

Summary Report
Recommending Combining
the Public Works Department and the Engineering Department
of the City of West Allis

By Paul M. Ziehler
City Administrative Officer, Clerk/Treasurer

November 17, 2009

**Combining
the Public Works Department and the Engineering Department
of the City of West Allis**

RECOMMENDATION

It is important to remember that people make the organization work; the organization does not make the people work. The structure is not the key; the City's processes, communications, and personalities all fit together to make the organization work well. Because the City has good processes, communications, and people, these factors will work positively in a combined structure.

With six (6) or seven (7) of the surveyed municipalities having a combined structure, it is clear that the combined structure can work. Since the practical experience in the other cities has shown that they mostly function separately, we need to assure ourselves that our combining of the two departments, in fact, do operate and function together as one. Both departments, integrated as one, will remain dependent on each other under the combined structure. The move to a combined department will be less disruptive from our operating standpoint, making the transition smoother and easier. A new City structure of a combined Public Works Department and Engineering Department should be established. The reasons to change to the combined structure with the benefits identified with that new structure are as follows:

1. Our administrative officials and management team will make it work effectively and efficiently.
2. Transition to new structure will be smooth with existing people.
3. There is some potential for long-term savings.
4. Cross training potential may be greater.
5. One department will be held accountable for all public work facilities and operations.
6. Service response time could be improved somewhat.
7. Operational efficiencies should occur through:
 - Eliminating any potential public works/engineering conflicts.
 - Better coordination of scheduling of projects.
 - Establishment of one set of priorities for both maintenance/operations and construction.
8. Is likely to save at least \$75,000 in the indirect reorganization of duties in the Public Works Administrative Office.

The direct benefits of a combined structure are as follows: (1) Greater unified point of operation for all operations and maintenance, and for all construction and design. (2) One central department for accountability, response, and resolving conflicts. (3) More complete understanding of all aspects. (4) More collaborative work force.

Challenges

With the combined Public Works/Engineering structure, certain challenges will need to be met by the Mayor, Common Council, the new combined Director and Administration. They are as follows:

1. Assuring direct access to Mayor, Common Council, staff, and public in regards to service.
2. Prevent creation of another level of management and more bureaucracy.
3. Seeking new ideas and fresh approaches.
4. Continue to serve all other departments fairly and equally.

TIMING AND OTHER RELATED DISCUSSION

As mentioned at the August 10, 2009 joint meeting of the Administration & Finance Committee and Board of Public Works, there are four decision points that the Common Council needs to make. They are (in the order shown) as follows:

1. Primary – Organizational Structure
2. Secondary – other related:
 - a. Job Description
 - b. Salary Levels
 - c. Residency vs. Perimeter Requirements
 - d. Recruitment Policies and Procedures

Organizational Structure. First and foremost, the Common Council needs to decide on the organizational structure. Everything else flows from that first decision. (It is the recommendation of this report to combine the Public Works Department and the Engineering Department.)

Other Related:

Job Description and Salary Ranges. Assuming the Common Council agrees that the two departments should be combined, current documentation already exists for previously existing job descriptions and salary ranges. They can be reviewed and updated, if necessary.

Residency/Perimeter Location Requirements. The Common Council has an opportunity to open up the possibility of an internal candidate being eligible for the Assistant Director of Public Works Operations job recruitment by extending the perimeter location provision to Deputies/Assistants. A greater than 2% salary differential could be implemented in conjunction with such a change (e.g., 3-4-5% or 4-6-8%). Under existing normal requirements, an individual has 18 months to establish residency in the City and is eligible for X-month extensions.

Recruitment. Existing ordinance, policies, and procedures specify recruitment processes. The HR Division, under guidance from the City Administrative Officer, conducts the recruitment and presents the final list of qualified candidates to the Mayor. The Mayor, with the assistance

of the City Administrative Officer, makes a final selection and recommendation to the Common Council. The Common Council must approve the Mayor's appointment.

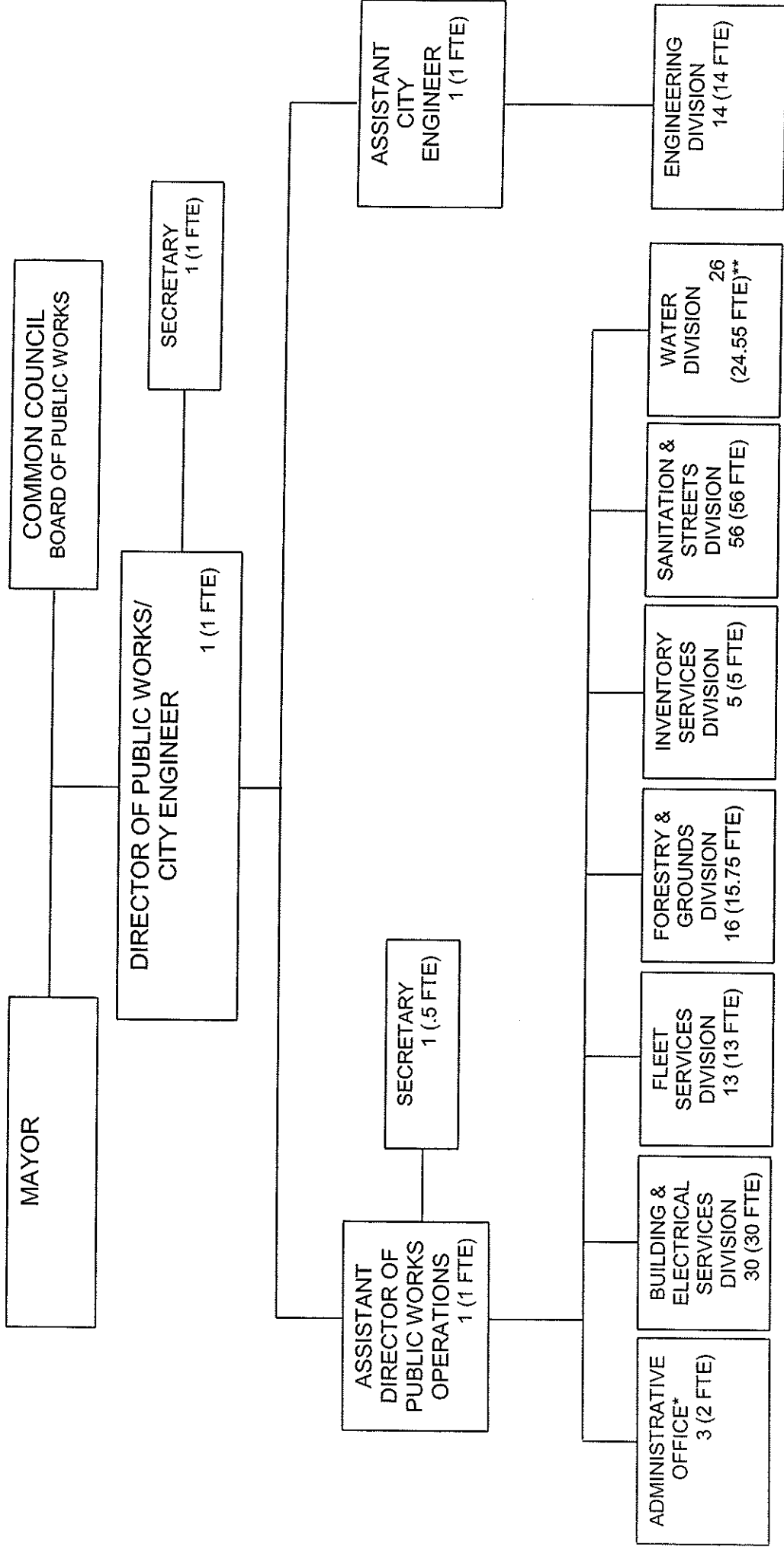
In conducting the recruitment process, succession planning and future positions and promotions are valuable to keep in mind. The City will continue to face similar challenges in the next 5-10 years as current employees retire and the City attempts to fill vacant positions. Succession planning, training, and internal promotions will all play a larger, expanding role.

The recruitment effort for the new Director of Public Works/Engineering should be run on only an internal basis since a qualified candidate already is employed with the City. There will be some learning time for the new combined Director, but that will be minimized due to his previous 12 years experience in similar combined jobs and 4 years experience as a City Administrator. The new Director of Public Works/Engineering will appoint the new Assistant Director of Public Works/Engineering in accordance with existing policies and procedures. Some issues of position requirements, including education and experience, will need to be addressed.

Here are a few final comments in regard to the promotion of our internal candidate within the City to the new combined position. The following points should be discussed and committed to by the new Public Works/Engineering Director.

- Effectively manage projects.
- Have good relationship with elected officials, staff, and public.
- Posses a variety of skills (including soft, people skills).
- Have a good administrative and technical background.
- Deal effectively with problems and emergencies.
- Administer, manage, motivate, and supervise in a full and positive manner.
- Respond well to multiple demands, increased productivity, and creative innovations.
- Look long range to planning, financing, and building needs.
- Be a mentor and encourage training.
- Continue to seek new ways to operate, and the implementation of fresh, creative, and innovative approaches.

**ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
PUBLIC WORKS/ENGINEERING**



* FTE LESS YARD OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR

**2.05 POSITIONS UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE FINANCE DIVISION

TOTAL POSITIONS: 168 (164.8 FTE)