

December 12, 2007

Mayor Bell and Members of the Common Council
7525 West Greenfield Avenue
West Allis, WI 53214

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

In the ten day period between Saturday, December 1, and Tuesday, December 11, 2007, southeastern Wisconsin has experienced numerous snow, sleet and freezing rain events that have put a tremendous strain on emergency equipment and personnel charged with the responsibility of keeping our streets in a safe winter driving condition. Despite the challenges that we have faced in the past ten days, I believe that the Department of Public Works has done an exceptional job in achieving their responsibility.

This, however, has come at a price. We have expended substantial amounts of money to cover our labor, equipment and material costs used in the numerous ice and snow control operations. Of greatest concern is the fact that, in that ten day period, the Department used almost 1900 tons of salt to keep our streets safe. While putting the 2007 salt budget well into the red, the 1900 tons also represents 25% of the Department's total amount of salt ordered for the 207-08 season. This order (which was made in July of 2007) should have been more than adequate to cover a typical winter season. Should the current weather pattern continue throughout the winter, we have the potential of running out of salt before the season ends.

For this reason, on December 11, I directed staff to attempt to secure an additional 1000 tons of salt this year. Unfortunately, we could not get a firm commitment from our vendor but, rather, have been placed on a "waiting list". That is to say, if the vendor is able to get another shipment of salt into the harbor, we will most likely get the additional salt. The vendor indicated that he would let us know the status of our request sometime in January. Nonetheless, a purchase order for approximately \$35,000 has been issued to the vendor as a confirmation of our commitment for the salt.

This communication is intended to summarize the impact that the weather events over the past week and a half have had on our budget and supply of salt. While the Department is always conscientious of budgetary expenditures, it will, nevertheless, spend whatever monies are necessary to provide safe winter driving conditions in West Allis. I do not expect the weather pattern of the past ten days to persist but will keep you informed of potential problems with salt supplies in the unlikely event that the pattern does not change.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael F. Pertmer
Director of Public Works