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Memorandum

TO: Public Works Committee

FROM: Joseph Burtch, Assistant City Engineer

DATE: January 11, 2017

RE: Proposal to Implement Private Lead Water Service Replacement Using Grant Funds.

The City of West Allis has approximately 10,000 properties that have lead water services on the private side (the private side starts at the curb stop next to the sidewalk/curb and ends at the water meter). Approximately 1,500 of these services have had the lead replaced with copper on the public utility side (the public side starts at the water main in the street to the curb stop). The estimated cost to replace a lead service on the private side is between \$4,500 and \$5,000 each. The estimated cost to replace a lead service on the public utility side is less than \$2,500 for a service installed during street reconstruction, to over \$8,000 for installations involving a street cut and patch.

Removing the lead services from our system is a major undertaking. The private services will cost \$45,000,000 to \$50,000,000 to replace and the public utility side will cost between \$21,000,000 to \$25,000,000 (Assuming we can schedule replacement of all the public side lead services during street reconstruction, it will take around fifty years at best to complete). We have been awarded a \$500,000 Department of Natural Resources (DNR) grant to assist in replacing private lead services. Since this money is such a small percentage of the cost of replacing the private services, the City needs to decide how best to use the grant in providing assistance to as many property owners as possible.

Our plan is to award a single contract for this work. By letting a single contract, rather than allowing property owners to select their own plumbers, we have better control over the installations and can take advantage of lower prices due to the volume of work and competitive bidding. This is very similar to what we are doing with Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) funding for private laterals. We have been using MMSD's funding to remove foundation drains and installing sump pumps.

At this time, we are planning on offering this opportunity to property owners that have copper service on the public side to avoid digging into the street. We started replacing the public side with street reconstruction in 2005 and will start with those properties first and work our way up thru the years. We are proposing a \$1,600 special assessment, similar to Milwaukee. Participation in the project is voluntary.

The grant money will cover the cost of approximately 150 lead service replacements. Participants will be selected on a first come first served basis. \$50,000 will be reserved for staff time, consulting help, namely plumbing inspection services and any construction cost overruns.

The ramifications from the Flint disaster will impact our ratepayers for years. We foresee changes in State law (the League of Municipalities has already proposed this) that will allow water utilities to pay for the cost of private lead service removal and a federal/state mandate to remove all lead services (who knows what timeline). The American Water Works Association has gone on record recommending the removal of all lead services nationwide.

In many ways this work is creating a false sense of security and a shotgun approach to what was criminal behavior in Flint. Even though no amount of lead can be deemed as safe, even with complete lead line removal there may still be lead in the household plumbing and fixtures along with other sources of lead such as lead paint.

cc: Administration and Finance Committee
Mayor Dan Devine
Rebecca Grill, CAO
Michael Lewis, Director of Public Works/City Engineer