

From the Mayor...

October 2, 2015

The removal of trash, recyclables, and yard waste are essential services that our city provides to our residents. The cost to provide these and many other city services continues to rise faster than revenues can keep up. Faced with property tax caps and other revenue restrictions, we must find ways to improve efficiencies and cut costs. Our goal is to provide solutions that allow us to maintain current levels of service without interruption.

For many years, we have utilized two manual rear load trash trucks with one driver and two additional workers on each truck. Both trucks, with a total of six employees, cover five different routes on a weekly basis and sometimes have to double up routes for holidays or in extreme weather. Over time, this method of collection has become less cost effective and is creating a burden on our general fund. We are now in the process of updating our equipment and re-evaluating our routes. This is done to prepare for a switch to automated pickup utilizing new totes similar to those used for recycling.

In early 2016, we will take delivery of a new automated side arm trash truck that will be controlled by the driver and thus requires but a single employee to operate. The city will be distributing one of two different sizes of trash totes (either the same 96 gallon size used currently for recycling or a smaller 64 gallon size) at no charge to our citizens for weekly automated pickup. Our two current trucks will be retro fit with “tippers” and be used for routine and backup coverage.

The trash routes are currently being evaluated. There will be changes made. We may need to tweak those changes as our operational efficiencies improve. Your trash day may change. We understand it will be an inconvenience during the transition but this solution will allow the city to realize significant reduction of man-hours with resultant cost savings. It will also help to reduce the potential of work related injuries for our employees.

There will be one other significant change for our citizens whose trash and recycling is currently picked up in the alley.

The recycling contract with our current vendor was just recently renewed. The new contract gave us an optional quote that if we move those recycling totes that are currently in the alley to the front curbside, we would realize a 28% reduction in cost for a savings of \$42,000. I met with our citizen’s curbside waste task force and presented the contract with this option. After careful consideration, their recommendation to the Board of Works was to accept the option of moving the recycling pickup location to the curbside. This will require that those citizens whose recycling totes are currently in the alley will need to move them to the curbside in the front of their house for pickup. It will also require the new trash tote pickup to be curbside.

Those changes will not occur until we begin using the new automated trash truck. At that time, we will require both recycling pickup and trash pickup in front of the house. Those two pickups will most likely occur on separate days. This change will not occur until early spring 2016. I

know initially, this will cause some inconvenience. I know it will be different. I ask you to consider how you will make these changes in the six months we have before we implement the new system.

One thing is for certain. The cost savings, operating efficiencies, and safety improvements are critical to the program. I appreciate your understanding of the importance of these changes.