

**MARCH 17, 2021
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
ADDITIONAL MATERIAL/REVISIONS**

REQUESTED REVISIONS TO THE AGENDA/PACKET:

<u>ACTION</u>	<u>ITEM</u>	<u>REQUESTED BY</u>
Add to item J.1.	City Manager's Report <ul style="list-style-type: none">• FY2021 Efficiencies Report	City Manager

[PAGE LEFT BLANK INTENTIONALLY]

CITY OF KENAI EFFICIENCIES REPORT

March 2021



The identification and execution of strategies that result in efficiencies and cost savings within the departments of the City of Kenai has been a focus of this administration. Despite the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the employees of the City of Kenai continued to develop new and resourceful ways to save time and money while still providing the same or better level of service.

The following are highlights of successful efficiencies initiated by City departments in fiscal year 2021. These strategies from department managers and City employees have reduced costs or streamlined processes. Our hope is that by sharing these initiatives amongst ourselves, these resourceful approaches will spark ongoing ideas and discussion for further advances to saving money while still providing excellent service to the residents of Kenai.

Most impactful reported change:

Public Works:
Wasting Pump Replacement
Annual Savings: \$55,310

Section 1. Efficiencies Overview

In the past year, departments within the City of Kenai have continued with efforts to reduce costs and improve workplace efficiency. Efficiencies are reported as quantified (with a cost savings value attached) or non-quantified.

Quantified Efficiencies
Total Estimated Savings: \$107,088
Annual Savings: \$ 81,732

QUANTIFIED EFFICIENCIES SUMMARY				
<i>Department</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Estimated Savings</i>		
		<i>One-Time</i>	<i>Annual</i>	<i>Hours*</i>
Airport	Carbide Cutting Program		\$6,785	14
Airport	Wildlife Hazing Training		\$600	
Clerk's Office	Reduction in Newspaper Subscription		\$208	
Finance	Electronic Timesheets		\$155	572
Finance	Electronic Paystubs W-2's			73
Finance	Discontinue City Hall Postage Meter		\$1,722	
Fire Department	In-House Training		\$2,250	80
Fire Department	Eliminated Printing Emergency Run Data Reports		\$137	
Legal	Eliminate Online Research Subscription		\$5,208	
Legal	Eliminate Duplicate Legal Research Books		\$272	
Library	Services from an Individual Vendor		\$1,300	
Parks & Rec	Clean-up Collaboration	\$1,056		
Police Department	Paperless Initiative		\$400	135
Police Department	Elimination of a Postage Meter		\$200	
Public Works	Wasting Pump Replacement		\$55,310	
Public Works	Shared Equipment Rental	\$2,300		
Public Works	In-House Excavation Work	\$8,000		
Public Works	Shared Equipment Rental and In-House Maintenance Work	\$14,000		
Senior Center	Reduction in Newsletter Printing		\$1,800	60
Senior Center	Vintage Pointe Apartment Painting		\$5,385	
Estimated Savings		\$25,356	\$81,732	934

* Annual Savings

Non-Quantified Efficiencies

- 1 Collaborative effort to reduce costs across departments and work with other public and private entities was reported.
- 3 Projects to digitize elements of department operations and utilize online resources were reported.
- 5 Projects implementing new technology to eliminate numerous inefficiencies were reported.
- 6 Projects took measures to streamline processes, saving staff time and reducing duplicate efforts.

Additional departments also changed scheduling structures, began strategic planning processes, implemented workflow changes, and made other efforts to achieve savings.

Section 2. Quantified Savings Based on Operational Changes by Department

Quantified Savings
Total Estimated Savings: \$107,088
Annual Hours Saved: 934

Department: Airport

Estimated savings: \$7,385
Hours saved: 14

1. Carbide Cutting Program. The Airport included efficiencies in prior years for the replacement of blades on its Case 1021 Loader (2019) and 966M Caterpillar loader (2020) with carbide cutting edges. The purchase of carbide cutting edges represents a material savings for each piece of equipment in which blades are replaced with carbide (double-sided) cutting edges instead of steel single-sided cutting edges. This year the Airport evaluated the cost savings of using carbide cutting edges over the past three years on a total of three pieces of equipment for a material savings of \$20,355 and 42 annual hours. The Carbide Cutting Program was put into place this year to replace blades on all equipment with carbide blades subject to budget. Based on the annual material savings reported over the past three years, continuing this program will result in an estimated annual savings of \$6,785. (Jim Lackey)
Estimated Annual Savings: \$6,785
Estimated Annual Hours Saved: 14
2. Wildlife Hazard Training
Initial and recurrent training for all personnel acting under the direction of the Wildlife Hazard Management Plan (WHMP) is required under 14 CFR 139.313 in the area of wildlife hazard management, as defined in 14 CFR Part 139.337. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approval allows annual training by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the Kenai Police Department designee who, in turn, annually trains all Airport, Kenai Police, and Kenai Fire Department personnel involved in wildlife hazing operations.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the in-person training for the train-the-trainer course and three initial new personnel trainings will be conducted online. The in-person training cost is \$1,425, and the virtual training cost is \$825, resulting in an annual savings of \$600. (Mary Bondurant/Erica Brincefield)
Estimated Annual Savings: \$600

Department: Clerk's Office

Estimated savings: \$208

1. Reduction in Newspaper Subscription. The Clerk's Office subscribed to the Peninsula Clarion so that ads from newspapers could be cut out to create an affidavit as proof of publication which is sometimes needed for legal purposes. The affidavit was changed to indicate that the City Clerk swear that the notice was caused to be published in the newspaper and posted on the website, which is sufficient for legal purposes. (Jamie Heinz)
Estimated Annual Savings: \$208

Department: Finance

Estimated savings: \$1,877

Hours saved: 645

1. Electronic Timesheets. The implementation of electronic timesheets has reduced staff hours in processing payroll as opposed to using paper timesheets and made the payroll process more efficient. Employees can enter hours from any location with a computer or a smart phone. This is especially helpful for employees working at multiple locations and/or on vacation. Departments can track, identify, and report employee hours by activity for budgeting and managing their employee workloads with reports from timekeeping rather than creating and maintaining manual spreadsheets to track employee time by tasks. Departments also save up to nine staff hours per pay period or 234 staff hours annually not having to hand-deliver and collect and organize paper timesheets. Time saving benefits include up to eight staff hours per payroll or 208 staff hours annually for the payroll clerk by eliminating the duplicate effort of entering employees time manually into the accounting system. The Finance receptionist saves up to three staff hours per pay period or 78 staff hours annually by eliminating the need to scan and shred paper timesheets. The Accountant saves up to two staff hours per pay period or 52 staff hours annually due to the efficiency of information being kept electronically instead of in paper form. The electronic timesheet program is included with Caselle Software at no additional cost. To summarize, implementing electronic timesheets has saved up to 22 staff hours per pay period annually, reduced paper costs by an estimated \$155 per year, and significantly enhanced the reporting and tracking capability for employee time by task. (Sue Best/ Susan Joy)
Estimated Annual Savings: \$155
Estimated Annual Hours Saved: 572
2. Electronic Paystubs and W-2's. The Finance Department implemented electronic paystubs and W-2's in the latter part of FY20 resulting in significant time saving, security improvements, and a reduction in the amount of paper being distributed to City employees. Electronic paystubs and W-2's are uploaded to a secure website, Doculivery, the electronic copy is stored uniquely, with each employee having a user ID and password. The employee can access this information even after their employment with the City ends. Employees benefit by having access to their paystubs and W-2 information at any time. It

prevents check stubs from getting lost and possibly landing in the wrong hands. The electronic check stub contains more payroll information than the printed paystubs. The Finance receptionist saves up to 2.5 staff hours per pay period or 65 hours annually by not folding the paystubs, putting them in envelopes, and dispersing paychecks to departments. The Accountant saves up to eight staff hours annually due to requests from employees for copies of their paystubs and W-2's. The cost to issue paystubs and W-2's electronically was a onetime fee of \$3,000 and ongoing annual cost of \$117, which will result in a cost savings from eliminating postage, paper, and envelopes in future years.
(Sue Best/ Susan Joy)

Estimated Annual Hours Saved: 73

3. Discontinue City Hall Postage Meter: The current contract for the City Hall postage meter was set to expire in 2020, and a five-year lease on a new machine was quoted at \$1,722 annually based on the Alaska State NASPO agreement. Based on the cost-savings of other departments reported in the annual efficiencies report, the staff using postage at City Hall worked together to obtain quotes for a meter and compare with using stamps.com or other similar online postage vendors that would result in cost savings. The five-year average for postage at City Hall is \$4,952 and has been trending down for several years, at \$3,544 in 2019. The switch to stamps.com at an annual fee of \$215 required installing five digital scales at no cost as part of the program. The change resulted in a cost savings of \$1,722. Additionally, stamps.com includes cost codes that allow postage usage to be tracked by Department, which was not available with the postage meter.

(Tina Williamson, Kristi Hershberger, Susan Joy, Cindy Herr, Willie Anderson, Jamie Heinz, and Christine Cunningham)

Estimated Annual Savings: \$1,722

Department: Fire Department

Estimated savings: \$2,387

Hours saved: 80

1. In-House Training. In the past, the Fire Department has been forced to bring in instructors from outside the Department to conduct Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) and Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) training. This training requires contracting two instructors for two days to conduct the ACLS and PALS training biennially. This year, three Fire Department personnel received the prerequisite training to become ACLS and PALS instructors at an initial cost of \$136. The cost of biennial refresher courses is sponsored by Central Peninsula Hospital (CPH) for instructors who teach courses at CPH to maintain their certificates. This saves in the cost of hiring instructors, as well as overtime hours for personnel. The Fire Department can now train personnel while on shift instead of hosting a two-day class, resulting in an overtime savings of 160 hours biennially. (Mark Anderson)

Estimated Annual Savings: \$2,250

Estimated Annual Hours Saved: 80

2. Eliminated Printing Emergency Run Data Reports. This year the Fire Department eliminated the printing of emergency run data reports and moved to digital copy. In the past, every emergency run report would be printed for personnel to enter into our data entry systems. These reports have response time data of personnel and equipment that are transferred into National Fire Incident Report System (NFIRS) reports and into Image Trend (Medical Reports) reported to the State of Alaska. This year we began saving those reports in PDF form and email the reports to personnel. Based on 1291 calls, averaging six pages per call, approximately 7,746 pages were saved this year. Each page costs

approximately 15 cents, resulting in a \$116 savings. Shredding costs are approximately 28 cents per pound, and based on 78 pounds, represents a savings of \$21 this year. (Tony Prior)

Estimated Annual Savings: \$137

Department: Library

Estimated savings: \$1,300

1. Elimination of Services from an Individual Vendor. Various staff members received collection management training over the previous year. This allowed the Library to cancel one of its more expensive database subscriptions.
(Katja Wolfe, James Adcox, Hannah Meyer)
Estimated Annual Savings: \$1,300

Department: Legal

Estimated savings: \$5,450

1. Eliminate Online Research Subscription. Westlaw is an online tool used by the Legal Department to research case law. The three-year contract for this service, ending in January 2021, limited annual increases to 3%. In addition to looking at potential costs increases with a new contract, the City Attorney's need and use of this tool has been minimal. Other online options are available at a lesser cost when and if needed.
(Scott Bloom)
Estimated Annual Savings: \$5,208
2. Eliminate Duplicate Legal Research Books. The Legal Department receives multiple annual subscriptions for law research books. The duplicate copies of the Alaska Rules of Court, Alaska Attorney Guide Book, and Alaska Criminal and Traffic Laws for the Legal Assistant have been canceled. It is a money-saving initiative and does not increase the time needed for research as the books are available for use in the Attorney's office.
(Cindy Herr)
Estimated Annual Savings: \$242

Department: Parks and Recreation

Estimated savings: \$1,056

1. Clean-up Collaboration. City departments (Parks & Rec, Police, Public Works) collaborate annually with other groups/agencies in an effort to clean up debris leftover from abandoned illegal camps. Rental of 30-yard roll-off containers are often the most practical way to assist with cleanup but can be costly. The largest cleanup (5.52 tons) occurred between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Kenai Spur Highway, involving City staff and inmates from the Wildwood Correctional Facility. By collaborating with the Russian Orthodox Church (Dorothy Arness), the Church paid for the rental of two 30-yard roll-off containers used for this project. This resulted in a total savings of \$1,056.
(Sgt. Jay Sjogren and Bob Frates).
Estimated One-Time Annual Savings: \$1,056

Department: Police Department

Estimated savings: \$600
Hours saved: 135

1. Police and Communications Department Paperless Initiative: Criminal charges are now e-filed with the Alaska Court System rather than distributed on paper. Paper copies of criminal charges and reports are no longer provided to the District Attorney's office, rather they are provided electronically. Early estimates indicate the change to electronic distribution will have annual savings of approximately \$400 in paper and printing costs. Administrative personnel and dispatchers will save approximately 135 hours annually in paperwork processing and delivery to other agencies. (Stephen Meyer)
Estimated Annual Savings: \$400
Estimated Annual Hours Saved: 135
2. Elimination of a Postage Meter: The Kenai Police Department eliminated its postage meter and replaced it with Stamps.com, which resulted in an approximately \$200 in annual savings. (Dave Ross and Stephen Meyer)
Estimated Annual Savings: \$200

Department: Public Works

Estimated savings: \$79,610

1. Wasting Pump Replacement. The City's Waste Water Treatment Plant consumes more energy than any other City property. Utility costs peaked in FY2019 with actual utility costs of \$453,342 for the plant alone. One of the first successfully completed projects at the plant replaced 40-year-old aeration blowers, and the FY2020 Utility Budget goal of \$402,787 was achieved. Part of last year's efficiencies was to set a goal of continued utility savings by further reducing the budget to \$347,477. This was a \$55,310 year over year reduction as well as a \$106,000 reduction from the facility high in FY2019. A goal was also set at that time to continue with improvements to be able to further reduce the budget to \$300,000 for FY2022. The Department can now report that those goals have been achieved. The Neuros Aeration Basin Blowers continue to exceed expectations, and the Department successfully completed a Wasting Pump Replacement project where two failing 40-year-old 15 horsepower pumps were replaced with new and more efficient three horsepower pumps that are performing better and providing continued energy savings. At this time, the Department would like to set a goal of continued Utility savings by continuing with the replacement of aging equipment in support of the Capital Improvement Plan with a goal of setting FY2023 Utility Budget at \$270,000, which would reduce the overall budget by another \$30,000 or 10% year over year savings. It should also be noted that these savings are annual, year over year, and not one-time savings. (Scott Curtin)
Estimated Annual Savings: \$55,310
2. Shared Equipment Rental: The City's Street Division leases a variety of equipment seasonally in support of operations. For FY2021 the Division coordinated with the Water & Sewer Division as well as the Parks and Recreation Department to plan and coordinate efforts to better utilize equipment rentals. The Streets Division leases an excavator to perform right-of-way clearing. This year they performed drainage improvements in-house along Willow Street and, upon completion, assisted the Water Division with the replacement of a leaking water service valve at the ball fields on South Spruce as well as the replacement of a broken water service key box on Forest Ave. When that work was completed, staff utilized the excavator to assist the Parks and Recreation Department with the removal of various beetle kill trees in the City as well as site grading at the recreation

center. The approximate savings on the rental equipment was \$2,300. This does not consider the savings from staff performing this work during normal business hours and savings performing work in-house as compared to hiring contract services.

(Curt Wagoner)

Estimated One-time Savings: \$2,300

3. In-House Excavation Work: The City Street Division, in continuation with savings on rented equipment, also widened the exit road from the City Dock by clearing the right-of-way, excavating out unusable material, and hauling and backfilling of gravel. This work was done during normal business hours when closing down the area after the Personal Use Fishery. This was a priority project to allow emergency services a second entrance / exit that would avoid the highly congested Boat Launch Road during the Fishery. This saved the City approximately \$8,000 in contract services. (Scott Curtin and Curt Wagoner)

Estimated One-time Savings: \$8,000

4. Shared Equipment Rental and In-House Maintenance Work: The Buildings Maintenance Division assisted with the completion of Capital Projects this year. Coordination of rental equipment was also utilized by obtaining an aerial lift for the month. The first two weeks staff power-washed and stained the Recreation Center. This is work that generally would be contracted out. After two weeks staff and lift went over to the ice rink where the steel beams were pressure washed to remove algae and rust in preparation of other work. By utilizing the lift for the month, rental costs were reduced by \$2,000. By staff performing this work \$12,000 in contract services were not required. (Scott Curtin and Joe Beverly)

Estimated One-time Savings: \$14,000

Department: Senior Center

Estimated savings: \$7,185

Hours saved: 60

1. Reduction in Newsletter Printing and Mailing. The Centerline is the Senior Center monthly newsletter. It is filled with activities, information and most importantly, the menu. The Senior Center had been printing between 300-450 newsletters each month for many years. In addition to printing, over 125 copies were mailed to individuals who requested this service. This year, the Senior Center started showcasing the newsletter on Facebook and have emphasized the email option when possible. Senior Center staff found that after the newsletter was read, most folks just wanted a copy of the menu to post, so staff began printing extra copies of the menu to disperse instead of giving out whole newsletters for those who had lost their original copies. Each month, the Senior Center now prints just under 200 copies, mails 30 copies, and emails over 150 copies. (Angie Clary)

Estimated Annual Savings: \$1,800

Estimated Annual Hours Saved: 60

2. Vintage Pointe Apartment Painting. Historically when an apartment is vacated, the entire apartment has been painted because contractors would only bid to paint a minimum of one apartment. The bids were between \$950 - \$1600, based on the contractor and the square footage. The Senior Center was able to locate a contractor who will repair and paint only the areas needed for each apartment. (All Senior Center Staff)

Estimated Annual Savings: \$5,385

Section 3. Non-quantified Savings and Efficiencies Based on Operational Changes

Collaboration

The City of Kenai has worked throughout the year to identify areas where increased efficiencies can be achieved through improving collaborations both amongst departments and between departments and other public and private entities.

- New Tree Removal Permit. Despite receiving requests over the years, the City did not have a process for allowing members of the public to remove trees on City property. Parks and Rec worked with the City Manager's Office, Planning Department, Fire Department, Public Works, and Legal Department to create a new online Tree Removal Permit form and process. Members of the public are now able to submit an application for tree removal on City property using the new form and process, and KPD, KFD, Public Works and Planning will receive a copy of issued permits so they can appropriately address any phone calls they may receive. (Christine Cunningham and Bob Frates)

Using Online and Digital System to Streamline Processes

A number of departments have continued to take steps to streamline processes and workflow by utilizing digital and online tools.

- Automated Liquor/Marijuana License Review Process: This process used to require paper documents to be printed and circulated to eight employees in five different departments and returned to the Clerk's Office. An automated process was created in Laserfiche which allows for a concurrent review and approval or rejection of electronic documents. Each staff member spends the same amount of time reviewing the documents but the process is more efficient with the concurrent reviews. (Jamie Heinz)
- Online Burn Permit Process: The Clerk's Office created an online Burn Permit Form in Laserfiche for the Fire Department, which allows the public to complete the burn permit online, the Fire Department to approve them using the Laserfiche software, and then Dispatch to see the permit in the software. This replaced a paper process in which a paper form was filled out by the resident, the information was entered into an Excel Spreadsheet by Fire Department Staff, and then emailed periodically to Dispatch. (Rebecca Mathews)
- Implement digital transferring of citations from the Police Department and Animal Control: Citations issued by the Police department and Animal Control are scanned and emailed to the Legal Department to process. Paper copies are no longer delivered weekly to City Hall. This has greatly improved the time effectiveness in entry of the citations and makes them readily available for payment. Prior actions when the citation had not been received but the defendant is ready to pay, has been to enter off their copy (in person), request a photo of the citation to be emailed to the legal assistant (via phone), or to call the defendant back when it is received. By having the citations entered, the appearance of professionalism and competency is increased and prompter collection of fines will ultimately increase revenue. Digital files have been set up and storage for paper files has been decreased creating space savings. (Cindy Herr)

Implementing New Technology to Drive Efficiency

In addition to utilizing online and digital resources to streamline processes, many departments have identified and implemented new technology that results in significant efficiency savings.

- **Cashless Dipnet:** Historically the Personal Use Fishery fee shacks have conducted most of their business using cash. In 2019, 65% of all transactions used cash. Dealing with the cash was labor-intensive and created a safety issue for the attendants. Each of the eight shack attendants required a starting till. Because the fee shacks operate around the clock and on weekends, Finance Department staff would spend time each morning counting the previous days tills and making new tills, which were delivered to the police station for storage. Shack employees would pick up their till for the day at the Police Station before their shift. Anytime there was more than \$2,000 in any shack, the Police Department would send an officer to pick up the money. The Police Department estimates that a minimum of 49 hours was spent on 148 cash pickups each year. In addition to the time to do the pickup, police employees had to be scheduled to pick up cash after each shift, which limited their scheduling flexibility. On Mondays, there could be as much as \$50,000 in cash that had to be physically counted, reconciled, and deposited. This would average two employees working two hours each day. By going cashless, reconciliation now takes one employee 15 minutes each day. In 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the decision was made to stop accepting cash and only accept credit cards. Credit card readers were installed on the outside of the shack allowing customers to swipe their own cards. This was done to limit exposure of our employees. Credit card transactions were no longer signed for, saving printed receipts. In total the savings include elimination of 17,590 printed receipts, 49 hours of police department time, 31.5 hours of overtime for shack attendants to pick up tills before their shift, and 82.5 hours of Finance staff time counting and distributing cash. Credit card transactions do incur fees compared to no fees for cash. The average cost per transaction is 2.4%. The additional cost of transactions previously paid in cash is estimated to be \$8,200. This additional cost does limit the estimated savings; however, the increase in personnel safety, greater flexibility in staff scheduling, and the reduced health exposure to large quantities of cash make this a significant efficiency for the City. (Dan Castimore)
- **Kenai Community Library Scheduling Software:** Implementing and utilizing scheduling software significantly reduced the time spent creating staff schedules, keeping track of staff leave, as well as requesting and approving schedule changes and time off at the Library. This also reduced paper waste. The Library schedule is now web-based and can be checked from anywhere. (Katja Wolfe and Library Staff)
- **Kenai Community Library Web-Based Reservation Tracking:** Using free web tools to keep track of reservations for the Library conference and study rooms, as opposed to using paper-based planners, has allowed all Library staff to provide better customer service to Library users. Additionally, staff have access to reservation information from their workstations in real time. Estimated annual savings: \$100. Estimated annual hours saved: 20 hours (All Library Staff)
- **Kenai Community Library Online Library Card Registration:** Library users now have the ability to register online for a library card. This saves on paper and printing supply costs and staff time spent manually entering library user information into the library database. (All Library Staff)

- Efficiency and upgrades in evidence processing at the Police Department: The police department has moved to a system of using its records management system to create evidence labels and barcode scanners to further track and manage that evidence. Uniformity of labeling and recording evidence items creates long term efficiencies in the accuracy of tracking and researching evidence items in the possession of the Police Department. The new system is anticipated to save approximately 52 hours per year in data entry duties and evidence organization/storage of evidence for the Evidence Custodian. (Stephen Meyer and Kelly Evenson)

Redesigning Staff Structures and Work Processes to Improve Efficiency

Departments examined work processes to propose new approaches to improve existing systems, teams or processes.

- Pre-printed Labels at the Kenai Community Library: Pre-printed labels accessible by all technical services staff streamlines processing of new audiobooks, DVDs and Music CDs. (Alinna Granados)
- Municode for Planning & Zoning Commission Packets: Planning Department staff have worked with the Clerk's Office to utilize Municode as the new platform for publishing Planning & Zoning Commission packets with a significant improvement in efficiency, providing staff with additional time for other assignments. (Willie Anderson and Jamie Heinz)
- New Process Tax Compliance Certification Filing: The Planning Department changed its procedure for the filing of Tax Compliance Certification with the Conditional Use Permit annual reports. Applicants are now able to fill out and submit their Tax Compliance Certification directly to the Kenai Peninsula Borough, which saves staff time researching and filling out these reports. (Willie Anderson)
- Alternative Material Removal: Approximately 60 to 70 yards of woody debris is collected from City properties in the form of slash, limbs and decayed wood each season. The material is typically staged at the old City yard, then hauled to Section 36 (near sports complex) or the Borough Landfill utilizing a flatbed truck. This involves extra handling time and logistics getting the woody material loaded and transported off-site. This fall the department obtained a burn permit and burned the debris at the old City yard instead. The savings in haul time and equipment time was estimated at 7 labor hours. (Randy Dodge)
- Float Plane Basin Draining: There is very rich native aquatic plant life in the float plane basin due to it being shallow (warm water) and the sand at the north end being a good medium for plant growth. The heavy vegetation causes problems for float planes. In an effort to reduce plant growth for aircraft safety, the Airport worked with the Federal Wildlife Service to look at two remedies: 1) non-chemical means (lowering water in basin obtaining a deep freeze) and 2) chemical means. The chemical remedy is expensive (\$30,000 - \$35,000 annually), would require reapplication periodically, along with a lengthy and extensive study to determine any environmental hazards. Since the new outflow was installed at the basin, the Airport opens the drain and drains the basin water. Over the

winter the remaining water freezes solid around the plant life. In the spring, the drain is closed and the basin is refilled. As the water rises, the weeds are pulled from the bottom. After all the ice melts the weeds fall to the bottom of the basin. This has proven very successful in killing most roots of perennial aquatic plants and in futures years, if chemicals had to be purchased, would save the City \$30,000. (Mary Bondurant and Jim Lackey)

- Volunteer Coordination: Due to COVID-19, the Parks and Rec Department devised an alternative solution to handling volunteer planting that allowed participants to safely plant many of the City's flowerbeds. The strategy spread the volunteers out over the course of one week rather than occurring on a single day as in year's past. Volunteers were afforded the opportunity to select a specific day and time to plant. This improved safety by allowing for social distancing and minimizing interaction, thus, lowering the chances of COVID-19 transmission between volunteers and staff. It also contributed to some efficiencies by giving volunteers flexibility in scheduling their donated time which led to more beds being planted. The Department plans on hosting the volunteer plant day in a similar fashion this upcoming summer. (Bob Frates)