



Public Works | 860-584-6125

## Memorandum

Date: February 9, 2021

To: Mayor Zoppo-Sassu  
Board of Public Works

From: Raymond A Rogozinski, P.E., Public Works Director

Re: **DPW Snow Operation Status / Update**

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The Department of Public Works has performed snow operations during a number of recent snow storms including the 15-16 inches on February 1, 5-6 inches on February 7 and 2-3 inches on February 9. Snow operations are managed by the Department's Street Division, and during the storm there are 20 staff members treating and plowing City streets and approximately 4 Fleet employees servicing trucks. During large storms the City staff workforce is supplemented by approximately 42 private plowing contractors.

In addition to treating and clearing 234 miles of roads the DPW Streets Division clears snow from the 11 City schools along with City Hall, two libraries and the Parks Department's 51 High Street facility. Once it stops snowing it typically takes the Department approximately 5-6 hours to complete snow operations. When private contractors are utilized they are typically for a duration of 5-6 hours and during a typical storm the Department uses approximately 300 tons of salt, 4000 gal magnesium deicer. A summary of storm operation costs during overtime operations is provided below:

1. DPW Street Division (8 hr. shift)- \$10,400
2. Private Contractors (6 Hrs.) - \$33,600
3. Salt (300 tons) - \$18,900
4. Magnesium Deicer (4000 gal) - \$5,000

The total cost for an 8 hour snow operation period during off hours is \$67,900, accounting for time-and-a-half payments. Storms that occur on weekdays during the hours of 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM lower the reference cost; however, storms that occur on Sundays increase costs due to double time labor cost by approximately \$5,000. There is no additional cost to utilize private contractors outside DPW's weekday work hours.

| ACCOUNT     | BUDGET    | APPROX. COST TO DATE | AVAILABLE FUNDS |
|-------------|-----------|----------------------|-----------------|
| DPW OT      | \$270,000 | \$160,000            | \$110,000       |
| Contractors | \$300,000 | \$130,000            | \$170,000       |
| Salt/Deicer | \$480,000 | \$290,000            | \$190,000       |

The Department can request the transfers of funds between the accounts from the BOF.

The Department’s salt & magnesium supply is currently sufficient. Treated salt is stored at DPW’s V.P. Kelly Road facility and its James P Casey road salt dome that have a capacity of 4,500 and 1,500 tons, respectively.

The primary concern with winter operations is the number and quality of private contractors. Of the approximately 40 private contractors the City does have a number of high quality contractors who work the required hours and perform a quality job. However, the Department struggles with some of the contractors. Under the current contract contractors who do not perform are penalized by being deleted from the list and not being called for work. The problem is that there are no extra available contractors; DPW needs all the contractors on our list, which makes it problematic to eliminate a vendor. A good analogy is when you hire a plumber to fix a leaky faucet at your house. When they come to your door three hours late you do not tell them to leave, since it is so difficult to get a plumber you greet them cheerfully in the hope that your faucet will be fixed.

In order to improve the issues with private contractors DPW is proposing to increase plow rates to increase the number of contractors which will enable us to be more selective. We are also requesting to purchase two addition plow trucks and maximize use of Water/Sewer & Park Department trucks to maximize use of City personal. In addition to DPW Street Division personnel plowing, six solid waste staff members can be available if additional trucks were available. The Department does receive assistance from the Water/Sewer Department in the form of two trucks. In addition, DPW has requested funding for a plow that can be used by Building Maintenance to remove snow from City Hall, Library, Police Complex and Park’s High Street facility. We will also be investigating requiring DPW staff to work mandatory overtime; however, that will require changes to the labor contract and may necessitate implementing designated rest periods.

The primary complaint from residents associated with snow operations are snow in cul-de-sacs, access to mail boxes, snow stockpiled at intersections and plow trucks driving fast. The Department’s policy is to push snow to the edge of the road / curb line; however, this is a challenge in some areas and in cul-de-sacs in particular. As a result, DPW typically utilizes front end loader and dump trucks to remove snow from cul-de-sacs and intersections a few days after the storm. We do not in general push back snow along roadways after the storm due to property owner complaints of plowing snow into driveways. We also instruct drivers to minimize truck speed, however in order to push the snow (F=MA) off the road some truck speed is required.

Another area associated with snow operations that the Department is investigating is an alternate snow stockpiling area. The Department currently uses the Centre Square site to stockpile snow plowed to the center of downtown roads; however, with proposed development a new site will have to be identified. DPW can use the Department’s James P Casey site or if permitted by DEEP the landfill but we would ideally find a more centralized site to reduce travel times.



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Please feel free to contact me with questions / concerns.

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