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February 28, 2011

TO: Public Works Committee

FROM: Carl S. Goldsmith, Director of Public Works *CJ*

SUBJECT: After Action Review – January 31, 2011 – February 4, 2011 Blizzard

The Public Works Department has prepared the following report as a means to critique the operation capacity and logistic response to the storm event experienced in Lombard between January 31st and February 4th. The information contained in the report includes input and comments from all operating departments of the Village.

Storm Characteristics

Between January 31, 2011 and February 4, 2011 the Village received a recorded accumulation of 19.1 inches of snow. Snowfall began the evening of 1/31/11 and dropped 3" of snowfall by early morning. The bulk of the snowfall (16.1") was received between Tuesday, February 1st pm and Wednesday, February 2, 2011 mid-morning. Given high winds throughout the storm event (gusts up to 60mph), drifting was an issue, which often led to near white-out conditions. Throughout the storm event, recorded power outages were minimal and Village pump/lift station operation was maintained throughout the storm event with minimal disruption.

The Fairview Lift Station was without power on February 1, 2011 between 5:45 pm and 10:00 pm. A portable generator was stationed onsite earlier in the day but two employees had to connect it and get it running. The Finley Road station was out on February 1, 2011 between 9:45 pm and 7:30 am on Wednesday, February 2, 2011. A generator had to be pulled out to the station because there is no where to stage it. The Sunset Knolls station was out from Tuesday, February 1, 2011 at 9:20 pm to Wednesday, February 2, 2011 at 6:00 am. The wet well level was monitored for high water level. A generator was not mobilized to this site.

This was the 3rd most significant recorded snowfall event in the Chicago area.

Public Works Response:

The Village's revised Shift Implementation Plan was put into effect with the Seasonal Plow Operators being utilized. The plan calls for three (3) shifts with the following breakdown:

"A Shift" 9:00 am – 9:00 pm (21 employees)

“B Shift” 9:00 pm – 9:00 am (15 employees)
“C Shift” 7:30 am – 4:00 pm (12 employees)

This was the first opportunity for the Village to implement the revised Plan that provides for the Seasonal Operators. The Plan allowed “C Shift” to handle the seven (7) main breaks/emergency sewer digs received between 2/1/11 and 2/5/11 without reducing available resources to the snow and ice mission. The snow event was managed by Angela Podesta and Steve Kremske.

In advance of the significant snow event, the Village activated the Emergency Communication Center (ECC) on the morning of Tuesday, February 1, 2011. In accordance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the Incident Action Plan was developed and critical staff members were assigned roles within the command structure. Carl Goldsmith served as Incident Commander with Angela Podesta serving as Operations Chief.

To prepare for the significant call volume anticipated, additional personnel from the Lombard Police Department, Village Hall, Community Development and Finance were retained to respond to resident inquiries. Information was provided to each operating department on the PW response, and information was updated on the Village’s website regarding the status of the clean-up effort. The Village used the DuPage County Sheriff’s reverse 911 system to notify residents of the planned response and to request that vehicles be removed from the roadways to assist in the snow removal process.

Given the projected accumulation totals anticipated, staff modified the “normal” response to ensure that emergency services were available to all areas of Lombard. *As such, the Public Works Department objective was to open access to all streets, alleys and cul-de-sacs.* In accordance with the Snow Plan, priority streets were addressed first, neighborhood streets were second and the cul-de-sacs and alleys were lowest priority. In order to assist with meeting the objective, the Village contracted for the snow removal in the North Industrial Park and for the clearing of cul-de-sacs north of Roosevelt Road. This afforded the Village to concentrate resources more effectively on the mission. After approximately 6 hours of snowfall through the evening on February 1, 2011, the pick-up trucks were unable to continue to effectively move the snow. As a result, the trucks were reassigned to pushing back corners throughout the zones.

Following the major clean-up, resources were assigned to curbing and knocking down corners. The priority was established to be a three block radius around schools. The staff used the Unimog for some curbing, which resulted in less snow being placed back on residential aprons and avoided pushing against mailboxes.

The Public Works Department performed the windrowing operations along Main Street, St. Charles Road and Westmore beginning on the evening of Thursday, February 3, 2011. The windrow operation was a 2 night operation. The Lombard Police Department assisted in the operation with the assignment of a Community Service Officer to assist in the road closure during the operation. On the first night (Thursday), the windrow on

Main Street and St. Charles Road east of Main were removed. On the second night (Friday), the crews removed the windrow from St. Charles west of Main Street and Westmore between Maple and Division.

Observations/Issues

The following is a list of observations that were made during the snow event. These comments were from various sources including a survey that was distributed to all Lombard Public Works Employees. A copy of the compiled survey results has been attached.

1. The shifts with A, B, C worked really well. We were able to repair or maintain daily operations with little effect to snow removal.
2. The Public Works Department provided lead plows on several ambulance calls to ensure accessibility to the scene. In one case, the ambulance was a Glen Ellyn unit and there was little communication on the intent of the ambulance. A protocol should be developed to have a means to communicate for units from other communities.
3. To a degree, some of the seasonal employees worked fine, but then some didn't. All in all it was good to have the extra bodies.
4. Cleanup with UNIMOG worked great. Very limited equipment down time.
5. The night crew was very effective at cleaning up parking lots, McGuire Drive, Park, Parkside and Lincoln. Breaking up south priorities into 2 routes was effective.
6. A bus was stuck on 22nd Street west of Westmore. There was confusion on which party was responsible for the coordination of the removal of the bus.
7. In order to efficiently and safely plow, vehicles parked on the roadway must be removed by the Lombard Police Department. A review of State Statutes and authority should be undertaken to determine if towing can be performed prior to the issuance of citations.
8. The DuPage County OEM requested information on the Village's designated warming centers. The locations and capacities of these centers was unclear.
9. The Police Department had limited patrol capabilities with only 5 SUVs. Police squad cars were not functional during the snow event.
10. The PW Department loaned pick-up trucks with plows to the VH staff and Police to assist in clearing the parking lots on the complex. This allowed PW to focus on the objective of opening roads.
11. The media hype leading up to the event did assist in reducing the volume of traffic on the roadways. Many businesses and schools closed early on Tuesday, February 1, 2011.
12. The Village used the website to disseminate information to the community. Greater quality control to ensure that the information is accurate and current must be built into the process.
13. While the seasonal employees were a value added during the storm, several operators were not trained adequately.

14. The entire Village fleet was in excellent condition heading into the event, which resulted in few issues with the equipment.
15. Given the significant snow accumulation, commercial business corridors (St. Charles, Main and Westmore) could not adequately clear the public sidewalks.
16. The Village did not receive timely weather updates from the forecasting service.
17. Snow fence should be installed at Lombard Park District properties to prevent drifting (Wilson, Grace and Madison).
18. Use of contract loaders for cul-de-sacs was highly effective.
19. Additional supervisor to coordinate windrow trucking should be considered.
20. Senior citizen requests for additional services was heavy. Resource list was developed and posted on web and provided to other departments.
21. Inability to effectively communicate Village message to general populous.
22. Lack of a Village regulation to require single family and multi-family residential sidewalks to be cleared.

Recommendations

1. The Village will review the squad car replacement program and arrange for rental SUVs for future snow fall events which debilitate our fleet.
2. Analyze Fleet Replacement Plan to ensure adequate pool of vehicles capable of handling snow events.
3. Develop a "Commercial Corridor Snow Removal Plan" to articulate snow removal efforts in the commercial corridors.
4. Develop emergency contracts with private contractor for cul-de-sacs.
5. Incorporate a better mechanism for quality control into the Snow Plan to determine whether objective was met.
6. Proceed with salt dome project to minimize freezing of salt, resulting in downtime.
7. Purchase an emergency notification system to provide timely updates and service announcements. (This item has been included in the FY 2012 Budget)
8. Develop an Ordinance that requires removal of snow/ice from public sidewalk in residential neighborhoods.

I am extremely proud of the men and women of the Department of Public Works for their effort during this historic snow event. Their commitment and dedication was truly outstanding. It is also appropriate to recognize all Village personnel for their service and assistance during this and other severe weather events. The team approach is a testament to the leadership of the Village President, Village Board of Trustees, Village Manager and the entire management team of the Village of Lombard.

February 1st & 2nd BLIZZARD – Suggestions and Comment

The following comments are from an employee survey conducted in the Public Works Department and reflect that actual responses received. The responses have not been edited for content.

What Worked:

- The shifts with A, B, C worked really well. We were able to repair or maintain daily operations with little effect to snow removal. (UGU Dept.)
- To a degree, some of the temps worked fine, but then some didn't. All in all it was good to have the extra bodies. Cleanup with UNIMOG worked great. Very limited equipment down time.
- Shift schedule and having the 7:30 – 4:00 shift helped out.
- Using snow blower on big drifts.
- Having 3 shifts kept employees refreshed during the blizzard
- The night crew was real effective at cleaning up parking lots, McGuire Drive, Park, Parkside and Lincoln. Breaking up south priorities into 2 routes was effective.

What Didn't Work:

- Everything worked but things could have been handled differently to help operation run smoother. For example we have Snow Plan, stick to it! Priorities First – our priorities should have been curb to curb; we should never have left areas until they were completed. Secondary streets – we had vehicles doing alleys and courts. The 1-tons should never have tried to plow the alleys with that much snow. They were getting stuck and we had to take vehicles from other areas of work to help them out. Also when a call came in that there was a problem in a certain area people would be rerouted to do that. When a call comes in it should not take priority over our Snow Plan.
- At shift changes – not knowing what was plowed at least once and what wasn't plowed at all.
- 1 pass each way.
- Asking for parked cars or abandoned cars to be moved.
- Not curbing right away. We should have taken the time at the outset and done it right. Very unorganized. No real sense of direction and too much confusion. Didn't do downtown for Metra parking early enough. Should have gotten people there earlier. Should have been salting earlier. Clean up after storm – should not still be doing things we are for a week later.
- Worried about commuter lots. Should have paid attention to Metra limited train schedule. That way you have more people in areas. Curb first.
- We should have plowed from curb to curb from the very beginning instead of waiting for the blizzard to stop and try to move 20+ inches of snow drifts and possible freezing of the snow. All areas did not get plowed one pass in each

- direction. We still have streets where the snow is several feet away from the curb (2-5 feet) i.e., Grace and St. Charles.
- Doing just 2 passes to open up the roads in the areas. Once the residents cleared their drives to the open road the piles of snow were too high to push to the curb. Communication between day and night shifts. It seemed like day & night shifts had their own goals and sometimes did not go together.
 - For a snow fall this large it would have more effective to eliminate the 7:30 – 4:00 shift.
 - Priority routes not being touched day after snow fall and being left for the night shift.

What Would you Change:

- The 7:30 – 4:00 street persons in the Street Dept. were not used as intended. Their job is to perform daily operations as like the UGU guys. For example: vehicles were moved around for getting people instead of for complaints. These duties should have been handled by the 7:30 – 4:00 person and you would not have interrupted snow removal. Also the use of salt. Salt serves its purpose. For snow removal – we need to use it. I understand we should use less for the Eco-System but we have already cut back in many other ways like pre-salting - we don't do that anymore. We've reduced the amounts that we use on small snow falls. But when the time arises we need to SALT! We're doing this to save the Eco-System, but 1 or 2 accidents could hurt someone and the auto fluids spilled causes just as big of an Eco problem.
- I would do something about the size of the areas. Although it is good PR to be able to tell the residents that we have workers in "your area", it is overwhelming and confusing to work in areas that are as large as the established ones we work with. Example: Have a Zone 1A and 1B. The worker does not leave 1A until it is completed, then he goes to 1B. Or if 2 workers are working Area 1, one worker stays in 1A only and the other in 1B. If a worker finishes his sub area he goes to help his coworker in that area. Also, get a jeep with a plow for alleys and tight areas. It is just too difficult to work a pick up in some spots which becomes very time consuming.
- Do 4 passes with 6-Wheeler (curb to curb). As the snow carries over the left side of the plow it creates a windrow. Have a pickup clean up behind the 4th pass with 6-Wheeler.
- Getting parked cars and trash cans off of the roads.
- No Shepherds Pie. The way decisions were made. Should listen to the people who have done this. A 20" snowfall is different than a 3" snowfall which is how this was gone about. Better allocation of equipment and personnel.
- Work on the downtown at an earlier time. When you knew the following day that Metra would be back on schedule.
- Plow curb to curb from the beginning. We still have streets where half the lane or more is impassible, such as the right turn lane at Westmore/Roosevelt going south and west. Make sure the tandem plowers plow properly and windrow properly. When tandem plowing it is hard to get to the curb but on the second pass on the

same street leave some snow in the middle and plow the curb. At a time such as this, the Police and CSO's are very busy and they should be enforcing the code where private contractors are not allowed to put snow in the street, as well as residents. There would be less cleanup time if plowed from curb to curb to curb in the beginning. **Good customer service starts with good communication from within.**

- We needed to not just open up the areas. We should have gone curb to curb immediately. Maybe tandem plow the areas. Snow Command should be mobile to check to see how areas are being cleaned up. Shifts should have set goals. Example: night shift making sure that commuter lots are cleared. 7:30 – 4:00 shift would have been more effective working on the night shift.