



STAFF REPORT

DATE: September 6, 2016

REGULAR

ITEM #: 17

MOTION

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Michael Bent, Building Official

Kristina Handt, City Administrator

AGENDA ITEM: Authorize Advertising for Building Inspector

BACKGROUND:

As previously discussed at budget workshops, the City is experiencing an increase in building activity and additional staffing was requested to cover the inspections.

ISSUE BEFORE COUNCIL:

Should the Council authorize staff to advertise for a building inspector?

PROPOSAL DETAILS/ANALYSIS:

Attached to this cover sheet is a more in depth analysis of the need for an additional combination building inspector prepared by the building official.

Also included in the packet is the job posting used last year that has been updated with new dates.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The cost of the new position for the remainder of 2016 is estimated at \$20,000 or less depending on start date and pay. The 2016 budget is projected to have a surplus of over \$550,000 due largely to the increase in building revenue.

OPTIONS:

- 1) Authorize staff to advertise for a new building inspector
- 2) Table decision until closer to 2017
- 3) Direct staff to secure a contracted building inspector
- 4) Maintain current level of staffing

RECOMMENDATION:

Motion to authorize staff to advertise for a building inspector



The City of Lake Elmo offers competitive pay and benefits in addition to professional development opportunities to all employees. The city's number one value statement is to foster an environment based on trust and ethics. These philosophies and practices help the City in recruiting and retaining exceptional employees.

Accepting Applications for the Position of:

BUILDING INSPECTOR

SALARY: \$26 - \$32 /hr

OPENING DATE: 9/8/2016

CLOSING DATE: 9/22/2016

POSITION TITLE: Building Inspector
DEPARTMENT: Department of Building Safety
ACCOUNTABLE TO: **Building Official**

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE:

This individual will perform all functions of the Department of Building Safety to assist and maintain compliance with the State Building Code and City of Lake Elmo Municipal Code. Delivering service, solutions, education, and efficiency while facilitating positive relationships with residents, contractors, and design professionals.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE POSITION

1. Perform plan reviews and building inspections on all types of building structures (commercial, industrial and residential) to ensure that they meet the MSBC and City of Lake Elmo Municipal Code.
2. Communicate with architects, engineers, contractors and property owners to interpret and clarify code requirements.
3. Maintains record of erosion control violations and coordinates the City's enforcement of erosion control requirements for new construction.
4. Verifies that site construction activity is in conformance to approved plans, coordinates City action to bring non-compliant sites into compliance.
5. Ensure complaints involving building codes, related ordinances and nuisance investigations, are m

managed in a timely manner. Initiate appropriate action regarding violations that are not corrected.

6. Keep abreast of innovations and developments in the construction industry and how changes in materials and construction practices relate to code requirements.
7. Responsible for keeping Building Official informed of issues and proactively working through for solutions. Recommends procedures and policies in cases not clearly covered by codes and ordinances.
8. Responsible for ensuring department reports are completed and accurate.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- Skills in mediation, complaint resolution and problem solving.
- Team player with the ability to collaborate and implement effective customer service.
- Strong initiative to improve processes and productivity.
- Ability to effectively use a computer and various software programs, including software for tracking building inspections and permitting activity.
- Ability to maintain a positive and effective working relationship with council, commissions, businesses, designers, contractors, residents and staff.
- Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.
- Thorough knowledge and understanding of the pertinent state and local codes and licensing requirements applicable to the City of Lake Elmo and the legal aspects of code administration.
- Ability to read and interpret plans, specifications, engineering and architectural project drawings, and electronic documents accurately and to compare them with construction in progress.
- Ability to enforce codes and ordinances firmly, tactfully and impartially and deal with difficult situations.
- Understanding and experience working with best management practices for construction activity.
- Develop and maintain effective working relationships with City departments & Authorities having jurisdiction.
- Ability to physically move about all areas of construction properties to carry out duties.
- Ability to manage multiple projects and meet deadlines working in a fast paced environment.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- State Certification as State Building Official
- 2 Year A.A.S degree in construction.
- Three years' experience in construction public or private sector.
- 2 years' experience in building inspections.
- Experience with Microsoft Products (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
- Valid MN Driver's License

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS

- Experience with inspections, property maintenance, sign permits and/or planning and zoning in Public Sector
- Certification from ICC in fire and or building inspections.

SUPERVISION RESPONSIBILITIES

N/A

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

Positions in this class typically require: sitting, feeling, manual dexterity, grasping, talking, and hearing, typing, and seeing. The individual may encounter unexpected and prolonged workdays and stress and pressures from dealing with emotional issues and conflicts. There is sustained exposure to computer keyboards and video screens. This position is light duty and may require the exertion of up to 20 pounds of force on occasion or a negligible amount of force frequently to lift, carry, push, pull or otherwise move objects. Work is performed in both office and field settings year round. Some of the employee's time is spent in field inspections associated with code enforcement and development cases. Sufficient mobility is necessary to navigate natural terrain and construction sites.

PLEASE APPLY BY **CLOSING DATE: 9/22/16**

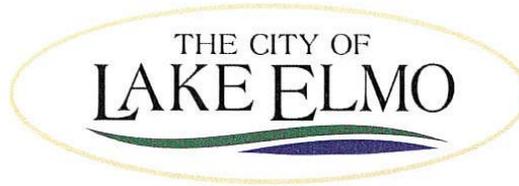
**SEND COVER LETTER, RESUME, LAKE ELMO APPLICATION AND REFERENCES TO:
CITY OF LAKE ELMO**

ATTN: Julie Johnson, CITY CLERK

3800 LAVERNE AVENUE NORTH, LAKE ELMO, MN 55042

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT **WWW.LAKEELMO.ORG** FOR ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION/APPLICATION OR CONTACT US AT 651.747.3900

CITY OF LAKE ELMO IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER



Lake Elmo Building Department

Our mission is to provide professional plan review, permitting and inspection of building construction projects to ensure a safe built environment for all those who live and work in the City of Lake Elmo.

Request for increase in staffing:

As presented in detail during the 2017 budget review process, the Lake Elmo Building Department is experiencing an increase in workload due to a variety of reasons. The workload for the department related to residential new construction is directly related to the real estate market, and the real estate market for new home construction in Lake Elmo is strong.

It is requested that the FTE combination building inspector position requested in the 2017 Building Department budget (effective 1/1/17) be moved forward, recruited and filled as soon as possible to meet current and forecasted future workload demands.

The alternative of using an external contracted resource was reviewed. The use of such a resource creates inconsistencies in inspections, workload and established relationships with our customer base. Utilizing a contract based inspector as a supplement to staff positions would only address a long term need with a short term solution. It is estimated that the lost revenue from utilizing a contract inspector to the City would be double the fully loaded cost to hire the proposed FTE.

Workload

The City of Lake Elmo Building Department has issued 139 new construction home permits from January 1, 2016 through August 17, 2016. There are currently 39 new construction home permits in for permit or awaiting development release for permit. When preparing the 2017 budget information in June, the building department estimated 202 new home build outs based on permit trends at that time. Based on the activity since that time, the building department is on pace to issue over 250 residential new construction permits in 2016.

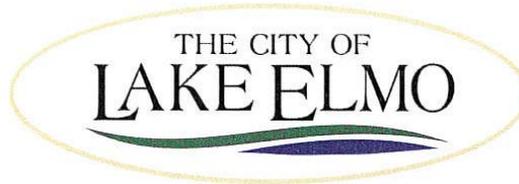
The City of Lake Elmo Building Department currently has several large scale commercial construction projects started.

The Northeast Metro Intermediate School District 916 Pankalo Elementary School project located at 8568 Eagle Point is a 78,000 sf public school project under construction.

The Arbor Glen Senior Living project permit has been issued and construction is beginning at 11020 39th Street North.

The Oak-Land Junior High School addition and remodel at 820 Manning Avenue is scheduled for completion by the time school starts up.

The Health Partners Specialty Dental Clinic build-out located at 8515 Eagle Point Boulevard is scheduled for completion in October.



The new construction value of these commercial projects permitted from January 1, 2016 through August 17, 2016 is \$84,335,275.11; generating permit revenue of \$198,415.90 and plan review revenue of \$45,136.43. Included in these numbers was unbudgeted revenue of \$189,481.33 in permit revenue and \$45,136.43 in plan review fees due to the building official having certifications and delegation authority with the State of Minnesota allowing for the work to be done in-house rather than by the State Department of Labor and Industry Construction Codes and Licensing Division inspector.

The number of inspections associated with large scale commercial projects varies according to the scope and type of the project. A project similar to the Pankalo school project will command several hundred inspections during the course of the project while a project such as the Arbor Glen Senior Living project will require between 800 and 1,000. Commercial inspections tend to differ from residential inspections; the time required to perform a commercial inspection is generally longer than a similar type of inspection on a residential project.

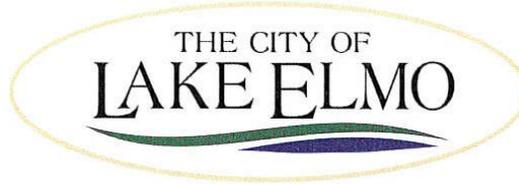
Performance Standards/Expectations

A combination building inspector performance standard for average number of field inspection is 2,000 +/- inspection annually. This performance matrix allows time in a daily schedule for plan review and other duties associated with the position. A working Building Official can typically perform 1,200 to 1,500 inspections annually. The reduced number of field inspections is due to management and supervisory duties, administering the code enforcement program, and concentrating the field inspection workload on the commercial projects.

The current staff has been able to complete an increased number of inspections due to the building inspector on average working 10 hours of overtime every week as well as the Building Official working an average of 55 hours per work. However, there is no plan in place for backing up the staff for vacations and there is concern over burning out the existing resources.

The current staffing of the Lake Elmo Building Department is set at one Building Official and one combination building inspector for 2016 who can perform 3,500 to 4,000 inspections working an average of 50 hours per week each. The building department recommendation for the 2017 budget includes the addition of one FTE combination building inspector effective 1/1/17 to meet the current and future needs projected.

The department conducted 3,670 inspections from January 1, 2016 through July and it is anticipated that over 8,000 inspections will be requested and completed by December 31, 2016 based on the current trend of scheduled inspections and anticipated workload of the commercial projects listed above.



The Lake Elmo Building Department conducts plan review and field inspection for all permitted construction projects in the city. The building department staff also responds to and administers property maintenance complaints, works with developers, contractors and residents in a wide range of capacities from plan review to guidance and local ordinance interpretation. On average, 2,000 field inspections per year accounts for approximately 6 work hours per work day. One hour per day on average should be dedicated to field inspection follow up work, recording inspections, follow up correspondence with builders, etc. Two hours per day on average should be allocated to plan review duties.

The Lake Elmo Building Department has set the following performance standards for duties assigned as primary responsibilities:

Residential Plan Review, New Construction:	2 weeks from submittal
Residential Plan Review, Remodel or Alteration:	1 week from submittal
Commercial Plan Review, New Construction:	3 weeks from submittal
Commercial Plan Review: Addition/Alteration:	1 week from submittal

Completing Inspection requests: The requests for inspections is currently set at 24 hour notice. The inspection schedule is often filled as needed and many inspection requests are accommodated either next day or same day as times are available.

Budget Impact

The 2016 Building Department Budget is set at \$260,765.91

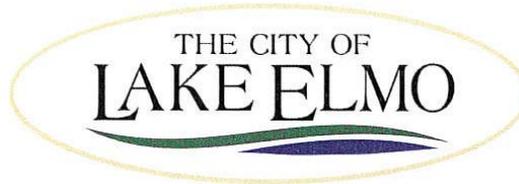
The budget projections through December 31, 2016 project a total expense of \$212,972.31.

Budget revenue projected from the Building Department for 2016 was set at \$873,629.00.

Budget revenue was revised and projected at June 30, 2016 from the Building Department for 2016 to be \$1,104,600.75.

The actual Building Department revenue is currently projected to exceed the original 2016 budget projections as well as the revised projection made in June 2016 and can be seen in the table below.

There will be no negative impact to the 2016 budget as the actual Building Department revenue far exceeds projections. It is anticipated that the cost for filling the position the remaining of 2016 is approximately \$20,000.00.



		Projected (6/30/16)	Projected (8/17/16)
	2016	2016	2016
	Budget	Actuals	Actuals
Revenue	\$873,629	\$1,104,601	\$1,500,000
Expense	\$260,766	\$226,930	\$226,930
Net	\$612,863	\$877,671	\$1,273,070

Staffing Request

Due to the current new construction demand, it is requested the FTE combination building inspector position requested in the 2017 Building Department budget be recruited and filled as soon as possible to meet current and forecasted future workload demands.

The current trends show the new construction market to be very strong and expectations are that the workload levels for the Building Department support this new position for a minimum of 5 years out based on the projected average new home build outs.