

Executive Director's Report October 24, 2019

It's been a ridiculously busy month for myself and the agency as a whole. The bus accident on October 16th is obviously first on the mind. It's very unfortunate that individuals were injured and that there was significant property damage. I'm glad that no one was killed, which frankly could have been the case. We are working right now with our insurance (ICAP and IMWCA) to make sure that those with injuries and with damages are taken care of. Our driver in the incident was cited for crossing the center line, and I find it hard to imagine that liability wouldn't rest with us.

I did receive an anonymous letter early in the month with some serious allegations against a member of staff. You will see probably in next month's financials some expenses related to me communicating with legal counsel in terms of how to handle those allegations. In the end advice of counsel was to interview all staff, and I did that. In the end, those interviews lead me to the conclusion that we have areas to improve in, clearly, but that the serious allegations did not have merit as far as I could tell.

Our role in the flood recovery effort is becoming more clear, and intense. Alexis has been doing an amazing job juggling all of her normal duties and being the primary person dealing with buyouts, plans for new housing, EDA grants, USDA programs, etc. We are beyond the point where we need another person in planning to help with the increased work load from the flood. Alexis has put together a draft job description and we hope to advertise that soon, and she did some scouting of prospects at the Iowa planning conference. I am requesting that EDA fund 85-90% of this new position.

Inspections has been another area where having good people in place is both a blessing and a curse. Matthew and Larry have done a great job getting through backlog and pushing forward with projects (both building inspections and good old fashioned CDBG/IFA/FHLB). But with that success means other communities are interested. Matthew and I have attended a number of council meetings, and both Missouri Valley and Harlan are at various stages of moving forward with a rental code. Sidney and Malvern have also had us at meetings. Atlantic has contracted with us for dangerous building inspections. As mentioned at the last board meeting, Larry is re-retiring at the end of the year, and I hope to advertise for that position tomorrow or early next week. We are also in the middle of the interview process for the new grants specialist. This position has become necessary because staff who are currently tracking inspections and other projects will be doing additional work with buy-outs, and we simply have more work going on. Obviously, we are going to be cramped, and do not be surprised if our board meetings get moved off site as the board room is prime real estate right now for additional office space.

The procurement of new tablets and data service was intense. As of writing this I don't know what you as a board have decided, but will by the time of reading this. The competition in the cellphone/data realm is cut throat. One good thing is that any way we slice it we will be saving significantly over our current program with Routematch. To that I can only say that once you get heavily invested in a program, you really want to make that work, and I think we've clearly found that it won't, and I'm excited about replacing it.

Early this month we celebrated the paying off of the loan for the Ann Wickman Child Development Center here in Atlantic. That was a very proud moment for me because it was one of the early projects I worked on as staff, and I was very glad to represent SWIPCO at the event and we were recognized for that work.