



MEMORANDUM

Date: March 9, 2026
To: Finance & Personnel Committee
 Members of City Council
From: Jamie Rott, Water Superintendent
Re: **Committee Report: Hiring Request**

On October 8, 2024, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a final rule requiring drinking water systems nationwide to replace lead service lines within 10 years, beginning in 2027. The Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI) also mandates increased public notification, expanded lead sampling and sampling protocols, and increased reporting and documentation. To comply with the LCRI and complete replacement of all lead service lines within the City of Rockford, the City must replace approximately 3,000 services annually starting in 2027.

The City of Rockford has been actively and progressively expanding its lead service line replacement program. In 2025, the City replaced 886 lead service lines (353 funded through WRIA and Operating Funds, and 533 funded through IEPA Loan/Grant funds). In 2026, the City secured funding to replace approximately 1,200 lead service lines, with efforts underway to obtain additional funding to replace approximately 1,000 more services. With this significant increase in annual replacements to meet federal requirements, additional staffing resources—along with expanded consulting support—will be necessary to effectively implement and manage the program.

The Water Division proposes adding the following positions.

Position	No. Requested	New Personnel	Vehicle	Total
Project Manager	2	\$ 150,550.00	\$64,000.00	\$365,100.00
Water Utility Technician	1	\$ 93,000.00	\$55,000.00	\$148,000.00
			Total Cost=	\$513,100.00

The Project Manager’s primary responsibility will be to oversee each lead service line replacement from initiation through completion. This includes reporting and documenting replacements across all required regulatory platforms; preparing customer communications and coordinating directly with property owners; overseeing consultants and contractors; and ensuring full compliance with all applicable regulatory requirements related to lead service line replacements. The Water Utility Technician’s primary responsibility will be to locate City-owned storm sewer and water assets in response to JULIE locate requests. Over the past two years, JULIE notifications have increased significantly—from approximately 22,500 tickets annually to 36,800 tickets per year. This increase is likely due to expanded fiber installations, the lead service line replacement program, and a general rise in construction activity.

The sustainability of these positions should prove itself over a minimum of the next ten years, consistent with the requirements of the LCRI and implementation of the Water Division's planned CIP. After that time, if the Water Division's projects and mandated regulatory requirements unexpectedly significantly decreases in size, the position(s) can be reevaluated as eventual retirement or other natural turnover occurs.

The fully burdened annual costs of these positions are estimated at *\$394,100.00* and would be funded by the Water Division Operating Fund. The additional cost associated with these positions will be covered by current water fund revenue. No rate increase is required.

The Public Works Department recommends authorizing the attached Committee Report for the hiring request of two Project Managers and one Water Utility Technician. Thank you.

COMMITTEE REPORT

TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROCKFORD:

Council Members:

The Committee on Finance and Personnel having received a request hereby begs leave to report recommending **approval** of the Hiring Request for Public Works Water Division for two (2) Project Managers and one (1) Water Utility Technician in the estimated annual amount of \$394,100.00. The estimated total cost, including vehicles, is \$513,100.00. The funding source is the Water Fund Operating Budget. The Legal Director shall prepare the appropriate ordinance.

Kevin Frost (Chair)

Jonathan Logemann (Vice chair)

Frank Beach

Dawn Granath

Chad Tuneberg

Committee Action Taken:

Frost:	Ayes:___	Nays:___	Absent:___
Logemann:	Ayes:___	Nays:___	Absent:___
Beach:	Ayes:___	Nays:___	Absent:___
Granath:	Ayes:___	Nays:___	Absent:___
Tuneberg:	Ayes:___	Nays:___	Absent:___