

Mayor's Message

October 2012

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Dear Resident,

You may have noticed that the City of Mount Vernon has a brand new website! Along with the new site, there will be a new format for this newsletter, as well as some initial set up procedures that must take place to make this happen.

We will soon be moving your email address over to the "list serve" for the Mayor's Newsletter on our new site, which will automatically generate an email asking you to confirm your subscription. If you do not respond to that email you will not receive notifications that the newsletter has been posted on the City's website. If you do respond, you will have the opportunity to sign up for other notifications as well.

So please look for a message from listserv@civicplus.com with the following subject line: **"Information on Your Subscriptions (Confirmation Needed)"**

If you have any problems, please contact my office at (360) 336-6211 or mvmayor@mountvernonwa.gov

Budget



You may recall a quick synopsis of the Budget Process in our July newsletter - now that we are mid-way through this process... it warrants an update!

The preliminary budget was delivered to Council last week, and our first committee meeting to discuss the budget is this Wednesday, October 24 at 6pm. I encourage all interested parties to attend this public meeting. The budget situation is still difficult as we are challenged with unfunded mandates and increasing costs with no new revenue. The good news is that revenue is flat, and not declining. The bad news (in part) is that we have lost State shared revenue of \$138,000, we have increasing costs for public defense totaling \$100,000 in addition to increase in jail expenses and labor costs.

Staff and I have working diligently to address the budget shortfall with some creative ideas. For instance, a few employees with extra talents are willing to cross over to other departments on an 'as needed' basis to assist. Help may come to our Information Services Department from a talented Library employee, etc. We have identified at least one position that will be laid off in 2013.

This budget cycle is hard and grueling work and must be accomplished with great thoughtfulness to our community. The preliminary operating budget is \$22.5 million, 0.1% less (or \$15,000) less than 2012. The full budget (including our utility operations and capital funding) is \$47.3 million, 0.5% higher (or \$239,000) more than 2012.

If you want to review the 2012 budget document online, click [here](#).

Consider attending a Mayors Coffee in the near future and join the budget discussion!

New Police Officer

We welcome Officer Brandon Liukko to the Mount Vernon Police Department! Brandon graduated on Wednesday, October 17 from the Basic Law Enforcement Academy in Burien, WA. The Academy is a 19 week Basic Law Enforcement Training for the State of Washington.

Brandon will now enter a 12 week (minimum) FTO Field Training Officer phase - after successful completion of FTO, he will be released to work solo. Officer Paul Shaddy has been assigned as the training officer.

I enjoyed the ceremony, especially comments given by Susan Rahr, Executive Director of the WA State Criminal Justice Training Commission. She stated that law enforcement officers were guardians - peace officers who have taken an oath to uphold the laws of our Country.

We welcome Officer Liukko to the City of Mount Vernon!



From left to right: Interim Chief Jerry Dodd, Officer Brandon Liukko & Lt. Greg Booth

Railroad Crossing Update



Public Works Director Esco Bell continues his relentless work to ensure improvement at our railroad crossings at College Way and Kincaid Street. The Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission is involved, and issued a 'railroad crossing defect notice' to BNSF for unacceptable crossings at College Way and Kincaid Street. This notice was given in August 2012. BNSF is required to respond to the Commission with a plan for acceptable corrective action. State inspectors are involved, and Mr. Bell is keeping informed of the process.

Winter Driving



As we slide into Fall, the City strongly encourages all drivers to be prepared for winter driving and slippery roads. Our Street Department is constantly monitoring the weather conditions, and responding as promptly as possible icy roadways. Take time to check wipers on your vehicle, tire tread, and heating system.

Drivers need to be prepared to help us keep the traffic flowing!

- Reduce your speed and increase your following distance.
- Use caution on bridges, overpasses, ramps, curves, and hills that tend to get icy first.
- Stay informed about weather and road conditions to help make good decisions.
- Plan ahead and allowing extra time to reach destinations.
- TALK WITH YOUR TEENAGE DRIVERS - and discuss safe winter driving habits.
- Prepare and carry an emergency car kit.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT WINTER DRIVING - Click [here](#) for the Washington State Department of Transportation website.