



CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

REPORT TO MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

Date: March 20, 2024
To: Mayor and City Council
From: Earle M. Chesley, P.E., General Services Director
Subject: 2023/2024 Winter Operations Staff Stipend Outcomes

Recommendation:

Accept this report for information.

Background:

After conducting a public hearing at the December 11, 2023, City Council meeting and having received a Report to Mayor and City Council dated October 26, 2023, City Council raised and appropriated funds to:

1. Provide a weekly stipend of three hundred dollars paid weekly to City full-time staff available and related to winter operations for city streets, sidewalks, and airport, and
2. Provide a weekly stipend of one hundred fifty dollars paid weekly to staff supporting the performance of winter operations (wingers).

The weekly stipend was paid for the winter season from December 3, 2023, through March 30, 2024.

At that time, General Services had experienced a critical staffing reduction levels due to employee resignations over the previous six-months. (This staffing reduction is in addition to typical employee staffing level attrition due to retirement.) The Department had lost twelve employees through resignation, and the attrition rate due to resignations was more than three-fold over historical rates. Of critical concern was three-quarters of these vacant positions were needed to perform winter operations. Within the Department's Highway and Utilities Division, there were eleven vacant full-time positions that required a Commercial Driver's License (CDL).

The shortfall of staffing for winter operations was not unique to Concord. Other communities and the New Hampshire Department of Transportation experienced this chronic problem to meet winter operation staffing demands. In an attempt to mitigate the shortfall, the NH Department of Transportation provided \$5,000 for a second year.

Discussion:

Implementing the winter operations staff stipend was successful in retaining the Department's staffing level associated with winter operations and significantly reduced staff erosion through resignation. For the period, the General Services Department had one supervisory staff with a CDL resign.

Implementing the winter operation staff stipend was not successful in attracting new employees with CDL to fill vacant positions.

To meet this demand, the Department was successful in recruiting twelve new staffers to the Department who have committed to secure their CDL licenses after receiving training provided by the City. To date four have obtained their CDL licenses and the other eight are in the process of training and obtaining their CDL license. For employees enrolled in 'Entry Level Driver Training', the City will pay program payments:

1. For Class A CDL, up to \$10,000, and
2. For Class B CDL, up to \$ 6,000, and
3. For an upgrade from Class B CDL to Class A, up to \$6,000.

Cc Brian LeBrun, Deputy City Manager/Finance
Jennifer Johnston, Director of Human Resources and Labor Relations