

# CITY OF WARRENVILLE

## MEMO

TO: Mayor, City Council, and City Administrator Coakley  
FROM: Ronald Mentzer, Director of Community and Economic Development<sup>RM</sup>  
SUBJECT: Building Inspection and Code Enforcement Staffing  
DATE: September 9, 2020

This memo has been prepared to (i) provide a status report on the City's effort to fill the additional full-time Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer position authorized in conjunction with the approval of the FY 2021 budget and (ii) outline staff's recommendations for addressing the City's ongoing building inspection and code enforcement needs.

### **Background**

The new Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer position was recommended by staff earlier this year in an effort to ensure the Community Development Department could respond to property maintenance code complaints and inspect the unprecedented level of construction occurring in the City in an efficient and cost effective manner and proactively prepare for the anticipated retirement of the City's existing, highly experienced, Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer. When the new position was last discussed with the City Council, the exact date of this retirement was not known but was anticipated sometime in the next two years. It is now known that this retirement will occur near the end of this calendar year.

While staff conducted nine interviews for the newly created position over the last five months, none of the interviewed candidates were found to have the combination of experience and personality necessary to satisfy the City's needs. Staff believes the following two factors are largely responsible for this outcome:

- ***Limited supply of qualified and experienced building inspectors.*** Based on the City's recent recruitment experience, there are very few qualified private sector professionals seeking municipal inspector type of work. In addition, the ongoing need for area municipalities to inspect the relatively large amount of construction activity occurring in the Chicago metropolitan area has limited the number of existing municipal inspectors seeking employment.
- ***Code enforcement responsibilities.*** Code enforcement is one of the more challenging and underappreciated jobs in municipal government. It is often an entry level job individuals are willing to accept to "get their foot in the door" with the goal of advancing into a more desirable and less confrontational building inspector position. Staff feels the City's inability to attract high quality, experienced individuals to the City's existing open position was, in part, due to the fact that a significant portion of the position's responsibilities involve property maintenance code enforcement. High quality, experienced, building inspectors are generally not attracted to positions that require a significant amount of property maintenance code enforcement.

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**Staff Recommendations**

1. Narrow the title and responsibilities of the unfilled Building Inspector/Code Enforcement officer position to focus primarily on building inspection responsibilities. Repost/advertise the revised position. The goal would be to attract and hire an experienced and qualified building inspector before the end of November so the new inspector could work with the City's existing inspector for at least one month before that individual retires. Under this scenario, the new employee would essentially replace the City's existing building inspector/code enforcement officer.
2. Create and recruit for a new part-time position to handle property maintenance code enforcement responsibilities "in-house" versus through a consulting vendor. Staff expects this position will be difficult to fill but feels it is worth the effort to "test the market" to see what, if any, potential candidates might be interested in such a position.
3. Continue to use part-time consulting services to address City Code enforcement needs until a part-time employee is hired to do so.
4. Reevaluate the City's building inspection and code enforcement staffing needs during the FY 2022 budget process based on the level of construction activity occurring in the City, the impact COVID 19 is having on the local economy and the City's budget, and future City Council decisions related to the potential implementation of a mandatory rental registration and inspection program.