

City and Borough of Juneau City & Borough Manager's Office

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TO: Mayor and Assembly

DATE: November 3, 2016

FROM: Rorie Watt, P.E., City Manager

RE: Better Community Communications

Developing a communications plan is an established Assembly goal. With that in mind, we've developed a Communications Cabinet (a subsection of the Leadership Team) that has been charged with developing a plan and implementing actions to improve communications with the community. While we think we are making some inroads, it is clear to us that unless we have a dedicated resource, it will always be an "other duty as assigned" instead of the primary focus in needs to be.

We will not be successful in properly communicating with the public about our programs, processes and decisions if we leave public and press communications as an "other duty as assigned." The modern world of rapid and diverse communication requires an appropriate response.

I've identified a full time position that can be carved into two pieces. Half of the FTE will remain allocated to its current use (Library Assistant) and the other half of the FTE will be reclassified to a Public Information Officer. The PIO will report to the Manager's Office and work in concert with the Communications Cabinet to assist in the development and implementation of a communications plan. Funding for the .5 FTE will come from the \$50,000 allocated in the FY17 budget for communications. Creation of this position is budget and FTE neutral.

I believe this is an important focus for us. We do not do as well as we should engaging the community and letting them know what the city does for them. The creation of a PIO will help us achieve that goal. On a practical level, devoting resources towards better and timely communication with the public will help small issues from unnecessarily escalating, will allow the Assembly to more efficiently pursue its goals and will help the Leadership Team be more responsive to the Assembly and the public.

I wanted to provide you with this information in case you had concerns about my direction. I think it is important to remain transparent about this type of staffing change.