

04-18-2023

**City Council Regular Meeting
Supplemental Packet**

Meeting Date April 18, 2023

Council Action Memo

City of Afton
3033 St. Croix Trl, P.O. Box 219
Afton, MN 55001

To: Mayor Palmquist and City Council Members
From: Ron Moorse, City Administrator
Date: April 18, 2023
Re: Storm Damage Cleanup - **Supplemental**

Cleanup Costs for the City Right-of-Ways

The heavy, wet snow that fell on Friday night March 31 and on Saturday morning April 1 damaged trees and electrical poles and lines, resulting in power outages, as well as tree limbs blocking major roads. Extensive clean-up of fallen limbs and brush in the city right-of-way will be needed. Ben with Tri County has estimated the cost to clean up the City right-of-ways will be about \$100,000. As indicated below, it is expected that state emergency funding assistance will fund 75% of this cost, leaving \$25,000 for the City to fund. The City has a budget for brush clearing, tree trimming and mowing in the City's street right-of-ways. This budget should be sufficient to fund the estimated \$25,000 of City costs for the tree debris cleanup.

County-Wide Cleanup Cost Estimates Expected to Meet the Threshold for State Emergency Funding Assistance

Doug Berglund, Washington County Emergency Preparedness Director, has indicated that, based on cost estimates for the storm damage cleanup he has received, he expects the County to meet the cost threshold required for the state to reimburse 75% of the costs incurred by cities and other local jurisdictions for the storm cleanup.

No-Cost Tree Limb Disposal Site for Residents

Washington County will open a temporary tree debris drop-off site for *RESIDENT USE ONLY* at the Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields at Belwin Conservancy. Washington County residents are invited to bring their tree debris from the ice/snow storm event that occurred on April 1, to the temporary site located at Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields at Belwin Conservancy, 15601 Hudson Rd. N., Lakeland, MN 55043. There is no fee for residents to drop storm debris at this site. The hours of operations for the site are:

Sat 8am – 2pm

Sun 8am – 2pm

Wed 8am – 2pm

Fri 8am – 2pm

The temporary tree debris management site will be open and available until May 31, 2023, with the exception that **the site will not be open on Saturday May 20**. Because the site at Belwin is for **residents only**, all tree debris removal by the cities and by private tree contractors must be directed elsewhere. This is mostly due to debris volume control and site limitations.

Assistance for Private Property Owners

Staff has been receiving numerous calls from residents with questions regarding a no-cost tree limb disposal site and whether the City plans to pick up limbs if set out at the curb by private property owners. As indicated above, there is now a no-cost tree debris disposal site available to residents.

The magnitude of the damage and necessary cleanup on private property is not clear, but it is expected that the magnitude would be substantially greater than the clean-up of the City right-of-ways. Because the City does not

have a public works maintenance staff, any assistance provided by the City to private property owners would need to be done through private tree service contractors, which would be a substantial additional expense to the City. The cost would be expected to substantially exceed the cost to clean up the City right-of-ways. 75% of the costs would be eligible for state emergency funding assistance, with the City paying the remaining 25% of the costs. In addition, the cleanup would be well-beyond the capacity of Tri County, which would require the City to hire additional tree service contractors.

At its April 17 work session, the Council discussed that the cost and magnitude of an effort to pick up tree debris from private properties is beyond what the City should take on. Also, the no-cost and conveniently located temporary tree debris site will be helpful to residents who are cleaning up their own tree debris.

Council Action Requested

- **Motion to authorize Tri-County to clean up debris from damaged trees in the street right-of-ways that fell on the street and had to be moved to the shoulder, or fell in the street right-of-way, or that pose a hazard, at an estimated cost of \$100,000, and that staff provide on-going updates regarding the clean-up and the costs.**
- **Motion to provide direction regarding providing assistance to private property owners for the storm damage clean-up.**