




Memorandum

Memorandum No: 22-090

Date: August 5, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Commissioners

From: Greg Chavarria, City Manager 
Greg Chavarria (Aug 5, 2022 18:31 EDT)

Re: Public Works Administrative Building HVAC Issues

On August 3, 2022, a local media story discussed mold issues at the Public Works Administration Building located at 949 NW 38th Street, near the Fiveash Water Treatment Plant. The focus of the story was about a Public Works employee who identified mold concerns in the building going back to 2017. We want to provide the reassurance that the safety of our employees is paramount. This memo provides information regarding status of the building and remediation efforts taken to sustain a safe working environment.

The Administrative Building houses about 200 employees, including water and sewer field crews, lab personnel, the Public Works Utilities Division leadership team, and the call center. The City first became aware of issues in late 2017 and determined that mold was caused by excessive water intrusion due to moisture buildup from damaged skylights. In response, the Department initiated project (P12259) to replace the entire HVAC system, in an effort to control excessive moisture and prevent risk of mold growth. While the CIP project progressed, the department completed Limited Indoor Air Quality/Mold Assessment, testing numerous times most recently in June 2022.

The assessment reports identified appropriate remediation efforts, to include repairs to leaking skylights, cleaning of HVAC ducts and components, cleaning and/or replacement of ceiling tiles and drywall, and cleaning of carpets and other surfaces. At no time does an assessment identify any excessive risks to employees that continue to work in the building. Following receipt of each Assessment Report, the appropriate remediation measures have been completed, however staff recognizes that the building may continue to experience issues until the entire HVAC replacement is complete.

The HVAC Replacement project was initiated in 2018. Design was completed from February 2020 through January 2021, and a construction contract awarded in July 2021 at a cost of \$1,727,907. HVAC replacement includes replacement of the existing chillers, chilled water pumps, all associated pipe equipment and devices in chilled water yard; existing rooftop and indoor air handling units, associated ductwork, piping and

devices; existing concrete pad; plumbing, electrical and fire protection updates necessary to accommodate new rooftop and indoor air handling units.

Due to material availability and supply chain delays, beyond the City's control, work on the facility began in June 2022. All equipment has now arrived, with the exception of one roof unit which is expected by October 2022.

While work is underway, portions of the building are working with temporary HVAC units. The original schedule called for a phased replacement of system components over the next year to allow people to safely work in their offices with portable units being relocated as needed. Based on the need to accelerate work, staff is coordinating with the contractor to continue installation in the critical areas first, with the first phase expected to be completed in the next 3-4 weeks.

The contractor will be providing a comprehensive schedule to complete the entire project sooner than the contractual March 2023 deadline, incorporating different options such as increasing the labor force, working longer days and weekends. While these steps are being taken, staff will coordinate, as needed, to temporarily relocate employees.

The safety of our employees is of the utmost importance, and staff will continue to assess the risks to employee's health while balancing operational needs. Should the current situation change while work is ongoing, we will take appropriate action as needed and accommodate individual's needs to ensure their safety.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Omar Castellon, Assistant Director for Public Works at 954-828-5064.

c: Tarlesha W. Smith, Assistant City Manager
Anthony G. Fajardo, Assistant City Manager
Susan Grant, Assistant City Manager
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