



Mayor Joshua A. Garcia

Amie Chrzanowski, Acting General Superintendent

City of Holyoke

Department of Public Works

June 6, 2022

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The Honorable Joshua Garcia
City of Holyoke
536 Dwight Street
Holyoke, MA 01040

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**Holyoke City Clerk's
Holyoke, MA**

Dear Mayor Garcia:

The Board of Public Works respectfully requests the Mayor's Office to request the City Council to remove the midpoint salary range cap placed on the Director of Public Works position. The cap currently limits the salary offering to hires coming from outside existing City employment to \$102,000. Removing the cap would allow the Mayor to offer a salary up to the max of \$118,862 depending on the candidate's knowledge, skills, and previous experience.

The Board of Public Works also respectfully requests the Mayor's Office to request the City Council to amend the required level of experience to five (5) years of relevant upper-level administrative experience in public or private employment dealing with a public works program, or an Associate Degree and shall have had ten (10) years of relevant upper-level administrative experience in public or private employment dealing with a public works program.

The Board of Public Works notes that recent hirings of DPW Directors in nearby communities had a starting salary of \$118,000 or more. We also believe that a minimum of five years of upper-level administrative experience in public or private employment dealing with a public works program would attract qualified candidates with at least five years of experience working with the annual municipal cycles of budgeting, operations, regulatory compliance, and more.

The Board of Public Works believes that this request should be prioritized and expedited as an urgent matter. In the absence of a permanent experienced Director of Public Works, the City is placing at risk its financial resources, public safety, economic growth, and quality of life. It is difficult to quantify the value of the losses: financial, public safety, and more; but easy to see where they could come from.

This request is not meant to undermine the performance of the Acting General Superintendent. Amie Chrzanowski has done an outstanding job of keeping the department functioning. There is more that needs to be done which requires a permanent Director of Public Works with the technical, management, labor, financial, and public relations experience to ensure that Holyoke's DPW moves forward. The hiring of a DPW Director will introduce stability to the DPW workforce which has been admirably responding to a history of change. The Department of Public Works is the front line of defense in responding to many public safety and health threats.



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They are first responders along with police, fire, and other emergency boards. An experienced DPW leader will make sure they are respected as such.

The responsibilities of the Director of the Department of Public Works are complex. To be successful the Director will require the cooperation of other DPW staff, departments, officials, and the public. In addition to the management and technical experience the City is seeking in a Director of Public works, this individual needs to exhibit the skills to bring all parties together.

In the absence of a permanent DPW Director the Board of Public Works is concerned the City may lose opportunities to seek maximum funding from the Build Back Better Act, other Federal Highway programs, the Commonwealth's Transportation Improvement Program, State Revolving Fund, Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program, Municipal Small Bridge Program, and more.

Holyoke's DPW Director, in coordination with the City Engineer, Board of Public Works, and the Mayor's office must participate or be informed in the discussions with regulatory agencies regarding compliance with existing permits and negotiations of new permit requirements. These permits include NPDES wastewater discharge permit, NPDES MS4 permit, and more. City Engineer Robert Peirent has been admirably fulfilling this duty and we anticipate that the new City Engineer Kris Baker will do the same. However, these responsibilities are beyond the capacity of one person. The hiring of a professional DPW Director will make sure Holyoke has the professional and experienced leadership team to represent the interests of taxpayers and ratepayers in negotiating new permit requirements and questions about existing permit compliance.

We believe that if the Mayor and City Council support and approve these requested changes, the City of Holyoke will attract and identify the candidate needed to lead our DPW. The Board of Public Works is prepared to offer you any support you need to advance this issue with the City Council and Holyoke's taxpayers and ratepayers. Please let us know how we can help.

Sincerely,

Quinn Lonczak, Chair

Mary L. Monahan, Member

Jose Garcia, Member