

## **Valparaiso to Merge Public Works and Utilities**

The City of Valparaiso will merge its Public Works and Utilities departments, enhancing efficiencies and maximizing service, announced Valparaiso Mayor Matt Murphy. Steve Poulos has been named Director of the newly consolidated Public Works and Utilities Department, as of Nov 1, 2020.

The merger was a strategic initiative first introduced in Murphy's initial month as mayor. "After thoughtful analysis, it became clear that our community will benefit from the shared resources, making this consolidation an upgrade in efficiency and service," said Murphy. "Further, we have the utmost confidence in Steve Poulos' expertise in managing the new, unified department," said Murphy. The two departments are currently housed on the same campus, which opened in 2014.

Numerous jurisdictions in Indiana and across the country have realized opportunities and service enhancements by consolidating public works and water/wastewater utility departments. In fact, the City of Valparaiso has already experienced success in merging major departments: In 2005, Valparaiso's water and wastewater utilities merged under the leadership of a single utilities director and board of directors. At that time, efficiencies grew, and personnel was consolidated through attrition, leading to the current utility, which is fiscally strong, environmentally sound and known as a leader throughout Indiana.

The new Public Works & Utilities Department will be responsible for providing and maintaining essential resources for the City of Valparaiso, providing the highest quality service. The new Department will include separate divisions for drinking water and wastewater treatment; sewer, storm and water distribution; meter services; finance; customer service; fleet maintenance; streets and solid waste; trash and recycling; and leaf/yard waste collection.

The new Executive Director Steve Poulos has served as Valparaiso's Utilities Director since 2012. He joined the city in 1994 as Laboratory Director for the Wastewater Treatment Plant, was named Utility Manager for the Wastewater Utility in 2002, and then Assistant Utilities Director in 2009. Poulos has made many contributions to the department through the years, including facilitating strategic plans, addressing aging infrastructure needs, and implementing work management systems for the Utilities, significantly boosting efficiency. He led the way in optimization efforts that have saved rate payers more than \$2 million in operating costs and led multi-million-dollar expansion projects which have substantially increased service capacities and quality.

The consolidation of efforts for the Public Works and Utilities Department will be a seamless transition for residents and all services will remain accessible using the same phone numbers and online at Valpo.us. As appointed by the Mayor, the Board of Public Works and Safety, and the Valparaiso City Utilities Board of Directors will remain as the respective oversight boards through the integration process.

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### **Our City...Our Values**

Honestly Accountable Surprisingly Responsive Boldly Proactive Creatively Frugal Respectfully Compassionate

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