

# FY-2024 – 3rd Quarter Report

Public Works Division/Shannon Stone

**Public Works currently includes the following areas/departments:**

**Public Works Operations** – Administration, Automotive/Fleet Management, Facilities, Wells/Septic & Plumbing, Utilities, Custodial, Groundskeeping/Parks

**Community Development Area** – Engineering, Zoning, GIS/Planning, Tribal Transportation, Indian Preference

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## Introduction Note:

In March 2024, the Division of Public Works management team went through a TOPS facilitated Strategic Planning process. During the process we established five strategic directions we wanted to move in for the future. These are outlined at the end of this report. Each strategic direction has been assigned to a team to further develop and plan. The teams have begun to layout their action plans for the FY25 initiatives. We will continue reporting on the current goals until the first fiscal quarter FY25. The new strategic directions can be seen at the end of this report.

## Outcome/Goal # 1

Develop operational workforce plans within each department and area of Public Works. The plans will address critical issues including staffing requirements, employee retention and development, and succession planning.

Retention of existing employees and recruitment of new employees has been a challenge for DPW leadership, especially the positions of custodians and groundskeepers. Several managers and essential positions are becoming critical as they approach retirement in most of the Public Works departments. Additional tools will become available with the development of Global Human Resources (GHR) over the next 1 to 5 years.

## MEASUREMENT:

1. Skill and knowledge requirements identified for each position.
2. Position Descriptions are current, identifying competencies and scope of the position.
3. Career paths are identified and communicated to the employees.
4. Training is identified for position development and advancement in three areas:
  - i. Mandatory Training required by position, policy, or law.
  - ii. Continuing Education for employees to stay current in their area of expertise.
  - iii. Developmental Training including education and developmental tasks.

5. Training programs are provided that include identifying the competencies required for each position and a mechanism to evaluate progress of employees learning them.
6. Succession planning is in place identifying pools of interested employees in the event a strategic or essential position is vacated. Succession Planning will provide opportunities to potential candidates to gain knowledge and skills transfer from experienced employees to prepare them advancement into these positions.
7. Supervisors are engaged with employees through recognition and retention planning.
8. Staffing Plans are developed to identify staff levels and staff level requirements.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS RELATED TO THE OUTCOME/GOAL:

In the third quarter, Public Works has identified a plan for the Utilities department that should allow for the current department manager to stay on while mentoring the next manager through their qualifications as wastewater treatment plant operator. This license is required to keep the plant operational under the Oneida Nation's control.

Facilities is also undergoing significant change. Grace Koehler is in the process of transitioning into the Custodial Manager position. Grace has several years of supervisory experience within the Nation. She is very detail oriented and highly organized. Grace has assisted Facilities and Custodial departments with their administration since she returned to Public Works last year as the DPW Executive Assistant. This key move will enable the Assistant Custodial Manager, Ron Vanschyndel to provide more focus on developing employees and the Nation's waste management program.

During the next two quarters DPW will be looking at the key position descriptions to identify development needs throughout the division. For example, as we look to incorporate more renewable energy initiatives, we will need to train employees on the maintenance and care of the equipment such as solar panels and battery systems.

Public Works had a key loss at the end of the quarter with the death of our newly hired Safety Coordinator, Rob Gardner. Rob was involved in a fatal motorcycle accident on June 26<sup>th</sup>. His sister Dianna shared this was the first place Rob felt like he fit in. Oneida welcomed him like family, and he shared that experience with his family and friends in Virginia. Dianna said this brought great comfort to the family and Rob's mother. Rob was doing well to develop the trust and camaraderie with his coworkers after just six weeks of employment.

EXPECTATIONS/FUTURE PLANS REGARDING THE OUTCOME/GOAL:

- Continue working with HR to learn and utilize software applications to develop employees.
  - Rewrite position descriptions. In each area there are positions that are changing due to technology and the labor market. We also have under skilled staff that were retained from passed reorganizations but were not retrained to be optimized for their current positions. As a result, their position descriptions were also scaled back but do not meet the needs of the organization. These need to be corrected (Ongoing).
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## Outcome/Goal # 2

Create efficiencies, optimize the use of limited resources, enhance capabilities, and improve Customer Service by evaluating current processes. The focus is on utilizing technology, increasing collaboration, and creating new streamlined process flows to achieve this goal.

### MEASUREMENT:

1. Evaluate DPW processes to streamline them for efficiencies.
  - a. Develop and communicate an online Land use review process that can be used by all reviewers and create the various reports needed by Land Management, Development, Housing and the Land Commission. (in progress)
  - b. Evaluate technology and software to reduce technology deficit. (in progress)
  - c. Integrate DPW systems into the main Enterprise Resource Processes (ERP). (To be evaluated)
2. Expand the access and use of GIS data.
  - a. Identify the long-term staffing needs of this area based on what data needs to be updated and maintained.
  - b. Utilize GIS to create the layers of information that will be useful to the varied users of the system. (ongoing)
3. Identify and incorporate other technologies.
  - a. Incorporation of data intelligence from services such as Pacer.ai to assist with strategic planning of infrastructure and business.
  - b. Modernize water utility technologies.
4. GPS systems installed in Oneida Nation vehicles.
  - a. Automotive department is installing GPS on vehicles that support the technology to help maintain accurate vehicle inventories, provide data for maintaining vehicles, and creating efficient routes to reduce gas consumption and carbon emissions. (ongoing)
5. Enhance communication.
  - a. Find opportunities to reach out to the Oneida community.
  - b. Develop informative packets for services to the community.
  - c. Provide opportunities for the community to give feedback to DPW.
  - d. Work to build internal cooperation and transparency to the organization.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS RELATED TO THE OUTCOME/GOAL:

Public Works is continuing to work with Purchasing Department. During the quarter, we supported a change in the Vehicle Driver Certification and Fleet Management law to remove purchasing requirements from our Automotive department and transfer those responsibilities to the Purchasing Department. This minor change will take some time to implement as we map out the complex purchasing process and the roles each area will have.

The Automotive department is also looking at modernizing its software for Fleet Management. This will likely be a FY26 request. The software we are looking for would use GPS technology to track mileage

which would tie directly to customer service and maintenance. The software would be able to help manage fleet size and age. By retiring vehicles at an optimal age, the Nation should be able to trade vehicles in with a significant trade-in value and minimize maintenance costs due to aging. This should also impact safety and employee morale.

Another area of improvement Public Works has been participating in is the Land Use Review process. This process requires the participation of the Division of Public Works, the Law Office, and the Environmental, Health, Safety, Land & Agriculture Division. It feels like we are nearing the end of this process and may be substantially complete by the end of the fourth quarter.

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### Outcome/Goal # 3

Energy Management is another area we are working on. We are working to create a long-range vision and plan for the Nation's energy management.

#### MEASUREMENT:

1. Complete a review of past plans and accomplishments.
2. Update the most recent plan to current.
3. Open discussions on seven generation energy plan.
4. Develop plan and timeline.

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS RELATED TO THE OUTCOME/GOAL:

The Energy Team has gone through the process of strategic planning. We have identified our strategic directions.

#### EXPECTATIONS/FUTURE PLANS REGARDING THE OUTCOME/GOAL:

Next will be the planning for initiatives. In the next couple years, we expect to build the Health Center microgrid and incorporate electric vehicles and vehicles that use alternative fuels in the Nation's fleet. We will also work with programs such as Focus on Energy to assist tribal members to have energy options.

## **2025-2030 Division of Public Works Strategic Plan**

The DPW 2025 – 2030 Strategic Plan was developed in March of 2024. Work for this plan will begin in the fourth quarter of FY2024 (July – September). The plan consists of five Strategic Directions (broad goals) that are moved forward by executing accomplishments planned out annually. Listed below you will see each strategic direction, a general summary of what it entails, and the success indicators and the first-year accomplishments pertaining to the Strategic Direction.

### **STRATEGIC DIRECTION #1: LOBBYING FOR RESTRUCTURING SYSTEMS TO EMPOWER END-USERS**

**Summary:** The Oneida Nation's systems, built on a lack of trust, are taxing overall productivity of the Division and organization. The Division will lobby for change to empower end-users to do their jobs quickly and efficiently.

**Success Indicators:** Processes will be streamlined as non-value-added processes or components are eliminated, a sense of partnership will prevail with the rest of the organization, and end-users will be trusted within the processes they are responsible for.

**First-Year Accomplishments:** Communicate the DPW Strategic Plan to all teams, “Clean your own kitchen” (meaning get your own work correct first), analyze current processes, document specific examples of why change is needed).

## **STRATEGIC DIRECTION #2: UPDATING & EXPANDING TECHNOLOGY**

**Summary:** The organization’s technology solutions are both underutilized and outdated. DPW will implement new solutions to unify the work in the Division and embrace new solutions for the whole organization (HR, Finance, etc.)

**Success Indicators:** Technology will be current, systems will be connected/ data shared, technology will align with functional need, and DPW will hire or a DTS resource will be assigned to DPW to assist with technology needs.

**First-Year Accomplishments:** Validate current software use and needs, prioritize software needs and share with DTS, schedule collaboration with DTS, update software/tech per schedule.

### **STRATEGIC DIRECTION #3: ANALYZING, ENGAGING, AND COMMUNICATING DIVISION BRAND IDENTITY**

DPW, internally and externally with other business units, seeks better communication, clarification of purpose and mutual understanding of brand and identity.

**Success Indicators:** Establish a clear understanding (internally and externally) of DPW functions, PR person in place, and improved relationships with areas in the organization.

**First-Year Accomplishments:** Inventory and communicate DPW Services, faster completion of services, have a PR person standardizing area information, and decrease negative feedback and improve positive feedback.

### **STRATEGIC DIRECTION #4: ESTABLISHING A WORKFORCE PLAN AND DEVELOPING EMPLOYEES**

The Division needs a better developed workforce, including leadership skills, equipment training, and apprenticeships.

**Success Indicators:** Status reports done and communicated, certifications obtained, and successful project completion.

**First-Year Accomplishments:** Catalyze a unified training plan for the division, increase each department budget and identify trainings/certifications, complete monitors change out in DPW training room to offer onsite trainings, and more people in apprenticeships.

### **STRATEGIC DIRECTION #5: IMPROVING & ENHANCING OUR WORK CULTURE & VALUES**

DPW seeks to improve and revitalize our work culture, starting with the mission and vision, addressing ethics, and ensuring clear expectations.

**Success Indicators:** Less or reduced complaints, clear expectations lead to improved employee engagement, everyone will know the vision, mission, and values, employees will be healthier (ergonomics), we will be able to do more with less, and there will be ownership (“not my job” to “it is my job”).

**First-Year Accomplishments:** Communicate the benefits of taking ownership, define ownership (vision, mission, etc.) and define or explain expectations (the “why” and importance) – value added.