

***A Review  
of  
Public Works Management Practices  
City of Valparaiso, Florida***

*April 1998*

## *Preface*

The Institute for Senior Professionals (ISP), Okaloosa-Walton Community College, is an organization comprised of talented and experienced retired individuals from business, industry, government, military and academic fields. They are committed to assisting the local community by contributing their professional expertise without compensation, in community and government problem solving, economic development of the college district, and various educational programs of the college.

The ISP has participated in such projects as educational funding for Okaloosa-Walton Community College, Okaloosa County Government Consolidation and Transportation Study, Okaloosa County Fee Schedule Study, a short- and long-range plan for Okaloosa County facility and office space needs, a management study for the County School System, a management analysis of the County Health Department, and a review of the Okaloosa County Contracts and Procedures. ISP has completed management and efficiency studies for the Okaloosa County Chapter of the Salvation Army and for the Okaloosa County Red Cross. It has also developed and implemented an Elderhostel Program and a seniors' continuing education program called Prime Time.

This report, *A Review of Public Works Management Practices* for the City of Valparaiso was accomplished by the ISP at the request of the Administrator of the City of Valparaiso. It is intended to provide an independent assessment of the effectiveness of Public Works management practices in the utilization of available resources.

The ISP is pleased to have had this opportunity to serve the City of Valparaiso through the City Commission, to whom this report is submitted. The ISP expresses sincere thanks and appreciation to the Mayor, City Commissioners, City Administrator, Public Works Director, City Engineer, and all other city employees for their friendly and courteous support during our review.

Eddie Phillips  
Chairman

***Contents***

Preface..... i

Table of Contents ..... ii

The City of Valparaiso ..... iii

Executive Summary and Recommendations ..... iv

I. Introduction.....Page 1

II. Objectives and Approach to Study .....Page 1

    A. Objectives

    B. Approach to Study

III. City Government and Supervision of Public Works .....Page 4

    A. City Government

    B. Supervision of Public Works

IV. Review of Public Works Operations .....Page 8

    A. Introduction and Analysis of Public Works

    B. Water and Sewer

    C. Sanitation and Solid Waste

    D. Streets

    E. Public Lands and Institutions

V. Other Observations .....Page 31

VI. Addenda .....Page 33

## **The City of Valparaiso**

The City of Valparaiso, Florida (Vale of Paradise) received its municipal charter from the Florida Legislature on April 29, 1921. The city became a reality under the leadership and efforts of its first mayor, John B. Perrine from Chicago. Perrine was also president of the Valparaiso Development Company that went into bankruptcy shortly after his death in November 1921.

The Development Company's assets were soon acquired by James Plew, a Chicago financier for \$46,500. He also assumed large outstanding mortgages totalling approximately \$200,000. A quarter-million dollars is a sizable sum in 1998, but just imagine the relative magnitude of this fortune in 1921. Plew established the Valparaiso Realty Company with himself as president and his son-in-law, C. W. Ruckel, Sr. as secretary (Ruckel would later become mayor of Valparaiso.) The Valparaiso Realty Company is still in business today and is run by descendants of Mr. Plew.

It is reported that John Perrine gave the city its name and James Plew gave the name a city. Plew was instrumental in the growth and development of the city and surrounding area. He established the Valparaiso State Bank that later became Valparaiso Bank and Trust Company and still later, Vanguard Bank. He was president of that institution until his death in 1938.

Three years before his death, in 1935, Plew leased 137 acres of land south of Tom's Bayou to the City of Valparaiso for \$1.00 per year for the purpose of building an airport. The runway was later paved by the Florida Department of Transportation. This airport became the nucleus of Eglin Air force Base that was later supplemented by the addition of 340,000 acres of federal land provided by the Forest Services.

The population of Valparaiso in 1998 is estimated to be approximately 7,200 as reported in Florida Statistical Abstract 1996 published by the University of Florida. There were 1,385 family households plus 450 non-family or single member households with income ranging from below \$5,000 per year to well above \$100,000. It is interesting to note that there were 51 households with income in the lowest range of \$5,000 or less, and 37 of these had a head of household in the 35 to 44 age range. At the opposite end of the income range were 22 households with income of \$100,000 or above, and 7 in these were in the age range of 25 and below. The statistics further reflect a highly educated population with almost 60 percent having attended college. Also, a full 25 percent of the population has earned one or more college degrees.

It was noted above that James Plew established the Valparaiso Bank and Trust Company. The first and second bank buildings were located on Westview Avenue. The third and current structure for this bank, located on John Sims Parkway, is undergoing a major renovation as of this writing. The first building was a two-story brick structure that later became the administrative offices of a new community/junior college, Okaloosa-Walton Community College. The second building was a more modern single-story structure located next door to the first building. This building became the Business Department for the college beginning in 1964, and still later, the Historical Society Museum. These facilities, along with others that were remodeled and new ones that were added, served Okaloosa-Walton *Junior* College until January 1969 when the college moved to permanent quarters in Niceville.

The City of Valparaiso is essentially a bedroom community for Eglin Air Force Base and surrounding communities. Many residents commute for work throughout the region and

to classes at schools and colleges in the county, including Okaloosa-Walton Community College in Niceville, the OWCC/University of West Florida Campus in Fort Walton Beach, and Troy State University Center, also in Fort Walton Beach.

Valparaiso, the "Vale of Paradise" located on the shores of Tom's and Boggy Bayous, has a long-standing tradition of providing quality services to its residents with minimum expenses. The city maintains the lowest tax and fee structures feasible for the level of services provided, and with perhaps minimum adjustments, these conditions are expected to continue in the years ahead.

## **Executive Summary and Recommendations**

The City Commission of the City of Valparaiso, Florida, through the City Administrator

requested the Institute for Senior Professionals (ISP) at Okaloosa-Walton Community College (OWCC) to review city Public Works management practices to determine if the most effective use was being made of available resources, and if not, to suggest improvements.

Current Public Works management practices have evolved over the 76 years since the City of Valparaiso was incorporated in 1921, and have been based on maintaining a certain level of service, while maintaining the lowest possible cost.

The ISP met with the four Commissioners, the Mayor (Commissioner-at-Large), the Administrator, and the Director of Public Works, reviewed available records, and made tours of the various Public Works operations. The ISP was given unrestricted access to personnel and data, and was favorably impressed with the community spirit, and the conscientious and cooperative personnel dedicated to providing the best possible services to the citizenry of Valparaiso.

The ISP made certain findings during the course of this study and submits the following findings and recommendations:

**Findings:**

1. The residents of the City of Valparaiso enjoy a level of service greater than surrounding communities, and at a lower cost.
2. Public Works personnel are hard working and dedicated to providing good service to the community.
3. The organizational structure for supervision of the Public Works Department within the city government, and the organization of the ..... department are appropriate for the City of Valparaiso. ISP does not ..... believe that any organizational change would improve the efficiency or ..... productivity of the Public Works Department.
4. There are no work task related records to identify how specific activities within the four Public Works functions utilize available ..... manpower.
5. Enterprise operations are currently being subsidized by a transfer of approximately \$60,000 from the General Fund.
6. State-mandated requirements have increased demands on Public Works available staff.
7. Changes proposed in the Charter Revision will not improve the efficiency in the utilization of Public Works resources.
8. The Public Works operation is undermanned and underfunded. Additional use of extensive overtime will not provide any relief.

## **Recommendations:**

1. Increase staffing and funding levels for Public Works.
2. Increase the rates charged for "enterprise fund" operations, i.e. water and sewer, and garbage disposal, to break-even status. General Fund resources currently subsidizing "enterprise funds" would be available ..... for other Public Works programs.
3. Initiate a system of Work Orders and a nominal work-charge system to facilitate scheduling and provide work measurement data.
4. Provide administrative training for the Public Works Director, with emphasis on planning and monitoring work programs.
5. Establish a five-year operating budget and a ten-year capital expenditure plan for each Public Works function and for the total ..... department.
6. Aggressively pursue grants for future Public Works capital projects.
7. The cemetery advisory board should seek to develop a long-term plan for the cemetery in order to achieve a fully funded operation.
8. Develop a long-term plan for operation and maintenance of city parks.
9. Establish and provide staffing for a maintenance repair and clean-up function within Public Works, in lieu of the current "as time permits" approach.
10. Establish requirements for residents to bag offensive garbage; to keep containers covered to prevent rainwater collecting; and to limit the ..... weight of any single garbage container to reduce strain on workers.
11. Reconsider curb-side garbage pick-up in lieu of back-yard collection. This could reduce manpower requirements, and free up at least two full-time workers for other Public Works efforts.
12. When new garbage trucks are procured, consider rear-loading units with greater capacity than current haulers. (Curb-side pick-up and new trucks could double the number of residents served per day per crew.)

## **I. Introduction**

In a letter dated October 17, 1997, Mr. Michael M. Flynt, Administrator, City of Valparaiso, requested the Institute for Senior Professionals (ISP) at Okaloosa-Walton

Community College to undertake an independent study of the Public Works management practices to determine if the most effective use was being made of available resources and to make recommendations (Addendum 1).

Specifically, analyses of the utilization of available resources, constrained by limited budgets, were requested in 1.) the municipal and departmental organization; 2.) distribution of personnel resources among work areas; and 3.) requirements for equipment and facilities for enhanced effectiveness.

ISP accepted this challenge and proceeded by selecting members of the organization with appropriate expertise and experience to form a study team to conduct the review (Addendum 2). Subsequent to the letter (Addendum 2), Dr. James A. Durham joined the study team.

## **II. Objectives and Approach to the Study**

### **Objectives**

A kick-off meeting of the full ISP study team with the Mayor, Mr. John B. Arnold; City Administrator, Mr. Michael Flynt; and Public Works Director, Mr. Tony Piper, was held at the Valparaiso City Hall in December 1997. The City Administrator provided the following statement of the objectives of the study:

**Public Works Management Study  
December 10, 1997**

∅ Management philosophy: The entire work force is available for tasking in any Public Works area when needed.



- ∅ The workforce appears to be tasked close to its maximum capacity.
  - ∅ Additional personnel not readily available due to budget constraints.
- ∅ Some tasks are slow to be accomplished because resources do not appear to be available.
- ∅ In general, the public is well satisfied with Public Works performance.
- ∅ Questions: Is there a way to organize or operate that would allow accomplishment of more tasks using the same manpower resources?
- ∅ We are asking ISP for help answering that question.

## **Approach**

At the request of the ISP study team, Mr. Flynt, City Administrator, advised the City Commissioners, the Public Works Director, and the City Engineer of the study and authorized their participation (Addendum 3).

The ISP study team requested certain documentation and authorization to interview the four Commissioners, the Public Works Director and function leaders, and the City Engineer. Documentation provided by the city is listed in the Addenda to this report.

The study team divided itself into two or three member groups which performed the following tasks in addressing the above-stated objectives:

1. Reviewed Public Works operations with each of the City .  
Commissioners responsible for direct supervision of the following ..... areas:
  - a. Utilities - Water and Sewer: Commissioner Heyward Strong, Jr.
  - b. Sanitation and Solid Waste: Commissioner Charlie Niefert
  - c. Streets: Commissioner Thomas G. Miller
  - d. Public Lands and Institutions: Commissioner Irene Reser
2. Reviewed Public Works operations with Mr. Tony Piper, Director of Public Works, who conducted tours of all areas of Public Works ... operations.
3. Reviewed Public Works operations with the City Engineer, Mr. Spence King.
4. Reviewed the existing charter for the City of Valparaiso.
5. Reviewed the current adopted Comprehensive Plan for the City of Valparaiso.
6. Reviewed the position description for the Director of Public Works and the pay grade descriptions and pay scales for Public Works employees.
7. Reviewed annual city budgets for the preceding five years.
8. Reviewed correspondence between the Mayor and federal elected officials regarding financial assistance for the city.
9. Compared fees for services from surrounding communities with current Valparaiso rates.

10. Analyzed work charges to the several Public Works functions for selected periods.

11. Three members of the ISP study team actually accompanied the sanitation crews on garbage and trash pick up on March 9, 1998 to get ..... a first-hand perspective of the collection task, and made spot time ..... studies of several aspects of the process.

### **III. City Government and Supervision of Public Works**

The City of Valparaiso was incorporated in 1921, and the charter established at that time has been amended from time to time to conform to changes in the laws of Florida. The government of the City of Valparaiso is vested in a Mayor (Commissioner-at-Large) and four (4) other Commissioners who are elected for four-year terms. The Commissioner-at-Large and the four (4) Commissioners constitute the five-person City Commission.

By ordinance, the direct supervision of each portion of the administration of the city government is placed under one of the commissioners. The current organization of the city government is shown in Figure 1.

The Public Works activities are subdivided into four sections for purposes of commissioner supervision:

1. Utilities - water and sewer
2. Public Lands and Institutions (parks, medians, and cemetery)
3. Streets and Rights-of-Way
4. Sanitation and Solid Waste



The Commissioners who are responsible for each section of the Public Works operation directly supervise the Director of Public Works in the performance of tasks associated with that section. This creates what has been called a "matrix organization" wherein the Director is called upon to prioritize and assign resources to respond to all day-to-day routine and emergency requirements placed upon him by the five Commissioners.

This "matrix-type" organization is widely used in U. S. military and major industrial development programs. It makes maximum use of limited available skills, provides flexibility in handling unexpected problems, and minimizes bureaucratic staffing. It also has the inherent disadvantage that the several operational functions have difficulty in justifying the need for resources.

The organization of the Public Works is shown on Fig. 2. An "H" designates lead person for each of the areas of responsibility.

ISP is aware that there is currently a committee of citizens actively involved in a study to update and revise the city charter. While this is beyond the boundaries of our study, the draft of the proposed charter revision indicates that although the supervisory relationship and reporting responsibility of the director of Public Works would be changed, it should have no bearing on the applicability of the recommendations submitted with this report.



## **IV. Review of Public Works Operations**

### **A. Introduction and Analysis**

The Public Works Department serves the citizens of Valparaiso in providing water, sewer, sanitation, streets, parks, and cemetery services. The city administration and citizens generally feel that these services are adequate; however, budget constraints have precluded an increase in resources required for Public Works. ISP proceeded to conduct an impartial review of the Public works operation to identify any productivity increases through organizational and/or operational changes that could provide increased capability within current budget constraints with no degradation in level of service.

Data pertinent to the review of Public Works operation, city budgets, administration, and from surrounding communities was requested, provided, and analyzed.

The comparison of residential charges for water, sewer and sanitation as shown in Fig. 3, 4, and 5 show that Valparaiso water and sewer rates are among the lowest in this area. The sanitation rate, however, is the highest.

Time sheet data were requested for two-week periods spaced quarterly throughout 1997. ISP was looking for seasonal trends and indications of personnel turnover. The data are represented in Fig. 6 which lists Public Works employees by name and time employed.

The data reveal that during 1997, there were ten (10) resignations and eight (8) new hires, a turnover of almost 50 percent. However, further analysis reveals that Public Works had a steady core of eighteen (18) employees. It is not clear as to why reduction of two (2) in total workforce continued throughout the year.

Further analysis of the payroll data shown in Fig. 7 indicates no significant seasonal trend other than in Parks, which results from employing temporary summer workers. The data presented in Fig. 8 reveal the distribution of effort, with Sanitation as the major user of resources at 39.7 percent, Water and Sewer at 22.6 percent, Parks and Cemetery at 19.0 percent, and Streets and 6.0 percent of the overall Public Works manpower utilization. The Shop and Administrative costs make up the remainder.

City budget data was also obtained covering the five prior fiscal years. These data were helpful to ISP in understanding the origin of resources and the allocation thereof. ISP noted that "enterprise funds" which are generally regarded as self liquidating were being subsidized with resources from the General Fund.









Fig. 6

**Public Works Personnel - 1997**

NAME	3/6	3/30	6/12	6/19	8/14	8/28	12/11	12/18
PIPER	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
COLBURN	X	X	X	X	O	O	O	O
CURRINGTON, J.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
CURRINGTON, T.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
DUDZIK	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
RICHARDSON	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
GUNNELS	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	O
KING	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
NASH	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
SJRSTVON	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

SPIKES	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
WALKER	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
WEST	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
BOLDUC	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
MASON	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
WEBER	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
EDDINGS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
WOODS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
MOORE	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	O
GLOVER	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
DOWNING	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
PECKMAN	X	X	X	O	O	O	O	O
JEFFERIES	X	X	X	O	X	X	O	O
HUDSON	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
WILSON			X	O	X	X	X	O
SMITH				X	O	O	O	O
SHEPARD					X	X	X	X
TURNER					X	X	X	X
<b>TOTAL ON PAYROLL</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>21</b>

KEY

X EMPLOYED  
O OFF PAYROLL

NOTES

∅ START WITH 24, END WITH 21 = NET LOSS 3  
∅ 7 RESIGN, 4 HIRED  
∅ 19 OF ORIGINAL 24 REMAIN

ISP spent considerable time with the Director of Public Works reviewing the administration and operations of the Department. The City of Valparaiso is fortunate to have a hard working, flexible, non-unionized workforce providing very personalized service to the community at lower costs than the surrounding communities. ISP requested work task-related data to be used to identify those activities consuming the resources, and used to justify the need for resources. ISP was surprised that such information was not available. Without work-task

budgets and utilization records, it is very difficult for Public Works to manage interfaces in a "matrix type" organization.

Without specific data to analyze, ISP proceeded to estimate work task-related data by interviews and observation of activities. The following data for Water and Sewer, Sanitation, Streets, Parks and Cemeteries depict this effort (Fig. 7 and 8).

*Fig. 7*

**Man Hours/Discipline  
Public Works Personnel - Selected Weekly Periods - 1997**

<b>Discipline</b>	<b>3/6</b>	<b>3/30</b>	<b>6/12</b>	<b>6/19</b>	<b>8/14</b>	<b>8/2</b>	<b>12/11</b>	<b>12/18</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Ave</b>
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						<b>8</b>			<b>Man/H rs</b>	<b>Man s</b>
Garbage	250	183	261	275	261	253	225	272	1980	24
Parks	93	48	255	212	195	114	170	94	1181	14
Sewer	135	71	88	90	59	116	78	76	713	8
Cemetery	44	45	49	...43	43	42	45	31	342	4
Water	93	172	176	191	110	98	105	153	1098	13
Trash	160	223	85	79	116	116	127	127	1033	12
Administration	42	46	42	42	42	42	42	42	340	4
Shop	74	72	88	91	87	87	83	87	669	8
Streets	32	59	55	47	107	91	37	57	485	6
Yard Cleaning	29	24	17	8	16	40	20	7	161	2
TOTAL	952	943	1116	1074	1036	995	932	942	7990	
PEOPLE	24	24	28*	*27	*26	24	22	21		
AVERAGE/PERSON	39.7	39.3	39.9	39.8	39.8	41.5	42.4	44.9		

\* Includes Summer Hires

### **Public Works Personnel - 1997**

Analysis of the data from Fig. 7 dividing the average man hours per discipline gives the following distribution:

<u>Discipline</u>	<u>Equivalent Men</u>	<u>Percentage of Total</u>
Sanitation -		
Garbage	6.2	
Trash	3.2	
Yard Cleaning <u>0.5</u>		
	9.9	39.3
Water/Sewer - Water	3.4	
Sewer	<u>2.2</u>	
	5.6	22.2
Parks/Cemetery -		
Parks	3.7	
Cemetery	<u>1.1</u>	

	4.8	19.0
Streets	1.5	6.0
Administration	1.1	4.4
Shop	<u>2.3</u>	<u>9.1</u>
TOTAL	25.2	100%

## **B. Water and Sewer Operations**

Water service to some 1,800 homes and businesses is provided from four wells and two water towers located throughout the city. The sewer system collects the waste and seventeen (17) lift stations pump it to the regional treatment plant shared by Valparaiso, Niceville, and Okaloosa County.

In the absence of specific task/man hour data, interviews and inspections of the water and sewer systems were conducted. This effort focused upon identifying the estimated man hours associated with scheduled and unscheduled activities. The findings follow:

### **I. Scheduled Tasks**



∅ All water wells are inspected every day for chlorine content.

Certified personnel from Niceville accompany the Valparaiso crew and will do so until certification of Valparaiso personnel, currently underway, is accomplished.

∅ All sewer lift stations are inspected daily.

∅ Water samples are taken twice a month at each well plus seven locations throughout the distribution system. The samples are analyzed by a private laboratory.

∅ Water meters are read once a month for billing purposes. Each meter is read, the data recorded, the usage calculated by the Public Works crew and then furnished to city administration for billing (Note: ISP contacted the Destin Water Users to assess possible application of their system to Valparaiso. There, a probe is used to touch a sender on the meters, the data is automatically recorded, and the information down-loaded into a computer which produces the billing. This system is judged not to be cost effective for a customer base of only 1,800 connections.)

∅ It is estimated that these scheduled tasks require 60 to 75 man hours per week.

## **2. Preventive Maintenance Tasks**

There is no formal preventive maintenance plan available for analysis.

There are, however, tasks being performed which qualify as being preventive in scope. These are:

∄ Inspection of the larger sewer lines is being conducted as resources permit. Public Works personnel clean the lines and the inspection using a T.V. system is performed by a private contractor. ISP was advised that approximately 12 percent of the lines have been inspected to date.

∄ Equipment used throughout the water and sewer systems are serviced and tested. The frequency is currently based upon experience and observations made by the daily inspection crews discussed in the scheduled task section.

∄ The water towers are inspected and painted by a private-contractor. Public Works personnel assist on some occasions.

∄ It is estimated that Public Works expends 18-20 man hours per week for these tasks.

### **3. Unscheduled Work Efforts**

Both water and sewer systems personnel must respond to customer service calls. These include needs such as chlorine odor, water leaks, sewer line blockage, broken lines, and equipment malfunctions such as motors, engines and controls.

∄ Data are not available to establish or evaluate the man hour usage. This unscheduled effort does, however, comprise a

significant portion of the water and sewer resources.

#### **4. Near-term and Future Projects**

There are several projects either in work or being considered for the future. Those in work are being accomplished as resources become available, including:

- ∅ Back flow preventors are required at each water tap. The installation of valves prevent customer water from flowing back into the distribution system with possible contamination. This state-mandated program is some 30 percent complete. Although the state is not exerting pressure for completion, it should be noted that Destin Water Users has experienced the threat of a \$5,000 per day fine for non-compliance. Public Works does not have anyone certified to oversee this effort.
- ∅ One of the sewer lift stations has only one working pump. The stand-by unit requires replacement.
- ∅ Significant repair and maintenance work was identified including trusses, new roof and decking at Well #2, and lift station fencing.
- ∅ Expansion of sewer service to the few remaining homes on septic systems.
- ∅ Complete the water distribution loop to eliminate dead end lines.
- ∅ Add an additional water tank for storage and improved system

pressure.

∅ Provide a retention and distribution system for reclaimed water.

∅ Emergency power to operate the lift stations during power outages.

As these and other projects are implemented, they will additionally tax the already strained Public Works resources.

## **5. Overall Assessment**

In an effort to identify the man hours being used for water and sewer operations, ISP used the payroll data from 1997. These data reveal a weekly average of 226 man hours. Dividing this number by 40 hours per week yields an equivalent man loading of over 5.6. It appears that water and sewer operations are under staffed by more than one full-time worker.

## **6. Recommendations**

∅ Increase the staffing of water and sewer operations by one full-time position.

∅ Initiate a system of Work Orders to schedule and measure the work being performed. The data from this control system will enable the Director of Public Works to justify the need for resources.

∅ Raise rates for water and sewer to make these enterprise operations self liquidating.

∄ Provide some administrative training for the Director of Public Works, emphasizing planning.

## **C. Sanitation and Solid Waste**

### **1. Organization and Manning**

The organization of the Sanitation and Solid Waste section may be seen at Fig. 2. It is noteworthy that Public Works has been unable to assemble and present production data that will support requests for adding staff or even maintaining current staffing.

### **2. Operations**

The sanitation service consists of the following:

- a. Garbage pickup four (4) days per week (Mon, Tu, Thu, and Fri) for residential customers. This provides two (2) pickups per week for each residence. The service is provided by picking up the solid waste from anywhere on the customer's property, frequently in the rear yard, dumping into a large yellow City container, carrying it to the street where the garbage truck is parked, unloading into the garbage truck, and compressing it to the rear of the truck.
- b. Commercial customers are serviced three (3) times per week (Mon, Wed, and Fri). A two-man crew is used for this truck, in contrast to the three-man crew used on the residential garbage trucks.
- c. Trash service, for pick up of tree and bush cuttings, small

appliances, used hardware, lumber, etc. is provided weekly on Wednesday.

d. Recyclables are picked up once a week by the (Okaloosa) County.

e. After pick up, the garbage trucks are driven to a Fort Walton Beach transfer station for unloading. Generally a truck makes one trip per day, with occasional large volume pick-ups requiring more than once a day dumping.

Currently, there are no City regulations regarding bagging of offensive and unsanitary garbage, nor limitations on how heavily the private garbage containers may be loaded. The work on garbage pick-up is dirty, fatiguing, and smelly, resulting in abnormal turn-over (29 percent in 1997), and absenteeism. However, the sanitation crews seem to work very well together, and under the circumstances, do a good job for the citizens of Valparaiso.

### **3. Cost of Operations**

The Sanitation and Solid Waste service is operated as an "enterprise fund," which by common accounting principles means it should neither make a profit nor a loss. The FY 98 budget shows an end-of-year operating loss of \$12,960. This may be paid from the General Fund showing that the cost of operations exceeds budget and, thus, reflects a need to raise fees.

For the residential customer, far more than half of the sanitation crews' time and cost is spent in retrieving the garbage from behind residences. Such services in residential pickup of garbage is unique to Valparaiso. Neighboring cities Fort Walton

Beach, Niceville, Destin nor Okaloosa County provide such personalized back yard pick up service.

#### **4. Comparative Services**

The bar chart (Fig. 6) shows the relative cost of service in the four (4) areas. Valparaiso services are clearly the most expensive; the least expensive are those served by a private contractor, such as BFI or Waste Management, Inc.

Fort Walton Beach is the most unique service in that it employs garbage trucks that have gripping and lifting mechanisms to empty the city-supplied garbage containers into the garbage truck. It appears that Niceville is also moving to implement such a system. With this arrangement, there is only a one-man crew for each truck, the driver. This one-man crew services twice as many stops in the same amount of time and provides the same twice-per-week service that Valparaiso enjoys, all at a lower cost. And, it is safer, less fatiguing, and less expensive to operate. Of course, residents are required to take garbage containers to and from curb-side. Also, the trucks used in Fort Walton Beach are more expensive.

#### **5. Overall Assessment**

ISP could not identify any significant changes which would improve the efficiency of the sanitation and solid waste service provided to the community of Valparaiso without changes in the level of service currently being provided.

There is a real need to improve the working conditions to which the pick-up

crews are being subjected, principally in handling unbagged, offensive garbage and waste, and in lifting of heavily loaded residents' containers.

Valparaiso fees for sanitation service are the highest of surrounding communities.

It is estimated that over 50 percent of the garbage handling costs are incurred by pick-up on residents property.

## **6. Recommendations**

- ∅ Require residents to bag offensive garbage
- ∅ Limit the weight of disposed materials placed in garbage containers, i.e. no used car engine blocks.
- ∅ When replacement of existing garbage trucks becomes necessary, consider rear-loading and greater capacity.
- ∅ Reconsider curb-side pick-up. This, combined with larger capacity trucks would provide considerable manpower savings.

## **D. Streets and Rights-of-Way**

1. The Public Works organization chart (Fig. 2) indicates that two men assigned to the Streets Department, one of whom is designated lead man. The Commissioner estimates that on average, he has the equivalent of 2.75 men chargeable to the streets function, which is indicative of the flexibility of the Department's work



force in task assignment.

The City of Valparaiso has approximately 232 miles of streets, almost all of which are paved. Principle activities include cutting grass and maintaining rights-of-way and medians, maintenance of street pavements, and storm drainage systems. The city has an annual contract with the Florida Department of Transportation to perform such work on the state highways within the city limits.

Recent equipment additions include a new six-foot mowing machine which greatly facilitates mowing rights-of-way, and a new Elgin street sweeper. We received comments that the new sweeper could be better utilized if adequate manpower was available on a regular basis.

Public Works personnel do the on-going maintenance, including pot-hole repairs. The City has an open-ended contract (currently with Young & Sons) for street maintenance projects estimated to cost up to \$10,000. All street projects over this amount are advertised for bid.

All major street projects are designed by the City Engineer and the construction work is put out for bid. There are at least two street projects in the works: construction of a new street (Louisiana Avenue); and resurfacing of Wolverine Street. ISP is not aware of the status of funding for this work.

## **2. Near-term and Anticipated Future Projects**

In addition to the two major street projects mentioned above, projects to improve the storm water run-off control will be required in the future.

### **3. Overall Assessment of Operations**

There seems to be a good working relationship between the Commissioners responsible for supervising the various Public Works functions. Citizens of Valparaiso also appear to be well satisfied with services provided.

### **4. Recommendations**

There are no specific recommendations in this area other than the previous recommendation (Page 21) to implement a modest work order/time charge system for the entire Public works operation.

## **E. Public Lands and Institutions**

### **I. Cemeteries**

One worker is assigned to the cemetery full time. Up to this point the cemetery is not self-funding. Particularly, long-term perpetual care is not fully funded. A positive action occurred recently to appoint a citizen advisory board. The purpose of the board is to review the cemetery operation and determine ways to make it a self-supporting operation.

One recent change was to take over responsibility for opening and closing burial sites. This provides additional revenue to the city. Prior to this, funeral directors were involved in this activity.

There is adequate land for long-term needs. However, one problem is the continual changing of the plat plan. This seems to be done with each new person responsible for this area. A more constant long-term plan needs to be considered.

## **Recommendations**

∄ The Advisory Board should be continued with active and productive membership. It should seek opportunities to increase revenue in order to have a fully-funded operation, particularly as it pertains to perpetual care.

∄ There is a need for a long-term plan that is not changed frequently.

## **2. Medians**

The street medians are listed as a separate operation because there is reimbursement from the state for mowing activities. The state DOT recently increased the amount of reimbursement, but it is not clear that all costs are being covered.

The shrubbery and trees in the medians are the city's property and are maintained by the park employees. This activity includes replacement, trimming, fertilizing, and maintaining.

## **Recommendations**

∄ There are no specific recommendations for this area, other than those

covered under the Parks Section.

### **3. Parks**

Two people are assigned to the Parks Department. The lead person has been attending training seminars provided by the County Extension Service and others. There have been some complaints concerning trimming of trees and shrubs from an assortment of people. Part of this due to differences of opinion from various experts in this area. There is also a failure to understand the need for safety considerations in various areas concerning visibility and a general need to control the size of some shrubbery.

In the summer months, the crew is supplemented with students, and in some cases, volunteer help. Also, prison help is used when available. Vandalism repairs, regrettably consume some of the crew's work time.

There have been several items in the long-term capital plan. They have not been given a high enough priority to become reality. One item is a new pavilion in Lincoln Park. This would be used in lieu of facilities currently rented. Another item is a nature trail. There does not appear to be any likelihood that these projects will be completed considering the increased demands on a pool of dwindling funds.

### **Recommendations**

∄ There should be an action program for seeking professional help for a long-term park plan. This might be developed through an intern program using students from nearby colleges and universities as part of their study programs. There also might be enough qualified citizens in the city to provide an advisory group. This group should be made up of citizens who have time and the various contacts needed to pursue this activity. The County Extension Service might be used to assist in guidance on planting and trimming procedures and other on-going landscaping activities.

∄ Once an effective plan is developed, it should be adopted by the commission and implemented. An aggressive effort to secure grant funds to cover the major portion of the plan should be undertaken. A well-developed plan is necessary to a successful effort to achieve grant funds.

## **VI. Other Observations**

### **A. Review of City of Valparaiso Comprehensive Plan (1990)**

The Comprehensive Plan relates to the Public Works functions as follows:

- ∅ Outlines level of service requirements for sewer, solid waste, water, and drainage.
- ∅ Requires all obsolete or worn-out facilities to be corrected by 1997.
- ∅ Requires the cost of water and sewer services to be funded by fees.
- ∅ Contains provisions for and maintenance of recreation facilities.

∅ Establishes "pay-as-you-go" technique for capital improvement and requires allocation of revenue for renewal and replacement fund in annual budget.

∅ Requires establishment of a committee to review development activities, level of services, and capital improvement needs. A report to the Commission is due May 1 of each year.

ISP did not review past history of compliance with the Comprehensive Plan; we were advised that the review committee was to report to the City Commission as required on May 1, 1998. There are requirements in the Comprehensive Plan which impact long-term funding for maintaining levels of service, as well as future capital projects.

## **Recommendation**

It is suggested that the requirements for a committee to review development, levels of service, and recommend capital improvements be regularly fulfilled, including the requirement for an annual report.

## **B. Federal Interaction**

Copies of correspondence from the mayor to federal elected officials regarding financial assistance to the city over the past several years demonstrate that the mayor has been persistent in bringing to the attention of Florida U. S. Senators, Representatives, and others

the impact of Eglin Air Force Base on the services and infrastructure of the city. No meaningful response has ensued.

### **C. Grants**

ISP is aware that there have been discussions within the city government and a grants workshop regarding the possibility of acquiring state grants for city programs for water and sewer expansion, parks, and storm drainage. These grants would be acquired under the Community Development Block Grants administered by the Florida Department of Community Affairs. Such grants could possibly enhance the ability of the city to finance completion of currently anticipated public works capital projects.

ISP has no comment on the probability of such grants being awarded to the City of Valparaiso. However, they should be aggressively pursued.

## **VII. Addenda**

1. Letter (October 17, 1997) from M. M. Flynt to J. P. Chitwood requesting ISP study, including attached memorandum. Public Works Management Practices
2. Letter (November 20, 1997) from H. D. Harvell to M. M. Flynt
3. Memo (December 22, 1997) from M. M. Flynt to ISP study team regarding notification of City Commissioners and City Engineer
4. Position description - Public Works Director
5. Schedule of Pay Grades
6. Pay scales for city hourly employees



7. Five year capital budget FY 1994-1998

Other reference documents (not reproduced for inclusion in this report)

- a.) City Comprehensive Plan
- b.) City Charter and proposed charter revisions
- c.) Capital budgets for 1997-98
- d.) Budgets for four prior years
- e.) Comparative utility rates from surrounding cities and Okaloosa County
- f.) Public Works Department time charge distribution
- g.) Correspondence from city to federal elected officials re: financial assistance from Air Force (Eglin)
- h.) Department of Labor - 1997 occupational injuries for City of Valparaiso