Water and Sewer Crew Leader Scott Ryder glances down at the maps on his phone to find nearby water mains that need maintenance. As Ryder, Michael Kirby and Nate Allison pull their truck around and set up equipment and safety cones, they explain that maintenance is never finished.

In all kinds of weather, year-round, the crew exercises water mains to prevent big headaches in the future. When they “exercise” this crew does not need to run in place or do jumping jacks. Instead, they use a heavy-duty mechanical wrench to open the water main valve deep beneath the street. Opening and closing the valve helps to prevent watermain breaks that could disrupt your water service. The exercising also uncovers rusted bolts or other maintenance issues that might cause problems later on. While the valve box (what we think of as a manhole) is open, crews guide a giant vacuum into the hole to suck up leaves or other debris that might also cause complications.

Despite the high-tech tools on their truck, Michael Kirby uses some elbow grease to hammer away at a stubborn valve box cover, and the crew is always ready to lean in with a manual wrench when things get stuck.

Water and Sewer Crew Leader William Gormours and technicians Blake Carter, Brian Carter and Marcus Benedetti like days when the wind doesn’t blow as they clean out sewer lines. When it is windy there is always a chance that what is inside those lines will spray outside manholes during the cleaning.

Even with all this water and sewer line deep cleaning, emergencies do happen. The crew is on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year ready to respond if there is a water main break or a sewer backup, so that you can keep the water flowing in your home.
A Moment with the Mayor

Mayor Michelle Davis-Younger

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

I don’t know about you, but for me, this year flew by really fast. I cannot believe that I will have been your Mayor for one year this month. I have enjoyed learning and growing in this position and representing you and our great city. I look forward to three more years!

I want to take the time to wish all of you a very happy and prosperous 2022 and to thank you all for being so kind and sharing your encouragement and love as I have really tried to be out in the community and ensure that we are the inclusive city that I know we are.

With the colder weather, our activities will now be inside…I will miss my Saturday Farmer’s Market, but we will have the Winter Market that is open through March 26. Please make sure that you still get out and support our vendors. I have to take a moment and shout out to two very special people who make our Farmer’s Market run so well and make it the amazing, award-winning market that it is. A big thanks to Ron Taylor and Melissa Williams, you are both amazing and thank you for all you do!

I have had many highlights this first year as Mayor, from singing the national anthem at an Osborn High School football game, to flying in a helicopter over our city…I believe one of the best things was holding the “If I were Mayor” essay contest. We had almost 50 fifth grade students from Manassas City Public Schools participate and these essays were amazing. The winners of the essay contest are: First Place - Isabella Salazar, Second Place - Paola Hernandez and Third Place - Giselle Martinez-Hernandez. These essays were very well written and so inspirational. These young people have some great ideas about how to keep our city culturally aware, safe and environmentally friendly. The one common theme they all seemed to have was that Manassas is a kind and welcoming place and they LOVE living here. Congratulations to you all! It is these kinds of things that I love to do as your Mayor and look forward to continuing my collaboration with the schools to do even greater things next year…we are talking about having a cornhole tournament between Council and the school board in February…stay tuned!

As we move into the new year, please resolve to show kindness and be patient with one another, we all love our city and want what’s best. Even though we may not agree on things, we can remain civil and set the example for the rest of the nation. Manassas is and will always be a wonderful place to live, work, raise a family and start a business. If you can, I ask that you make a resolution in 2022 to become more involved in your community by attending Council meetings, joining a board or committee, volunteering at our local shelter, sharing a hug and a smile, and basically, paying it forward. It takes so little to be kind and can make such a difference in someone’s life. Again, happy new year to one and all and make it your best year ever!
Another priority relates to Manassas reliability of our electric utility system. Of underground cable to maintain the costs less to operate. We have also buried lights to LED, which will last longer and area. We are converting all of the street other development proposals in this already in process and construction of the Grant Ave. Streetscape project that is in the Grant Ave. corridor, including the limits. We are making major investments of the first five signs for the African American History Walking tour as a part of our effort to identify unique neighborhood characteristics. We established the first library in the city limits. We are making major investments in the Grant Ave. corridor, including the Grant Ave. Streetscape project that is already in process and construction of a public safety facility which is spurring other development proposals in this area. We are converting all of the street lights to LED, which will last longer and cost less to operate. We have also buried 2,000 feet of overhead electric cable and replaced more than 60,000 feet of underground cable to maintain the reliability of our electric utility system.

Another priority relates to Manassas being a strong economic hub for the region. During the pandemic we have provided direct assistance to impacted businesses and families. We have helped several new businesses open in the City and helped even more to expand their business during the last year. We have worked to promote workforce development with the Graduate and ELEVATE! programs. We saw a tremendous return of events, activities and visitors in the City and created a Shop Local campaign. We also expanded our public utility capacity to support new economic growth.

Providing a variety of transportation options to have a well-functioning transportation system is also a priority. Around the City you will find new trails at Kinsley Mill Park, Oakenshaw Park, Metz Middle School, Tudor Lane and improvements to the trails at Bartow Road and Tall Oaks Court. We have installed two additional miles of bike lanes and shared-use paths, with more efforts in design. Transportation projects completed include improvements to turn lanes at Centreville Rd. and Liberia Ave., sidewalks on Portner Ave. and a new shared-use path on Dumfries Rd. Construction has begun on widening Route 28 south of Godwin Drive to match the widening done in Prince William County. Other projects in design include Sudley Rd. and Mathis Ave., as well as a variety of pedestrian improvements across the City.

In supporting the priority of educational attainment to create a workforce for tomorrow, we have worked with local businesses to identify the talent that they need and partnered with our local educational institutions to promote those skills. We have had 82 adults enroll in the GRADUATE! Program with 53 having completed the training to receive a GED. We are also the first locality to offer the course in Spanish, Council increased operating funds for K-12 education in the budget and also set aside funds along with a funding plan to replace Jennie Dean Elementary School.

The final priority involves being an inclusive organization that applies our core values to promote a better life for our community in providing sustainable services. I am extremely proud of our workforce as no services to the community were significantly interrupted due to the pandemic and additional efforts were made to address testing and vaccinations, along with other actions to support response to the pandemic. In addition, work was completed by the Equity and Inclusion Task Force appointed by Council to identify barriers that limit community members from full participation in the City’s economic and community vitality.

Our Police Department was accredited with excellence by CALEA. Our Fire and Rescue Department opened a new Fire Station #21. Our Water Treatment Plant was awarded the Silver Award from the Virginia Department of Health for our water quality. Our AAA bond rating was affirmed by the Standard and Poor’s rating agency along with GFOA recognition for our annual audit and budget.

While 2021 was a tremendous year for the City, 2022 also holds much promise. We will be renovating the Manassas Museum and City Hall to provide better services to the community. We are working on capital plans for several park and historic structure enhancements along with other projects related to street and stormwater improvements. Several economic development projects are also in the pipeline that will enhance our economic prosperity. We are hopeful that 2022 will allow us to finally put the pandemic behind us.

So, while I am still having trouble believing we are in 2022, don’t blink because 2023 will be right around the corner along with the 150th birthday of our City. Happy New Year!

W. Patrick Pate
The City of Manassas Happenings

Find these events and more in the City of Manassas, Virginia. For more information go to www.visitmanassas.org.

Winter Market is open - 9 a.m. -1 p.m. at 9024 Prince William St across from Baldwin Elementary School. There are 30 vendors at the Winter Market and more to come. Interested in who is there? Visit cityofmanassasfarmersmarket on Facebook or www.visitmanassas.org to see a list of vendors.

Now - March - Ice Skating at the Harris Pavilion. For tickets or to rent the rink, visit www.harrispavilion.com

Now – Feb. 28, 2022 - Prince William Public Libraries' first-ever Winter Reading Program for grades K – 12. Head to your local library to pick up a bookmark. Complete any 10 activities and be entered to win a special prize! Yeti...Set...Go! Sign up today at the library or online at pwcva.gov/library.

Jan. 1, 2022 - Happy New Year - All trash and recycling collections will run on a regular schedule

Jan. 1, 2022 - New parking district for Georgetown South begins

Jan. 4, 2022, 7 p.m., Virtual Event – Historic Manassas Livestream Shopping at https://fb.me/e/49nPD1lx

Jan. 15 from 8 a.m. to noon - Electronics Drop-off Day at Public Works - 8500 Public Works Drive - Don't miss our electronics-only drop-off day on Saturday, January 15, from 8 am - 12 pm at the Public Works Building located at 8500 Public Works Drive. This is your opportunity to clear out the old electronics after Christmas and make space for your new TV just in time for the Superbowl.

Jan. 18, 2022, 7 p.m., Virtual Event – Historic Manassas Livestream Shopping at https://fb.me/e/49nPD1lx

Jan. 18 – Feb. 22, 2022 (Tuesdays), 7:30 – 9 p.m. – Adult Acting @ ARTFactory

Jan. 22 – Feb. 5, 2022, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. – Monologue Workshop Series for Teens & Adults at the ARTFactory

Jan. 22, 2022 – 2 p.m. & 7 p.m. and Jan. 23 at 3 p.m. – Pied Piper Theatre presents Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella at the Hylton Performing Arts Center, $20 Adult/$16 Children under 12

Feb. 4 from 6 - 9 p.m. - 8th Annual Souper Bowl - this year we will see if CJ Finz's She Crab soup can retain its title of Souper Bowl Winner. For $10, participants may visit the downtown shops that will be listed on a map and taste the soups, then vote for your favorite. Tickets are on sale now. Go to www.visitmanassas.org

Do you want to be a Firefighter or Emergency Medical Provider?

The City of Manassas Fire & Rescue Department is looking for candidates who are trained or who wish to be trained as firefighters, medics and ALS providers.

We offer:

• Comparable Salary, Starting at $50,003
• 24/48 Hour Schedule, with Kelly Day
• Suppression and EMS Unit Rotation
• Advanced Life Support Pay for Medics(additional $3/ hour; calculated towards retirement)
• Annual Recruitment / Retention Bonus
• Virginia Retirement System (VRS)Contribution, Hazard Duty Pay
• Deferred Compensation Plan
• Insurance: Health, Dental, Life, Vision,and Supplemental

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