

## Scott's Statement at Council:

As many of you now know, this year's budget process presents enormous challenges. We are currently facing a \$17 million shortfall in our budget for the Fiscal Year 2026 as a direct result of reductions in our property tax revenue growth combined with rising costs of services and materials.

I am committed to working diligently to find solutions that minimize the impact to both our staff and residents who depend on our services. After months of careful analysis of our organization, last week, I made a difficult decision to lay off two employees.

These employees primarily worked on our sustainability initiatives, and I want to make it clear that the work on sustainability in Des Moines did not end with those positions. For decades, subject matter experts within each department have been tasked with implementing sustainability tactics in their fields of expertise including forestry, stormwater, our facilities and our vehicle fleet, among others. These experts will continue to lead implementation of our climate action and adaptation tactics.

Sustainability work remains a priority, and we plan to continue efforts moving forward with staff across our organization. We will continue to lead in implementing sustainable practices into our projects and services to the community. This effort includes working diligently with our non-profit partners, which will continue.

Sustainability is not the responsibility of one employee or team, but rather a commitment as an entire organization and community to continue addressing impacts of climate change. And to that goal, we remain committed.