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Ald. Robert J. Bauman
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Alderman Robert J. Bauman introduces legislation to develop a reserve workforce for snow and ice control

Alderman Robert J. Bauman, chair of the Public Works Committee, introduced legislation at the February 26 Common Council meeting to beef up the city's snow and ice control efforts. **File #181747** directs the Department of Public Works (DPW) to develop a reserve force of drivers and supervisors recruited from the ranks of retired city employees to add resources during snow and ice removal operations.

At the February 13 Public Works Committee meeting, DPW officials were asked to report on the quality and efficiency of recent snow removal operations, when the city received more than a foot of snow. DPW stated that while its goal is to safely, effectively and promptly remove and control snow and ice from city streets, bridges, and crosswalks, work force capacity issues hampered their efforts. Worker shortages because of high turnover in key positions such as equipment drivers, reliance on sanitation crews to plow snow rather than collect garbage and recyclables, and the routine 16-18 hour shifts during a snow event all contribute to a relatively inexperienced team trying to keep pace battling the winter elements.

"Considering the challenges our stretched-thin DPW crews face during a snow event, why not engage a reserve force of plow and salt truck drivers to step in to assist with our round-the-clock operations," Alderman Bauman proposed. "The most knowledgeable and experienced candidates for this reserve force are former DPW employees who have the know-how and familiarity to get the job done, working alongside current crew members or offering them a much-needed break from snow and ice control duties to rest and recharge."

The file will be discussed at a future Public Works Committee meeting.