City of Birmingham
A Walkable Community

MEMORANDUM

Department of Public Services

DATE: **April 17, 2015**

TO: **Joseph A. Valentine, City Manager**

FROM: **Lauren A. Wood, Director of Public Services**

SUBJECT: **Emergency Purchase Frozen Water Services**

On February 19, 2015 the Department of Public Services began to receive calls from customers with no water. During our investigation we discovered that their water service lines had frozen under the roadway. Water service lines have the potential to freeze when the frost line dips below the depth at which the water service line was installed. DPS immediately notified all of our customers that have had their water services lines freeze in the past to turn on their faucets to run water until further notice. Running water ensures that water services will not freeze. This past winter produced frost depths of over four feet in the roadway which is something rarely seen in Southeast Michigan.

The City of Birmingham currently uses a combination of a newly purchased hot water thawing machine and Rhodes Welding Co., Inc. to thaw frozen water service lines. The Department purchased a hot water thawing machine at the end of last winter that uses a small hose to inject hot water into a water service to thaw the ice blockage. If the location has newer water lines, the machine can be hooked up to the water service in the basement of a house. Unfortunately that wasn't the case in most locations which then required us to dig a hole at the property line to hook the machine up there. The new machine was successful in thawing 4 water lines including one that was plastic and doesn't allow welding equipment to be used. Rhodes Welding Co. thaws frozen services using welding equipment to negate the need for an excavation. The total cost of this service was $19,912.50 to thaw 32 frozen water service lines on 10 different days between February 19th and March 14th (24 days). Last winter we spent a total of $33,131.25 to thaw 34 water lines. Funds for this purchase are available in the Water Supply Fund account #591-537.005-811.0000.

SUGGESTED RESOLUTION:
To confirm the City Manager's authorization for the emergency expenditure to thaw frozen water service lines by Rhodes Welding Co., Inc. in the amount of $19,912.50 to be paid from the Water Supply Fund account #591-537.005-811.0000, pursuant to Sec. 2-286 of the City Code.