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Andy Ybarra**
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MEDIA RELEASE

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VILLAGE MOURNING LOSS OF LONGTIME EMPLOYEE Joe “Tiny” Lauro Was Happiest When Helping Others

Franklin Park – The Village of Franklin Park is mourning the loss of its Utilities and Public Works Commissioner Joe ‘Tiny’ Lauro. Tiny, as he was affectionately called by all who knew him, worked for the Village for 42 years. Beginning as a seasonal summer help while a student at East Leyden High School, his entire career was in service to his community.

The Utilities and Public Works Department oversees three divisions: Water and Sewer, Fleet Management, and the Streets Division. As Commissioner, Tiny had oversight of all physical infrastructure, street repairs, snow removal, the forestry program, landscaping, street sweeping, alley maintenance, traffic and street sign replacement and maintenance and repair of all Village vehicles.

Tiny was one of the most caring, compassionate persons or neighbors you could find. In his capacity as Commissioner, Tiny had many opportunities to help fellow Franklin Park residents. He made sure that disabled residents could have safe access to their homes during snowstorms, often personally cleaning snow off ramps and sidewalks. There was no question too small and no problem too large that Tiny would not be eager to provide assistance, advice, and solutions. He

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was always there to help his neighbors, to assist businesses and to add support and aid to neighboring communities.

Mayor Barrett Pedersen shared that not only is Tiny's family heartbroken, but that the entire Village is grieving. "Tiny was not just my Commissioner of Public Works, he was my dear friend," Pedersen stated. "He took tremendous pride in his work, was dedicated, responsible and did everything with kindness and respect. Tiny was thoughtful, generous, and humble. He went above and beyond to help residents struggling to pay their water bills and to negotiate a fair payment program to prevent shut offs. People were his priority, and he knew everyone in town. Tiny's passing is a huge loss for our Village. These will be big shoes to fill," Pedersen concluded.

Board Member, Andy Ybarra, Chair of the Streets, Alleys and Fleet Maintenance Committee stated that Tiny loved serving his community. "His staff used the term 'Tiny Time' because he was always late to meetings. They knew it was because he had stopped to help a resident install a rain barrel, remove debris, or check a leaky toilet on the way to the meeting," Ybarra stated. "He will be greatly missed by all."

Board Member Bill Ruhl offered his deepest condolences to Tiny's wife Kathy and his children, Joey, and Angela. "The entire community of Franklin Park suffered a great loss. Tiny was a kind and caring person that loved his family and his community. He was happiest when he was able to help others. Rest in peace, Tiny, you will be missed," Ruhl said.

Village Board member, Irene Avitia, Chair of the Water and Sewer Committee recalled a story that illustrated Tiny's boundless kindness. "Resident Kat Harris contacted the Village with a problem. In order for her disabled son to get on the school bus, the ramp needed to touch bare ground, or her son would miss school. Every time it snowed Tiny made sure the driveway lip was clear of snow and ice so her son could get on and off the school bus safely," Avitia said. "Tiny always made time for my questions and kept me updated; forever with a cup of coffee in his hand," Avitia concluded.

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“Tiny serves as the ultimate, shining example of what it means to be a public servant. The loss is immeasurable, but his legacy of service will continue to inspire us to strive for excellence. We have lost our friend, but we have not lost our way. He will continue to light our path,” Mayor Pedersen said in closing.

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