



CITY OF HURON  
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

April 19, 2024

Matthew Lasko, City Manager

## ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**ConAgra:** The City received three (3) submittals from qualified and interested development companies. Interviews commenced during the week of March 11th – with two interviews occurring with each respective development team. The city anticipates doing one more round of conversations – this time focused more on the business points, and what each team may be seeking from the city to develop the site.

**Norfolk Southern Holdings:** The city hosted Solomon Jackson from Norfolk Southern approximately a week ago to talk about their holdings and the future of the Carmeuse Plant. Per Norfolk, the lease with Carmeuse expires in early 2024 and neither party desires to renew it. As such, Carmeuse continues to work on site cleanup as required by the lease. Upon vacation, Norfolk Southern will be working with the City to ultimately facilitate the sale and development of their waterfront acreage.

**Oster's:** As of February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024, the city is still working with Columbia Gas and Rural Water to finish utility hookups for final household. Sanitary and electric are completed and operational. The service line has been installed and passed its exterior pressure test. We are just waiting for the final interior pressure test prior to setting the meter.

The City contracted with Barnes Nursery to undertake road removal, final tree and stump clearing and grading and seeding. To date, all three roadways throughout the park have been removed, multiple stumps and dead/decaying trees and rough grading and seeding has been completed. Over the next few weeks, Barnes has completed final grading and work should be completed during the week of April 22.

**Firelands Scientific:** At the February meeting of the Planning Commission, plans were approved for two (2) expansions at the facility. First an approximate 15,000 square foot cultivation addition was approved which will consist of four (4) new smaller greenhouses and secondly a nearly 3,000 square foot addition was approved which will allow for increased lab space. We anticipate construction to occur this year. We are very appreciative of the company's continued investment in their facility and commitment to Huron.

**Two Rivers:** The City is in receipt of the first two zoning applications for the eventual construction of two new homes on Sheltered Brook. We anticipate receiving building plans for these two homes in the very near future. We are very excited to see this project move forward and eventually welcome many new families to Huron.

## INFRASTRUCTURE/STREETS/UTILITIES/IT

**Rt 6 Phase II:** Staff finally received a letter of intent from the Ohio Department of Transportation to allow a 100ft LA Break adjacent to Liberty Ave on Rt6. This break will allow the city to move ahead with planning and resident engagement for a proposed roundabout on Rt6 at Liberty Ave. This project would also close Jim Campbell Blvd at Center St, remove the unwarranted light at Center and Rt6 and add a multi-modal pathway on Jim Campbell. The roundabout will take Rt6 from a two-lane road down to single lane road east of the walk-bridge, slowing traffic coming into town.

A scope meeting with our preferred designer, TranSystems was held during the week of February 19<sup>th</sup>. Staff will be working with the firm over the next few weeks to present a design proposal to Council for consideration – likely at the second meeting in March.

Staff also met with representatives of Shores and Islands, Ohio to request funding for a public art installation within or around the proposed roundabout. This funding would allow for gateway signage denoting both Huron and the broader Shores and Islands region.

**East Side Sidewalks:** For the southside portion, we are currently working through some ODOT ROW acquisitions for temporary access enabling construction. Once this has been concluded, we are ready to put this project out to bid.

For the Northside portion, construction is anticipated to commence during the week of April 22<sup>nd</sup> and will be completed in May.

**Route 13 Crosswalks:** The City has applied to the Ohio Department of Transportation for Systemic Safety Dollars and was awarded funding to cover 90% for this project. The expected cost is \$134,000, with \$120,600 being covered by grant funding. This project will install new crosswalks and flashing beacons on Route 13 at both Forest Hills and Valley View. It is not yet known if these will be able to be installed during the S. Main Street Watermain replacement and resurfacing project or will have to be installed in 2025.

**Pavement Condition and 2023+ Resurfacing:** Bids closed for this project and DL Smith Concrete LLC were the lowest and best at a construction cost of \$2,148,655.30. Preliminary construction schedule will be from the beginning of April to mid-June and will be firmed up in the next few weeks.

Work is ongoing on this project. Many areas in Chaska have already been addressed with new concrete and curbing poured. The contractor will work through Chaska before moving on the Old Homestead II, then Old Homestead I. The expected completion date (weather dependent) is June 21<sup>st</sup>.

**South Main Street Streetscape Design and Engineering:** A scope meeting with our preferred designer, OHM Advisors, was held during the week of February 12<sup>th</sup>. Staff will be working with the firm over the next few weeks to present a design proposal to the Council for consideration.

**South Main St Watermain Replacement Project:** Construction is expected to begin the week of April 29<sup>th</sup>. There will be a complete road closure at the intersection of Mudbrook and Huron-Avery Roads that is expected to last 60 days. The road will be open to emergency vehicles.

**Bike Lane Repainting:** This project went out to bid on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and closed May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023. We received two bidders, but unfortunately both were outside the 10% allowance of engineers estimate. Both bids were rejected. Staff will analyze why the delta between the estimate and bids was so wide.

**US 6 Connectivity Corridor:** ODOT held a public information open house on March 28<sup>th</sup> from 6:00-8:00 p.m. at BGSU Firelands (Cedar Point Center Auditorium) for folks to learn more about the project and ask questions. The project was very well attended by the public. Reminder, there is a 30-day virtual option for folks to still learn about the project which will be open now – April 28<sup>th</sup>. If interested in this option, you are encouraged to visit [publicinput.com/USR6](http://publicinput.com/USR6).

**Huron Public Power Expansion Phase 1:** This is the first expansion project for Huron Public Power. The city is finally out to bid on our first expansion project for Huron Public Power. This project will allow Huron Public Power to be extended northward down Rye Beach Road, under the railroad tracks and across the entrance to Sawmill Parkway. This project went out to bid 1/4/2024 and bids closed on 2/16/2024. A single bid was received in the amount of \$369,870.00 and was presented to Council for consideration at the March 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. There was also a purchase of switchgear before Council for \$58,700, bringing the project cost to a total of \$428,570.

**Huron Public Power Rate Study:** Staff engaged Sawvel and Associates of Findlay, OH to carry out a rate study for HPP. This cost-of-service study will look at our distribution and capital costs, along with our revenue history and projections to ensure this utility is efficient and can keep expanding to serve other businesses and start serving residents.

**Website:** Six vendors presented, and the committee narrowed these options down to three for a deeper dive. In August, the final three carried out in-depth presentations and took question and answer sessions. After final voting, [Revize](#) of Troy, Michigan was selected, and a proposal has been approved by Council. Work has commenced on the website, and we hope to unveil in 2024.

## ZONING/CODE/PLANNING

**Coastal Management Assistance Grants:** The City received six (6) proposals for conceptual design work and selected to negotiate a design contract with OHM Advisors after interviewing three (3) finalists. A scope meeting occurred during the week of February 19<sup>th</sup> and the Council will consider approving a design proposal for \$67,000 at the April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, regular Council meeting.

This plan will look to suggest potential upgrades to the former Showboat property along with enhancing connectivity and accessibility between the Showboat property, through Lakefront Park and to the beach behind the water plant.

**Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area:** As part of the main street/downtown plan – we heard from many folks about the desire to have a designated outdoor refreshment area, also referred to as a DORA, in Huron. DORA’s are governed by the State of Ohio and have recently been approved in Sandusky, Milan, and Port Clinton. Staff have met internally to begin discussing the possibility of such an area within the city and begin to understand the potential safety and operational challenges of such a district. We are still very early on in the process and ultimately, if moving forward, will be subject to significant public and stakeholder feedback.

PARKS AND RECREATION



Fabens Park Dedication:

**SAVE THE DATE!** The Dedication and Ribbon Cutting for the new tennis/pickleball courts at Fabens Park will be held on **Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm**, with details to follow.

**31<sup>st</sup> at 1:00pm** at the Huron Boat Basin & Amphitheater, details to follow.

Anchor Memorial Public Art Dedication:

**SAVE THE DATE!** The Anchor Memorial Public Art Dedication & Celebration will be held on **Friday, May**



**State Capital Budget:** The City submitted State Capital budget requests for during the week of April 1<sup>st</sup> to our respective state legislators – Sen. Nathan Manning and Rep. Dick Stein. Each request was for \$750,000 which is in line with past state capital grant awards in previous years. The city has informally been told that we will be receiving between \$200,000-\$250,000 from the State of Ohio as part of the first \$350M in one-time Strategic Investment funding. There will be another \$350M announced shortly which is on top of the state capital funding bill. The \$700M is from a one-time allocation of surplus operating funds from the state of Ohio. These funds will be used to offset part of the necessary capital improvements needed at the Boat Basin site. We will keep Council up to date as we get more formal information about this funding.

**Berlin Road Park:** The visitor parking area at Berlin Road Park has been completed. The gravel surface has been installed and the entrance/exit has been widened for vehicles to safely maneuver in and out of the parking area. The floating dock system to be placed in the pond for better accessible fishing has been ordered as well. A delivery and installation in late May 2024 is anticipated.

**Huron River Boat Access Ramp Fish Cleaning Station:** The Fish Cleaning Station opened for the season on Wednesday, April 17 for public use. The Parks & Recreation Department is looking forward to the second season of having the public fish cleaning facility open and operational.

**Huron City-Wide Clean-Up:** Thank you to everyone who participated in the City-Wide Clean-Up held on Saturday, April 20. The Clean-Up Event was in celebration of Earth Day on Monday, April 22.

**Summer Camps & Programs:** The Parks & Recreation Summer Camp and Program registration opened on April 10<sup>th</sup>. Within a few short days, program registrations exceeded 250 registrations. The department is excited to welcome participants in the 2024 Summer Camps and Programs. As a reminder, a full list of camps and programs is on the City's website along with the online registration portal.

## SAFETY SERVICES

N/A

## FINANCE

**March 2024 Financial Report:** The March financial report will be sent to the Council and the Finance Committee this week. Through the end of March, the City's income tax revenue is 3% lower than YTD March of 2023. The unencumbered balance in the General Fund is \$1.6 million, or 24% of annual expenditures. We will continue to closely monitor the income tax collections and General Fund performance for any negative revenue trends or unanticipated increases in expenditures. At the end of March, a decrease in the City's income tax and increased subsidy (budgeted) to other operational funds are negatively impacting the General Fund's fund balance.

**Income Tax:** At the February 13<sup>th</sup> Finance Committee meeting, staff presented options for increasing revenue to aid in the future stabilization of several funds and departments. This is a follow-up to the Finance Committee's recommendation and Council's approval to explore additional revenue options following 2024 budget meetings. During those meetings, several City funds, such as fire, parks and recreation, street, and stormwater, will require unsustainable levels of general fund subsidy in the next 3-4 years. As such, staff presented the Finance Committee with an option to address the shortfalls through an income tax increase from 1% to 1.75%, while adding a 100% credit for residents paying income tax to other taxing jurisdictions. Staff are prepared for an exhaustive conversation with the public and our residents over the next several months prior to Council having to decide as to what, if anything, is proposed. Staff have scheduled and will be holding regular meetings and work sessions with various groups, agencies, and neighborhoods to present options, answer questions and solicit feedback. There are also four (4) larger community meetings scheduled with two having already been completed. The following meetings remain:

- April 30, 6:30 PM, Huron Library
- May 9, 12:00 PM, Huron Yacht Club

And staff will be available to meet with other groups or associations as needed to continue to solicit feedback.

## WATER DEPARTMENT

### Recent Activity:

**Backflow Tracking Software:** The Water Department has entered into a contract with Backflow Solutions Inc. (BSI) to manage backflow tracking and reporting. This is essential to keep customers and the city compliant with OEPA regulations.

**Sludge Retention Dikes:** Smith Paving has been given a notice to proceed with the removal of the south sludge retention dike at the WFP. This work will take less than a week to complete and will be scheduled prior to June 2024.

### Active Project Updates:

**Alternate Intake/Sludge Lagoon:** The City accepted a proposal from Kleinfelder on January 12, 2024, in the amount of \$344,840 for design, bid and administration services. Staff met with Lead Engineer, Tom Borck, on January 17, 2024, to discuss this project in depth. The sludge lagoon rehab scope was identified with Kleinfelder, as well. A grant/loan combination was applied for through OPWC for an amount not to exceed \$262,500. Surveying has been completed.

Surveying has been completed for the water tower site, alternate intake site, and sludge lagoon site. Boring samples are the next step of the project to be completed. The city has entered into an access agreement with Ardagh to obtain boring samples from their property.

**West Side Water Tower:** The City accepted a proposal from Kleinfelder on January 12, 2024, in the amount of \$132,250 for design and bidding services. On June 16<sup>th</sup>, The City was awarded \$5M from Governor DeWine's Ohio BUILDS water and wastewater infrastructure grant program. This is the largest allowable grant in the State of Ohio, and we believe it to be the largest single grant the City of Huron has ever received. We are thankful to our State and Local partners that help make projects like this possible. Surveying has been completed for the water tower site. Boring samples are the next step. Kleinfelder has provided renderings of the new water tower.

**Plant Re-Rating:** Kleinfelder has applied to the EPA on behalf of the City for a plant rerating of 4.95 MGD; approval from the EPA is still pending. The carbon feed system at the filtration plant did not meet the EPA requirement of 40ppm. On 3/1/2024, WFP staff installed larger pulleys are the current carbon feed equipment. This increased the carbon feed capacity to 44 ppm at 5.87 MGD. There was no cost associated with this work. This information has been sent to Kleinfelder who is working on the rerating with the Ohio EPA.

As of April 18 - Kleinfelder applied for a plant rerating of 5.5 MGD on 3/29/2024. Approval from the EPA is still pending.

**S. Main Water Line Replacement:** Construction is expected to begin the week of April 29th. There will be a complete closure at the intersection of Mudbrook and Huron-Avery Roads that is expected to last 60 days. The road will be open to emergency vehicles.

## STREETS DEPARTMENT

**GIS Mapping:** The Streets Department continues with GIS mapping/updating of catch basin, manholes and storm line. The east side of town has been completed.

**Tree/Foliage Clearing:** The Streets Department cleared trees and foliage behind the guardrail areas with their new Fecon cutter attachment for the mini excavator. Route 6 and Jim Campbell areas have been completed.

**Spring Maintenance:** The Street Department has completed the first sweeping of the 2024 season, completed servicing on their mowing equipment and has begun to mow, and has continued to monitor the Nickel Plate Ditch as it has opened several times this season.

**Riverside Drive/Wheeler Drive:** Staff have installed stop signs and painted stop bars at the intersection of Riverside and Wheeler, making it a 3-way stop.



## PERSONNEL/ADMINISTRATION

**Jack Evans Class IV Examination:** Congratulations to Water Superintendent Jack Evans for passing his Class IV Water Supply Examination through the Ohio EPA, which is the highest certification within the state. Over the past two years, Jack has spent a great deal of time and has been very dedicated to completing his thesis. Passing this examination is a huge achievement and something to be very proud of as there are a limited number of professionals with this certification. Having this license is beneficial to the City of Huron as the city is seeking reclassification of our filtration plant to a Class IV facility.

**Troy Halstead:** Troy Halstead began his CDL training at Great Lakes Trucking School on Monday, March 11. This is a 5-week course with completion scheduled for April 15. As of April 17, Troy Halstead has completed and passed his CDL schooling at Great Lake Trucking. He now needs to pass the state exams to complete his CDL licensure.

## AGREEMENTS

N/A

## PROJECTS OUT FOR BID

N/A

## CONTRACTS

- HJRD Annual Agreement (Recreation) - **Expires 12/31/23.**
- Seeley, Savidge, Ebert & Gourash Co., LLP (Law) – **Expires 6/3/24.**
- Dispatch Agreement – Erie County Sheriff – **Expires 12/31/24.**
- City Prosecutor Employment Agreement – expires **12/31/24.**
- Personnel Officer Employment Agreement – expires **12/31/24.**
- OHM Advisors (Engineering) – **Expires 12/31/24.**
- Erie Soil and Water Conservation District (Engineering) – **Expires 1/31/25.**
- Dynegy Electric Aggregation Agreement – expires **7/30/25.**
- Dynegy Electric Standard Large Stable Service Agreement – expires **08/2025.**
- School Resource Officer – **Expires 8/31/26.**
- Republic Services – **Expires 12/31/26.**

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### April Meetings:

- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.
- Proposed Income Tax Increase Public Outreach Conversation – Tuesday, April 30 at 6:00 PM at the Huron Public Library

### May Meetings:

- Utilities Committee – Wednesday, May 1<sup>st</sup> at 5:00 PM in the Main Conference Room.
- HJRD – Tuesday, May 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM in Council Chambers.
- Proposed Income Tax Increase Public Outreach Conversation – Thursday, May 9 at noon at the Huron Yacht Club.
- BZA – Monday, May 13<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM in Council Chambers.
- Finance Committee – Tuesday, May 14<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM in Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, May 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM in Council Chambers.
- Planning Commission – Wednesday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> at 5:00 PM in Council Chambers.
- Memorial Day – Administrative Offices will be CLOSED on Monday, May 27<sup>th</sup>.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, May 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM in Council Chambers.