



CITY OF HURON
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

June 7, 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. Based on those interviews and fact-finding efforts, the City has narrowed the list down to two (2) finalists including K. Hovnanian/Knew Homes and Prephan Enterprises. These two finalists will be presenting to Council and the public at two (2) separate work sessions scheduled for June 25th and July 9th.

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.

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.

Humanetics: In recognition of their 15th anniversary in the city of Huron, Humanetics are hosting a tour of their facility for Council and staff on Wednesday June 12th at 1:00 p.m. Anyone still interested in attending, please let Terri Welkener know.

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 19th. Staff have finally negotiated a design proposal which will be presented to Council for consideration at their June 11th regular Council meeting.

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, RMH Concrete and Foundations were the lowest and best bidder at a Construction cost of \$52,309.50. Work commenced at the end of April, and as of now the sidewalk has been poured and restoration work has been completed. We expect this project to be closed out in the next few weeks.

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.

The final design package has been submitted to ODOT for approval. As soon as this is approved, we will put this project out to bid. We are still expecting to contract this in 2024.

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 is finishing up in Chaska and has started in Old Homestead. The expected completion date (weather dependent) is still June 21st.

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

A kickoff meeting was held May 9th with OHM Advisors to verify scope and work on estimated project schedule. Currently, we expect to be finished with design and ready to go out to bid in spring of 2025.

South Main St Watermain Replacement Project: This project was advertised December 14th, and bids were received on February 15th, 2024. Spear Brothers, Inc were lowest and best at a bid amount of \$2,549,899.00. The pre-award meeting was carried out on March 1, 2024. This award was presented to the Council at the March 12, 2024, meeting.

Construction on this project has started, working from the southern City limits on Huron Avery, northeastward. This project will require road closures to enable new waterline installations. These road closures will be kept to a minimum as much as possible.

Mudbrook Road was made a one lane road, starting the week of May 20th and will last approximately 60 days, from Rivers Edge south. We will maintain single lane traffic for as long as possible before performing a full closure. Once any full closure takes place, access will be maintained for Emergency vehicles, trash, school buses and local traffic access. The detour will be via Bogart west, Rye Beach south, and Sheid east.

Bike Lane Repainting: This project went out to bid on April 24th, 2023, and closed May 11th, 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.

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 12th 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 19th, and the Council will consider approving a design proposal for \$67,000 at the April 9th, 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. This project is funded on a 50/50 split, with a maximum grant amount from ODNR of \$35,000.

A kickoff meeting was held with OHM Advisors on May 9th to discuss scope and project timeline. We expect to have this project completed by the end of 2024 or shortly thereafter.

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

Lake Front Market: A huge thank you to all the volunteers, organizations and our Parks and Recreation Department for putting on another successful Lakefront Market event this past weekend.

State Capital Budget: The City submitted State Capital budget requests for during the week of April 1st 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 City recently approved a contract with DL Smith Concrete to install a larger, and better delineated parking area at the park. This work will widen the entrance, expand the gravel surface with proper base and significantly enlarge the parking area in the southeast portion of the site. The work is just under \$20,000 and was included in the 2024 budget. This is one of two upgrades we hope to make at the park this year – the second being the purchase and installation of floating dock systems on the pond.

A floating dock has been ordered and we hope to receive and install this exciting new addition before the end of summer.

Amphitheater Canopy Grant Funds: The Parks & Recreation Department has been awarded an Erie Metroparks Local Improvement Grant in an amount sufficient to replace the canopy at the Boat Basin Amphitheater. Application for this grant made in April 2024.

SAFETY SERVICES

New Officer Eric Ritter: The next ceremonial swearing-in will be at the next City Council meeting on June 25th where Ofc. Eric Ritter will be sworn in. Ofc. Ritter just graduated from the police academy from Owens Technical College. Prior to the academy, Ofc. Ritter was with the Ohio State Highway Patrol. Ofc. Ritter resides in Amherst with his fiancé. Although the expenses for sending a candidate to the police academy were budgeted in 2024, a grant from the Erie County Job & Family Services called the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) was secured and it paid for all the expenses. Additionally, a grant was applied for from the OhioMeansJobs Erie County which will pay 50% wage reimbursement for the candidate's first six months of employment. Ofc. Ritter is currently in field training with Ofc. Ryan Boesch.

Flock LPR Cameras: Since February, our FLOCK license plate reader system has had over 600,000 plate reads. The program continues to be an integral part of many investigations.

Project Life Saver: The police department's Project Life Saver program has registered our second resident in the program. Ofc. Joe England heads this program. Project Lifesaver is the premier search and rescue program operated internationally by public safety agencies and is strategically designed for "at risk" individuals who are prone to the life-threatening behavior of wandering. The primary mission of Project Lifesaver is to provide timely response to save lives and reduce potential injury for adults and children with the propensity to wander due to a cognitive condition.

FINANCE

City's Credit Rating Upgraded: I am happy to report that Moody's upgraded the City's credit rating from AA3 to AA2 on May 31, 2024. In the press release, Moody's referenced the City's strong operating reserves and liquidity, which have improved over the past several years from conservative budgeting and a growing revenue base. The upgrade should lower interest rates on the upcoming \$2M bond issuance. Moody's press release also stated the importance of maintaining current fund balance levels to prevent a downgrade.

May 2024 Financial Report: The May financial report will be available this week. Below is a link to the April report.

[April Report](#)

Income Tax: Staff recently concluded its four (4) public meetings regarding a potential income tax increase. We have one more meeting scheduled with a local HOA on June 17 and continue to be willing to meet with any person or organization moving forward. The Finance Committee, who met on May 14th, did unanimously approve the staff recommendation for how to structure a proposed increase. This topic will be revisited in late June as Council will be holding a public hearing on June 25th.

WATER DEPARTMENT

Recent Activity:

Sludge Retention Dikes: Smith Paving has completed the removal of the sludge retention dike at the WFP.

Water Plant Production Record: The water plant recorded yet another highest single month record in May of water production, setting a record of 92.363MG. The Water Superintendent has been in contact with the Ohio EPA regarding the urgency of the plant rerating.

Backflow Management: A new backflow management solution went live with Backflow Solutions Inc. (BSI) on 5/1/24. All backflow reports from contractors are being submitted and monitored online through BSI. An automated backflow survey will be issued to necessary customers in the coming weeks.

Sludge Retention Dikes: Smith Paving has begun removal of the south retention dike. Work is expected to be completed by May 28, 2024.

Water Plant Open House: The plant is planning to host an Open House/tour on Tuesday, June 18th, 2024, at 6:30PM. This will be on a first-come basis, maxing out at 20 residents. Depending on the responses, a second open house will be organized. This event was advertised on the City's Facebook page on May 22nd.

Northwest Ohio American Waterworks Association: The City of Huron will be hosting the Northwest Ohio American Waterworks Association summer meeting on Thursday, June 20, 2024. The meeting will be held at Mesenberg's with a plant tour to follow at the Water Filtration Plant.

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.

Boring samples were completed at the tower site on 5/13 and the river intake site was completed on 5/14. Electrical engineers have also been onsite to assess utility needs and availability for both sites. Due to timing constraints, it is being advised that a low-interest loan from OWDA will be the only option for funding the balance of the water tower project.

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 16th, 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 5.5 MGD; Approval from the EPA is still pending, and the Water Superintendent has notified the Ohio EPA of this urgency. The EPA indicated on 5/3/24 that the city should receive a response in the coming weeks. No further correspondence from EPA Plan Review has been received at this time. The Northwest District office indicated that the city will not receive violation at this time for producing beyond 3.4 MGD. This is because the rerating application is in review.

S. Main Street Water Line Replacement Project: Boring work began on Monday, 5/6 and pipe was being installed on Tuesday, 5/7. The roadway on S. Main St. is still open but is reduced to one lane currently. The contractor has neared completion of installation on Main Street and will be shifting towards Mudbrook. The watermain on Main St. will be dechlorinated and pressure tested. Once negative bacteriological samples are returned, the contractor will have a separate crew onsite to begin tap work for each residence on Main St. This work will be concurrent with installing a watermain on Mudbrook. A full closure of this intersection is expected within the next 2-3 weeks. A low-interest loan (3.37%) will be applied for from OWDA with a repayment term of 20 years.

STREETS DEPARTMENT

Troy Halstead: Troy Halstead has completed and passed all state exams and now has his CDL license. Congrats to him!

1234 Marina Drive: The culvert installation at 1234 Marina Drive has been completed.

Catch Basin Repair: Repair of the catch basin at Gumwood/Maple Avenue has been completed.

Radar Speed Signs: The radar speed signs have been moved from Strowbridge Drive to Adams Avenue.

Street Signs: Staff have updated all street name signs in the Rye Beach neighborhood.

Crosswalk/Stop Bar Painting: Staff have completed painting of stop bars and crosswalks in the Rye Beach, Wexford, and Village Green areas.

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

PERSONNEL

Planning Director: The city continues to receive applications and undertake interviews for this position.

Finance Director: The city continues to receive applications and undertake interviews for this position. In the interim, the city does intend to enter into a consultant contract with Mr. Swaisgood to continue to assist the finance department operations until the full-time position is filled.

Congressionally Directed Spending Request: We are please to share that the City has been notified that both of our funding requests to Senator Sherrod Brown have been submitted to the Senate Appropriations Committee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies. These requests included \$1,500,000 for the secondary intake and \$1,750,000 for Boat Basin renovations. This is a major hurdle to jump in hopes of eventually securing funding later this year through the final federal appropriations measure. We are so appreciative of Sen. Sherrod Brown's support for the City of Huron and these critical projects. We will keep Council updated as the process unfolds.

AGREEMENTS

N/A

PROJECTS OUT FOR BID

N/A

CONTRACTS

- HJRD Annual Agreement (Recreation) – **Expires 12/31/23 (on current agenda).**
- 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.**
- Seeley, Savidge, Ebert & Gourash Co., LLP (Law) – **Expires 6/3/25**
- Dynegy Electric Aggregation Agreement – expires **7/30/25.**
- Dynegy Electric Standard Large Stable Service Agreement – expires **08/2025.**
- Building Official – Service Agreement - **Expires 7/25/2026**
- School Resource Officer – **Expires 8/31/26.**
- Republic Services – **Expires 12/31/26.**

UPCOMING MEETINGS

June Meetings:

- BZA – Monday, June 10th at 5:30pm in Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, June 11th at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.
- Council Work Session on ConAgra Development – Tuesday, June 25th at 5:30pm in Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, June 25th at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.
- Public Hearing on Tax Budget for Fiscal Year 2025 – Tuesday, June 25th at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.
- Public Hearing on Firelands Scientific's Petition to rescind Ordinance 1121.08 and update other sections of the Huron Codified Ordinances to align with ORC Chapter 3780 – Tuesday June 25th at 6:30 in the Council Chambers.
- Public Hearing on proposed revisions to Chapter 185 relating to local income tax – Tuesday, June 25th at 6:30p, in the Council Chambers.
- Planning Commission – Wednesday, June 26th at 5:00pm in Council Chambers.

REMINDER: City offices will be closed on June 19th in observance of Juneteenth.

SAVE THE DATE: The Huron Public Library will be celebrating the completed renovation of the Children & Teen Area with a ribbon cutting on Friday, June 21st at 12pm. Musician Zak Morgan will kick off the celebration with a concert at 11am.

July Meetings:

- Utilities Committee Meeting – Wednesday, July 3rd at 4pm in the main conference room.
- BZA – Monday, July 8th at 5:30pm in Council Chambers.
- Council Work Session on ConAgra Development – Tuesday, July 9th at 5:30pm in Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, July 9th at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.
- Council Work Session on Waterfront Parks Plan – Tuesday, July 23rd at 5:30pm in Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, July 23rd at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.
- Planning Commission – Wednesday, July 17th at 5:00pm in Council Chambers.

REMINDER: City offices will be closed on July 4th in observance of Independence Day