

Infrastructure/Streets

Sawmill Parkway: The City continues to finalize the financing and funding plans for Sawmill Parkway prior to finalizing construction drawings and ultimate bid documents. Based on all the funding streams involved and ultimately seasonality of the roadwork construction season, the project is anticipated to occur in Spring of 2022. A summary of the funding thus far for the approximate \$3.4-\$3.5M project include:

- \$412,500 from OPWC which has already been awarded (just waiting on final agreement with OPWC)
- \$1,000,000 from Jobs Ohio – the City has received a conditional offer letter from Jobs Ohio and submitted a formal application for funding. We are hoping to get State Controlling Board approval in April.
- The City has been made aware that ODOT Jobs and Commerce is reserving \$250,000 for the project. This will still need to be approved by our local MPO and also a grant agreement will need to be entered into between ODOT and the City.
- The City received communication from EDA that we have made it through their Internal Review Committee and are still being considered for grant funding. The City is currently in the process of responding to a document request for a few other pieces of information. We hope to have an update to Council in the upcoming weeks about final grant determination.

Berlin Road Project: The City is currently in the bidding process for the Berlin Road water line replacement and resurfacing projects. Bids will be due soon and staff hopes to approach Council soon for permission to enter into a contract with the lowest and best bidder.

Economic Development

Ardagh: The Planning Commission approved the site plan for all 3 phases of future development of Ardagh. The Design Review Board approved phase 1, with a broader design package anticipated for phases 2 and 3. Phase 2 and 3, which is the major addition, is contingent upon a vacation of ROW request from the developer to the City. They have requested, and we have begun evaluating, a request to vacate roughly 350-450 ft. of Sawmill Parkway. This will ultimately require review and approval of Council.

The City also is in receipt of a Community Reinvestment Area tax abatement request which is currently being reviewed for completeness. Upon verification of completeness, the request will be considered by the Tax Incentive Review Council.

USGS / Harbor North: The Design Review Board officially approved the design and landscape package for the new USGS facility. Anticipated completion date is still slated for early to mid-summer 2021.

Zoning/Code

Transient Rental: The transient rental working group has met multiple times over early part of 2021 considering revisions to the City existing transient rental ordinance. The most current version of the revised transient rental ordinance was presented and discussed at work session of the full Council in late February. Based on those conversations, Council will begin consideration of the proposed revisions at its March 9, 2021 meeting. The process will also include a public hearing to occur on March 23, 2021 at McCormick Middle School during the normal Council meeting.

Annual Sidewalk Inspection Program: The City is beginning the process of implementing the new sidewalk inspection, repair, and assessment program. The City is planning on inspecting every single sidewalk in the City proactively every 3-4 years, plus will be inspecting any complaints as well. The City is currently in the process of breaking the City into near equal quadrants that will be put on an every 3-4 year rotation. Each quadrant will be inspected and any section of sidewalk found to be damaged, cracked or lifted will be noted and a violation letter will be sent to the respective property owner allowing them time to comply or minimally provide evidence via contract with a contractor, to have the sidewalk section repaired or replaced. The City will eventually bid out in late summer all sections of sidewalk needing repaired or placed that have not been addressed, with the costs of those projects assessed to the real estate taxes.

Parks and Recreation

ODNR Public Fish Cleaning Station: Staff had additional conversation with ODNR about the proposed fish cleaning station. ODNR indicated they have approval for State Fiscal Year 2022 (July 1 2021 – June 30 2022) and are planning on moving forward based on the initial estimates provided from the city. They are sending a draft grant agreement, which we'll review internally, and present to Council to determine whether there is comfort with moving to next step.

Utilities

Water Bill Moratorium Reminder: The current moratorium on water shutoffs will expire on March 31 unless action is taken by Council to extend the deadline. With 3rd notices and the

Water Department currently tagging doors, 114 accounts remain delinquent (down from 157 delinquent accounts from two weeks ago), totaling \$21,199 in outstanding bills (3.5% of total billed). Payments are still coming in and we believe some late payments are a result of delayed mail services and the City switching to a new online payment solution.

Traditionally, 130-160 customers receive the tag at this point in the cycle and only 15-20 accounts are shutoff. We are noticing the majority of accounts currently outstanding are repeat customers that wait for the door tag to pay their bill. The current tagging of the doors, expected to be completed early next week, has resulted in more payments and customer phone calls. Although stated on the notices, door tag and suggested to customers calling, no customers have been interested in setting up a payment plan.

Huron Public Power: The administration finalized the long-term power supply purchase for Mucci Farms. The price came in very competitive: \$0.031 / kWh (which is a 14% decrease from 2018's market pricing). The supply agreement is from March 1st 2021 to December 31st 2023. We're also working with AMPT on the initial engineering and design for updating the existing meter infrastructure at the main delivery point as well as the construction of the secondary 69-kV transmission delivery point, which greatly improves our system reliability. The administration is also exploring revisions to our rate structure which would result in energy cost savings to HPP's customers which is a result of increased usage of HPP and also to be reflective of the transmission asset sale.

Finance/Budget

American Rescue Plan: The \$1.9 trillion bill was approved and signed into law on March 11. The City is estimated to receive approximately \$1.25-\$1.35 million over the span of two years. This is not a final number, nor is there a known timetable on receipt of these funds. The City will have until December 2024 to use these funds. The City will keep the finance committee and council apprised of Huron's final allocation, along with a listing of eligible uses.

Personnel:

Water: In 2021, the Water Plant is anticipated to move towards 24/7 operation, which has long been a goal of the City. To do so, this will require the addition of one more employee. The City has closed the advertising process has completed several interviews. As of March 19, 2021, the City has extended an offer which to a candidate which has since been accepted. The new hire is anticipated to start on March 22, 2021.

Police: The City is working with the National Testing Network to administer the testing process for potential candidates to be considered for officers of the Huron Police Department. The testing process has begun, and applications are being accepted until mid-March. As of March 15, 2021, the City is in receipt of over 30 applications which is a very high number of

applicants. The City is planning to hire two (2) full-time police officers – 1 of which is backfilling a recent retirement and 1 of which is an additional new officer.

Engineering / Svc. Dir.: The City is moving forward with the hiring process for a Service Director. This new position will be tasked with oversight of engineering, water filtration, water distribution, streets, fleet and the construction side of utility expansion projects. The job description has been completed and the City advertised on Saturday March 6 and Saturday March 13. Application will be accepted until near the end of the month.

Extension of Emergency Sick Leave: Congress passed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) in 2020 requiring employers to provide employees with 80 hours of paid emergency sick leave (in addition to the employee's normal sick leave) for specified reasons related to COVID-19. The FFCRA was effective April 1, 2020, through December 31, 2020. In January 2021, the City extended this policy through March 31, 2021, under the City's home rule Charter. The March 23rd meeting was scheduled to be the next decision point on either extending the policy another quarter or letting it lapse. However, the American Rescue Plan appears to have extended the FFCRA through September 2021, with other eligible reasons such as obtaining the COVID-19 vaccine. One thing we know for sure is the extended policy is **voluntary** for employers after December 31, 2020. Staff is awaiting more guidance on this extension and is planning to have more information for Council by the first meeting in April.

Agreements

2021 will be busy with renegotiation of several multi-year agreements/contracts that expire this year. Agreements/contracts to be reviewed and renegotiated for 2021 include:

- OHM Advisors (Engineering) – **Completed.**
- Erie Soil and Water Conservation District (Engineering) – **Completed.**
- Chief Building Official and Inspection Services (Building)
- Prosecutor (Court)
- HJRD Annual Agreement (Recreation) – **Completed.**
- Huron Township Fire Protection Agreement (Fire)
- Seeley, Savidge, Ebert & Gourash Co., LLP (Law)
- FOP – Patrol Officers (Police)
- FOP – Sergeants (Police)
- IAFF (Fire)
- AFCSME

It should be noted we are likely to hold off on consideration and negotiation of both FOP agreements, IAFF and AFCSME until end of Q2 so as to have a better understanding of any COVID related impacts (or lack thereof) to the City's budget.