



CITY OF HURON  
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

July 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. 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 the Council and the public at two (2) separate work sessions scheduled for July 9<sup>th</sup> and July 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**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.

## INFRASTRUCTURE/STREETS/UTILITIES/IT

**Rt 6 Phase II:** Pursuant to authorization provided by Resolution No. 50-2024 adopted by Council on June 11, 2024, the city executed an Agreement with TranSystems Corporation of Ohio for professional design and bidding services relating to the US 6 Phase II Project in the amount of \$369,469. Legislation was passed for this project on June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and a contract has been signed. We will work on design and will carry out public engagement throughout the project. It is hoped to construct this project in 2025.

**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.

**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:** All construction work is completed, and a final walkthrough was carried out 7/2/2024. A punch list has been generated and associated work should be completed over the next few weeks.

**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.

A kickoff meeting was held May 9<sup>th</sup> 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 14<sup>th</sup>, and bids were received on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 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.

Mudbrook Road was made a one lane road, starting the week of May 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

All customers on S. Main Street are connected to the new water main. Residential taps are currently being installed on Mudbrook. Once all taps are installed in this area, the old watermains will be physically disconnected from the system and abandoned in place (S. Main & Mudbrook). A new watermain has been installed on Valley View Drive and bacteria samples have been collected. These samples have passed, and this street will start receiving water taps. A new watermain has been installed on Hickory and Forest Hills and bacteria samples are in the process of being collected. New taps will be installed on these two streets after a passed test. The contractor is currently beginning work on Huron and Mills Street. Finally, as part of this work, a new concrete sidewalk is going to be installed on the west side of the Valley Ford property (currently painted blue lines on asphalt. Additionally, the public right away will be reclaimed and grass planted. We have spoke to Valley Ford who is ok with the proposed improvements.

A low-interest loan has been granted from OWDA with a repayment term of 20 years at 3.48%.

The City recently executed an Ohio Public Works Commission Infrastructure Program Project Agreement relating to the South Main Street Water Main Replacement Project for financial assistance in the form of a grant and loan in an amount not to exceed \$412,500. The grant portion is in the amount of \$275,000 and the loan portion is \$137,500. The project must be completed by April 2025 to be eligible for these funds.

**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.

**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:** We expect to have this project completed by the end of 2024 or shortly thereafter. A second meeting (conceptual) was carried out this week and staff feedback given. We expect to see some more concepts at the end of the month. The next step would be a joint Council/Planning Commission/HJRD work session either in August or September.

**Light Trespass Ordinance:** Based on feedback from the last Council meeting, the Law Department has been charged with reviewing ordinances that exist in other cities to gain an understanding of the various methods of enforcing and what tools may be needed. Once this information is compiled, we plan to schedule a work session with all the Council to understand what options exist to address the issue.

### PARKS AND RECREATION:

**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.

**Nickelplate Beach:** As some may be aware, the City currently leases the beach and parking areas from Norfolk Southern Railroad. The lease, as written, permits Norfolk Southern to terminate the lease with 30 days notice to the City. The City has reached out to Norfolk Southern to begin conversations on securing this regional asset as publicly accessible recreation space – in perpetuity. We will keep Council and the public informed as the process moved forward.

**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 see this installed the week of July 22<sup>nd</sup>. We also anticipate beginning the public outreach efforts in the next week or two to select a permanent name for the park.

## SAFETY SERVICES

**Ohio Office of Budget and Management Grant Award:** The Fire Department has applied for Ohio Ambulance Impacted Industry Program grant funds once again through the Ohio Office of Budget and Management, and we are pleased to advise that the Huron Fire Department has received an award distribution in the amount of \$24,336 to be distributed to the 15 full-time firefighter/EMT's who served during the pandemic as premium pay.

**Assistance to Firefighters Grant Award:** The Fire department was awarded a FEMA – Assistance to Firefighters Grant on 7/12 in the amount of \$155,787 for the purchase of turnout gear. This grant award should allow us to purchase 30 complete sets of gear. A few weeks ago, I submitted a requisition for ten sets of gear as we are in dire need and did not think we would receive word on the grant for several months yet. Fortunately, for us the order had not gone through yet so we will now be able to combine the grant funds with our capital dollars allowing us to outfit the entire department (40-42 sets). We have not been able to accomplish this since 2002. We will be working with our vendor over the course of the next several weeks to finalize the details. Delivery time is generally 2-3 months, and I would expect to take delivery sometime in the fall. There is a 5% match for this grant so we will be responsible for approximately \$7,800 which we have available in our budget.

**Ohio Emergency Management Agency Grant:** Safety Services received a grant from the Ohio Emergency Management Agency for 75% of the overtime expenses related to extra staffing required for the Eclipse event on 04/08/2024. The fire department received \$773.17, and the police department received \$2,005.28 in funds.

**MOU with FOP/Sergeants and Patrol Officers:** The City of Huron and the two Fraternal Order of Police bargaining units in the police department (officers and sergeants) are proposing a memorandum of understanding. This MOU is a temporary pilot program to implement changing from 8-hour shifts to 12-hour shifts. These new 12-hour shifts are used by every other agency in the county and surrounding counties. These proposed shift assignments will begin Sunday, August 4th, and the hours of the shifts will be from 6am to 6pm and 6pm to 6am. The department will be divided into four squads and staffed with three officers per squad which will work on 80 hour bi-weekly schedules instead of 40-hour weekly schedules. This MOU will expire on 12/28/2024, at which time, the operational and economic benefits will be evaluated. If there are no issues, this new schedule will be continued in 2025. This new proposed schedule should improve our retention and recruitment efforts in addition to providing more coverage of officers on shifts.

## FINANCE

**Income Tax:** Staff recently concluded its four (4) public meetings regarding a potential income tax increase. We also met with residents from the River's Edge neighborhood during the week of June 17 and continue to offer meetings to all individuals and organizations interested. The Finance Committee, who met on May 14<sup>th</sup>, did unanimously approve the staff recommendation for how to structure a proposed increase. The city also held a public hearing on the topic at its regularly scheduled Council meeting on June 25<sup>th</sup> and held a first and second reading on potential legislation. **A third and final public reading will occur at the July 23<sup>rd</sup> City Council meeting.**

## WATER DEPARTMENT

### Recent Activity:

**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.

A backflow survey will be issued to commercial, industrial, and residents with sprinkler systems in coming weeks. This survey is used to determine water use practices and assists the city in monitoring active backflows as well as discovering needs for backflow devices.

### Active Project Updates:

**Alternate Intake/Sludge Lagoon:** 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 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 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. The WFP did exceed our current rating on 6/17/24 as 3.455 MG of water was produced that day. The EPA was notified.

## STREETS DEPARTMENT

**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 has conditionally offered the Finance Director position to Mr. Ed Widman who has accepted said offer. The offer is conditioned on being affirmed by a majority of City Council since the Finance Director position is a chartered position. If affirmed at our July 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting, Mr. Widman will commence his employment with the City of Huron on Monday August 5<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Widman is a very experienced municipal finance professional, having served in the past as the finance director for both the City of Sandusky and Erie County. Most recently, Mr. Widman has served as the finance director for Avon Lake. We look forward to Mr. Widman joining the team.

## AGREEMENTS

N/A

## PROJECTS OUT FOR BID

N/A



## CONTRACTS

- HJRD Annual Agreement (Recreation) – **Expires 12/31/24.**
- 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.**
- 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

### July Meetings:

- Council Work Session on ConAgra Development – Tuesday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30pm in Council Chambers
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.
- Scott Cemetery Board – Monday, July 29<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm at Huron Township Hall
- Huron Joint Port Authority – Wednesday, July 31<sup>st</sup> at 6:00pm at Huron Township Hall

### August Meetings:

- Utilities Meeting – Wednesday, August 7<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm in the main conference room.
- BZA Meeting – Monday, August 12<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm in Council Chambers.
- Finance Committee Meeting – Tuesday, August 13<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm in Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, August 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.
- Planning Commission – Wednesday, August 21<sup>st</sup> at 5:00pm in Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, August 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.