



CITY OF HURON
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

March 8, 2024

Matthew Lasko, City Manager

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ConAgra: The City received three (3) submittals from qualified and interested development companies. Interviews will be commencing this week and continuing through the end of March in hopes of making a recommendation to Council in April.

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 23rd, 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. Columbia gas is scheduled to install their service line on March 13th and if the pressure test is approved, the meter will be set the same day.

The City is also in the process of securing bids to undertake final grading and seeding.

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: 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 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.

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. Now that Council has approved the contract staff hopes to have a schedule for commencement and completion 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.

Pavement Condition and 2023+ Resurfacing: This project is out to bid and has an estimated construction window from April through the end of June 2024, weather cooperating. Staff will reach out to the relevant HOA's to provide an update.

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.

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 Council for consideration.

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 will be presented to Council at the March 12, 2024 meeting along.

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.

US 6 Connectivity Corridor: Reminder to the public and other interested stakeholders, there will be an in person public information open house on March 28th 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. Additionally, there is a 30-day virtual option for folks to learn about the project which will be open from March 28 – April 28th. If interested in this option, you are encouraged to visit 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 it will be before Council for consideration at the upcoming meeting. There will also be 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 we hope to present a contract to Council in the next few weeks for consideration. 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 has 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.

Demolition of 531 Belin Road: A request for proposals was issued to demolish the condemned structure at 531 Berlin Road. A well-attended pre-bid walk through was carried out this past Wednesday, with proposals due next week. The intent is to assess the cost of the demolition against the property. Nine bidders submitted quotes and Marksch Excavating and Demolition were the lowest and best at \$22,500. The contractor has graded and seeded the site. We will be withholding a 10% retainer until the grass has fully grown in.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Pancake Breakfast with the Easter Bunny & Egg Hunt:

SAVE THE DATE! The City is partnering with the Huron Lions Club, Horvath Roofing and AkzoNobel to present the annual Pancake Breakfast with the Easter Bunny & Egg Hunt.

Breakfast will be served at 8:00am at the First Presbyterian Church, and the magic show will start at 10:00.

Following the magic show, the Egg Hunt will take place at the Boat Basin at 1pm.



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 8th at 3:00pm**, with details to follow.

Anchor Memorial Public Art Dedication:

SAVE THE DATE! The Anchor Memorial Public Art Dedication & Celebration will be held on **Friday, May 31st at 1:00pm** at the Huron Boat Basin & Amphitheater, details to follow.



State Capital Budget: On December 11th, the City made a formal request to the Greater Sandusky Partnership for prioritization of the Huron Boat Basin rehabilitation to be prioritized locally for state capital funding. Although making GSP's priority list does not limit the City's ability to seek funding on our own, there is significant benefit to being prioritized by GSP from a lobbying and advocacy standpoint at the state level. We will keep Council apprised of any updates as this process moves forward.

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.

Huron Boat Basin Dredging: The City finally received permission to open lake dump dredged material. Staff put out a bid to complete this work and received two (2) bids. Both bids were extremely close and while they came in over the budgeted amount, the unit price was very close to bids received in 2018. The lowest and best bidder was Huffman Equipment Rental Inc. in the amount of \$366,477.50. Huffman mobilized their equipment on February 26th, and started moving material on Tuesday, February 27th. They are making good progress and should be completed within a few weeks with good weather.

SAFTEY SERVICES

Flock Safety Cameras: After one month with the Flock LPR's in operation, we have over 250,000 plate reads. The system has been used in several situations already with positive results. The Police Department continues to educate the public on the positive uses of the system.

K-9 Unit: The Police Department's K-9 Unit made an appearance at the Erie County Home Show hosted at Sawmill Creek, which was a great public relations event.

Eclipse: The Police Department continues to work with our local and county partners for the Eclipse on April 8th.

FINANCE

February 2024 Financial Report: The February financial report was sent to Council and the Finance Committee a few weeks ago. A link to the report can be found below. The City's income tax is down 2.5% through the end of February from February of 2024. The unencumbered balance in the General Fund is \$1.3 million, or 20% 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 February, 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.

[February 2024 Financial Report](#)

Income Tax: At the February 13th 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 preparing 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 are currently preparing material to begin holding regular meetings and work sessions with various groups, agencies, and neighborhoods to present options, answer questions and solicit feedback.

WATER DEPARTMENT

Recent Activity:

Pump Drive Installation: Pump drives are being installed at the Water Filtration Plant by Firelands Electric beginning on February 21, 2024. Two drives were fried during a power surge in December. The claim filed with Ohio Edison regarding the damaged drives was recently denied; however, the Finance Director is looking into reimbursement through PEP. The work should be completed and pumps operational by February 23, 2024.

Backflow Tracking Software: The Water Superintendent is currently exploring options for a software program related to backflow tracking and reporting. This is essential to keep customers and the City compliance with OEPA regulations.

Jack Evans Class IV Examination: Water Superintendent Jack Evans met with the Ohio EPA Advisory Council in Columbus on February 15, 2024, to discuss his Class IV examination. Final clarifications are being added and the examination is expected to pass by mid-April.

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.

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 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.

STREETS DEPARTMENT

GIS Mapping: The Streets Department continues with GIS mapping/updating of catch basin, manholes and storm line on the east side of town.

Tree/Foliage Clearing: The Streets Department cleared trees and foliage behind the guardrail areas with their new Fecon cutter attachment for the mini excavator in the Route 6/Berlin Rd. Areas, as well as the sidewalk area on Catalpa Rd. They also cut down or trimmed back many trees along the Route 6 guardrail area.

Storm Lines: The Streets Department jetted and cleaned out storm lines and catch basins on Taylor Avenue.

PERSONNEL/ADMINISTRATION

Boat Basin Facility Manager: After interviewing several applicants, Doug Steinwart has offered the position of Boat Basin Facility Manager to Mr. Bryan Edwards, who will be starting with us on March 11th. Bryan comes to us with 10+ years of managerial experience and an extensive background in marketing, public relations, and event planning through his work at Cedar Point and Erie Shores & Islands.

Open Positions: Come join a winning team at Huron Parks & Recreation. We have several part-time seasonal positions available, including Nickel Plate Beach Parking Attendants, Youth Program Assistants, Parks Maintenance Crew and Huron Boat Basin Dockhands. To apply, go to www.cityofhuron.org or our social media channels for more information.

Jeff Fantozzi: The City lost one of its own on Sunday, March 3rd. Jeff Fantozzi, our Zoning Inspector, passed away suddenly due to a short illness. Jeff was a wonderful colleague and an even greater person. He will be missed by his City of Huron family, and we extend our condolences to Jeff's family and friends.

Annual Report: Department heads are in the process of finishing up providing 2023-year end information for the annual report. Once received, this will be summarized and compiled in a formal annual report – which we hope to be completed in late February or early March.

New Patrol Officer: After a lengthy hiring process, the Police Department has selected Zachary Blair as the next full-time police officer. He is a lateral transfer from the Sandusky Police Department with 6-½ years of full-time experience. Prior to that, he was a part-time officer for the Huron Police Department for 3 years. He will start on March 27th and will be officially sworn in at the March 26th Council meeting.

AGREEMENTS

Huron Public Power Expansion: The City executed two (2) easement agreements to permit for the expansion of Huron Public Power northward on Rye Beach Road. There were too many existing underground utilities in the right of way – leading the City to explore burying our conduit and lines within private property. The agreements were entered into with 5 Crooks, LLC, and Bradley Francis individually.

PROJECTS OUT FOR BID

N/A

CONTRACTS

- HJRD Annual Agreement (Recreation) - **Expires 12/31/23.**
- Erie Soil and Water Conservation District (Engineering) – **Expires 1/31/24.**
- 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.**
- 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

March Meetings:

- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, March 12th at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.
 - Records Commission – Wednesday, March 13th at 9:00am in the main conference room.
 - BZA – Monday, March 22nd at 5:30pm in Council Chambers.
 - Planning Commission – Wednesday, March 20th at 5:00pm in Council Chambers.
 - City Council Meeting – Tuesday, March 26th at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.
- **Good Friday – Administrative Offices will be CLOSED at noon on Friday, March 29th.**

April Meetings:

- HJRD – Tuesday, April 2nd at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.
- Utilities – Wednesday, April 3rd at 5:00pm in the main conference room.
- BZA – Monday, April 8th at 5:30pm in Council Chambers
(will most likely be rescheduled).
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, April 9th at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.
- Planning Commission – Wednesday, April 17th at 5:00pm in Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, April 23rd at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.