

City Manager's Report

DECEMBER 21, 2015

Grants Applied for and Received

Staff completed the 2015-2016 Wellhead Protection grant proposal for \$60,000 to include the chemical inventory project, update the contaminant source inventory/risk assessment, educational ads, radio campaign, metro bus placard educational campaign and upgrade the www.protectyourwater.net website.

Community Planning & Development (CP&D)

➤ Planning

At its regular meeting held on November 5, 2015, the Planning Commission voted to recommend to the City Commission to:

- approve the text amendment for the Outdoor Sports/Recreation Lighting and Noise Ordinance with an adjustment to the use table to increase games from two to four in the 201 – 500 foot range.

Three site plan projects were processed as follows:

1. A new, two-tenant commercial building at 2075 Drake Road
2. A new bed and breakfast use in the house at 1403 Grand Avenue
3. The addition of Crown Castle equipment to the cell tower at 2839 Millcork

Five other projects were submitted for review, but need more information before they can be formally processed.

The new KVCC Healthy Living Campus facilities were inspected for compliance and will be provided with temporary occupancy certificates. Finalization of the improvements will take place during the next few months.

Four requests for new certificates (plus one transfer of an existing certificate to a new owner) for Neighborhood Enterprise Zone Certificates in the Vine neighborhood were processed. The requests will be presented to the City Commission in December.

➤ Housing

In 2015, the City responded to 958 tall grass and weed complaints. This was a 158% increase over 2014. The 958 cases were distributed as follows:

- 300 were taken care of by the property owner before the City responded.
- 252 were sent a violation notice and responded by mowing prior to re-inspection.
- 358 were sent a violation notice and subsequently had to be referred to the mowing contractor.
- 31 were cancelled due to wrong address or same owner/adjacent lot.
- 5 were referred to the Kalamazoo County Land Bank.
- 12 were referred to Kalamazoo County Treasury office.

➤ Code Compliance / Anti-Blight

The Code Compliance Team completed over 220 inspections including 160 Chapter 22 Trash violations and 51 Anti-Blight violations.

The Kalamazoo County Hoarding Task Force held a subcommittee meeting on November 17 to discuss completion of the hoarding task force manual. Representatives from Gryphon Place and the City of Portage assisted in document preparation of the draft decision matrix (self help guide to dealing with a hoarder) for the manual. The next meeting in December is at the Housing Resources Incorporated offices.

➤ Building & Trades

In November there were 467 permits issued, representing \$8,241,836 in construction valuation. These figures brought year-to-date permits to 3,680, representing year-to-date construction valuation of \$57,214,457.

➤ Community Development

Contracts were awarded for the demolition of 17 blighted residential structures. Demolition has started and will be completed by the end of December. The City Commission approved the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2 (NSP2) Program Income Grant in the amount of \$181,500 for the demolition of these properties.

Community Development staff met with board members and directors from Eastside, Northside, Oakwood, Stuart and Vine neighborhood associations to discuss community engagement and 2016 general fund agreements. The discussion included effective engagement methods and how the City and neighborhoods can work together for optimal engagement with Kalamazoo residents.

Staff provided CDAAC subcommittees with the 2016 Affordable Housing applications to begin the scoring process.

Economic Development (ED)

Staff has completed the 27th Brownfield Plan amendment and all associated documents. Changes included the addition of three chapters as well as the amendment of one chapter. Plan changes were approved by the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA) during their November meeting.

Staff is preparing for BRA acquisition of 915 N. Pitcher Street, which adjoins the former JA Richards property, where demolition was recently completed.

Staff continued work on multiple projects and prepared to seek BRA approval of two new Development Agreements (216 & 220 W. Michigan and 162 E. Michigan) and one Amended Development Agreement (108 E. Michigan) during the BRA's December meeting.

Human Resources (HR)

The Weight Watchers at Work Program coordinated by Human Resources, which officially began on October 1, has helped the 18 registered employees in combined weight loss of 231.6 pounds through the first 9 weeks of the program!

➤ HR Advisors

Prepared for PSO recruitment and established timeline of events for hiring process;

- Posted job opening
- Reviewed, processed & performed data tracking of 552 applications with supplemental questions
- Invited passing candidates to test with notice regarding a test preparation session
- Arranged for test preparation session, content of the information, and online study guides with test consultant

➤ Benefits

2016 Open Enrollment process closed on November 23 for active employees and eligible retirees; one active NBU employee elected to enroll in the new Consumer Driven Health Plan (CDHP) with a Health Savings Account/High Deductible Health Plan (HSA/HDHP) under Equity Health (the HSA administrator).

Finalized formatting requirements with Cornerstone Municipal Advisory Group for the collection of medical insurance data for ACA reporting requirements to employees and the IRS for tax year 2015; initial submission of ACA data was submitted to Cornerstone for January through October 2015.

Information Technology (I.T.)

I.T. staff handled 527 unique trouble tickets in the month of November. These trouble tickets were I.T. problems handled by I.T. staff that originated with a phone call, email, or in-person visit to the I.T. Helpdesk.

The web-based reporting tool was used by citizens 38 times during the month of November. This automated web-based system allows citizens to use their web browser or smartphone to report numerous City-related issues including potholes, streetlight outages, traffic signal issues, and tall grass and weeds. All reports were automatically routed to the appropriate City staff via email.

Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety (KDPS)

The CID investigated a traffic crash where one of the drivers was found to have multiple weapons inside his vehicle. Weapons to include a loaded AK-47 assault rifle. Detectives are working a weapons violation case against the subject.

The CID worked a case where multiple vehicles were damaged in 2 downtown parking ramps. Three arrests have been made from this incident.

The CID also worked a stabbing at the Econolodge Inn. Warrants for the suspect have been obtained.

KVET continues the battle against drug trafficking in and about the city of Kalamazoo. KVET made 39 drug cases and seized 9 firearms in November.

KVET has investigated 58 meth labs to date for 2015.

Management Services

➤ Assessor

Bills were sent out to all long-term delinquent accounts. Staff is in the process of reviewing the returned mail for account activity and active status. Collections have been made on numerous accounts. Staff is researching those parcels that would be written-off due to collection law.

Work continues on the neighborhood reviews. Field work related to the review has been completed and the permit work is nearly complete. Due to the temperate November weather, some review will be necessary in December and January.

The number of new full Michigan Tax Tribunal (MTT) cases for 2015 was 13 (2014 had 26)..

➤ Budget and Accounting

Staff prepared supporting documentation for the Water Revenue bond sale, including updated cash flows for the Water system and supporting detail of how the bond dollars will be applied to prior bond expenses.

Staff finalized the process for billing Consumers Energy for Right-of-Way permits, including assisting the department with testing and performing the first "push" from the permit module to miscellaneous receivables.

Staff prepared the Transitional Reinsurance Recovery Fee annual submission, the General Fund Cash flows for the TANS bond, and worked with departments to determine capital project financing plan for the 2016 budget and the remainder of 2015.

Staff continued to work on the 2016 Proposed Budget document by preparing the document for presentation, working on the budget summaries and overviews, and the City's demographic information. Staff also implemented requested changes to the proposed budget, which will be made available on the City's website on December 1st.

Special Projects/Financial Policies:

- Accounting staff worked with Treasurer's office to improve daily cash balancing forms to improve efficiency and accuracy of weekly wires.
- Staff prepared wire transfers for OPEB debt service due December 1, and coordinated transfers with the Treasurer's office.

➤ Financial Services

Processed weekly and monthly disbursements.

Processed monthly disbursement; processed refund requests for terminated employees; disbursed the 13th check; finalized pension adjustments and communications.

Staff worked with I.T. and HR staff to create the data file requested from Cornerstone for ACA reporting.

➤ Purchasing

Working collaboratively with City Departments bid documents were prepared and distributed through the City's website for seven purchasing projects.

Reviewed and set up 126 purchase orders and processed 31 change orders.

Purchasing staff are administering prevailing wages for nine construction contracts.

➤ Treasury

The division continues to add the paperless billing option per customer requests.

Meter readers are obtaining actual reads for several accounts that had been estimated for several billing cycles.

Continuing the process of determining Personal Property taxpayers who are still in business and what balances should be written off. Site visits will begin again in December.

Utility Billing – Utility Bills issued in November:

14,060 Original Bills
2,424 Reminder Notices
2,207 Final (shut off) Notices

Parks & Recreation

➤ Recreation Division

The Recreation Division saw our fall programs in full swing in the month of November. After School programs at the YDC, Oakwood Neighborhood Association, and Winchell are at capacity and doing great. We are looking to begin offering five days a week at the YDC starting in January 2016 utilizing funds from the CDBG Grant.

Our youth programs ended in November for the fall season and saw increased attendance numbers in Soccer, Middle School Golf, and Volleyball. The ability for our customers to view our programs and register for them online has made registration a much easier process.

➤ Communication / Outreach

Staff assisted DKI in passing out posters and information to downtown businesses for the holiday season. This was done on the morning of November 20.

The Recreation Manager is a member of the KYD Network Visioning Cabinet which is assisting KYD Network in helping map out a plan for the organization moving forward. Meetings are held monthly and the staff of KYD Network will be presenting the cabinet's recommendations in January to their board.

The Annual Tree Lighting event in Bronson Park was a success again in 2015. It took a collaborative effort from the entire Department. The weather was a challenge that day, but the event was an overall success.

➤ Parks Division

During the month of November, the last park temporary employee left and the remaining full time staff remain busy with leaf removal as well as facility winterization.

The construction for the improvements at Woods Lake Park continues. The park shelter building is 85% complete and the pre-engineered shade structure is 100% complete. The observation deck at the wetland area is 100% complete. The general site work which includes earth moving, site grading, gravel pathways, and concrete pathways is 90% complete. Site landscaping, which includes site retaining walls and plant material installation, is about 70% complete. Installation of the play area is approximately 30% complete (drain tile and pipe is installed). Due to weather conditions and lower temperatures, the project team has made the decision to install the following items in the spring: wearing course for the asphalt parking lot; play equipment, mulch and poured-in-place surfacing at the play area, plant material for the rain garden and general site; and site furnishings (benches, trash receptacles, picnic tables).

In response to a meeting in October with the Friends of Wood's Lake (FOWL), staff held a meeting on to discuss the progress of the park improvements at Woods Lake Park as well as address concerns regarding connection to an adjacent property to the west of the park and boat access for treatment of the lake. Due to project budget, the connection to the western property cannot be made at this time. On November 11 staff met with a representative for the company that treats the lake. A solution was developed to allow a truck and trailer access to the water.

Throughout the month of November, several meetings were held to discuss and obtain input for the future Farmer's Market. The design team met with the project architect and landscape architect to prepare for the November design charrette meetings. On November 19, the project team held a public planning exercise. This meeting allowed the public the opportunity to put on their "design hats" and create their own site plan and define success for the market. That afternoon and evening, the public had the opportunity to comment on the designs that were generated earlier in the day. On November 20, the project team reviewed and discussed the public comments gathered from the previous day's meetings and selected several plans for public voting. The project team also presented several images for the public to vote on for visual benchmarking. A meeting is scheduled in December to discuss the results of these meetings and present a conceptual plan for review by the design team.

Public Services

➤ Accounting

Staff completed monthly quality quantity billing for minor/major industrial users, contract industrial users and contract municipalities within the required timeframes as well as invoicing for Kalamazoo County shared Traffic Engineer and Traffic Signal Technician.

➤ Administration

Public Services staff met with EPA and MDEQ representatives and attended community meetings to discuss the pending options and monitoring for the Allied site and discussed the Cork Street 5-year review and recommended institutional controls and maintenance requirements

➤ City Wide Maintenance

Staff worked numerous hours on their preventative and demand maintenance on City owned equipment and structures, and repaired and/or contracted repairs/replacement of vandalized City owned infrastructure throughout the county.

Staff replaced the heat exchangers and repaired leaks within the downtown snowmelt system.

➤ Customer Service

Eighteen work orders for streets and sidewalks were logged and completed; 24 forestry related work requests in November were logged and completed. The Cemetery Coordinator responded to 84 cemetery related calls, met with 11 cemetery related visitors, processed eight foundation orders and sold five final resting sites.

➤ Engineering

Public Services staff worked with the contractor to finalize the completion of the Local and Major Streets projects for 2015, and worked with property owners along the downtown trailway to secure easements or property for portions of the downtown trailway through Kalamazoo.

Staff continued to review current and proposed trailway routes as part of the non-motorized plan update, continued their review of all streets that have not been rated, and continued their work on the Houston Street collaborative project between CP&D and the Vine Neighborhood.

Staff continued to provide all required inspections services for new services and mains as well as providing required MISSDIG staking for City utilities inside and outside the city limits.

➤ Environmental Services

Public Services staff completed 210 water system cross-connection inspections since January.

Staff collected and analyzed the state required last 2015 Stage II Disinfection sampling, tested 120 monthly water distribution bacti and chlorine residual samples for November, conducted volatile organic samples at Central and Station 11, analyzed five contract samples, four main construction and eight wells, and completed all required unit process control and NPDES permit required Wastewater sampling for November including extra WET testing for the outfall as requested by the MDEQ.

Staff reviewed eleven site plans to evaluate the need for environmental controls.

➤ Field Services

Public Services Field Services Staff received the 2015 Southwest Branch of the American Public Works Association (APWA) Project of the Year Structure Award for the 2015 Forbes Wall Project at Mountain Home Cemetery.

Staff replaced several lead service lines, repaired several service leaks, curb box, hydrants and restored several lawns, drive, roads, and sidewalks damaged during water related utility work.

Staff cleaned several thousand feet of the sanitary collection system, continued efforts to ensure a smooth roadway by filling several hundred potholes and repairing utility cuts on major and local streets and alleys, removed several cubic yards of leaves throughout the City and swept the streets after removing the leaves.

Forestry staff removed four trees from the right of way, trimmed 20 trees in the right of way, ground one stump, removed seven downed limbs, performed two tree removals from well field locations, and removed four hanger limbs from right of way trees.

➤ Fleet Services

Staff met with a vehicle leasing company to discuss the potential lease option for CP&D's fleet.

Fleet closed 286 vehicle work orders in November. Two hundred and forty-two were repair work orders that included 71 from Public Services, 84 from Public Safety, seven from Wastewater, 50 from Water, three from Parks, four from Community Planning & Development, 18 from City Hall; two from pump stations, one water tool, and one rented packer leaf truck. Forty-four of the orders were preventative maintenance and included five from Public Services, 28 from Public Safety, one from Wastewater, seven from Water, one from City Hall, one from Parks and Rec, and one from CP&D.

➤ Safety

Staff worked with the consultant to continue ongoing efforts to review and revise the various safety training programs for Public Services: as Confined Space training, ergonomics training, job hazard assessments, the Water Emergency Response Plan and the arc flash awareness training for staff.

➤ Solid Waste

One hundred thirty nine tons of bulk trash and 128 tons of recycling was removed from the curb lawn in the city.

Three hundred and three yards of debris was removed from the City's right of way as part of code enforcement during the month of November.

Staff submitted the solid waste request for bid during the last week of November; the bid requested pricing for both single and dual recycling streams and monthly/quarterly bulk pickup and weekly/biweekly recycling.

➤ Wastewater

Staff continued to dose with the new carbon in November in a "predictive manner" way of projected loadings from our major Significant Industrial Users.

An unknown contaminant interfered with the Whole Effluent Toxicity Test (WET) in October; two tests were conducted and both exceeded limits for acute and chronic toxicity. A follow-up WET test in November showed no toxicity for either species.

Staff continued their work with contractors concerning the replacement of two of the Tertiary Screw Pumps, and continued to gather system infrastructure information for inclusion into the Wastewater Systems Strategic Plan for the next five-ten years' worth of capital improvement projects at the treatment plant and throughout the collection system at a estimated cost of four to five million annually.

The National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permit expired in October 2015 but will remain in effect until the new permit is drafted and approved. The TMDL group continued working on the draft TMDL agreement in November to present to the MDEQ and EPA.

➤ Water

Public Services staff worked diligently to ensure the 440,231,440 gallons or an average of 14.68 MGD of safe drinking water was pumped into the Water System in November.

Staff dealt with 12 customer water quality concerns within various locations throughout the system.

Staff continued their ongoing efforts to document standard operating procedures required for the Water Systems Environmental Protection Agencies required Risk Management Program and Emergency Response Plan.

Staff members from all areas of Public Services prioritized the list of necessary upgrades to the City's water system for inclusion in the Water Systems Capital Improvement Program Budget and Strategic Plan for the next five and twenty years. At an estimated cost of five to six million annually, the proposed regulatory required capital improvement plans for the water system are due to the MDEQ on January 1, 2016.

Transportation

➤ Ridership

There were 296,261 passenger trips provided system-wide in the month of October, 2015, and a total of 2,504,307 passenger trips provided system-wide year-to-date through October.

Year-to-date through October, 2015, the number of rides provided on Metro County Connect service is up 8.23% over the same time in 2014. The Community Service Van program also had an increase of 56.21% over previous year through October. The number of rides on the Metro Transit fixed-route bus service has dropped 8.68% through October, 2015, which is reflective of new identification badges issued in October 2014 by Western Michigan University that no longer allow for use as bus fare by previously graduated students.

➤ November Activities

Metro Transit prepared a passenger survey to help determine routing changes for fall 2016, that will include late-night service, increased frequencies on some buses and Sunday service. Results of the survey will be helpful in determining the best bus coverage possible.