

City Manager's Report

JANUARY 19, 2016

Grants Applied for and Received

There was no activity for this month.

Community Planning & Development (CP&D)

➤ Planning

At the December 3 Planning Commission meeting, the Commission

- voted to recommend to the City Commission the approval of the 2016 Capital Improvement Plan
- staff provided an update on the Strategic/Master Plan project

Staff processed the following site plan projects:

1. Add equipment to the cell tower at 2500 E. Cork by Verizon Wireless
2. Construct a new storage building for A & L Janitorial at 903 Jackson
3. New duplex and commercial garden for Northside Association for Community Development (NACD) at 302 W. North
4. Add equipment to the cell tower at 3417 S. Burdick by AT&T
5. Construct a building addition and change the use of the building at 4702 W. Main for Billy's Party Store
6. Add equipment to the water tank at 7837 Gull Road by Verizon Wireless (courtesy review)
7. Add a used car sales use on the site at 341 S. Pitcher for Robison Auto

Staff submitted a quarterly report to the MEDC on the progress of the city's Redevelopment Ready Communities process. Two of the five conditions to receive certification have been met, two of the other conditions are actively being worked on, and work on the fifth condition is being planned. The Planning Division is preparing to incorporate site plan review, Planning Commission, and ZBA processes into a new BS&A software module that will enhance the tracking of projects and reduce the reliance on paperwork.

➤ Zoning

At the December 10 Zoning Board of Appeals meeting, the Board granted the following uses:

1. A use variance request for NACD. The use variance will allow the construction of a residential duplex for low income seniors on the commercially zoned property at 302 W. North Street.
2. A dimensional variance to the Meyer C. Weiner Company for the replacement of the freestanding sign at the Oakwood Plaza at 3013 Oakland Drive. The first dimensional variance was to allow a 237 square foot freestanding sign, where the maximum size for

the CC District is 150 square feet. The second dimensional variance was to allow the sign to be 33 feet in height, where the maximum sign height for the CC District is 25 feet.

➤ Code Compliance / Anti-Blight

The Code Compliance Team issued enforcement on over 260 code and blight cases this month, including four condemnations and over 60 clean-ups.

➤ Building & Trades

In December, there were 227 permits issued, representing \$7,630,734 in construction valuation. These figures brought year-to-date permits to 3,906, representing year-to-date construction valuation of \$64,867,580.

➤ Community Development

Staff met with the CDAAC Affordable Housing Subcommittee to score applications for PY2016. Recommendations will be made at the January CDAAC meeting.

The NSP2 Program Income Grant was completed. A total of 17 blighted structures were demolished in CDBG eligible neighborhoods.

Economic Development (ED)

Staff completed final steps for Brownfield Plan Amendment #27 on December 7. The Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA) approved two new mixed use projects for 216/220 W. Michigan Avenue and 162 E. Michigan Avenue for mixed use developments. BRA also approved and Amended Brownfield Plan Development Agreement for 108 E. Michigan Avenue.

Human Resources (HR)

The first session of the Weight Watchers at Work Program coordinated by Human Resources, concluded on December 17. Due to the great success and continued interest in the program by employees, a second 12-week session has been established and will begin on January 7.

➤ HR Advisors

Public Safety Officer current recruitment: PSO prep session held, 84 attended; 123 local identified candidates received online practice test code, 40 utilized the code prior to the test; PSO written test conducted/assisted, proctored alternative test, total of 302 tested; 254 candidates sent passing notice and instructions/attachment to complete background application.

Staff processed Veterans Administration paperwork for 3 vets returning to KDPS in-house training.

➤ **Benefits**

The IRS announced a delay in the required reporting of Minimum Essential Coverage for employees and retirees under the Affordable Care Act. Originally, employers had to send out notices to covered individuals by February 1 and that has now been delayed until May 31. Electronic filing to the IRS has also been delayed from March 31 to June 30. The City is working with Cornerstone Municipal to pull our data from Blue Cross and Blue Shield and format what we need to remit to our covered members. This delay will give us a little more time to make sure we have everything in order to handle the required reporting.

Information Technology (I.T)

I.T. staff handled 566 unique trouble tickets in the month of December. These trouble tickets were handled by I.T. staff that originated with a phone call, email, or in-person visit to the I.T. Helpdesk.

Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety (KDPS)

In the month of December, the CID investigated an incident where an officer witnessed the suspect shooting a handgun at a vehicle in the area of Ada and Simpson Streets. The suspect was arrested after a short foot pursuit and the weapon was located.

The CID also investigated a shooting incident where the victim was shot in the chest but survived his injuries. He was shot while standing outside his vehicle in the 800 block of Woodbury Street.

The CID is also investigating the Christmas Day shooting where the victim was shot in the stomach and leg while standing inside his apartment on Westbrook Avenue. Multiple guns and suspects were involved.

KVET continued the battle against drug trafficking in and about the city of Kalamazoo. KVET made 29 drug cases and seized 3 firearms in December.

KVET investigated 65 meth labs for 2015.

Management Services

➤ **Assessor**

Work continues on the neighborhood reviews. Field work related to the review has been completed. Permit work is mostly done.

The personal property canvas was completed and accounts were updated by early December. 2016 Personal property statements were mailed out to the businesses having personal property in the City of Kalamazoo. Additionally, the mailings included the exemption affidavit for personal property accounts having less than \$80,000 in true cash value. Personal Property Statements are due February 23. Personal Property Exemption Affidavits are due back to the City by February 10. There is no extension of the deadline.

Eligible Manufacturing Personal Property (re: new State of Michigan exemption applications) letters were sent out to all industrial personal property accounts notifying them of new State of Michigan forms. All these accounts received the regular personal property statement that has a bold section describing the new form for those that qualify.

Renaissance Zones are expiring as of December 30. The pharmaceutical renaissance zone for MPI was terminated voluntarily in the fall of 2015.

Items reviewed during the December Board of Review included Principal Residence Exemptions claims for 2012 to 2015, Poverty Exemptions claims for 2015, Veteran's Exemptions claims for 2015, Qualified errors (as defined in MCL 211.53b(8)), clerical errors relating to transfers of ownership, and any other business that may properly be brought before the Board. Letters to the owners/petitioners were sent out the week of December 21. Corrected bills or refunds are being processed by the City Treasurer and the County Treasurer. The abstract of the proceedings (minutes and actions) will be filed with the City Clerk in accordance with STC guidelines.

The number of new full Michigan Tax Tribunal (MTT) cases for 2015 was 13 (2014 had 26). The MTT spreadsheet has been updated to reflect the new cases, estimated values in contention and anticipated refunds.

Small Claims MTT Cases filed for 2015 are at 40. Cases that were filed earlier this year are already scheduled for hearings. Only a few cases are still to be heard in January and February.

➤ Budget and Accounting

Staff prepared year end documents for KCTA annual audit performed the first week of December.

Staff continued to work on the 2016 Proposed Budget document verifying all numbers and tracking changes until the budget adoption on January 19.

Budget staff held the first group meeting on December 15th with Metro Transit staff to review the project timeline and assist with the transition to CCTA in October 2016.

➤ Purchasing

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

Reviewed and set up 100 purchase orders and processed 36 change orders.

Purchasing staff are administering prevailing wages for nine construction contracts.

➤ Treasury

Parcel number updates continue to be added to utility billing accounts as time allows.

Staff continue to add paperless billing option per customer requests.

Utility Billing – Utility Bills issued in December:

15,727 Original Bills
564 Original Bills sent via email
2,382 Reminder Notices
1,727 Final (shut off) Notices

Public Services

➤ Accounting

Staff received several damage claims during December and met with the new claims contractor.

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.

Staff met with each division within Public Services to review their yearend budgeting and projected 2016 budgets.

➤ Administration

Staff met to finalize the MDEQ required Water System Capital five year and twenty year capital improvement projects due January 1 after the December 29 meeting held with the Townships and City of Portage.

➤ City Wide Maintenance

Staff ensured that the downtown snowmelt system was in standby mode until needed for snow removal.

Staff worked with outside contractors to ensure that custodial services were being met on a continuous basis and that contractors were finalizing their structural maintenance activities prior to the end of the year.

➤ Customer Service

In 2015, staff scheduled 91 burials, 52 cremated remains, 1 disinterment, sold 59 final resting sites and processed 89 foundation orders.

Several work practices and standard procedures were revised and created to share information and data in a proactive manner between various Divisions and Departments.

➤ Engineering

Staff worked with the contractor to finalize the completion of the Local and Major Streets projects for 2015 - Majors (Rose Street, Riverview, Mills, Portage from Crosstown to Egleston, Pitcher from Water to North, Alamo from Douglas to City Limits, Manchester from Kilgore to Covington); Locals- (Audubon from Rambling to West End, Manchester from Covington to North end, Robin Lane from Parker to West End, William street from

Cobb to Westnedge, White Oak from Lakeside to Bronson, Stone Street, and Princeton).

Staff continued to work with property owners along the downtown trail way to secure easements or property for portions of the downtown trail way through Kalamazoo, the Willard Phase #1 from Harrison to Walbridge was completed.

Staff met to discuss possible mapping of historical, current and future Sanitary Sewer Overflows for inclusion in the NPDES Wastewater Asset Management Plan.

➤ Environmental Services

Staff reviewed several site plans to evaluate the need for environmental controls, completed 272 water system cross-connection inspections in 2015, collected and analyzed the state required 120 monthly water distribution bacti and chlorine residual samples for December, conducted volatile organic samples at Central and Station 11, analyzed five contract samples, collected and analyzed seven main break samples, four well construction samples, two water tank bacti samples, four contract samples, and completed all required unit process control and NPDES permit required Wastewater sampling for December including an extra WET test event for the outfall as requested by the MDEQ.

➤ Field Services

Staff completed eight replaced one lead service lines, repaired several water main breaks, repaired leaks in eight service and service line valves, repaired one curb box, replaced eight meters, repaired several hydrants, and restored several lawns, drives, roads, and sidewalks damaged during water related utility work. Crews also continued efforts to ensure a smooth roadway by filling several hundred potholes and repairing utility cuts on major and local streets and alleys.

Staff removed several cubic yards of leaves throughout the City and swept the streets after removing the leaves, removed several hazardous City trees within the City right of way, and trimmed several trees and bushes in the right of way.

Concrete crews completed the demolition of concrete at Portage and Cork Streets so that the contractor could lay new asphalt down at the intersection. Staff also completed several tasks to ensure that the streets were clean and free of safety hazards for the various special events in December.

Sanitary sewer overflow investigations and remediation that occurred in November/December has created heightened preventative maintenance tasks and schedules for off road sewer lines and manholes. Staff also cleaned several thousand feet of the sanitary collection system and received permits from Kalamazoo County Road Commission during the last week of December in order for Field Services staff to complete collection system repairs for Oshtemo on Crystal Lane sanitary line and a lateral line along Stadium.

➤ Fleet Services

Fleet closed 258 vehicle work orders in December. Two hundred and five were repair work orders; the repair work orders included 48 from Public Works, 80 from Public Safety, six from Wastewater, 51 from Water, seven from CP&D, five from City Hall; two

from pump stations; one from KPS and three rented packer leaf trucks. Fifty-three of the orders were preventative maintenance and included five from Public Works, 27 from Public Safety, two from Wastewater, 18 from Water, and one from CP&D.

➤ Solid Waste

Public Services staff met with the budgeting team and the Commission during the Budget Work session to discuss the solid waste millage and ongoing increases in expenses.

One hundred fifty-nine tons of debris was removed from the City's right of way as part of code enforcement during the month of December. In 2015, there were a total of 1,652 tons of recycling, 2,510 tons of bulk trash and 266 tons of brush removed from the curb lawns.

➤ Wastewater

Staff worked on various capital improvement and maintenance projects as well as monitored and implemented on-going treatment enhance efforts.

Staff received the plant's bug health report which indicated that the plant was nutrient deficient in soluble phosphorous therefore they have changed operating parameters and started comingling sludge to increase the soluble phosphorus in the system.

Staff continued to gather system infrastructure information for inclusion into the Wastewater Systems Strategic and Asset Management Plans for capital improvement project planning for the treatment plant and collection system at a projected cost of four to five million annually over the next ten years.

➤ Water

Staff worked to ensure the 446,831,685 gallons or an average of 14.42 MGD of safe drinking water was pumped into the Water System in December of 2015.

Staff dealt with 33 customer water quality concerns within various locations throughout the system, continued to troubleshoot, replace and repair water supply and distribution equipment, and 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.

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 was submitted to the MDEQ on December 30.

Transportation

➤ Ridership

There were 251,412 passenger trips provided system-wide in the month of November 2015, and a total of 2,755,719 passenger trips provided system-wide year-to-date through November.

Year-to-date through November 2015, the number of rides provided on Metro County Connect service is up 8.75% over the same time in 2014. The Community Service Van program also had an increase of 52.32% over previous year through November. The number of rides on the Metro Transit fixed-route bus service has dropped 8.34% through November, 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.

➤ December Activities

Metro Transit held a passenger survey to help determine service need for upcoming route enhancements. More than 1,200 people responded to the surveys.

Two Stuff the Bus events took place. Each event generated thousands of toys to benefit children in the US Marines Toys for Tots Program and the local Big Brothers/Big Sisters organization. Metro Transit buses were used in both events.

New bus pass will be available for sale beginning January 1. The new pass is a 31-day unlimited ride pass for \$60.00. The new pass will enable the pass-holder to ride an unlimited amount of times for a consecutive 31 days.

An announcement was made that the Metro County Connect service will begin operating on Sundays, starting February 7.