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# City Manager's Report

OCTOBER 19, 2009

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## Administration & Finance

### ➤ Assessor

Completed scanning of all property transfer affidavits (PTA) & Principal Residence Exemption (PRE) into the BS&A Assessing system for ease-of-reference by staff and public and for transparency.

Holding monthly staff meetings to educate staff on any new laws, procedures, and guidelines to assist in productivity and accuracy.

Continually updating our City's website to include all new assessing forms and links to the web. Also making sure the pamphlet on display in the atrium and in our office is always available.

Worked with Treasury and the Chief Financial Officer to complete Sales Study model and tax estimates for 2010 Budget.

### ➤ Budget & Accounting

Completed Technical Review of Department Budget Requests for 2010 Budget.

Worked with Public Safety, Public Services and Information Technology to review RFIs for scheduling and timekeeping software for payroll, and further to identify the proper technology platform to integrate equipment/fleet tracking and internal billings.

Worked with Treasury to update Miscellaneous Receivables process for greater procedural efficiency and centralization.

Worked with Human Resources to plan implementation of new ATU contract in the Payroll system.

Analyzing data in preparation of the 2009 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly Budget Report.

### ➤ Pension Administration

Corresponded with the IRS to request an update on the process of notifying several former employees who have retired without a vested pension benefit, yet have employee contribution balances remaining in the system that must be withdrawn from the pension trust fund or risk having their contributions forfeited to the City.

➤ Purchasing/Risk Management

Bids were taken for eight different projects. Preparations are taking place for the fall sale of surplus auction in October.

Continue to educate ourselves about sustainability initiatives in purchasing. Purchase costs continue to be an important consideration.

The September Purchasing newsletter was prepared and distributed.

➤ Treasury

Worked with BS&A to finalize go-live preparations for Utility Billing application.

Worked with Chief Financial Officer to finalize Tax Increment Financing projections.

Finalized revenue projections for the 2010 General Fund Budget, including 2009 year-end estimates.

Developed a plan with our IRS legal specialists to create a Section 115 OPEB Trust Account, which would provide for the receipt of funds from the City to facilitate the long-term investment and financing of a portion of future retiree health care costs.

Preparing 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly Report of economic situation and city-wide budget monitoring issues.

## **Community Planning & Development**

➤ Planning

At the September 3<sup>rd</sup> Planning Commission meeting, the Commission approved a special use permit to allow the existing cellular tower at 813 W. Kilgore Road to be increased in height by 20 feet, and to allow the co-location of antennas and equipment on the tower by Metro PCS. The Commission also recommended approval to the City Commission of the request to vacate a portion of Whiskey Alley in the downtown area.

Eight site plans were processed during September including a new parking lot for Asylum Lake, a new fraternity use in an existing building on W. Michigan Avenue, a building addition for a restaurant on North Street, a new parking lot for Republic Services on Gembrit Circle, a new school use in an existing building on Portage Street, a new storage building for Milham Park, a new parking lot for a business on E. Walnut, and co-location of antennas and equipment on the tower at 590 W. Maple.

➤ Housing

Code Administration has been working with the software vendor to implement the new Permit System and Field Inspection programs. Data conversion of the more than 4,000 properties to the new system is being undertaken, to date approximately 50% complete. On-going tweaks to the program will be necessary in the next several months to ensure work flow is established properly.

➤ Zoning

The Zoning Board of Appeals met on September 10<sup>th</sup>. At this meeting, the Board denied a dimensional variance request by Kalamazoo Metal Recyclers to erect a screening fence directly behind the sidewalk on 4<sup>th</sup> Street, where a six-foot setback is required. The Board also denied a use variance request by Shane Leach at 701 Trimble Avenue, which would have allowed a second dwelling unit to be re-occupied in the Single-Dwelling District.

The Board granted a dimensional variance request by MAVCON Inc. at 1919 E. Kilgore Road, to increase the impervious lot cover to 89% from the maximum allowed of 80%. The Board also granted a dimensional variance request for Weller Auto Parts at 1625 and 1629 Douglas Avenue, to allow for a reduced height and screening fence along the north property line.

➤ Building and Trades

In the month of September there were 256 permits issued, representing \$91,777 in fees and \$19,119,829 in construction valuation. These figures brought year-to-date permits to 1,891 representing year-to-date construction valuation of \$45,251,055 bringing in nearly \$332,476 in revenue.

➤ Community Development

The process is underway to develop a new Consolidated Plan to submit to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. This Plan is a blueprint for community development and revitalization - a strategic outline of how the City intends to make the most of the Federal entitlement funds such as Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME). The City hosted five community meetings during the week of September 28<sup>th</sup>, and a sixth meeting is scheduled on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 7:00pm, at 619 Douglas Avenue. Additional information on the Plan, opportunities to provide feedback, and next steps is available at [www.kalamazoo.org/consolidatedplan](http://www.kalamazoo.org/consolidatedplan).

## **Economic Development**

### ➤ Riverfront Area

LKF Marketing conducted a consensus group regarding the branding component of Corridor Improvement Study.

Staff met with business interested in relocating to a riverfront site, and explained the City's programs, incentives, goals, etc.

Staff arranged for the Kalamazoo Guerilla Drive-In to show a family movie at Jack Coombs Trail on September 26<sup>th</sup>.

Staff worked with Public Safety and local businesses regarding reports of the homeless camping out in the pavilion at Jack Coombs Trail.

Staff is working with Public Safety and Public Services to coordinate support for the mural unveiling and silo-singing event.

### ➤ Davis Creek Business Park

Work has begun on closing out the EDA grant received for Davis Creek Business Park.

### ➤ Brownfield Redevelopment

The first meeting of the Site Prioritization Committee was held on September 24<sup>th</sup>.

Staff is preparing an application to the EPA for a \$200,000 environmental assessment grant.

Bids for the demolition of the Superior Cleaners building at the corner of Oakland and Parkview are due October 15<sup>th</sup>. The demolition work is scheduled to be completed by mid-November.

Staff continues to move forward with the process of receiving the donation to the BRA of a small portion of FM Envelope property located within the creek channel at the Performance Paper site. The donated property will be used in the creek relocation project.

Several meetings have been held with LKF and Callander to prepare our real estate marketing strategy and materials, and to review and tour sites.

Staff gave an extensive tour of the Northside and Riverfront areas to the Borgess Medical Center community outreach representative.

➤ Economic Development

The City Commission approved tax abatement for Pfizer on August 31<sup>st</sup> for \$9.3 million in new real property and \$18.9 million in personal property. This action will result in the creation of 100 new jobs and the retention of 250 jobs.

At the October 15<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, the Economic Development Corporation will begin the process necessary to approve a \$75,000 Economic Initiatives Fund loan to Mossberg Precision Diagnostics.

Staff has worked with a potential applicant for a \$40,000 loan from the City's Small Business Revolving Loan Fund. It appears that the proposed project will meet the guidelines for the loan program and an application is expected in the near future.

Staff conducted business retention calls with six companies in the community.

Staff responded to various information requests from four business prospects interested in starting or expanding a business in Kalamazoo.

## **Human Resources**

➤ Flu Shot Clinic

City of Kalamazoo employees and their family members who get a flu shot this year will be reimbursed 50% of the cost up to \$16.50 per vaccine. We are doing this to protect our employees' health and the health of their families.

Borgess Visiting Nurses Association has scheduled flu shot clinics throughout the area. They charge \$33 for a flu shot or \$28 for the nasal mist. Two on-site clinics for City employees and family members are scheduled for October 28<sup>th</sup> at City Hall Community Room from 8:00 am to 10:00 am and November 12<sup>th</sup> at Metro Transit Conference from 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm.

Employees also can get shots at any Flu Shot Clinic or their physician's office. The City will reimburse employees 50% of the cost up to \$16.50.

## **Information Technology**

➤ BS&A Cash Management/ERP - Phase II Project

BS&A staff was on site for two Utility Billing data reviews which took place on September 14<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. The Utility Billing data extract and conversion was held on October 14<sup>th</sup> to October 18<sup>th</sup>. Go-Live data scheduled for October 19<sup>th</sup>.

➤ Network Switch Replacement Project

IT staff have replaced all layer2 network switches for this project. The final cutover for the layer3 network is still scheduled for November.

## **Parks & Recreation**

- Staff continues to meet and be involved with the development of a Youth Center on the Eastside. The Board of Directors and Articles of Incorporation have been completed, the Bylaws are being developed and fundraising will begin in December.
- O'Boyle, Cowell, Blalock, and Associates (OCBA) were awarded the Milham Park and Blanche Hull Park Master Planning work. OCBA, City staff, and Friends of Milham Park met with the Friends of Recreation Board to review the project goals. A meeting was held on October 15<sup>th</sup> at Milham/Blanche Hull Parks where the group walked the site. A public input meeting schedule is being developed and will begin in the next several months.
- Staff has been working with Abonmarche to finalize the details of the site plan for construction of the Fairmount Dog Park. The Dog Park construction documents and specifications are currently being prepared. The project will go out to bid in late October early November, with construction commencing in spring 2010.
- The Kalamazoo Kings made it to the playoffs, but lost in the first round series. There were 45 home games this summer. The economic impact brought into the community as a result of events, tournaments and Frontier League Baseball is approximately \$200,000
- Parks and Recreation participated with the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority in a Riverfront branding effort for the Riverfront Improvement project. One effort is a corridor improvement plan to improve both the traffic flow and the appearance of the area. Another effort is to brand the area - to give it an identity of its own. A one-time meeting, facilitated by LKF, was hosted. There were many great ideas discussed and Economic Development staff will be sorting through the ideas generated by the focus groups to determine next steps.
- Staff participated in a stakeholder meeting provided by Kalamazoo County/Kalamazoo River Valley Trail. An overview of the trail development was provided; as well as, an update on the current construction project at Verburg Park. In addition, fall programming opportunities and future programs were discussed. Over 50 people were in attendance and there was great discussion on future program and trail development.

- The Punt, Pass, and Kick regional event took place at the Mayors' Riverfront Park with 20 youth's ages 8 - 15 placing in each area of competition. Punt, Pass, and Kick is sponsored by the City, Michigan Recreation and Parks Association, along with Pepsi. The boys and girls who placed at the regional level are eligible to compete at the sectionals on October 11<sup>th</sup>, held here in Kalamazoo and also have a chance to win tickets to a Detroit Lions game. This event is free of charge.
- The Gymnastics program started with a full class of 15 youth ages 5-12. Participants in gymnastics develop skills including improved self esteem, strength, flexibility, coordination, and concentration. These classes are taught by former team members of Western Michigan University's Gymnastics team.
- Staff began a new collaboration with the Kalamazoo Kingdom to provide a basic soccer program for boys and girls ages 8 – 12. The Kingdom is providing coaches and healthy snacks. The program takes place at the Mayors' Riverfront Park on Saturdays for six weeks.
- Staff attended the Kalamazoo Public Schools open houses at the elementary and middle schools. They promoted upcoming after school programs and special events to families and school personnel. Staff answered questions and informed those that attended about a variety of opportunities available to the community. They also provided information regarding the Fairmount Dog Park, the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail, and Friends of Recreation.
- The Youth Development Center is now operating on the Fall/Winter schedule. A new after school reading program has been added and is held on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays for the youth. The HVAC project at the YDC was completed this month, just in time for the cold weather.
- The Middle School Golf League began September 21<sup>st</sup>, with 35 golfers from four middle schools: Milwood, Hillside, Christian and Gagie. The league plays at Eastern Hills and ends with a tournament.

## **Public Safety**

- Criminal Investigation Division (CID) is working with Operations to reduce breaking and entering, which have increased significantly. We are working with the Prosecutor's Office to ensure all charges are issued and we are educating the neighborhood residents on how not to become a victim.
- Due to a noted increase in burglaries in the Vine Neighborhood, Operations personnel, including the CPO unit, as well as personnel from CID, deployed into the neighborhood to provide information to each resident about crime prevention strategies, particularly prevention of burglaries.

- The assignment of supervisors to the power shift and fire operations has been effective in both the supervision of power shift and the concentration and standardization of fire related training. This initiative is proving itself to be a valuable asset to the Operations Division; fire training and supervision has been elevated and the activities of the power shift have been more focused. Operations personnel continue to be assigned based on contemporaneous crime trend analysis. Operations, along with all divisions of public safety, participates in the now weekly "crime fighters" initiative.
- 80 methamphetamine labs have been investigated by KVET to date for 2009.

## **Public Services**

- Arboretum Roadway and the off-road non-motorized pathway were completed and opened to traffic in time for the opening of the new Kalamazoo Public Schools' middle school. The City and Western Michigan University Foundation have agreed upon a process to design and construct a two-way link at Solon and Howard to complete the project.
- Staff is currently preparing the Fall/Winter View from the Curb which includes the leaf collection program for 2009.
- Cemetery staff assisted in 14 burials of which 8 were full burials, 4 were cremains and 2 were FIA.
- 2009 Local Street Project - All streets except for Wilshire are complete. Wilshire will be moved to 2010 to accommodate the possibility of a large excavation project of the abutting properties that could place a considerable amount of heavy traffic on the roadway.
- Received final report from Tower-Pinkster for the evaluation of the replacement of the City Hall roof. Although this report does not identify significant energy savings by installing a "green" roof it does identify a means to provide a sustainable roofing system. The City was recently notified by the Department of Energy that the City will receive the applied for EECSBG grant. This grant will allow the City to make energy improvements to City Hall.
- Completed EPA required sampling, testing and reporting of UCMR2 by required dates. Stage II disinfection sampling plan was completed in 2008. All required 2009 MOR sampling and reports submitted by required due dates. We will complete required Ground Water Rule (GWR) sampling plan by December 1<sup>st</sup> GWR promulgation date.
- Secondary Aeration Tank - We expect the design and bid documents for the conversion of the Secondary system to a BNR system to be 99% complete by the end of December. We expect the final cost of the project to fall within 5% of the HRC study cost opinion.

- Storm Water Program - All required reports were submitted within required timeframes. Staff was successful in having Lithium requirements removed from the NPDES permit. New draft TMDL cooperative agreement is scheduled to be completed by the end of December.

## **Transportation**

- Fare Increase Proposal

On October 23rd, the Transit Authority Board (TAB) will take up the issue of the proposed fare increase for 2010. The 30-day comment period will end on October 19th; however, the Department has already received a written request for a public hearing that the City Commission will be requested to set for November 16th. The Department has received six Resolutions of Support for a fare increase from outlying jurisdictions.

- Combined Paratransit Service Contract

Apple Bus has secured a facility on Gembrit Circle to set up operations for the new Metro County Connect program. They recently received 15 vans and 7 cutaways are having radios installed and stripping applied. The new General Manager for the program has relocated to Kalamazoo and is in the process of conducting interviews for driver and administrative staff positions. The new program will begin operations on November 2nd and we anticipate a smooth transition.

- Diesel Fuel

On October 7<sup>th</sup>, Metro Transit purchased 18,000 gallons of ultra-low sulfur B5 blend diesel fuel at a cost of \$1.93 per gallon. The average year-to-date price per gallon for 2009 is \$1.66. Metro Transit budgeted \$2.80 per gallon for diesel fuel in 2009.