



CITY OF HURON
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

January 10, 2025

Matthew Lasko, City Manager

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ConAgra: The purchase agreement for the former ConAgra property will be presented to Council on January 14th for consideration. If approved the agreement will be circulated for signatures and the due diligence process for the buyers will commence. Prior to eventual real estate transfer, the parties will still need to execute the development agreement, mortgage and promissory note.

The City is finalizing the process with ODNR to formally dedicate a portion of the ODNR boat launch property as public right of way – the preliminary dedication plat has been sent to Erie County for review and will be legislated by Council and signed in the next few weeks. As part of the plat, the City is providing a temporary name for the new roadway for purposes of getting the plat recorded as possible – which will be simply “Access Street.” Ultimately the new public roadway will need a permanent name, and the staff is proposing calling it River Road as a continuation of the existing River Road – south of Rt. 6 – similarly to how we treat Berlin Road.

Finally, the City is putting the finishing touches on a joint easement agreement with ODNR which will permit the City temporary construction easements outside of the formal roadway while also providing ODNR an access easement for the property that is being dedicated as public right of way to ensure people have perpetual access to the boat launch.

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.

Two Rivers Residential Development: Reminder that there will be a Builder's Preview event for the restart of the Two River's development on September 14th from 1-4 p.m. Council should have been forwarded an email invitation as RSVP's are required. There will also be a ribbon cutting event soon for the construction of their model home. We look forward to this development restarting and welcoming many new families to the City of Huron.

INFRASTRUCTURE/STREETS/UTILITIES/IT

Rt 6 Phase II: 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. We will work on design and will carry out public engagement throughout the project. It is hoped to construct this project in 2025. Survey of the project limits has commenced. Once this step is completed, design can start with the layout and limits of all aspects of the project. Staff continue to hold project meetings.

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. ROW acquisition is complete. ODOT are now reviewing our stage three plans. Once this is complete, staff are ready to put this project out to bid.

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: After receiving our final pay request for the project, the City anticipates the project will come in at around \$530,000 below budget. Since the City issued bonds to pay for the project and has already received the bond proceeds, we met with our bond counsel and financial advisor to determine what options we may have. Per their guidance, the remaining funds must be spent on future paving and reconstruction projects. If that is not possible, the City must transfer the excess proceeds into the bond retirement account to be used to pay debt service on the bonds. Staff will continue to work with council over the next month or two to determine the preferred use of these excess funds.

South Main Street Streetscape Design and Engineering: Staff continue to meet regularly with representatives from OHM regarding initial plan designs and preliminary engineering. Shortly, OHM and City staff will begin meeting individually with property owners to review preliminary drawings. A conceptual plan has been developed and the next step will be to engage business owners within the project limits. These discussions will be very high level explaining the intent of the plan and talking through any potential issues that the concept plan may cause to the operations of each business.

A Stakeholder meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday 15th @ 10:00AM in the Council chambers. This meeting is to go over the conceptual plan and garner feedback from property and business owners within the project area.

South Main St Watermain Replacement Project: Construction of this project is now substantially complete. There was a final walkthrough on November 18th and a final punch list was developed prior to officially closing out the project.

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 12th meeting. There was also a purchase of switchgear before Council for \$58,700, bringing the project cost to a total of \$428,570.

The city received the final go ahead to start boring under the tracks. We expect this project to take less than a month finally allowing HPP to continue expansion efforts to bring affordable and reliable electricity to businesses.

Website: The new website went live on the 17th of December. There is still work to do, and functionality needs to be added. We would like to thank Jen Kilbury, Terri Welkener and Chris Gibboney for their hard work during this project.

ZONING/CODE/PLANNING

Coastal Management Assistance Grants: We expect to have this project completed by the end of 2024 or shortly thereafter. The survey has closed, and we received over 300 responses to the concept ideas. Staff will be meeting with OHM over the next few weeks to determine if any alterations to the original concept plans are needed based upon feedback. We want to thank all the individuals who shared feedback and comments during the survey process.

Light Trespass: The law department has completed an initial draft to address light trespass on residential buildings. The Planning Commission has reviewed and recommended this legislation be forwarded on to Council. We plan to introduce this legislation to Council at the December 18th meeting for its first reading.

Race Permits: The City, very similarly to what is required for parades, is exploring a similar permitting process for races (such as 5k's). Based on recent feedback from streets and police departments, it is critical that the City, minimally, understand the proposed race route, staging areas if any and times of race to ensure proper road/intersection closures and is properly staffed from a safety service standpoint.

PARKS AND RECREATION:

State Capital Budget: The city submitted State Capital budget requests for during the week of April 1st 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.

Nickel Plate 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 Property: Staff intends to seek final Council direction on a formal and permanent name for the recently acquired greenspace on Berlin Road at our next Council meeting on January 28th. Once decided the City will be able to move forward with purchasing the new signage for the park. The City has already secured a variance from Huron Township for placement of the sign since the sign's proposed location is within the Township limits.

SAFETY SERVICES

FLOCK License Plate Readers: After six months of operation, the FLOCK cameras have recorded over 1 million license plate reads. The program continues to be a huge asset for the police department with investigations and the solvability rate of our hit/skip accidents has increased exponentially.

Ohio Department of Health Training: Several officers received training by the Ohio Department of Health on their new breath testing instrument.

FINANCE

2025 Budget: The budget for 2025 was unanimously approved by Council at our December 18, 2024, Council meeting. The year has now opened officially. Thank you to all our department heads, finance departments and finance committee for all their hard work through the budgetary process.

Income Tax: Income tax receipts ended the year 1% below 2023 receipts and 4% lower than budget. On a positive note, the unencumbered general fund balance ended up over \$1.8 million or 28% of expenditures.

Ohio House Bill 296: Staff are paying close attention to House Bill 296. The bill would increase employer contributions to the Ohio Police & Fire Pension – specific to police officer. If approved, contributions would increase from 19.5% to 24% over a 6-year period. The bill has already been approved by the house and is moving to the senate. Countless municipalities as well as the Ohio Municipal League have come out against the bill's passage due to the major financial constraints this will place on municipalities.

WATER DEPARTMENT

Recent Activity:

- 12/26/24 – Watermain leak on First St. This is the old style watermain that is connected with bolts. The bolts and part of the flange had rotted off. A 2' section of pipe was cut out and inserted with 2 couplers. A precautionary boil alert was issued due to the extent of this work and all samples passed the following day.
- 12/30/24 – Watermain leak on Silvern Ave. Again, this leak occurred at a joint. Staff were able to fix this leak live under pressure with a bell dresser. There was no boil alert for this work.
- A leaking curb stop at 638 Taylor Ave. was reported 12/30/24. Staff made this repair on 1/2/25.

Lead Service Lines: Distribution staff has completed investigating meter pits for service line material and entering them into the GIS database. The lead service line inventory was due to the OEPA by October 16th. Staff discovered one lead service line which was on the customer side. They were informed of this discovery.

Active Project Updates:

Alternate Intake/Sludge Lagoon: Engineering and design are nearing completion for the water tower and the Water Superintendent will advise on progress. Preliminary designs for the Water Tower and the pump station for the intake have been sent to the city for review. 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. An extension was granted to commit funds for the \$5M grant from the Department of Development. The project must be awarded by 6/30/25 and construction must be completed by 8/1/26. Kleinfelder estimated the project will be completed by 5/31/26.

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. An extension was granted to commit funds for the \$5M grant from the Department of Development. The project must be awarded by 6/30/25 and construction must be completed by 8/1/26. Kleinfelder estimated the project will be completed by 5/31/26.

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.

The EPA issued a response on 10/11/24 that included requests for additional information. This will be reviewed by the Water Superintendent and Kleinfelder. The Water Superintendent provided answers to questions from the EPA and returned this document to Kleinfelder on 10/30/24. This will be resubmitted to the Ohio EPA as soon as possible after being reviewed by Kleinfelder

STREETS DEPARTMENT

School Parking Sign Project: The Streets Department completed installation of the new street sign configuration at Woodlands. HPD will be at the school all week instructing drivers of the new traffic patterns. We thank all our partners for this collaborative project.

Snow: The City has seen a lot of snow and freezing temperatures in the last week. We would like to recognize the hard work by Staff, and many hours spent in the cab of the snowplows to keep our residents safe.

Radar Speed Signs: The radar speed signs have been moved from Adams Avenue to Buckeye and Deerwood.

PERSONNEL

Union Negotiations: The City has completed bargaining unit negotiations. Current status of each:

- Patrol Officers - contact has been fully executed by both parties.
- Sergeants – contract has been fully executed by both parties.
- AFCSME – contract has been fully executed by both parties.
- IAFF – contract has been voted on by IAFF membership which unanimously approved. Contract is being presented to Council on 1/14/25 for consideration. I approved – contract will be circulated for signature.

Nate Orzech – 25 Years of Service: Sergeant Nathan Orzech completed 25 years of service with the Huron Police Department on December 12, 2024.

Open Positions: The City is currently advertising the open positions of Finance Director and Secretary for the planning and zoning department.

AGREEMENTS/CITY MANAGER APPROVALS

N/A

PROJECTS OUT FOR BID

HPP Substation Switchgear Procurement: A Request for Bids was posted on December 4, 2024, for the HPP new substation switchgear procurement. Bids were opened on January 6, 2025, with a single bidder. The total bid amount was \$710,780.000. This bid is still being reviewed for correctness.

CONTRACTS

- HJRD Annual Agreement (Res 51-2024) – **Expires 12/31/24 (on agenda for approval at Council meeting on 1/14/25).**
- IAFF Collective Bargaining Agreement (Res 7-2022) – **Expires 12/31/24 (on agenda for approval at Council meeting on 1/14/25).**
- Erie Soil and Water Conservation District (Res 3-2023 Engineering) – **Expires 1/31/25 (on agenda for approval at Council meeting on 1/14/25).**
- Seeley, Savidge, Ebert & Gourash Co., LLP (Res 47-2024) – **Expires 6/3/25**
- Dynegy Electric Aggregation Agreement (Res 29-2023) – **Expires 7/30/25.**
- Dynegy Electric Standard Large Stable Service Agreement (Res 54-2023) – **Expires 08/2025.**
- Emergency Services Agreement with Huron Township (Res 85-2024) – **Expires 12/31/2025.**
- OHM Advisors (Res 95-2024 Engineering) – **Expires 12/31/25.**

- Building Official – Service Agreement (Res 43-2021) - **Expires 7/25/26**
- School Resource Officer (Res 32–2024 & Res 33-2024) – **Expires 8/31/26.**
- Republic Services (Res 44-2023) – **Expires 12/31/26.**
- City Prosecutor Employment Agreement (Res 79-2024)– expires **12/31/26.**
- Personnel Officer Employment Agreement (Res 78-2024) – expires **12/31/26.**
- Dispatch Agreement – Erie County Sheriff (Res 101-2024) – **Expires 12/31/26.**
- FOP-Sergeants Collective Bargaining Agreement (Res 100-2024) – **Expires 12/31/27.**
- FOP – Patrol Officers Collective Bargaining Agreement (Res 99-2024) – **Expires 12/31/27.**
- AFSCME Collective Bargaining Agreement (Res 102-2024) – **Expires 12/31/27.**

UPCOMING MEETINGS

January Meetings:

- City Council Work Session – Tuesday, January 14th at 5:45pm in Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting - Tuesday, January 14th at 6:30 PM in Council Chambers.
- BZA Meeting – Monday, January 13th at 5:30pm in Council Chambers.
- City Council Work Session – Tuesday, January 28th at 5:30pm in Council Chambers.
- City Council Public Hearing on proposed Turtle Bay PUD amendment – Tuesday, January 28th at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, January 28th at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.

REMINDER:

City administrative offices will be closed on Monday, January 20th in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.