



CITY OF HURON
CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

April 4, 2025

Matthew Lasko, City Manager

ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ConAgra: As required by ORC, the City sent the required notice to Erie County with our intent to ultimately approve an Incentive District TIF on the site to pay for the costs of the seawall. The County did not formally object to the TIF.

Finally, the permit for the seawall enhancements has been submitted by KS & Associates. The City will be awaiting the outcome of whether our permit will be considered maintenance or reconstruction as this has a major bearing on how quickly the permit will be issued.

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.

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.

River Rd. Land: At the last Council meeting in February, Council approved a purchase and sale agreement with Triban Investment for \$700,000. The development team is anticipating constructing between 170-220 single-family homes. The City is still awaiting the purchase agreement back from the development team to officially start the 6-month due diligence process. We anticipate receipt of the agreement any day now.

As a condition of the sale, the property also must be rezoned to R-1. A public hearing at the planning commission has been scheduled for March 26th on this request.

INFRASTRUCTURE/STREETS/UTILITIES/IT

East Side Sidewalks: Staff have recommended contracting with RMH Concrete and will be presenting a contract to Council for consideration at the April 8th, 2025, meeting. If approved, the project is expected to be substantially completed in 2025.

It should be noted; the bid came in roughly 50% lower than projected – meaning the City has excess grant funds from ODOT and Erie County Regional Planning. Staff will soon be engaging each entity about the possibility of moving these funds to other relevant and eligible projects versus returning the funds to each entity.

Route 13 Crosswalks: Staff have recommended contracting with DL Smith and will be presenting a contract to Council for consideration at the April 8th, 2025 meeting. If approved, the project is expected to be substantially completed in 2025.

South Main Street Streetscape Design and Engineering: The City has received updated cost estimates from OHM and is reviewing internally. Once reviewed by staff, Council will be briefed and a work session scheduled to determine if we desire to move forward with the project and if so, whether the proposed scope of work should be amended.

Rt 6 Phase II: The City has received updated cost estimates from OHM and is reviewing internally. Once reviewed by staff, Council will be briefed and a work session scheduled to determine if we desire to move forward with the project and if so, whether the proposed scope of work should be amended.

ZONING/CODE/PLANNING

Public Hearing to Rezone River Road Property: Planning Commission recommended the rezoning of the property to R-1 and Council has set a public hearing on the rezoning.

Firelands Scientific Temporary Greenhouse Structures: Firelands Scientific has submitted applications and plans for four (4) temporary greenhouse structures, which were approved previously by the Planning Commission/Design Review Board. The application and plans are currently in Zoning Review and have been distributed to OHM Advisors and Erie Soil and Water for SWPPP evaluation and plan review deposit determination. Following approval by Zoning and approval of the SWPPP, the applications and plans will be submitted to the Building Department.

Zoning Map Revisions: Staff have found the current Zoning Map requires revisions to reflect legislative action taken within the last few years. The map had been updated internally in recent years, however, prior to that, the County was provided with information, and they would revise the city map as well as their information. Staff found a property that had a court-ordered action which reverted the undeveloped areas of an R-2 PUD (Two Rivers original R-2 PUD) to R-1 Single Family Residential Zoning. A portion of the same property was approved as an R-1 PUD along Sheltered Brook, which will also need to be reflected. These changes are being presented to Council on March 25th for final consideration.

Coastal Management Assistance Grants: The final lakefront parks plan was adopted by Council on March 25th. Staff will be working over the next few weeks to close out this project and the related grant. A major thanks to ODNR for their funding assistance with this project.

Long John Silvers: The former Burger King building on Cleveland Road W. was purchased and the new use is intended to be a Long John Silver restaurant. All Zoning and Building permits have been issued. Demolition completed and construction underway.

Investigation- Lodging Tax Registration for Transient Rentals: The Zoning Inspector conducted a review of current Transient Rental properties and review of registrations through Erie County for Lodging Tax. As a result, 19 properties were found not to be registered with the County. This could be due to the owners not renting the property or operating but not reporting/collecting taxes. Notices have been issued to these property owners with response required. Staff will continue to review; taking steps pursuant to the code as needed.

Ohio House and Senate Bills: Staff and the SSEG team are keeping tabs on several Ohio State Legislative bills that are marking their way through the statehouse. As these bills progress, we will continue to keep Council apprised. Relevant bills include:

- Senate Bill 104 – relating to transient rentals. The proposed bill would erode home rule authority on a jurisdiction's ability to limit the number of transient rentals and manage certain elements of their operations.
- House Bill 160 – related to recreation marijuana. The bill would make alterations to the newly enacted recreation marijuana program. Of most interest to Huron is whether the existing 3.6% local tax that was permitted in the original law will remain in any potential amendments.
- House Bill 113 – related to annexation. The bill would create limitations to a jurisdiction's ability to proceed with annexations as they have historically – namely, providing more power the County Commissioners or County bodies to determine ultimately if an annexation between City/Village and Township is "in the best interest" of the County.

PARKS AND RECREATION:

State Capital Budget: The city has informally been told that we will be receiving \$200,000 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.

Berlin Road Property: At the final Council meeting in January, it was decided the greenspace on Berlin Road would be renamed Dancing Waters Park – as a bit of an acknowledgement to the family that was responsible for developing the man-made lake on-site. Staff are moving forward with ordering the signage for installation sometime in the Spring of this year.

SAFETY SERVICES

FLOCK License Plate Readers - UPDATE: The first of three new FLOCK cameras included in the 2025 budget were installed on Rt. 6 at By-the-Shores west bound. The eventual addition of these three cameras in 2025 will bring our total to eight cameras. The program continues to be a tremendous asset for the police department with investigations and the solvability rate of our hit/skip accidents and thefts has increased exponentially.

Training Update: Some of our officers received training on liquor permits and active shooter response.

FINANCE

Income Tax: Through March, income tax receipts still are trending positively and are 10.8% higher than this time in 2024. Through March, receipts total nearly \$1.275 million and are \$135,000 higher than this time last year. We will continue to monitor receipts as it is difficult to get a clear picture of performance until around June of each year, but it has been a positive start to 2025.

Real Estate Taxes: The City's first half tax settlement was approximately \$112,000 higher than 2024 receipts. Assuming the second half settlement is similar, the City would anticipate receiving approximately \$225,000 in increased real estate tax receipts due to the re-evaluation process. This would represent an 8% increase compared to last year (City budgeted for a 3% increase).

Monthly Financials (February): <https://stories.opengov.com/huronoh/published/8C9DxuAkG>

WATER DEPARTMENT

Recent Activity:

- New raw wet well screens are currently being built by Lake Erie Diving, Inc. The existing screens are original and have deteriorated over time. These screens prevent large debris found in the lake water from entering the wet well which can cause damage to raw water pumps.
- There was a watermain break on Ohio Street on 3/3/25. This was caused by a crack in the watermain and was repaired by Water Distribution staff.

Active Project Updates:

Alternate Intake/Sludge Lagoon: Engineering and design are nearing completion for the water tower. 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.

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: 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

N/A

HURON PUBLIC POWER (HPP)

Distribution Rate Study: This has been progressing for several months. With the increasing costs of maintenance, and the additional debt being borne from the purchase and installation of the new third transformer, a rate increase is required. This went before the Utilities Committee on February 5th and will be presented to the Utilities Committee one final time on April 23rd for consideration. If recommended, legislation will be drafted and sent to Council for consideration during three readings in May and June. If approved, new rates would go into effect as early as July 1st of this year.

3rd Transformer: The City participated in a bond ratings call with Moody's during the week of March 31st as a lead up to the bond issuance for the 3rd transformer. A follow up call will be held on April 9th to understand our current bond rating (which we anticipate remaining the same – which is a good thing) prior to us going out to the market for bids. We do know unfortunately that, given the limited number of customers on HPP and the fact that they are all private entities, the bonds are expected to be taxable versus tax-exempt, meaning higher interest rates.

Expansion Under the Tracks: The City and contractor received permission to move the boring location under the tracks to another location – which will allow the project to move forward. Due to not being able to locate a major fiber line in the preferred area, the boring location required

relocation which has now been approved. We are currently waiting for a flagger to be assigned by the Railroad so we can re-commence work.

PERSONNEL

Finance Director: The City continues to accept applications for this position and has interviewed 2 candidates thus far. Interviews will continue during the month of March.

Law Director Position: The contract for legal services with SSEG is set to expire on June 3rd, 2025. Staff and SSEG wish to continue this relationship for another twelve (12 months). SSEG is not proposing any increase to the annual service fee under the new contract. Staff will present a contract to Council for consideration in either late April or May.

Capital Requests: Sen. Moreno recently published instructions on the process of submitting federal appropriations requests through his office. The deadline is quick and is set on Friday April 11th. Staff are researching quickly whether any submittals make sense and are considering requests for the boat basin, secondary intake and water tower. Based on the super condensed timeline to submit, should staff choose to submit a project, we will approach Council after the fact at the April 22nd meeting to ratify the submissions.

AGREEMENTS/CITY MANAGER APPROVALS

N/A

PROJECTS OUT FOR BID

N/A

CONTRACTS

- 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.**
- HJRD Annual Agreement (Res 9-2025) – **Expires 12/31/25.**
- Erie Soil and Water Conservation District (Res 8-2025) – **Expires 1/31/26.**
- 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**.
- IAFF Collective Bargaining Agreement (Res 7-2025) – **Expires 12/31/27**.
- Charles E. Harris & Associates GAPP Conversion (Res 10-2025) – **Expires 12/31/27**.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

April Meetings:

- Public Hearing on the ConAgra TIF – Tuesday, April 8th at 6:30pm immediately preceding the regular Council meeting in Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, April 8th at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.
- BZA – Monday, April 14th at 5:30pm in Council Chambers.
- Planning Commission Meeting – Wednesday, April 16th at 5:00pm in Council Chambers.
- City Council Meeting – Tuesday, April 22nd at 6:30pm in Council Chambers.
- Utilities Committee Meeting – Wednesday, April 23rd at 5pm in the main conference room.