



*Office of the City Manager, Chief Administrative Officer  
Monthly Administrative Report  
December 2014*

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In November, the Police Department completed the hiring process for Police Officer and selected two local residents, Travis Reed and Daniel Stocker, as new Officers. Both have begun their field training and are expected to be certified for solo patrol in late March 2015. A third recruit will be selected in December to fill another vacancy. The vacancies were created with the unexpected loss of three Police Officers that resigned recently for employment elsewhere. The Police Department also saw the retirement of Records Supervisor Shelley Pavlinak. Taking Shelley's place will be Jill Emery, the former Police Chief Secretary. Sherri Reynolds has been selected to replace Jill as the Chief's secretary and she began employment on November 24, 2014. The Department wrapped up the special events for the year with the Santa Parade on November 28<sup>th</sup>.

Calls for service for October 2014 increased by 9% from September 2014, and increased 11% from October 2013. Increases from the prior month were seen in Assaults (+32%), breaking and entering (+8%), Malicious Destruction of Property (+69%) and suspicious persons/vehicle (+17%). November numbers are not available at this time. The Department went public with a gambling/conspiracy investigation in November where four search warrants were served simultaneously within the St. Clair County area. The PHPD NET team was the central law enforcement agency involved in this investigation. As the holidays approach, the Police Department is reminding citizens to be mindful of home invasions and larcenies. It is typical for this time of year to see an increase of theft reports due to opportunistic criminals looking for items in vehicles or homes that can be easily taken and sold for cash.

The Fire Department has completed attending each of the fire drills conducted at the schools located within the City for the fall scheduling period. We will resume this activity in the spring with the next round of drills. Feedback from school administrators was positive and they were grateful to receive suggestions for improving the safety of their respective buildings. There were 25 calls for service in November including building fires at the following locations:

- 512-11th Street. House sustained extensive damage to rear exterior due to unattended gas grill that was used on back porch.
- 2114 Cypress St. Damage sustained to a single family rental home due to fire discovered in a bedroom while occupants were inside house. Cause remains under investigation.
- 1213 Wall St. Two adult males were rescued by fire crews from an upstairs rear bedroom through a window and down a ladder after a fire broke out in the front bedroom causing them to be trapped by heat and smoke. Fire was caused by a faulty electric lamp. Victims were treated and released from local hospitals after treatment for smoke inhalation.
- 733 Union Street. Fire crews were called to a two-story house with heavy smoke showing and were forced to evacuate the structure due to deteriorating conditions from an advancing fire in the attic space above them. Extinguishment completed by crews from the exterior of the building until safe to re-enter, cause is undetermined at this time. No injuries to occupant, one firefighter sustained a knee injury.

Inspections of 21 commercial businesses have been completed for November.

In November thus far, we've had 73 new complaints opened. Part-time Inspectors are continuing to reduce their hours/days of the week as the workload decreases with winter approaching. We had about 150 landscaping tickets go through the AHB as we held them until the season ended. The rest of the cases (about 35) took care of the invoice/fine and their cases were closed. Sperry's failed to schedule local/state historic preservation meetings or obtain a building permit for windows in the time specified. They were sent notice to appear at a December 11th AHB Hearing. We have submitted two garnishment cases to Corporate Counsel to see if this collection practice will work as a way to collect outstanding debt owed to the City as an option other than single lot assessments.

Lt. Kuehn and Inspector Pat Cogley met with Port Huron Area Landlord Association representatives which went very well. We listened to their frustrations, much of which was lessened with our explanations. They requested that we thank people who do take care of their property. We could not address their anger towards raised water rates, Kathleen McCready's request for an overlay district (which would not allow additional rentals) and the need to create a vicious dog ordinance, which was beyond the scope of Code Enforcement.

In December, we plan to create a statistics page to show the success of the blight fix-it tickets and begin putting a year-end presentation together for City Council. We also hope to see SC4 student's artwork regarding a Code Enforcement logo within the next month.

The Clerk's office began the month with the November 4 election. Voter turnout was 32.62% (or 6,880 out of 21,094 registered voters). The numbers were low; however the inspectors did an outstanding job processing the steady stream of voters all day. We have also been working on preparing an RFP for the codification of the code book; reviewing a program to store and retrieve electronic documents in the cloud thus reducing search and retrieval time while providing an extra backup in cases of disaster; and we have been moving Traffic Control Orders from the mainframe to Excel. We have also been helping Beautification Commission members with understanding and improving their expense reports and planning for future needs. Also, a current member of the Sister City Commission is attempting to bring the commission back to meeting on a regular basis. We will assist them with this endeavor and plan to attend their next meeting on December 2.

The St. Clair County Parks Commission is proposing to construct wetlands along the St. Clair River adjacent to the newly constructed Desmond Landing recreational trail. The City of Port Huron has a permitted storm water outlet near the proposed wetland site. The Department of Public Works (DPW) Administration has reviewed a revised set of design drawings for the diversion of storm water flow into a proposed wetland area. We have provided review comments expressing concerns with the proposed design. We are also working with the MDEQ to determine how these proposed designs would affect the City's Stormwater NPDES permit. We will continue to work with all parties to find the best solution for this project. Department staff will revise the proposed language that would spell out the terms of an agreement between the County Parks and the City of Port Huron to provide for this diversion of City storm water flow.

We finalized revised bid documents with the Blue Water Area Transportation Commission (BWATC) for orphan well closures in the south McMorran lot. We scheduled a pre-bid meeting at the MOC for December 17, 2014 and bid opening January 7, 2015.

The Department of Public Works staff coordinated a ribbon cutting ceremony for the Stone Street Project.

The DPW Director submitted a quarterly Governmental Affairs article for publication in the Michigan Chapter of the American Public Works Association's *Great Lakes Reporter* magazine.

The DPW staff has met with representatives of Blue Water Area Transit and its consultant URS to review the proposed design of McMorran Boulevard, Superior Mall, and the South McMorran Parking Lot. We provided comments to the consultant's fifty percent complete design drawings. URS will submit all of the final design documents to DeMaria for bidding. The proposed bid opening for the project is December 2, 2014 with construction commencing in March of 2015.

The DPW administrative and engineering staff began to work on estimates for capital improvement projects for the Downtown Development Authority.

At the request of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), the DPW Director provided a copy of the poster that was used at the St. Clair River Symposium. This poster provides summary information on the pollution removal successes of the Combined Sewer Overflow Program. The MDEQ plans to use this information in its effort to delist the St. Clair River as an Area of Concern. This effort is very important to the Blue Water Area. The delisting of the St. Clair River will show the public how successful our efforts have been to keep our local waterways clean.

DPW Engineering staff continued working on various construction projects. The Nern Street Area contractor is continuing the lawn restoration in the Nern Street area. The final paving of all streets in the Nern Area Project area will be completed in the spring. The Stone and Kearney Street contractor completed asphalt paving, concrete sidewalks and driveways and is continuing lawn restoration and final cleanup. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held on Wednesday, November 19<sup>th</sup>. The contractor completed the asphalt paving and lawn restoration for the Thomas Edison Drive and Sedgwick Street project. The contractor has completed lawn restoration and cleanup in the Northern Woods Phase I, Aspen Drive and Ramblewood construction areas. Raymond Excavating completed the Pedestrian Bridge replacement project on Krafft Road. The engineering staff continues working on the design of improvements to Sanborn Street between Stone Street and Gratiot and Stone Street from Pine Grove to Thomas Edison Drive. Both of these projects will be funded partially with federal transportation grants. Engineering staff is working on the design of Washington Street reconstruction between 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Stone Street. This project will be funded partially with millage money. The design of the Riverview Area rehabilitation is ongoing and is expected to begin in the spring utilizing street millage money. Staff advertised the MOC back deck project. Engineering staff is preparing a report for the Blue Water Center of Independent Living on the ADA ramps that were completed in fiscal year 2013-2014.

The DPW street maintenance crews are currently crack sealing on 21st Street. Crews performed routine alley grading and asphalt patching at various locations. In addition, crews worked on about 20 alleys for the Community Development department which included adding rock, grading, and clearing trees and brush. Staff completed the final mowing of several City-owned vacant lots that are not included in the City's annual mowing contract. Street crews cleared leaves from the storm drains around the City. DPW crews salted the bridge sidewalks and decks on two occasions. The crews also provided traffic control measures for the Santa Parade in downtown.

DPW traffic control crews removed unused pedestrian signals at Stone Street and Glenwood Avenue. Our electrician was called out for repair to street light wiring along Thomas Edison Parkway. The electrician responded and repaired several wind damaged traffic control devices. Crews also completed all the railroad crossing issues that were reported by MDOT inspectors.

The motor vehicle pool staff stayed on schedule with their preventative maintenance list and all snow removal equipment has been inspected and is ready for use. They repaired two vehicles that had major breakdown issues. Technicians outfitted a detective vehicle for service

The water distribution staff completed the third and final round of hydrant winterization and also assisted the Water Office with shutoffs and turn-on's. Also, staff removed water metering equipment from various locations that are scheduled for demolition. The sewer collection staff investigated multiple sewer complaints, performed dye-testing of a few downtown properties to confirm their connection to the City's sanitary sewer system, and also replaced a concrete flow channel inside a sanitary manhole.

The Water Filtration Plant (WFP) staff completed the installation and calibration of the chemical feed monitor and is in the process of monitoring the results to establish a baseline. Staff is also in the process of installing a new raw chlorine meter and also has begun researching the appropriate replacement of the turbidity meters for each of the 10 filters. Recent rulings by the MDEQ will have an effect on what type of turbidity meter can be installed. The cost for the replacement of these meters is identified in the current budget. After further research and trial of equipment, a recommendation will be forwarded to City Council for approval. WFP and the Engineering staff completed the review of the proposal for consultant services for the painting of the north elevated water storage tank. An agreement for these services will be forthcoming to Council for their approval.

The Wastewater Treatment staff performed the bi-annual cleaning of the three lime storage tanks. One of the two odor control towers were removed from service to facilitate the cleaning of the packing media. One of the pumps at the 16<sup>th</sup> Street sanitary pump station was removed as it was not operational. The pump was sent to Electrical Motor Services of Port Huron for an evaluation and any necessary repair. Land Application program has been shut down for this calendar year.

During the month of November, the Human Resources Department accepted employment applications for School Crossing Guards and Temporary Laborers. These posted positions are for part-time openings.

Our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Employee Wellness Fair was held on Wednesday, November 5<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, November 6<sup>th</sup> in the Municipal Office Center, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Training Room. All full-time and year-round part-time employees were invited to participate. Port Huron Hospital Industrial Health personnel were on site to conduct Healthy Heart Screenings (blood pressure and cholesterol checks) as well as administer flu shots. Additionally, we had representatives from the YMCA, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan / Brown & Brown, and Chef Jim from the Galley Café were available to speak with our employees about exercise, eating healthier and help with completing the online Blue Cross Health Assessment. We had 68 participants this year compared to 56 in 2013. Drawings were held for various gift cards for those that participated in the Wellness Fair. We have completed our fundraising efforts for the United Way and American Red Cross campaigns and both campaigns are showing a slight increase in employee contributions from last year. Our employees are always very generous in helping individuals that are less fortunate than they are. We were entered into the United Way “Early Bird” drawing and the City of Port Huron was selected for the 4<sup>th</sup> place prize from participating employers/businesses. The drawing was held yesterday and Jeff McIntyre from DPW/Streets Division was the winner of a \$100 Visa gift card.

Last month, the Planning Division coordinated an agreement with Baker College, Orion Construction and the Port Huron Museum of Arts and History regarding excavation of the site of the future Baker Student Housing. The excavated soils will be removed and located on the Baker site on Lapeer Avenue. Dr. Richard Stamps and Dr. Richardson (SC4) will conduct a review of soils and look for any artifacts. Any artifacts found will become the property of the City/Museum. The excavation will only accommodate a crawl space and will not be more than four feet deep.

Review of site plans for the transit station at McMorran South Parking Lot is underway. Construction is anticipated in the spring/summer.

A request for rezoning from R-1 (single and two family dwellings) to R (single family, owner-occupied) of Harrison Pointe neighborhood has been received. The Planning Commission will review and hold a public hearing on December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

We are in the process of completing a new application packet to be used for requests of Brownfield designations. Application will require economic development and job creation criteria as a factor.

Rental inspections continue and include over 120 inspections, including responding to complaints. One of three part-time inspectors has left to accept a full time position out of town. There are no plans to replace the inspector at this time as trade inspectors will pick up additional rental inspections during the winter months. Our Chief Inspector met with the Eastern Michigan Landlord Association at an evening meeting to give a presentation and update on the Rental Certification program.

Inspectors in the Inspection Division handled over 80 permits and reviewed several large scale building plans. Four code cases were prepared for demolition requests to City Council and an

additional five are under review with preliminary notifications sent out. Inspections have been completed and potential work agreements drawn up for property owners.

In the Community Development Division, grant funds were used to re-grade and stone 18 alleys in neighborhoods as part of the “Pride in Port Huron” campaign. Four new families became homeowners because of the Urban Pioneer Program, three homes received rehabilitation grants, and one elderly homeowner was assisted. Sidewalks were replaced along Harker Street as part of the Mansfield Park neighborhood project.

In November, the Recreation Department was busy running fall programming and preparing our winter brochure that is sent to over 3,000 participants as well as flyers that are sent to every student in Port Huron Area Schools. We have also been in the process of working on a new partnership/cooperation with the Port Huron Area School District on afterschool programming in the schools. The schools will use Title I funding they have available and we will use grant funding to help provide students with fun and educational programming after school. Our first pilot school will be Cleveland Elementary and we look forward to expanding this partnership and helping our schools in the City of Port Huron.

The “Adopt a Soldier” program for the holidays has been a huge success with over 200 socks being sold. People buy a Christmas sock for \$2.00 (to cover our shipping cost) and then participants fill them with items for the soldiers and we will send them to the troop we have adopted. We also have a time the first week of December where families can come to the Recreation Department and make cards to send with the box as well.

The scoring for our Lakeside Beach DNR grant has come back. The City of Port Huron has scored very well. Our project scored with the top amount of points out of over 150 projects. We are very hopeful that the City will receive this grant but the official vote of the Michigan DNR Trust Fund board will be in Lansing on December 3<sup>rd</sup>.

In the cemetery, nine services were done in the month on November. Staff has been busy preparing for the winter and removing leaves. The community service participants also helped with leaf removal in the cemetery three weekends in a row. The forestry department cut down and put up the Christmas tree for downtown Port Huron. They also spent a lot of time cleaning up from the storm after Halloween and this past wind storm that took place last week. The Parks Department is in the middle of leaf pick up in all the parks and will be doing maintenance to the parks before the snow hits the ground. They also removed the kayak launch from 7<sup>th</sup> Street early in the month and created the winter removal process for this new addition to the parks assets.

The Information Technology Department continued to work with the Water Office on the December launch of monthly billing. It also began the deployment of the Cash Management System.

During November, the Income Tax Division continued our annual compliance efforts. All identified taxpayers have now been sent initial letters and we began sending follow up

correspondence and issuing proposed assessments. We prepared the final version of our 2014 tax forms.

The Accounting Division spent a large portion of their time during November involved with the year-end audit. We finished all of the EVIP documents so they can be submitted to the State by the December 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. We also took care of our typical monthly work such as posting journal entries, updating various spreadsheets, balancing accounts, etc.

The Assessing Division completed the residential sales study and the commercial appraisal study. The industrial appraisal study is still in progress. We are also canvassing for personal property that should be reported and hasn't been.

The Treasurer's Office continued the normal collection of water bills and property taxes this month. We continued posting past due notices for delinquent personal property taxes. We dealt with customer calls and inquiries as needed. We did the monthly accounting for BWATC.

The Water Office mailed out over 12,000 water bills as we began our transition to monthly billing. We received over 500 calls during the first three days after the first monthly bills went out, spending over 24 hours on the phone explaining the transition to our customers. We continued to receive calls after that; however we did not track the volume. 185 accounts were posted for shut-off with 37 accounts finally being shut off for non-payment.

Sincerely,



James R. Freed

*City Manager*

*Chief Administrative Officer*