



*Office of the City Manager, Chief Administrative Officer  
Monthly Administrative Report  
January 2015*

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In December, the Police Department made a conditional offer of employment to Clinton Thom of Leonard, Michigan. Thom graduated from Oakland Police Academy mid-December and is a recent graduate of the Port Huron Police Department's Citizen's Police Academy. Thom is expected to begin training January 5, 2015 and his position will bring the Department up to full strength. We anticipate another long-term officer possibly retiring early in the New Year. We will begin the process of filling that opening upon notification of retirement intent.

The Police Department is undergoing an internal review regarding the Officer Involved Shooting of a suspect that attempted to run over two officers during a traffic stop. The review is procedural internal process that takes a detailed look at the incident and, if necessary, makes recommendations for equipment changes, training needs, and/or procedural changes. The incident is also under review by the Michigan State Police. Preliminary information indicates that the officers' actions were appropriate to protect their lives.

The Department has noted an increase in robberies recently (Metro PCS, Lighthouse Party Store, Marathon Station, Admiral Station) and theft from vehicles which is indicative to the time of year. The increase, in part, is attributed to offenders looking for quick cash and/or saleable items around the holidays. Officers are reminding residents to be mindful of their surroundings, lock their car doors and to not leave valuables in sight in their vehicles.

Calls for service for November 2014 decreased by 17% from October 2014, and increased 8% from November 2013. Decreases from the prior month were seen largely in Assaults (-42%), animal complaints (-33%) and Domestic Assaults (-10%). December numbers are not available at this time.

The Fire Department has answered 205 calls for service to date including response to six (6) structure fires since last month's report. There were no reported injuries to citizens in any of these fires and none of them were directly related to the season. Several were caused by electrical malfunctions and the most recent garage fire at 2845-11<sup>th</sup> Avenue was a result of primary power lines falling onto the roof of the garage. Fire crews were delayed in suppressing the fire until DTE could cut power to the lines. Crews were able to remove an automobile from the garage prior to involvement in fire, preventing damage to a 1995 show quality Ford Mustang.

A grant application was submitted by the Fire Department to the Federal Emergency Management Agencies-Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) for the replacement of a Fire Pumper apparatus at a cost of \$425,000 as well as replacement of breathing apparatus worn by fire fighters and also the replacement of hydraulic extrication tools totaling \$323,060. The City of Port Huron would receive 90% federal funding with a 10% match of local funds. We were able to secure letters of support for this grant application from Congresswoman Candice Miller. If successful, this grant would allow for replacement of critical equipment not currently sustainable due to budgetary limitations.

So far this month, 35 fire inspections have been completed in commercial occupancies within our city. Adding this figure to our cumulative totals for the year-198 pre fire inspections have been conducted which continues our goal of bringing each location into a two (2) year inspection cycle.

On December 19<sup>th</sup>, the Code Enforcement Unit had 111 new complaints opened. We attended legal update training by Corporate Counsel this month related to private property access. We also won our second appeal in Circuit Court against Mr. Phillip Risner. We were able to finally get an appearance from Sperry's at the AHB Hearing where they were ordered to present a plan to show progress towards trim work and window replacement. Immediately afterwards, Larry Jones finally applied for a City of Port Huron Historic District Commission meeting. If the application is approved, it will occur on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015 providing he has all the window specifications at that time. We also were able to get William Kidd to appear at an AHB with a goal of repairing his roof or demolishing it if it is too far gone. Mr. Gerald Grattan eventually cleaned up his yard despite several malicious emails sent to the Chief from his father, Michigan Militia Officer Douglas Grattan.

In January, we will have received feedback on our two garnishment cases submitted 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. We will also prepare a year-end review of the Code Enforcement Unit's progress.

This month, the Clerk's office began selling dog licenses on behalf of St. Clair County. The County reimburses the City \$1.50 for each license sold and 77 licenses were issued in December. We also continued with the transfer of the Traffic Control Order records to Excel. We are reviewing over 1,000 traffic orders to ensure the information was properly transferred. We also worked on finalizing the RFP for the codification of the code book and plan to send the document to appropriate vendors later this month.

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 storm water outlet near the proposed wetland site. St Clair County's engineering consultant has incorporated into their plans DPW Administration's review comments and provided an approvable design for the diversion of storm water flow into a proposed wetland area. We will continue working with the MDEQ to determine how this proposed project would affect the City's Stormwater NPDES permit. Department staff has revised the proposed language that would spell out the terms of an agreement between the County Parks Department and the City of Port Huron to provide for this diversion of City storm water flow. The County Parks Director has approved our proposed agreement language.

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

The DPW Director met with staff and the press regarding his upcoming retirement and updated his job description for national advertising.

The DPW staff has met with representatives of URS to review the proposed design of McMorran Boulevard, Superior Mall, and the South McMorran parking lot. We provided comments to the consultant's seventy percent complete design drawings. URS will submit all of the final design documents to us by January 5, 2015. URS is scheduled to submit final documents to DeMaria for bidding by January 16, 2015 and construction is scheduled to begin March of 2015.

The DPW administrative and engineering staff continued 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 and staff commented on the interpretive sign that will be posted in Kiefer Park to explain the shoreline habitat improvements that were completed by the EPA this fall.

DPW Director began work on updates to the Capital Improvement Plan for fiscal year 2014-2015.

DPW Administrative staff met with Marcotte Disposal to discuss the billing of the new St. Clair County tipping fee.

DPW Engineering staff continued working on various construction projects. The Stone and Kearney Street contractor completed lawn restoration and punch list items for the project. 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. The 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. This project's bid will be opened on January 13, 2015 and is expected to start in the spring of 2015. The design of the Hickory Area reconstruction project is ongoing and the project's bid is expected to be opened January 20, 2015. This project is expected to begin in the spring utilizing street millage money. Bids were opened for the MOC back deck project. Sanctum Contracting was the low bidder and a resolution requesting approval of the contract will be presented to Council on January 12, 2015. Engineering staff submitted the report for the Blue Water Center of Independent Living on the ADA ramps that were completed in fiscal year 2013-2014. We have one more report to submit to the BWCIL for the consent decree concerning the ADA ramps.

The DPW street maintenance crews put down approximately 10 tons of cold patch at various locations. Crews were able to perform routine alley grading because of the warm weather. Street crews provided traffic control measures for watermain breaks, bridge inspections and New Year's Eve party downtown.

DPW traffic control crews responded to several damaged signs due to inclement weather. The electrician had to respond to several traffic signal issues caused by wind damage. Crews also completed the installation of signs to comply with updated traffic control orders. The City had to retain bridge tenders longer this season to facilitate the Corp of Engineers' dredging operations on the Black River.

The motor vehicle pool staff was slightly behind schedule on their preventative maintenance list because of short staff due to vacations and illness. Our mechanics performed repairs and maintenance on the drawbridges to support the longer season caused by the dredging operations. Technicians outfitted a new police cruiser for service.

The water distribution staff repaired two water main breaks and assisted the Water Office with water shutoffs and turn-on's. The sewer collection staff performed routine maintenance activities and investigated a few sewer backup complaints. They cleaned and inspected a 36-inch sanitary interceptor sewer near the St. Clair County Parks Commission proposed wetlands. This inspection determined that the proposed wetlands is not in conflict with the City's sanitary sewer and we also located three buried manholes which since have been exposed and adjusted accordingly. The sewer collection foreman also assembled the 2014 Operations and Maintenance Report for submittal to the MDEQ.

The Water Filtration plant (WFP) staff continued monitoring the chemical feed monitor to establish a baseline for the proper feed rate. They have also begun to work with the approved vendor and the City's IT staff to upgrade the software for the WFP operation system (this contract was approved at the November 24<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting). It is anticipated that this upgrade will be completed within the next two months. WFP and Engineering staff also reviewed and provided comments on a conceptual site plan from the United States Coast Guard for improvements to the Hollyhock mooring facility.

The Wastewater Treatment plant (WWTP) staff has been working with the manufacturer of the fine bubble aeration equipment which was installed a few years back within the three aeration tanks. This manufacturer previously replaced defective stainless steel hardware within aeration tank number one. Staff has observed similar conditions in tanks two and three. It is the intent of the manufacturer at this time to replace this hardware within the two remaining tanks in the next month. Even though this is outside of the warranty period, the manufacturer is standing behind their product and replacing any defective hardware at no cost to the City. Since replacing the hardware in aeration tank number one, there have been no further hardware issues observed. The consultant working on the arc flash report has begun the task of data collection by physically inspecting and gathering equipment/wire data in preparation for the electrical analysis and report. WWTP and Engineering staff also reviewed proposals for professional engineering services for pump station and metering equipment upgrades for the upcoming years. A resolution for the recommended engineering firm for City Council's consideration will be forthcoming.

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

Medical Incentive payments were issued in December to employees and retirees that elect not to participate in our healthcare program because they have dual medical coverage with their spouse. Employees and retirees that participate in the Medical Incentive Program receive a credit of \$250 per month in lieu of healthcare coverage and the special payment is issued in December of each

year. This plan reduces overlapping of medical coverage and helps lower the City's healthcare costs. We have approximately 40 employees/retirees that participate annually in this program.

Every year, the City adopts a Christmas Family through the Professional Counseling Center. This year's family consisted of a mom and four children ages 12, 7, 6 and 6-months. Throughout the year, City employees donated close to \$800 from casual Fridays and special casual days. Our volunteer shoppers, along with other employees' donations, were able to obtain most everything from the "Wish List" like coats, boots, toys, games and items for the family. In addition we were able to provide a \$250 Kroger gift card. The coordinator from the Professional Counseling Center sent us a thank you on behalf of the adopted family.

The Planning Department met with representatives from MDOT and discussed the procedure required for using the mitigation funds that were set aside to defray costs for required updates to the City's Master Plan. The City is required by law to review its master plan every five years and update the goals, land use maps and related ordinances as deemed necessary. It is anticipated that updated drafts will be completed in April/May for the Planning Commission's recommendation to City Council.

Work has begun on finalizing the expanded SmartZone that Council approved several months ago. We have still not received the written agreement from the State; however, we have been given permission to start the formal amendments to our documents in anticipation of the agreement being sent to the City shortly. The final approvals on the SmartZone will allow the City and the State to market Port Huron as a high tech research and development area. The Planning Department has also worked with several developers and investors regarding potential Brownfield Plans and similar incentive programs for business expansions in hopes that the new year will result in additional investment in Port Huron.

They have also been in contact with Washington D.C. representatives regarding the BEDI Grant and Section 108 Loan Program that was originally awarded to the Sperry development in August, 2010. They have agreed to review the new developer's proposal and anticipated financial resources and will then determine if the project would still meet the criteria of the original offer. We don't anticipate any decisions until the end of February. We have received approved building plans for a 12-plex theatre and restaurant at the site.

The Community Development Division is also working on a required five year plan. The "Consolidated Plan" is required by HUD every five years and establishes goals and action items that can be incorporated into the Annual Action Plan for the use of CDBG funds, and various grant applications (such as the Blight Elimination Grant). A survey has been set up on the City's website to gain information from investors and residents regarding housing and neighborhood issues. The questions are general in nature, multiple choice and established by HUD. In January and February, the office will have several items on the Council agenda and a public hearing to review programs that serve the neighborhoods, home repairs for the elderly, low-moderate income owners and those that hope to purchase their first home this year.

The Rental Certification Division is also in the process of updating information available on the website regarding inspection guides for the tenant and property owner, registering rentals and

collection of rental fees. The inspectors completed over 100 inspections and responded to rental complaints this month.

The Inspection Division issued permits for several new construction projects, including the 17 unit student housing facility owned and operated by Baker College. Inspection also responded to several fires and is working with property owners and insurance companies to remove the structures or arrange for repairs as soon as possible. The division is working closely with Community Development to identify several potential code cases that may qualify for the new Blight Elimination Program (subject to the very tight restrictions that MSHDA has imposed on the program).

December brought many good things to the Parks and Recreation Department. The department received several grants at the end of the year. Department of Natural Resources awarded us \$295,000 for Lakeside Park and \$45,000 to aid in signage along Black River Walk and an ADA accessible parking lot for the kayak launch. A private donation in the amount of \$40,000 was given by the Stebbins Family for the splash pad and they also challenged the community with another \$43,000 that they will match in funds until March 2015. From this challenge, people have been sending in donations and we have already received \$3,100 in donations for the project. A group of youth from the recreation center also submitted a grant to get our basketball courts resurfaced. They were awarded the grant! They were really excited. The winter brochure was released in December with many things for the whole family to participate in. Planning for the Cleveland Recreation Lab has been in full swing and there have been many meetings with the Port Huron Area School District to help in providing educational recreation opportunities for the children in our schools.

The cemetery had 11 services in December and participated with Lisa Fountain from Allied Veterans Council with the Wreaths Across America program for our veterans area of Lakeside Cemetery. Wreaths were unloaded and organized for them to be placed on veterans' graves by Boy Scouts and other various groups.

Community service helped a lot this month and blew leaves in the cemetery for the first three weekends in December. They were able to help us complete all sections and we are definitely ahead for this coming spring!

If you look on Facebook, Lakeside Cemetery now has a page. The cemetery staff created a Facebook page for Lakeside Cemetery to help promote, answer questions, and keep the public informed. Information about the present and past history can also be found on this page.

The I.T. Department was involved in a number of activities. Of note were: preparing monthly water billing for all customers for the first time. They also completed year-end accounting and payroll activities, including a number of one-time payment activities. They also installed a new network firewall.

During December, the Income Tax Division continued our annual compliance efforts, including a focus on larger amounts that may be owed. We are also attempting to clean up any open items from the 2013 tax year before December 31.

The majority of the duties performed by the Accounting Division are typically similar from month to month. These include processing payroll, expense checks and other typical monthly work such as posting journal entries, updating various spreadsheets, balancing accounts, etc. Several annual items were filed this month including the Single Audit, Act 51 Report, Qualifying Statement and the Form F-65 Report. Special projects accomplished this month include streamlining our report for our CDBG and HOME programs and a reorganization of our office supplies inventory.

The Assessing Division completed the canvassing for personal property and statements were mailed out this month. The Board of Review met on December 9<sup>th</sup>. Preliminary assessments have been adjusted and approved by the County Equalization Department. Permits, combinations and lot splits are still in progress and should be completed in January.

The Treasurer's Office and Water Office have been extremely busy during December. In addition to collecting winter property taxes and performing the monthly accounting for BWATC, we have been immersed in the transition from quarterly to monthly water billing. We dealt with customer calls and inquiries as needed, although the volume has increased greatly this month due to the ongoing transition. Because of this, we have not been able to tabulate our monthly statistics as usual but we hope to have time to do this next month.

Another meeting was held with museum officials regarding the cost reduction plan we are working to develop. In your Council packet for the first meeting in January you will find a resolution authorizing the sale of all or any items the City may currently have ownership over. This is not a fundraising tool, but necessary to clean out junk or useless inventory. Currently, the Museum houses thousands of items that were donated over the years, most holding little or no value. The Museum would like to begin "cleaning house" and getting rid of the junk that serves no purpose. They will then have a better idea of how much space they actually need to operate.

There are discussions taking place about whether or not they even want to stay in the building. Would the community be better suited with a museum focusing less on displays and exhibits and focusing more on sites like the Lightship, Hospital and Depot? These are honest questions that need to be discussed. Perhaps a new partnership with the County? We are pleased with the direction in which our efforts are going, and hope to have a long-term solution presented to Council in late spring.

A meeting was held between Main Street, Port Huron Festivals, Inc., and various City departments. The meeting focused on the various events held throughout the year such as Chilly Fest, Blue Water Fest and Boat Races. The discussion took place about what is or could be the most sustainable model to ensure these events have consistent leadership and funding. Perhaps a director of all the events needs to be in place? Is Main Street doing a good job and if so, should we bolster their efforts? It's a discussion that has needed to take place because too often the events are like a yo yo: up and down. We need to get serious about what is the best model. The group will be meeting monthly going forward to develop a plan.

The City Manager has been in initial stages of discussions with department heads regarding budget development schedule, expectations and process. The Council will be getting a Goal Setting Work Session packet that includes a list of proposed goals with a list that individual council members will set, then we will merge those lists for review at the goal setting Council Work Session. The City Manager and Department Heads are hoping that the Mayor and Council can give them 5-10 specific goals for the year. They will not be the only things we focus on this year, but they should represent the direction the Mayor and Council want us to go. This is a time for the Mayor and Council to provide the Administration with direction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James R. Freed', written over a horizontal line.

James R. Freed  
*City Manager*  
*Chief Administrative Officer*