



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

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In April the Police Department continues to see calls for service increase as we head towards the warmer months. In an effort to curb criminal activity and effectively decrease criminal activity in our higher crime areas, the department participated in the second Data Driven Approaches to Crime and Traffic Safety (DDACTS) activity on April 17, 2015. The activity involves saturating identified hotspots with uniformed police officers to address crime and traffic issues/complaints. Port Huron Police, along with the Michigan State Police and the St. Clair County Sheriff's Department, worked together in this latest operation. The effort resulted in 145 traffic stops, 91 persons investigated, 13 arrests, 7 fugitives taken into custody and 307 contacts. More operations are planned for the upcoming months.

The Police Department is preparing for the special event season that is fast approaching. Several meeting/planning sessions have been scheduled for events such as Boat Night, Parade, Cruise Night, Float Down, and other summertime events. The department is also finalizing plans to celebrate its 134<sup>th</sup> Birthday on Friday, May 1, 2015 at the Acheson Bean Dock. Several retired police officers from Port Huron that span many decades will be present, along with our current police force. In addition, the Department is preparing for its annual awards ceremony, scheduled for May 12, 2015 at 6 pm. The ceremony recognizes both officers and citizens for their efforts that have resulted in heroism, saving of a life and other acts of valor. The ceremony is open to everyone and the public is encouraged to attend.

Calls for service in March 2015 increased by 27.7% over February 2015 and were virtually the same as March 2014 (-.003%). Notable increases were seen in assault and batteries (+40.9%), domestic assaults (+40.7%), and suspicious person investigations (+96%).

The DPS-Fire Division has responded to 4 fires in the month of April. A hydraulic lift cylinder in the loading dock at 3495-24<sup>th</sup> Street was destroyed with no extension into the structure. A detached garage was heavily damaged at 1222 Palmer Court. Blowing embers from a previous recreational fire are believed to have ignited cardboard boxes outside of the garage. Careless cooking caused extensive damage to the kitchen area of 620 Griswold Street. The cause of a structure fire in the 2 family residential home located at 2938 & 2940 Military appears to have been electrical in nature with the investigation continuing.

The DPS-Fire and Police response boat has been placed back into mooring along the Black River. The boat had been stored on the trailer at Central Fire Station for the winter months. Annual pressure testing of our complement of fire hose began in early April and continues as scheduled with much of our stock completed as of this writing.

Forty four (44) pre-fire inspections have been completed for the month as of April 28<sup>th</sup>. Fire crews were given a walk-through of the completed Convention Center for familiarization of the building layout as well as the location of the fire suppression system components and the alarm

system panel. DPS-Fire Division staff have been working on compiling data from fire inspections and building pre-plans to make information electronically accessible to responding units for timely identification of critical building information such as the location of fire suppression connections or any construction hazards.

As of April 27<sup>th</sup> the Code Enforcement Unit had 281 new complaints opened. The increase is due to 166 enforcements opened for paint violations. This early fix-it ticket gives homeowners time to formulate a plan as they are given to July/August to correct the matter. Each paint fix-it ticket is accompanied by a Community Development letter that includes an offer for free paint to get them started. Most part-time Code Enforcement Inspectors increased their hours to 28 a week to get this done. The 2015 Lawn Maintenance Service bids were finalized and Lt. Kuehn completed her fourth month of Staff & Command training at MSU. In addition, we are working hard to address each 2014 enforcement with outstanding fines, fees or abatements processing paperwork to dismiss, forward to a collections agency, send a letter from Corporate Counsel to banking institutions, or process as a Single Lot Assessment. In May, we will forward our 2014 outstanding fines, fees, and abatements as Single Lot Assessments to City Council and begin working on the 2015 outstanding fines, which we will be addressing quarterly from this point forward.

This month the Clerk's office attended a free election and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) training day in Lansing. New regulations for FOIA take effect July 1 with significant changes to the process and fees charged. We average about 90 requests per year with the Police Department processing over a 1,000 per year. Following the informational sessions with our insurance carrier and the Michigan State Police in May, we will be revising our current policy to comply with the new regulations and plan to bring the revised policy for Council approval in either in May or June.

Other items of significance worked on this month include streamlining and automating a lot of the clerical processes for the Beautification Commission's Yard of the Year program. This will greatly assist the new chairs with coordinating this worthwhile event as the previous chair of many years has retired.

Finally, staff have issued over 850 absentee ballots for the May 5 election and are busily packing the supplies and coordinating the final items in preparation for a successful Election Day. They also have been working on a new process (spreadsheet) to track the number of burials, plots sold, foundations ordered, etc., on a monthly and yearly basis to provide a better overall review of the various activities in the cemetery division.

DPW staff attended a construction kick-off meeting with DeMaria and utility companies to discuss coordination issues for the Blue Water Transit Center. DPW staff collected parking lot lighting that was removed from the South McMorran Parking lot. These fixtures will be stored and used to replace damaged and failing fixtures elsewhere in the City.

The lease with Michigan Works will expire soon. The DPW Administration prepared a response to a request for proposal to lease the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the MOC to Michigan Works.

The DPW Director completed working on updates to the Capital Improvement Plan for fiscal year 2015-2016. The plan was submitted to the City Council to set a public hearing on the plan for May 11, 2015. The Planning Commission will review the draft plan at their meeting on May 5, 2015.

The Michigan Department of Transportation has submitted a draft Road Safety Audit (RSA) report regarding the 10th Avenue and Pine Grove intersection. We are reviewing the draft report.

The DPW Director received a completed report showing alternatives for improvements to the Quay Street river walk. These improvements would include pedestrian access from Military Street Bridge to the Fort Street docks along the waterfront.

The DPW administration is working on an application to the Local Bridge Program to perform preventive maintenance work on the 10<sup>th</sup> Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Street Bridges. City Council approved a resolution in support of this application at their meeting on April 27, 2015.

The DPW Director assisted the City Manager and the Human Resources Director with the selection process for the new City Engineer/Director of Public Works.

The Engineering staff continues to work on the design and processing of documents for the improvements to South Boulevard from Electric to 31<sup>st</sup> Street, 20<sup>th</sup> Street from Dove to Beard, Beers Street from Michigan to Merchant, Michigan from Beers to Glenwood and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Garfield to Sanborn Street. We are determining if the warranty from the roofing contractor will cover the repair of a roof leak at the Tennis House. The Washington Avenue project public meeting was held March 25, 2015. Construction work has started on the Washington Street project and the Nern Street project. Dean Marine will be repairing the docks throughout the downtown marina system.

The Engineering staff continues to assist the Recreation Department in processing contract bid documents for the improvements at Lakeside Park. Staff is also processing bid documents for the upgrade of the basketball court at Palmer Park.

The street maintenance crews repaired potholes with cold patch at various locations. Our asphalt crew has been saw cutting roadways in preparation for future concrete repairs that will be completed after the cement plants opening in May. Street crews closed several streets for forestry and utilities. Crews graded the cemetery, all local dirt roads and several alleys. They cleaned tunnels under the Seventh Street Bridge and the Military Street bike path. Crews also used a grinding machine to level the concrete header at the Edison Shores Condo entrance.

The motor vehicle pool crews maintained the preventative maintenance list and did some extensive work on the sludge hauling equipment for hauling season. The vehicle maintenance staff also completed fitting out two new patrol vehicles.

Traffic control crews finished repairing numerous signs that were damaged this winter. They also performed spring routine maintenance on the drawbridges.

The Water Filtration Staff oversaw the demolition of the Krafft Road meter house. The contractor still needs to complete the lawn restoration as a result of the demolition. This demolition eliminates future repair, maintenance and operating cost for this building.

The water distribution staff repaired a few water leaks and assisted the Water Office with water shutoffs for nonpayment. They also helped the St. Clair County Parks and Recreation with investigating a leak on the water service for the Fort Gratiot Light Station property.

The sewer collection staff investigated multiple sewer complaints. They also performed sewer cleaning and root cutting within a couple sanitary sewers along with making a repair to a sanitary sewer. The Sewer Collection Foreman position was filled with an internal candidate as a result of a voluntary resignation.

The Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) staff made repairs to one of the two grit channels. The other grit channel is currently being evaluated as to what repairs are necessary. Staff is in the process of making repairs to one of the township sanitary metering stations as a result of a vehicle accident which destroyed the above ground cabinet of the station. The WWTP and Engineering staff reviewed the final bid documents for the Gratiot Avenue Pump Station rehabilitation project. This project will be advertised starting on May 1st.

During the month of April, the Human Resources Department accepted employment applications for a full-time Appraiser and a Radio Technician. Seasonal applications were taken for School Crossing Guards, Lifeguards and Kids Program Coordinators.

Interviews were conducted in conjunction with the MML for the City Engineer/Director of Public Works. A conditional job offer was made, pending a background check. Interviews were also conducted for the Streets Foreman and Cemetery Supervisor. Both positions were filled by internal candidates.

Several meetings were held with management during the month of April to discuss manpower, upcoming retirement vacancies and possible department reorganizations. Additional meetings were held with the Fire Union/Department to discuss early severance (retirement) buyouts.

Police Department promotional tests were proctored by the H.R. Department on April 22, 2015.

The H.R. Director joined the City Manager for Career Day at the Harrison Center on April 24<sup>th</sup>. Additionally, the H.R. Director attended a Zing Train seminar at SC4 on Zingerman's approach to hiring.

Our Retirement Plan Specialist from ICMA Retirement Corporation (ICMA-RC) is normally onsite every April and October. Although this is a voluntary benefit option that we offer our employees, the Retirement Plan Specialist is available by appointment to meet with City employees that participate or are interested in participating to review their individual accounts. The Plan Specialist was available during the week of April 20<sup>th</sup> and met with City employees at various City work locations.

The Planning Department is preparing a list of vacant lots that may be available for sale to adjacent property owners in May. Several lots are too small for normal in fill construction. The department is also working with two groups regarding the use of vacant lots for community gardens this season and will be bringing details to the City Council during a short presentation in May.

The Community Development Division has received ten applications this month for the Urban Pioneer Program – a down payment assistance program that provides incentives to home ownership. Under the new “Blight Elimination Program” from the State of Michigan, the City and partners (PHNHC) have acquired their first two homes for demolition – one on Stone Street and one on 30<sup>th</sup> Street. Also, the staff has received the current annual list of county tax foreclosures and is preparing an acquisition and demolition plan for several structures. There are approximately 170 letters that are going out to property owners in need of exterior paint as a joint effort with code enforcement staff and CDBG funds. The letters provide notification that the exterior of the home needs to be painted, but also includes vouchers for free paint and information on our grant program that provides contractors for those that are unable to paint the home on their own.

The Inspection Division has issued 94 permits this month and responded to 16 complaints. There have been several fires and two new code cases that required inspections, work agreements and demolition processing. With spring and summer season emerging, the inspectors have taken notice of potential zoning ordinance violations and notified property owners so that they have time to make arrangements to remove front yard parking, temporary signage, improper storage of boats, motor homes, trailers and similar issues. The division is also undergoing minor improvements to procedures that allow us to expand the use of the BS&A software, internal procedures for potential code cases and access to funding sources.

The Rental Certification Division completed 109 inspections with our two part-time inspectors. The BS&A software is undergoing minor updates to accommodate increased comment fields for the inspectors and the staff to use which will allow for more information to be shared between the assessor’s office, water department, code enforcement and inspection division. The updates are handled by our own staff and at no extra charge to the departments.

April at the Parks and Recreation Department is a time of much planning and getting ready for the awaited summer. Our summer brochure just went out and we are in the process of hiring all the employees for the summer. Cleveland Recreation Lab took place this month during Spring break and was very successful with over 80 kids coming to camp that week. This gave children breakfast and lunch and educational recreation activities all week.

In the cemetery we had a total of 13 burials this month. The winter decorations have been removed and black dirt and seeds have been put down for summer. Roads in the cemetery were graded and gravel was placed in low spots by the streets department.

The parks division is working on lists of what needs to be done in each park. There has been a huge amount of people wanting to volunteer in parks. The department is starting these volunteers at 11<sup>th</sup> and Division and 19<sup>th</sup> and Division on May 16<sup>th</sup> to start the first neighborhood cleanup. The hope is to get neighborhoods to take some ownership of parks in their neighborhoods because, as we all know, great communities have great parks. Arbor Day was a huge success at Cleveland and Roosevelt. The forestry crew planted a tree at each school and did a demonstration of the equipment they use every day to care for our 25,000 trees in the city.

The Information Technology Department was involved in a number of activities which includes working with St. Clair County and the Port Huron Police Department to test software for the CLEMIS transition.

During April, the Income Tax Division continued to focus primarily on the thousands of 2014 tax returns they have received so far. There is currently a four to five day lag on the processing of both refund returns and tax due returns.

The Accounting Division continued to perform the typical month to month duties. These include processing payroll, expense checks and other usual monthly work such as posting journal entries, updating various spreadsheets, balancing accounts, etc. They have also completed work on the proposed budget which the City Manager delivered to the City Council. Staff also cleaned the store room and finished filing a back log of check vouchers as time permitted.

The Assessing Division finished all reports to the City, County and State for the 2015 assessing year. The assessing data base has been rolled over to begin work on the 2016 assessing year. Inconsistencies in the data base master files have been analyzed and corrected. A lot of file maintenance was done because of the changeover of years, both physical files and computer files. We are also updating the sales history and entering it into our computer files.

The Treasurer's Office and Water Office continue to be busy with collection of rental inspection fees, income tax payments and water payments. They continue to perform the monthly accounting for BWATC. During the month of April, the I.T. Department made available the water bills for customers to view online through the City's website. They also completed our setup to receive water payments through an electronic file. During the month of April they were able to resume shutoffs for nonpayment in all cycles. During the winter months, they did not have crews available due to frozen services and main breaks.

Sincerely,

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