



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

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With warmer weather upon us, calls for service in April have increased 6.6% from March, and 8.1% from April 2014. Increases have been seen in intoxicated persons (+38%), malicious destruction of property-vehicle (+48%) and emotionally disturbed person (+69%). Numbers are not available for May at the time of this report. Another DDACTS operation was scheduled for May 15, 2015. Results from the operation were 95 traffic stops, 75 persons investigated, 19 arrests and 4 fugitives. More DDACTS operations are planned in the near future.

The Police Department is currently investigating the tragic death of a 5 year old girl. Officers responded to a home in the 800 block of Oak Street for an unresponsive female child. Resuscitation attempts were unsuccessful. The parents of the victim have been arrested on charges of child abuse, and may be subject to enhanced charges pending the outcome of the investigation and autopsy. The malnourishment and care of the deceased and her younger sister were some of the worst investigators had seen.

On a more positive note, the Police Department celebrated its 134<sup>th</sup> birthday on May 8 at the Acheson Bean Dock. Over 200 people turned out for the event which was a huge success, and will likely be an annual event. The Police Department has begun preparation for the summer's special events, beginning with Cruise Night on Friday, June 26, and Blue Water Fest July 16-18. Organizers have met with officials from the Police Department to begin planning for the events, and ensure that the event plan is in place and will provide for a safe event for those attending.

The DPS-Fire Division has responded to six (6) fires to date in the month of May. A vehicle was destroyed in front of 2605 North Boulevard from a fire in the engine compartment. A male subject received burns attempting to extinguish a fire in his garage at 1426 Kearney Street. He was transferred out of town for treatment of his injuries. A bedroom fire upstairs at 1340 Minnie Street caused significant damage to the home. A female occupant later confessed to intentionally setting the fire to PHPD Detective Merritt. Fire crews responded to a motor vehicle crash at Stone and Harker Streets with both vehicles on fire. One male driver of a pick-up truck with significant burn injuries was pulled from his vehicle by neighbors -- he was transferred out of town for care. During investigation of the scene, components of methamphetamine production were located near the pick-up truck. Extensive damage was sustained to a six (6) unit apartment complex in the Blue Water Townhouses at 607 Taylor Street. The fire appears to have started in a wall due to an electrical problem and extended into much of the structure. Port Huron crews were assisted on scene by Marysville and Port Huron Township Fire Departments. One firefighter sustained a lacerated hand while fighting the fire. Residents of the occupied apartments were displaced but no civilian injuries were reported. The porch and exterior

of 1320 Nelson Street sustained damage from a fire that appears to have been caused by careless use of smoking materials.

The Department of Public Safety Police and Fire annual awards ceremony was held on May 15<sup>th</sup>. The Fire Division recognized 19 firefighting staff with a Unit Citation award for their efforts in the rescue of two adult males and simultaneous extinguishment of a fire last fall on Howard Street. Thirty-four fire inspections of businesses have been conducted as of May 26<sup>th</sup>. Fire Marshal Warren has been present for fire drills at city schools and continues follow up inspections of the Baker College student housing project and review of plans for upcoming developments.

As of May 27<sup>th</sup>, the Code Enforcement Unit had 330 new complaints opened during the month of May. This increase is due to paint and grass season being upon us. We submitted the majority of 2014 outstanding fines, fees or abatements as Single Lot Assessments to City Council. Corporate Counsel sent a letter to banking institutions attempting to garner payment before those cases are sent to Collections. We took down a blighted dead tree at 1412 Oak that had been there for years with the help of the Forestry Department and the out of state owner was billed for the service. Lt. Kuehn spoke to PH Northern students in a leadership class, attended CLEMIS, FOIA and her fifth Staff & Command training session at MSU. In June, we will take the remaining 2014 outstanding debt not eligible to be Single Lot Assessments (ownership transfer or ticket was issued in tenant's name) and send them to Collections. We will then begin processing more 2015 debt quarterly from this point forward, with invoices being directly sent to property owners by us instead of sending them to the Finance Department. Reports and processes are in place to track any payments received to ensure a more timely collection / single-lot assessment procedure.

Beyond our normal, day-to-day activities and responsibilities, the month of May for the Clerk's office began with the holding of the special election on May 5 which resulted in a 19.4% turnout or 4,038 voters. We spent the following week preparing the necessary materials (lists, maps, instructions, binders, etc.) used by volunteers to place over 3,600 American flags on veteran graves prior to Memorial Day.

We also continued to review and interpret the new law for processing written requests for public records (FOIA) and also attended two informational sessions by our insurance carrier and the Michigan State Police. The City is required to establish new procedures and guidelines for processing FOIA requests, along with a separate written summary informing the public on how to submit requests, how to understand the response, deposit requirements, fee calculations and avenues for challenging and appealing denials. These two documents will require the Council's approval at one of the June meetings.

During the month of May, the Human Resources Department accepted employment applications for a full-time Parks Repair employee, Utilities Repair employee for the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) and a WWTP Operator. The full-time openings are due to recent retirements. Seasonal applications were also accepted for School Crossing Guards.

Interviews were conducted for an Appraiser in the Assessing Department and the job has been filled. Two (2) Equipment Operator positions for the Utilities Division were also filled. Our new City Engineer/Director of Public Works, Lennie Naeyaert started his employment with the City during the week of May 18<sup>th</sup>.

Since our seasonal hiring is in full force, we are busy conducting background checks and processing paperwork for many summer positions that will be filled primarily for the Parks, Cemetery and Recreation Departments.

The H.R. Director prepared Severance Incentive Agreements for the eligible members of the Fire Department. Preliminary meetings have taken place with some of the eligible members and their union representative. Additional meetings will follow during the first two weeks of June.

Health & Safety training classes are ongoing. Supervisor Drug Free Workplace training classes were conducted for our newly promoted DPW Foremen. Confined Space training classes were also held for our new DPW employees.

The Planning Department staff is busy reviewing several use certificates for new businesses locating in the area, including downtown store fronts. Staff also continues to meet and work with new developers for the Sperry's building and HUD officials regarding the process for window replacements, and HUD approvals for the potential use of BEDI and Section 108 funds. We are also working with MEDC representatives to help property owners develop the old Times Herald Building, the Citadel Building, the Michigan National Bank Building, and the old Bijou Theater building. Rezoning requests and site plan reviews for Port Huron Hospital expansion plans are underway.

We are currently completing details on proposed local historic district guidelines for several neighborhoods adjacent to the downtown area.

Community Development assisted 10 new homeowners with down payment assistance and rehab grants, provided 15 property owners with free exterior paint, and is working with several families to secure exterior renovation grants for necessary repairs. We received approval to purchase 15 abandoned structures with new Blight Elimination Grant Program funds in partnership with Port Huron Neighborhood Housing Corporation. We also obtained two houses that will be rehabilitated and sold to first time homebuyers with HOME grant funds.

The Inspection Division completed site plan and building plan reviews for several projects including the revised plans for the bus station, Holiday Inn Express Hotel (from peak roof to flat roof), We have issued 104 permits and responded to several zoning complaints.

We are working on updating website information regarding permits and use certificates and updating procedures for permit tracking with BS&A software.

The Rental Certification Division completed inspection of several large complexes such as Grandview Towers and the Harrington Inn, issued 260 rental certificates and several non-compliance tickets.

As we head into summer, Parks/ Recreation/ Cemetery/ Forestry are in full swing. The Recreation Department has hired close to 100 summer employees. This month is full of orientation, registration and preparation for the upcoming summer. Numbers of participants for programs are up over 25% from last year and school is not even out yet.

In the parks we are in full swing of grass cutting. Getting ready for Memorial Weekend in the parks was a huge priority. We have been delivering wood chips to various garden clubs for plant days throughout the city, plus picking up leaf bags from all the flower beds to make our city look great. Crews have started to go through all parks and make as many repairs to playground equipment as possible to bring everything back to quality condition. Our first project park clean up event at 19th/Division, and 11th/ Division, organized a group of volunteers to come in and clean up parks, spread wood chips, paint swing sets and playscapes and we also spent lots of time scrubbing playscapes to remove graffiti. The event went great, and we are working to plan another park clean up and location. A big thank you to Marrison Jewell and Alfonso Amos for organizing this. We look forward to more of these projects in the future.

Forestry crews have been continuing to work on tree reports, they are also removing bushes at the City marina for a deck project and removed pine trees in Edison Shores for engineering for a water project. With the amount of wind and storms they also have been called out at various times for trees or limbs down. We had 12 paid brush pick ups this month and many that have taken advantage of the free drop off Saturdays.

In the cemetery there was a total of nine services. The new sign was installed in the front entrance which was on the list that was created a year ago by the group that saw improvements that would be good for the cemetery. This new sign gives a beautiful entrance way for the cemetery and really looks great. Community Service workers have been in the cemetery every weekend helping with trimming and clean up. The grass is growing fast but crews work hard every day to cut and trim and make our cemetery look great. The entire staff worked really hard to ensure the whole cemetery and especially the Veteran's Cemetery shined for the Memorial Day weekend.

During the month of May, the Information Technology Department worked with the Water Office to add a message to utility bills indicating the availability of paperless billing and added instructions to City web site. We also participated with H.R. and payroll and developed a process to accommodate the new Federal reporting mandate for 1094/1095 forms to comply with the Affordable Care Act.

During May, the Income Tax Division continued to focus primarily on the processing of annual income tax returns we have received. We are currently up to date on the processing of tax returns with refunds due. Tax returns with a payment have about a ten day processing backlog, however the payments are deposited daily as they are received. We have also started the process of reconciling tax year 2014 withholding payments to the informational returns filed.

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. We are also updating the PHNHC financial statements for the current fiscal year.

The Assessing Division is continuing the process of updating the sales history and entering it into our computer files. In addition, the Assessing Division will begin next month a process of verifying all assessing information for 20 percent of City properties. This program will ultimately take five years to complete. During that time, we will re-measure all buildings and structures as well as documenting other information including fences, sheds, sidewalks, pools and patios. During May, we have been working on mailers to send to property owners advising them when we will be in their area.

The Treasurer's Office and Water Office continue to be busy with collection of rental inspection fees, income tax payments and water payments. We also continue to perform the monthly accounting for BWATC. During the month of May, the I.T. Department helped us to begin the testing process for emailing water bills to any customer that requests them. We will initially email a small number and make sure that it is working the way that we hope. Once we are confident that the process is working, we will present an amended ordinance to Council so we are not required to mail the bills (when they have already been emailed).

We have also been working with the Post Office this month to improve delivery service of our water bills. Their prior practice had been to send all of our water bills to the Royal Oak sorting facility. They will now be sorting our water bills locally in the Port Huron Post Office. We are hopeful that this will speed up delivery service. 542 customers were shut off for nonpayment during the month.

Sincerely,

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