



Memorandum

Office of the Village Manager

TO: Honorable President Narsh and Village Council
FROM: Darwin D. P. McClary, Village Manager
DATE: April 24, 2023

RE: **VILLAGE MANAGER'S REPORT**

FY 2023-24 BUDGET PREPARATION

Council has conducted two budget work sessions to date covering General Fund, Public Works Fund, Major Streets Fund, Local Streets Fund, Police Fund, Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund, Water and Sewer Fund, and trust and agency funds. Council will be scheduling a work session for the Downtown Development Authority and DDA Property Acquisition funds, and this work session must be completed sometime this week so that the final budget can be prepared in time for public inspection on May 1. The budget public hearing and consideration for adoption will be held on May 8. Council will continue to work on the Capital Improvement Plan, comprehensive fee schedule, and water and sewer rates during the months of May and June for consideration for adoption no later than June 26.

ROAD COMMISSION EASEMENT ON CEMETERY PROPERTY

The village has executed the easement for the road commission along the southeast corner of the East Lawn Cemetery property, and the village has received payment from the road commission in the amount of \$12,964.00 (\$10,164 for the easement and \$2,800 for tree replacement).

WEB SITE REDESIGN PROJECT UPDATE

CivicPlus has completed the new web site design template, and staff will be working with the company over the next few weeks to complete the migration of existing web site data to the new site and the set up of menu structures and individual pages. The revised target date for going live with the new web site is mid- to late May.

REVIEW OF COUNCIL MEMBER LAMB'S DDA PRESENTATION INFORMATION

At council's March 27 regular meeting, council directed me to review Council Member Lamb's presentation on the financial impact of the DDA on the village's budget. I am in the process of

reviewing the information. I will discuss my findings at the DDA budget work session and will present those findings at council's May 8 meeting.

NORTH SHORE DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

At your April 10 meeting, council opted to authorize administration to continue work on the North Shore drainage problem. Engineer Thurber will continue her review of possible options for drainage improvements and preparation of preliminary design plans and probable estimates of cost. I continue to be concerned that Council did not indicate how the cost of this engineering work, or any improvement project, will be funded.

FY 2024 CONGRESSIONAL COMMUNITY PROJECTS FUNDING PROGRAM

As council is aware, I applied for grant funding under the FY 2024 Congressional Community Projects Funding Program through Congresswoman McClain's office to assist in funding the \$7.3 million Sanitary Sewer Pump Stations Improvement Project. I was made aware of the funding opportunity through an email communication from the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) just a week before applications were due, prompting the need for quick action by my office and the village council. Originally, the grant application requested \$3.5 million. However, after further discussions with Congresswoman McClain's office, I increased the request to more than \$5.8 million. In addition to the resolution of support for the project from village council, we received outstanding letters of support from the Lake Orion Downtown Development Authority, Lake Orion Lake Association, Clinton River Watershed Council, and SEMCOG. We have received notification that Congresswoman McClain has recommended funding for our project to the US House Appropriations Committee. We are waiting for final funding approval. If the village receives the funding, the Water and Sewer Fund share of the project cost would be approximately \$1.6 million, substantially reducing the amount needing to be raised through sewer system meter charge and commodity rate increases.

VILLAGE FINANCIAL CONDITION

Comments by certain individuals in the Lake Orion Facebook Chat Room state that the Village Manager admitted that the village is "broke". These false statements are harmful to our residents and our community. The village is not "broke" by any means. We are able to fund our normal operations on a balanced budget, and we maintain adequate fund reserves in all of our funds. We do not even levy the maximum authorized tax levies for General Fund and Police. However, like almost all other communities, our general operating and police tax levies do not accommodate capital expenditures such as infrastructure, buildings, vehicles, park improvements, and other capital needs. The same holds true for our schools, which is why they must seek bonds and special tax levies to pay for major capital needs. The village is currently working on a comprehensive capital improvement plan and discussing options for funding those needs, including supplemental tax levies, special assessments, fees and charges, bonds, grants, and available fund reserves. For anyone wishing to seek accurate and complete information,

please do not rely on the Lake Orion Chat Room, but, instead, contact my office. I would be happy to answer any questions.

MEEKS PARK PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT UPDATE

JSS-Macomb is expected to begin work this week on the demolition of the old Meeks Park pedestrian bridge and construction of the new bridge.

INITIATORY PETITION

A resident has submitted petition language for approval as to form by the Village Clerk that, if approved and sufficient signatures obtained and certified, would submit to village electors a ballot question as to whether a new ordinance should be adopted that repeals an existing ordinance extending the DDA tax increment financing plan and ceases the DDA's capture of taxes within the DDA district. The Village Attorney and Village Clerk are reviewing the petition form and language to determine if the petition can be approved so that the petitioner can begin soliciting signatures.

ORDINANCE RECODIFICATION UPDATE

Key village staff and ordinance committee members will be meeting with Municode this week to review the firm's legal analysis of the village's code. Municode will then finalize the recodification process.

FINANCE DIRECTOR/TREASURER POSITION

I have reached an agreement on starting salary with our top candidate for the Finance Director/Treasurer position and will be completing the necessary background checks. I anticipate that the approval of my appointment will be on council's May 8 regular meeting agenda for consideration.

POLICE CHIEF POSITION

As council is aware, Police Chief Rossman has announced his retirement effective on May 1, 2023. I am working on a job description for the position (the village does not currently have a job description for this position) and a proposed salary range for presentation to council at your May 8 meeting. I will then commence the recruitment process. I will also be engaging in conversations with Police Lieutenant Todd Stanfield to serve as Interim Police Chief and will request approval of his appointment as soon as details are worked out.

SIDEWALK TRIP HAZARD INVENTORY

The Public Works Department has completed its sidewalk trip hazard inventory and has uploaded the data to the village's GIS system. This data will be used to assist in the formulation of a comprehensive sidewalk capital improvement program.

IMPORTANT DATES

- April 10 – 28, 2023 – DPW Leaf Pickup
- April 25, 2023 – Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee meeting – 6:30 PM
- May 1, 2023 – Planning Commission meeting – 7:30 PM
- May 4, 2023 – DDA/Chamber of Commerce Small Business Legislative Walk – 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM
- May 4, 2023 – Board of Zoning Appeals meeting – 7:30 PM
- May 8, 2023 – Village Council meeting – 7:30 PM