



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

The Police Department is winding down the summer festivities through August which should include a decrease to budgeting needs/overtime costs. August saw the annual National Night Out block party event on August 5th which was highlighted by 12 separate block parties. The Blue Water International Offshore Powerboat races were held August 8-10 with no major issues surrounding the event. The annual Float Down was held on August 17th which was not an organized or sanctioned event. The event is largely promoted through word of mouth and social media. Dangerous water conditions and alcohol make the event a liability and resulted in the drowning of a 19-year-old Fenton resident.

Operation "Covert" in our neighborhoods continued during August with five individual operations scheduled. The operations mixed both uniform and undercover officers in targeted neighborhoods to proactively reduce crime. Funding for this operation is nearly completed with only one remaining operation scheduled for September. A recently submitted grant application was approved for funding of a similar operation for the summer of 2015 through Federal Byrne JAG funds.

The Gamez murder investigation came to a conclusion this month as the case went to trial in July/August during which Gamez was found guilty as charged in the double murder that occurred in July of 2013. Many PHPD officers were involved in the case and received high praise from the prosecutor's office on their professionalism and attention to detail.

Calls for service for July 2014 increased by 9% from June, and 6% from July, 2013. August numbers are not available at this time. Trends typically show calls for service increase during the warmer summer months, and decrease as the weather become cooler. Overtime costs for August have decreased from July, mostly based on the reduction of special events during the month. The Police Department is down two officers that have recently left for other agencies for better pay. Hiring to replace these officers is underway.

The Fire Division participated in the annual celebration of National Night Out on August 5th by visiting several neighborhood gatherings and answering resident's questions about the Fire Division. This included an overview of apparatus and related tools to those interested. Support resources for the annual OPA Powerboat Races on August 10th were provided by Port Huron DPS Boat 1 as one of four medical/dive rescue craft stationed within the race course. On Sunday, August 17th, the annual Float Down event was held along the St. Clair River. Numerous public safety and USCG assets were utilized to provide safety support to the participants. In addition to DPS-Boat 1, vessels from Algonac, Marine City, Clay Township, Marysville, Port Huron Township and Burtchville Township Fire Departments assisted on the water along with the Sheriff's Department Marine Patrol and dive team. On August 26th, 2014, the division recognized the promotion of Firefighter Dale Minard to the rank of Lieutenant.

To date in the month of August, the Fire Division responded to 306 calls for service including the following fires:

August 7, 2014 1023-Miller Street, Residential Structure Fire
August 25, 2014 1039 Bancroft St, Vehicle Fire 1995 Pontiac

A total of 68 Fire Inspections were completed including all school buildings in the City which are inspected each year prior to the beginning of classes.

In August, Code Enforcement had 390 open complaints thus far. We met with the Planning Department in an attempt to improve our enforcement efforts in a more collaborative effort. We did an ordered clean up on 2530 Conner Street, which was our worst house so far and made quite an impression on the owner, who thought that the City wouldn't follow through. We also asked PHPD VIPs to orchestrate a clean up of a 78-year-old female's residence at 1304 White Street. She needed help with overgrown landscaping and junk/debris. They spent nine hours (along with Councilmembers Ashford & Harris) and are still working to get a fence donated. We also communicated with three churches who offered to reach out to 923 Beard Street who didn't qualify for grant assistance. The owner needed help to fix the exterior of his home because of bankruptcy issues. In addition, the Harrison Pointe Neighborhood Watch group offered to cut the lawns of a couple nearby vacant lots so we don't have to incur the costs in an attempt to recoup from out of state/foreclosed owners, or banks. Gary Fletcher's office initiated the first garnishment test case in the hopes of reducing the amount of blight fees owed to the City. We also did a press release of an Abandoned/Junk Car campaign to rid the City of junk vehicles.

Beginning in September, we will begin issuing fix-it tickets to owners of junk cars throughout the City. We will be working on re-writing the 2015 Contractor Contract in regards to changing a few vague sentences that are confusing. We are evaluating our statistics collection deciding what is necessary and trying to make it as accurate and informational as possible. We will also begin to look at reducing Inspectors due to seasonal activities to three days a week in the upcoming winter months.

The Clerk's office began the first part of the month with preparing and running the August 5 election followed by review of over 1,600 signatures for the Charter amendment marijuana proposal. They verified the petition signer's voter registration, their signature and if the petition was accurately completed. We believe this proposal will cause a higher than normal turnout for Election Day and they will be prepared for this increase.

The Department of Public Works (DPW) Administration staff developed proposed language to the City of Port Huron Waste Water Treatment Plant's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit and submitted the language to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) for their review. It is critical that the MDEQ recognize that the City cannot complete its CSO Control Program until the Blue Water Bridge Plaza project is complete.

We provided revisions to the Blue Water Area Transportation Commission (BWATC) orphan well closure specifications and bidding documents.

DPW also responded to questions from the MDEQ regarding the City's Storm Water NPDES permit applications. We will continue to work with the MDEQ on appropriate language for this permit.

The DPW staff worked with the other departments to complete recommended updates to Chapter 48 Utilities Article II & IV. This update includes language changes to facilitate monthly billing.

DPW Engineering staff continued working on various construction projects. The Nern Street Area contractor has completed the installation of all underground utilities in the project area. The streets, including Nern Street and the streets to the south of Nern, are prepared for paving. The asphalt paving crews are scheduled to begin paving these streets the first week of September. The contractor is currently preparing the streets north of Nern Street for the installation of curb and gutter and preparing roads for paving. The contractor has begun pavement removals on Stone Street between Washington and Lincoln and on Kearney Street between Elk and Stone Streets. The City Council approved a contract with Ace Saginaw Paving Company on August 11, 2014 for the milling and resurfacing of Thomas Edison Drive and Sedgwick Street. The Engineering staff held a preconstruction meeting with the contractor who was awarded the contract to mill and resurface streets in the following areas: Northern Woods Phase I, Aspen Dr. Area, and Ramblewood. Construction will begin on this project the second week of September. The Engineering staff also held a preconstruction meeting with Raymond Excavating, the contractor who was awarded the Pedestrian Bridge replacement project and they anticipate the bridge will be fabricated by the end of October. Engineering staff prepared a request for proposal for as needed inspection and surveying services. The Engineering staff worked 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 sidewalk contractor performed ADA ramp installations and utility cut repairs.

The DPW street maintenance crews completed crack sealing on Minnie Street from 10th Street to 16th Street along with Riverside Drive from Garfield Street to Elmwood. They are currently crack sealing on Riverside Drive from Brandywine to Sanborn Street. Crews did routine alley grading and asphalt patching at various locations. Crews completed securing a house on 27th Street. Staff mowed several City-owned vacant lots that are not included in the City's annual mowing contract. Staff completed street closure barricading for the following special events: Rockin' the Rivers, backpack giveaway, Offshore Racing, Bridges, Plymouth Club, and YMCA/Orthopedic Associates run. The street crews provided traffic control the Utilities Division repair activities. DPW crews cleared tree branches that were obstructing the view of stop signs on our roadways. Crews rebuilt the traffic control trailer to accommodate the new traffic barrels.

DPW traffic control crews responded and replaced several accident damaged signs. Our electrician provided support and worked on electrical issues at Kiefer Park Rockin' the Rivers event. Crews reinstalled a pedestrian signal at the intersection of Stone Street and Garfield Street

that was damaged by a traffic accident. We also replaced faulty lights in various parking lots. Crews were called on several occasions to MDOT-owned Military Street Bridge to address operating failures.

The motor vehicle pool staff stayed on schedule with their preventative maintenance list. They began prepping and inspecting trucks for winter snow removal. Technicians are in the process of completing a major overhaul of the pins and bushings on the cemetery backhoe. Technicians completed outfitting one patrol vehicle for service.

The water distribution crew repaired a couple of leaks including one on a 20-inch water main. The sewer collection crews continued to perform sewer cleaning and repairing failing catch basins. The sewer crews also responded to multiple sewer backup complaints which our investigation determined that it was a problem with the private service lead and not the City's collection system. Our Meter Technicians have worked closely with the Water Office and have completed the last attempt to gain access to install the new automated meter reading equipment. There are approximately 140 accounts still remaining on the old reading system. These accounts will begin to receive a manual meter read charge beginning next month

Utilities staff and engineering staff are reviewing proposals for the replacement of the 42-inch north effluent valve at the Water Filtration Plant. The replacement of this valve is critical to isolate portions of the plant from the distribution system.

During the month of August, the Human Resources Department accepted employment applications for Police Officers, School Crossing Guards, Custodians, and Seasonal and Temporary Laborers. All posted positions are part-time with the exception of Police Officers. We currently have two full-time openings for Police Officers.

Testing and interviews were conducted for the Administrative Data Coordinator (budgeted position), for Engineering/Public Works Department. We plan to fill the position by mid-September.

Meetings were held to discuss potential upcoming retirement vacancies with various Department Heads and the Finance Department. This is an ongoing process in which we look for opportunities to combine positions and/or duties where possible. All open positions are carefully evaluated prior to filling them. We continue to look for opportunities to reduce manpower through attrition.

The Michigan legislature passed, and Governor Snyder signed, a new minimum wage law on May 27, 2014 giving the law immediate effect. Michigan Public Act 138 is formally known as the Workforce Opportunity Wage Act. Starting this September, the first in a series of increases to the state minimum will go into effect. The current minimum wage in Michigan is \$7.40/hour and has been in effect for several years. The new law repeals the Minimum Wage Act of 1964 (Public Act 154). On September 1, 2014 Michigan's minimum wage will increase to \$8.15/hour. The next scheduled increase after 9-1-14 will be on January 1, 2016 which will then increase the minimum wage to \$8.50/hour.

We have several part-time/seasonal positions that are currently paid minimum wage. The following part-time/seasonal positions will receive a wage increase as of September 1, 2014, bringing them up to the new minimum wage of \$8.15/hour: Bridgetenders, Cadets, School Crossing Guards, Seasonal Laborers and the majority of all summer Recreation positions. Adjustments will be made with the pay period that includes 9-1-14.

A safety program review and walk through of our facilities (WWTP, WFP, Streets, Utilities, Parks/Forestry/Cemetery) will be conducted on Wednesday, August 27, 2014 and Thursday, August 28, 2014. The review will be conducted by Janet Dobryden from CMI (Workers Compensation carrier), Dan Collins and Renee Reifert.

The Rental Division is working with property owners that have received rental citations and have not responded to our requests to make payment on their tickets. Several may end up in either court, the credit bureau for collection and/or have their rental certificate revoked.

The Community Development Division continues to provide exterior grant awards for home repairs and exterior paint. Sidewalks will be replaced in select areas in September. Two homes are under renovation through our partnership programs with local non-profits (Mansfield Street and 21st Street). Once the renovations are completed, they will be sold to first time home buyers and the program income will provide additional funding for code case demolitions and exterior renovation grants. Over 30 applications have been sent out to property owners in the Mansfield Park neighborhood to offer assistance with home repairs this fall.

Staff is completing a list of alleys that will be cleaned and re-graded in the fall to improve access and security. The list is the result of referrals from Code Enforcement and Rental Inspectors.

The Inspection Division is completing final inspections for the new addition to the Marwood Manor complex and periodic inspections for work are underway at the Kroger Fuel Station, the Kroger grocery store remodeling, Convention Center, and several other projects. A new list of potential code cases is being developed and interior inspections have been completed. Recommendations for demolitions will go to Council in September or October.

The Planning Department is working with neighborhoods that may wish to create a "Historic Overlay District". This locally designated district would provide guidelines for exterior renovations and review of demolitions on a case-by-case basis similar to the State designated Historic Districts, but do not require the intense historical research and documentation required by the State. The standards for review and approval are more flexible and allow for alternative materials. The overlay area works best in pocket neighborhoods where a majority of the homes are of architectural significance and would benefit from renewed investment and unique identification.

Staff is also assisting with the EDA's request to develop a satellite SmartZone designation from the State for our existing Industrial Park, SC4 Campus and TechPort sites. This request is also on behalf of the cities of Troy and Southfield who have formed a joint partnership through the Automation Alley SmartZone and wish to extend their certification through a partnership with Port Huron. Further details will be presented to the City Council on September 8th. A

preliminary application could be submitted in mid-September. The State will only provide an opportunity to continue the approval process to three of the applicants.

The Recreation Department had a very busy August. As summer starts to wind down, pools are closed, daycamp is closing and all the summer help starts to head back to college. We had hundreds of children and families that enjoyed all our summer programs and will be starting to promote all our fall programming soon. At the beginning of the month we took over 100 middle school children to Cedar Point for volunteering at the Recreation Department this summer. The trip is fully funded by Mr. James Acheson and has been for the last 15 years. The department also worked very hard on the Rockin' the Rivers concert series each Thursday night. This event brought thousands of people out each week. A special thank you goes to the volunteers that cook the hamburgers each week to support this program. Each week the hamburgers bring in approximately \$3000 toward Rockin' the Rivers series.

The Rec Department also presented this month to the DNR trust fund board in hopes of helping the Lakeside project to receive funding. First round scoring will be mid-September for this grant and final scoring will be at the end of November. We continue to work hard toward funding for this project.

In the parks division we were happy to open the new Port Huron kayak and canoe launch. The official dedication will be September 27th. Council will be receiving an official invite, but please save that date on your calendar. We will be also dedicating the Blue Water Young Professionals' benches at that time.

The parks and forestry division has also been very busy keeping our parks cut and clean and installed approximately 260 cubic yards of safety surfacing under the playscapes and swing sets to the Lakeside, Sanborn, Gratiot Haynes, Optimist, Mansfield and Pine Grove Parks.

The forestry division removed 26 trees in the City this month and picked up 25 loads of brush from residents. There were some challenges this month in removing and trimming trees due to two major pieces of equipment not being available for an extended period of time due to repairs. The cemetery did a total of 24 services in August. They continue to work on enforcing new rules and keeping our cemetery beautiful.

The Information Technology Department was involved in a number of activities. Of note were working with the City Clerk's Office on the development of an intranet application to manage the Boards and Commissions listings, working with the Water Office on planning of transition to monthly billings and the continued deployment of 10 upgraded desktop computers in the police department.

During August, the Income Tax Division began sending Proposed Assessments to employers with outstanding withholding issues. We also received taxpayer information from the State of Michigan and we are in the process of developing a list of non-filers as

part of our compliance efforts. Additionally, we began the annual process of reviewing our bankruptcy and delinquent account files in order to keep them up to date.

The Accounting Division completed adjustments in anticipation of the year-end audit. These included various inventory accounts, receivables, accounts and contracts payable as well as accrued payroll. We updated our spreadsheets for the various construction projects having activity during the year. This includes working with the Engineering Division in order to properly allocate the project costs to various funds, such as Streets, Water and Wastewater. We also worked on a report for the State in order to be reimbursed for lost personal property tax revenue in the various TIF's. Finally, we began preliminary work on our EVIP dashboard which will need to be updated by December 1st.

The Treasurer's Office was busy with collections this month. In addition to water bills and property taxes, summer collection items include the pools, boat ramps and the Lakeside Beach parking lot. Notices were sent to all delinquent personal property tax collections.

The Water Office remained busy, billing over 3,600 accounts and sending past due and shut off notices to over 800 accounts. Two hundred six accounts were posted for shut-off with 70 accounts finally being shut off for non-payment. We corresponded with the remaining accounts that have not switched to the remote read meter.

The City Manager has held numerous briefing sessions with Council members regarding a host of issues, including meeting with newly appointment member Rachel Cole. The briefings included updates on the SmartZone, finances and the current water and sewer deficits.

The thoughts and opinions expressed by the Mayor and Council in these individual meetings will be factored into the policy options we bring to Council during the work sessions. We found these individual meetings very helpful in knowing exactly what the elected officials desire to see from the Administrative office.

Meetings were also held with the Museum Director to discuss proposal for a separation agreement. The proposal in general had no real objections, just timeline issues and small details such as insurance costs. However, we feel it is important to begin the dialogue sooner than later. We have also met with various stakeholders regarding a possible partnership between SC4 and McMorrان. As of now these discussions are simply brainstorming, but we believe this could be a viable plan in the future and these discussions need to continue.

Our team has also been working with the Finance Director and his team to further analyze the current fiscal status of the City. Our goal is to bring to the work session the most accurate and up to date information available so that the Mayor and Council has the information they need to make the proper policy decisions.

The City Manager has also held meetings with various township officials to bolster our partnership and to begin a dialogue on possible water and sewer rate increases. We want to ensure they know that we hear their concerns and that we are working on a plan to ensure any rate increases are done in a fair and equitable fashion.

We look forward to the work sessions in the coming weeks. Its important that we collectively acknowledge the challenges we face and the need to take action. The work sessions will help develop the policy options needed.

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