

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 10

J. Mark Rooney

*Belle Isle City Manager
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

The Honorable Nicholas Fouraker
1600 Nela Avenue
Belle Isle, FL 32809

Dear Mayor Fouraker & City Council,

I am excited to apply for the position of City Manager. I believe that my unique background and breadth of experience will fit your needs and enable me to transition seamlessly into the Belle Isle community. I have held leadership positions in organizations with a range of 40 to 3,000 subordinates. My combined experience managing people in the municipal sector and in the U.S. Army has given me a unique perspective on leadership in diverse, challenging environments and on managing projects from \$5,000 to \$50 million dollars. I am confident in my ability to facilitate successful intergovernmental consensus, as I have negotiated over 60 in my career. I have consistently worked in ethnically diverse communities with a broad range of businesses, housing options and neighborhoods. I have a great deal of experience promoting an inclusive and open minded community. My varied experiences demonstrates a high level of competence in managing all aspects of local government from a complex urban environment to a stand alone, tourist focused community that expands from a picturesque New England community of 25,000 to 52,000 every summer.

The varied positions and roles I have held in local and federal service will allow me to adapt my leadership and management style to address Belle Isle's day-to-day operations as well as your goals and priorities. I have extensive experience with high quality residential, retail and commercial economic development. The conversion of Fort Sheridan to civilian use has given me a keen sense of the impact on a community's identity when experiencing major economic and rapid population growth. I gained insight into the importance of updating the comprehensive plan to guide and foster consensus with residents and major stakeholders in the community.

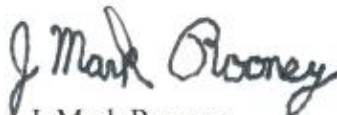
I have had a successful record in financial management, particularly in the areas of budgeting and Capital Improvement Programs (CIP). During my tenure at the Village of Wheeling, the Village contracted and completed a new Village Hall, Fire Station, Public Works facility and completely renovated the Police Station. All projects were completed on time and within budget. The general fund had a surplus of over \$18 million dollars when I left the position of Village Manager. Working in conjunction with the Finance Director, Human Resource Director and labor attorney, I was able to address the expense side of our structural deficit due to the 2008 recession, by eliminating 45 positions. This was accomplished without any termination related lawsuits or union grievance filings. Early in my tenure at the Village of Carpentersville I relied on that experience to address Carpentersville's structural deficit by eliminating 25 positions and converting 15 full-time positions to part-time status. The reductions allowed the Village Board to devote funds to the Capital Equipment Replacement Fund (CERF) and the CIP. The general fund

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increased from \$3.3 million to \$9.6 million due to significant sales tax growth as a result of successful economic development efforts, over seven years.

I have been fortunate throughout my career to work with councils that work collaboratively with staff in setting strategic and community objectives as well as organizational goals and priorities. This allows me, as City Manager, to build a culture of organizational excellence built on trust. I look forward to an opportunity to meet with you to discuss how I can utilize my can-do attitude, knowledge and expertise to be the transformative, visionary leader that will achieve measurable outcomes. I manage by empowering senior staff to utilize innovation and best practices. I lead by example. I focus on an organizational culture where department heads collaborate, as they have trust in each other and know that I will reward calculated, well planned risk taking in the furtherance of project completion and team and organization development. I set and communicate clear expectations and provide feedback and guidance and hold the organization and myself accountable in meeting the organization's goals and priorities established by the annual budget and the strategic comprehensive plan. I believe in and cultivate a culture of candor. In an era of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity, the resulting chaos demands a very different skill set to **manage projects** and processes and to **lead people**. What sets me apart from my peers is an awareness of the importance and the ability to not only lead but to develop leaders at all levels in the organization. I believe having a sense of humor is an integral part of the art of leadership as is a positive attitude balanced with humility and a commitment to empowering, delegating and celebrating the accomplishments of staff and elected officials. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



J. Mark Rooney

J. MARK ROONEY
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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Village Administrator, Round Lake Beach, IL

Sep 2021 - May 2023

Chief Executive Officer for a suburb located 39 miles north of Chicago with a diverse population of 30,000. FY 2022 overall budget of \$40M, 82 FT and 22 PT employees. Responsible for 5 operating departments.

Accomplishments:

- Issued \$10M of new debt, at an interest rate of 2.95%, to complete Village goals for infrastructure improvements, primarily replacement of 80 year old water mains.
- Facilitated the completion of a revision to the Village's Building Permits and Code Enforcement process. Created "Get to Yes" vision for staff to implement Village goal of being business friendly.
- Worked with the Village Board and staff to develop a \$1.5M plan, utilizing the American Rescue Plan Act funding to create an outdoor concert venue and renovate the Village Cultural Center.
- Reduced cyber risk by implementing new hardware and software changes along with major changes to protocols for external and internal system access.
- Successfully secured \$2.75M grant from DCEO-STOCIP that will address storm water flooding. Began process to remove impacted taxpayers properties that require FEMA mandated flood insurance.
- Worked with County Administration to implement framework to establish County wide dispatch for Fire/EMS and Police.

Town Manager, Westerly, RI

May 2018 - Sep 2021

Chief Executive Officer for a coastal community located 2.5 hours from New York and 1.5 hours from Boston, with a population of 25,000 residents / 50,000+ summer months. Home to magnificent beaches, including Watch Hill. Westerly's thriving tourist economy supplements a healthy mix of commercial and residential tax base exceeding \$6.5B in EAV. Responsible for ten operating departments. FY 2019/20 overall budget \$98M. 180 FT and 70 PT town employees, with an additional 350 school employees.

Accomplishments:

- Achieved certification in Rhode Island's municipal Resilience Program, a community focused process to assess current hazard and climate change impacts and vulnerabilities, due to storm surge and sea level rise. One of the first three in the state.
- Assisted policy makers in establishing Plastic Committee. Established plastic bag ban by 2020. Became leader in state to reduce use of plastic straws and utensils in all coastal establishments.
- Established Town's first Capital Equipment Replacement Fund (CERF) and other GFOA best management practices to prevent downgrade of Aa2 bond rating.
- Received first GFOA Distinguished Budget award.
- Implemented E-permitting system to reduce zoning and building permit wait time by four weeks for major projects.
- Lead negotiator for all collective bargaining units, Police, Public Works and clerical staff.
- Initiated process to redevelop closed mill site with US EPA grant funding to make site suitable for redevelopment, creating 45 immediate jobs and potential for over 100 jobs by 2022.
- Worked with staff and Town Council to pass a \$15M referendum for infrastructure improvements. Utilized Rhode Island infrastructure bank and saved over \$1M in bond and interest cost over the life of the bond.
- Managed \$15M capital improvements to town roads. Worked out a decade old dispute between the States of Connecticut and Rhode Island to rebuild a bridge destroyed by Hurricane Sandy in 2008.
- Applied and received \$2M federal dollars to dredge sand from inter-coastal pound damaged by Hurricane Sandy to restore salt marsh and provide beach nourishment on Atlantic Ocean beaches.

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Accomplishments:

- Coordinated the completion of a Harbor Management Plan that had languished for 15 years. Resulted in approval by both the Army Corp of Engineers and the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management.
- Facilitated an agreement with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management to improve the management of traffic, parking and trash at state and town beaches utilized by over 10,000 people every weekend from Memorial Day to Labor Day.
- Completed Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map (1998). State requires every ten years. Last completed in 2006.
- Reorganized Animal Control and Town Dog Pound. Worked collaboratively with nonprofit agencies to reduce operating deficit by \$150K.
- Implemented a third-party billing and scheduling system to reduce police details and overtime by over \$500K in the first year. Increased third-party collections rate by 50%
- Increased grants from less than \$250K to \$2M

Village Manager, Carpentersville, IL

Sep 2010 - Jan 2018

Chief Executive Officer for a suburb located 32 miles northwest of Chicago. 39,000 residents. FY 2017 overall budget of \$65M, 178 FT and 42 PT employees. Responsible for seven operating departments.

Accomplishments:

- Oversaw the creation of 4 new TIF districts; maintained positive and collaborative intra-governmental relations with impacted tax districts: schools, park and Kane County.
- Negotiated a \$4.3M TIF incentive to bring a \$25M Wal-Mart Super center. (185,000 sq ft and gas station). Generates additional \$1.2M sales tax, \$80K local gas tax and \$650K property tax for the Village.
- Implemented a "priority-based" budget process which resulted in the Village adopting 7 successive balanced budgets with no reduction of service levels and a \$9.7M General Fund balance as of December 2017, a \$6.6M increase from 2010.
- Implemented the reorganization of 9 operating departments to 7 in 2011, resulting in the elimination of 25 full-time and 15 part-time positions resulting in annual savings of \$1M.
- Coordinated the completion of a comprehensive revision of the Village economic development process. Created "Get to Yes" operating slogan to implement Village Board goal of being business friendly.
- Negotiated a new, solid waste contract with a private sector company. Saved the Village \$1M over a 5-year contract term by implementing curbside solid waste and recycling containers.
- Managed the construction of a \$13M, 120,000 sq ft Public Works building and \$2M Village Hall rehab.
- Worked with staff and financial consultants to upgrade the Village's bond rating to AA2.
- Received the Illinois Public Employer Labor Relations Association 2011 James Baird Leadership Award. One of three communities nationwide to receive the National Public Employer Labor Relations Association 2012 Pacesetter Award for the Village's leadership and innovation in collective bargaining. Collectively the agreements saved the Village over \$250K by healthcare and step pay plan changes.
- Increased transparency rating by IPI, an independent watchdog agency, from 46% to 96%.
- Negotiated 12 intergovernmental agreements with various government entities.
- Initiated the Village adopting the Greenest Region Compact 2 to address and act on common public policy issues and multi-jurisdictional challenges regarding sustainability and environmental stewardship.

Chief of Staff, North Chicago, IL (*non-ICMA recognized position*)

Nov 2009 - Sep 2010

Chief of Staff for a suburb located 35 miles north of Chicago. Diverse population of 36,000. Home to the Naval Station Great Lakes, Rosiland Franklin Medical Center and Abbott Laboratories. FY 2009/10 overall budget of \$37M. Reduced \$2.3M deficit to \$650K.

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Village Manager, Wheeling, IL

Oct 2006 - Oct 2009

Chief Executive Officer for a suburb located 25 miles northwest of Chicago. 36,000 residents. Extensive industrial and office parks bring the daily population to over 100,000. FY 2008 overall budget of \$96M, 260 FT and 45 PT employees. Municipal board member of the Northwest Water Commission. Representative to Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County, SWANCC. Member of the Board of Directors of the Chicago Executive Airport, the third busiest airport in Illinois.

Accomplishments:

- Maintained Wheeling's AA+ Fitch Investor Services and S&P AA bond rating.
- Manage the \$25M construction of a 48,000 sq ft Village Hall.
- Demonstrated the cost savings of "Design Build" \$13M, 48,000 sq ft Public Works building; \$6.2M, 24,000 sq ft Fire Headquarters facility; \$5.1M, 48,000 sq ft renovation of Police Station and 911 Center. Total savings exceeded \$3M.
- Implemented two new TIF districts and negotiated an 11-year extension of an expiring TIF.
- Negotiated Village purchase of over 30 retail properties, totaling in excess of \$15M to accomplish downtown redevelopment plan. Increased EAV over \$50M.
- Negotiated with Village of Wheeling Park District and Metropolitan Water Reclamation District for the storage requirement of Levy 37, on the Des Plaines River to prevent regional flooding. Created a Forestry Division within Public Works; Managed by certified arborist.
- Created an Information Technology Department; Implemented GIS via an intergovernmental cooperative agreement with 12 communities.
- Negotiated IGA between Wheeling and the Cook County Forest Preserve to create a unique prairie restoration, canoe launch and bike/jogging trail.

Assistant Village Manager, Wheeling, IL

Mar 2003 - Oct 2006

Accomplishments:

- Lead negotiator for all collective bargaining agreements (Police, Fire and Public Works).
- Initiated request for a "special census" to ensure recent growth from new construction and annexation would be reflected in state revenue sharing figures and utility taxes. \$3M, 6-year, projected fiscal impact.
- Applied and received \$240K Brownfield Grant from IEPA.
- Negotiated exclusive waste hauler contract. \$175K annual franchise payment to Village.
- Negotiated a \$22M TIF incentive for a \$110M, 412 room Westin Hotel, retail and restaurant complex.

City Administrator, Highwood, IL

Feb 1996 - Mar 2003

First City Administrator in Highwood's 112-year history. Located 28 miles north of Chicago. 5,600 residents. Responsible for all aspects of City administration and policy implementation.

Accomplishments:

- Redevelopment of Fort Sheridan, a former Army base identified for closure under BRACC in 1988 and closed in 1992. Served as Highwood's chief negotiator in the redevelopment of Fort Sheridan from a former military facility to a premiere residential community. Preservation of unique historical and environmental features, which include 92 buildings listed on the National Historic Register and the restoration and conservation of its natural beauty and 2-miles of public beach access.
- Efforts recognized by the Illinois Planning Association in conjunction with the City Manager of Highland Park. Received award for historic preservation and adaptive reuse.
- Negotiated over 40 intergovernmental and developer agreements. Worked effectively with various levels and departments of government, i.e. Departments of Defense, Army and Navy, U.S. Senate, U.S. Congress, State of Illinois, Lake County, Cities of Highland Park and Lake Forest and 5 nonprofit organizations that held land interest on the closed military base.

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Accomplishments:

- Managed \$4.9 capital improvements to the City's water treatment plant and associated infrastructure to include a new, 1 million gallon water tower.
- Negotiated model agreements for telecommunication providers, which generated over \$400K annually.
- Improved service by contracting with the City of Lake Forest.

Staff Assistant to Senator Paul Simon

June 1992 - Feb 1996

- Achieved bipartisan consensus to facilitate the passage of Senate and House Bills which resulted in the redevelopment of Joliet Arsenal, Fort Sheridan, Glenview Naval Air Station and Rantoul Air Base.

United States Army Officer, Lieutenant Colonel, Retired

Nov 1983 - June 2014

Active Duty

1983 - 1991

Reserve Duty

1991 - 2014

Held positions of leadership and responsibility in domestic and international locations, including Germany, South Korea, East and West Africa. Graduated from military schools with emphasis on leadership, problem solving and cohesive team building skills. Possessed top-secret and compartmental security clearance.

Desert Storm

Oct 1990 - June 1991

Saudi Arabia, Iraq & Kuwait

Operation Iraqi Freedom

Feb 2005 - June 2006

Iraq

Senior Advisor for Military Transition Team (MiTT)

Awards

- Awarded the Bronze Star with V-device for valor, Combat Action Badge.

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

Graduate of Command & General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KS
Civilian equivalent to Master Degree in Leadership Management

Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL

Completed all coursework for Master of Public Administration

University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE

Bachelor of Science, Economics & History

AWARDS

- ILCMA Special Service Award for Service to the Profession.
- Labor Relations and Collective Bargaining:
 - IPELRA - Leadership Award 2011
 - NPELRA - Pacesetter Award 2012

Candidate Introduction

J. Mark Rooney

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE

Completed Coursework for Master of Public Administration, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL

Civilian Equivalent to Master in Leadership Management, Command & General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, KS

EXPERIENCE

Village Administrator, Round Lake Beach, IL Oct 2021 – present
Pop 28,224 175 Full time/22PT w/5 direct reports Budget \$41M w/ \$28M Gen Fund

Town Manager, Westerly, RI May 2018 – Sept 2021
Pop 25,225 Summer 52k 180 FT/75 PT w/12 direct reports \$98M/\$40M Gen Fund

Village Manager, Carpentersville, IL
Pop 39,287 178 FT/42PT w/7 direct reports \$65M/\$30M Gen Fund 2010 – Feb 2018

Chief of Staff, North Chicago, IL 2009 – 2010
Pop 36,000 172 FT/18 PT w/4 direct reports \$37M/22M Gen Fund

Village Manager, Wheeling, IL 2003 – 2009
Pop 36,000 260 FT/45 PT w/8 direct reports \$96M/54M Gen Fund

City Administrator, Highwood, IL 1996 – 2003
Pop 5,600 41 FT/18 PT w/ 7 direct reports \$28M/24M Gen Fund

BACKGROUND

Aging infrastructures are the primary issues facing the Village of Round Lake Beach. The Village has an older section of the community of pre-WWII summer cottages, that became year-round homes without being built to standard building code, nor with adequate sized or quality watermains for the current built-out density. The high failure rate and emergency repair costs necessitate their replacement. Yet, the political challenge of the lower valued properties being primarily Hispanic owned and viewed by the mayor as a drain on the newer higher valued homes presents a challenge of equity. Staff and I utilized the EPA revolving Loan program at 2% interest to address the problem without dramatically raising water rates. I secured a \$2.75 M

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grant (with a \$75,000 match), that will address storm water flooding, due to disrepair of a 1930's era channel.

The Town of Westerly was founded in 1669. It occupies 35 square miles and possesses 9 miles of some of the most scenic and popular beaches in New England. Westerly has a permanent population of 25,000 and a summer population of 52,000, with an additional 10,000 day visitors in the summer. Westerly's thriving tourism supplements a commercial and residential tax base exceeding \$6.5 billion in EAV.

Major Challenges in Westerly:

Tourism: The need to coordinate with State Agencies to manage and mitigate the impacts of peak weekends of 10,000 day visitors to the quality of life of permanent and seasonal homeowners. This includes ability of existing wells during drought conditions meeting summer demands, and traffic impacts primarily on the weekends and summer Holidays. The discovery of PFOS & PFAS near one of the Town wells with the highest capacity at a closed textile mill threatened future growth, which necessitated working with State and Federal agencies to address the issue.

Budgeting for and maintenance of infrastructure and facilities: The Town lacked both a Capital and CERF plans. I incentivized the existing Finance Director to retire and hired an experienced Finance Director who was instrumental in gaining both staff and elected officials buy in to correct these deficiencies. We were able to issue two separate bonds totaling \$18 Million by voter referendum.

Emergency Preparedness: Oversaw the final changes and updates to replace a 15-year-old manual. The focus on hurricane preparation and recovery, proved beneficial as we experienced a Category-1 Hurricane and fortunately the eye passed over the Town and the heaviest damage was to our north. My insistence that active shooter training be added was proved necessary within months.

COVID-19: The State and the Governor's "LOCKDOWN" was a stark contrast to my use of the Executive-authority granted to me by the Town Council.

My first action was to close Nursing homes and congregant settings to the Public; to include mitigation steps for the workers of the facilities. Westerly suffered zero Covid deaths with over 350 occupants vs a State wide death rate that exceeded 60%.

I deemed all Town Staff as "essential workers" and I set the goal and established the standard of "open to the Public" and allowed wide latitude on how that was accomplished by department. I collaborated with staff and allowed Departments to propose the manner and method open for business would look like, as Public Safety personnel tolerance for 'risk' is far higher than a clerk in vital records.

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I opened access to Beaches almost immediately and explained to the Governor's office that I would not Order our Police Officers to cite or block people from walking on a beach. After the State opened Liquor stores- I allowed takeout orders from restaurants and eventually authorized liquor to be sold by beach side bars and restaurants, an activity prohibited by the Town since 1978.

I coordinated with the school Superintendent & Police Chief to create an alternate 2020 High School Graduation. at the Town Beach Drive-Inn. Students were filmed receiving their diplomas in a controlled setting; then at the Town Beach Drive-Inn family and friends honked and applauded from their cars. It took 2-evenings due to the number of students and families, but we made it happen.

Administered 50k shots at the only municipal Vaccine Clinic in the State. Staff and I modified EMA planning documents to coordinate citizen Volunteers and the Yale New Haven Hospital staff and the School Nurses and the Rhode Island Pharmacy school volunteers.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

I recognize that I have the responsibility to (1) create and foster an organizational culture and environment in which trust is valued; (2) to be a role model for integrity and honesty in all professional interactions and encounters. (3) Collaboration is key to achieving a healthy organizational culture. I work closely with staff, empowering them through clear direction and expectations and the metrics success will be measured. I mentor staff and develop them by giving them opportunities to succeed and learn from mistakes, so they will be self-motivated, innovative and entrepreneurial, in their approach to problem solving. (4) I do not rely on my position and title for my authority, as compulsory compliance is far less effective than voluntary commitment. I manage by seeking input, options and feedback and I integrate their views into our plan. I believe there needs to be a discussion on the "why", the meaning and purpose of a project and the desired outcomes. I provide the vision and guidance and give wide latitude on how and by what means staff adapts and adjusts their efforts to changing circumstances, as people are far more motivated when given autonomy to achieve the desired outcome, without being **micro-managed**. My core philosophy and direction to my direct reports is we **manage projects** but we **lead people**.

Elected officials would state that (1) I am a proactive, results orientated problem solver. (2) I collaborate with staff to present all reasonable options for council consideration and direction. (3) Politically astute but apolitical, while I always execute the will of the majority on a given issue, I never dismiss the viewpoint of the minority members of the council. (4) I respect the line between the policy maker and the staff role of executing and implementing the priorities of the council.

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Staff would state that I am (1) fair and consistent and respectful of others (2) That I am decisive in action and deed under pressure and that I never pass blame onto staff and publicly recognize their accomplishments. (3) I emphasize the importance of developing a positive organizational culture that identifies and nurtures potential leaders. Succession planning and training is not just for senior level positions. (4) That I fully embrace and model the public SERVICE nature of my role.

My greatest weakness was a lack of patience and tolerance for individuals with issues of character. The biggest mistake in my career led me to improving my management style and relationship skills. I used sharp and dismissive language, in a public setting, when a candidate for trustee, who was facing domestic violence charges, made a scurrilous charge about my integrity. I held myself accountable by participating in a training seminar conducted by Psychiatrist Dr. Morrison, the leader of the Midwest Leadership Institute, meets monthly with City Managers who work in the Chicago suburbs to discuss “Understanding Human Motivation and Leadership for City Managers”. I participated in a critical strengths assessment and discovered that my weakness was that I can be excessively competitive and focus on task completion over relationships. My strength of managing and dealing with ambiguity and goal accomplishment needed to be tempered with building relationships in order to be a better City Manager. I am keenly aware and thoughtful of how my mood and attitude impacts others. Each day as I get out of my car and walk into the office I consciously consider the analogy “what weather am I bringing”. I place a premium on developing and nurturing relationships and have developed habits to ensure that I focus on relationship building. Thus, I make a point to meet one-on-one with every elected official and Department Head monthly to obtain personal feedback as well as discussing status of goals and projects. I know that “active listening” is both a choice that must be made and a skill/habit that must be continuously developed to be effective.

My greatest strength is an optimistic attitude as it is a force multiplier in conveying my vision for a better future or that change can be positive. I possess a reservoir of “grit and resiliency” that provides me the ability to handle and deal with adversity in a calm deliberate manner. I attribute this quiet confidence to my years in the Army and the training and experiences it provided.

I use the City Council’s goals and objectives to form the basis for both budget preparation and a means to benchmark and set the metrics by which Department Heads and I evaluate their performance annually at the conclusion of the annual City budget process. Then we work together in an iterative discussion of the resources required for the subsequent years goals and convey this in the budget document for the Council’s discussion and consideration. I have learned to balance quantitative measurement with qualitative, as there is a vast difference between measuring efficiency and measuring effectiveness. Efficiency is a measure of how much each unit of output costs. Effectiveness is a measure of the quality of that output; how well did it achieve the desired outcome. When we measure effectiveness, we know whether our investment is worthwhile. There is nothing so foolish as to do more efficiently something that should no longer be done or does not fit Council priorities and organizational goals.

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Yet, like most government organizations, in the early part of my career I focused on the inputs: how much time is spent on a program or a department, the cost of overtime by department, how many people were served, and what service was received. This is helpful information and required for political accountability and transparency. Yet, as my staff and I developed greater skills we adapted our metrics to focus on outcomes and the results of our processes, so we could demonstrate annually at budget hearings how dollar inputs and staff time tied to policy goals and objectives. For example, in community development, rather than measuring customer satisfaction we often measured the administration process, i.e. how many permits were issued, how fast were the permits issued. Although, these process outputs are useful metrics they do not measure the policy goal of “improved customer satisfaction.”

This led to One of my successes that I am very proud of, and utilized in subsequent cities I have served. Providing staff my vision and collaborating with them to internalize the concepts behind the slogan of “Get to YES” as an over-arching vision and guidance to the customer service positions through-out the organization. In deference to building code officials and fire inspectors we added an important caveat of, do not ignore the imperative of life safety provisions. This vision transformed a bureaucratic mindset tethered to rules and “this is how we have always done it”- to that of an engaged problem solver. Employee morale improved as well as the satisfaction of citizens and stakeholders as measured by surveys and feedback received by the council. Front-line staff were empowered to **help** applicants with forms rather than just accepting paperwork, or taking payments or logging complaints or service requests in the Public Works department. It is my firm belief that most employees are not the problem as the vast majority are dedicated, talented people who are trapped in bureaucratic systems that were designed for the industrial era, that frustrates their creativity and saps their morale, and absolutely frustrates citizens and stakeholders perpetuating a dim view of government. It is my responsibility along with senior leaders to redesign systems and procedures and rules that incorporates and utilizes 21st century technology, (a simple example is e-permitting), to meet the needs of our customers.

I have terminated over 50 individuals, between my public sector and military careers, for cause or as a result of budgetary necessity. I have never outsourced this responsibility to the HR Department. I firmly believe that terminations must be done with care, respect and dignity for the impacted employee, and the organization. It is never about me, but the individual who is being fired. My focus is having a process that is respectful and professional. I seek to have empathy for the individual and their situation.

The challenges I see facing Belle Isle are the *opportunities and why* I am interested in the position professionally. I am that candidate *who has a library of solutions* and a demonstrated record of success addressing the issues as outlined in the recruitment brochure:

- Growth /Annexation: both improving the quality of life of the community and the tax base without substantially increasing the demand on town services.
- Infrastructure: Work with staff and consulting engineers to quantify the problem, the financial costs and options for a stand-alone Police Station and City Hall or a combined

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facility. Land availability may be the deciding factor, but in my experience a combined facility is the cost-effective option.

- **Personnel:** Staff retention is a problem shared by many communities in high growth states like Florida and Texas and are not unique to Bell Isle. I would look to partner with neighboring communities to cost share high demand and scarce available professionals. More importantly implement personnel policies to reflect current employee expectations to become more flexible with work hours and remote options when possible.
- **Funding:** Work with the Finance Director and Department Heads to quantify future costs to meet defined commission service levels and provide the Commission with “options” to fund current operations or explore possible changes to both expenses and revenues of Town operations.
- **Noise and Quality of life impacts of proximity to Airports** is an issue I have worked on twice in my career and the need to collaborate with the Airport management team to implement positive changes that can make a difference to residents is why I love local government. Yet, not all issues can realistically be resolved to the expectations of every critic, but I have found with respectful dialogue and truly listening to their concerns the anger and frustration can be decreased.
- **Crime:** I have always worked collaboratively with the police command team to solve and mitigate resident and business concerns, with a successful record of working with neighboring jurisdictions and the county Sheriff to address common problems. I firmly believe in the use of technology of Cameras and license plate readers to deter and successfully prosecute crime.

During my first six months I would:

- Have conversations with the Council as a whole and individually to listen and understand current situations and establish short-term (1st year) goals as well as mid-term (2-5 years) goals.
- Meet with the Florida ICMA Senior Advisors and the City Attorney to familiarize myself with relevant laws and City codes prior to my start date. Especially, those related to annexation.
- Ask the acting Manager and Department Heads to prepare an orientation binder for me. I would ask them to include the following items: 1. Information about the organization: people and projects. 2. Departmental goals, objectives and responsibilities. 3. Key policy documents. 4. One-page analysis, by Department, of their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges. 5. I would solicit suggestions about community leaders and stakeholders I should meet, from the departmental perspective. I would review the list with the Council to gain their insight. I would review this binder often to gain context about both the organization and community.

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I have extensive experience with both local and major newspaper reporters. I have been interviewed by all the major networks that serve the Chicago and Providence, RI media markets. (NBC, ABC, CBS, Fox and WGN) I always defer to the Mayor before I assume the role of spokesman. No community activist expected. Although, I am not on any *personal social media* accounts, with the exception of LinkedIn. I have worked extensively with a dedicated staff member and the Police Chief via official social media accounts and City WEB page to inform the public about projects and events and any first responder activities. For the past 5- years I have issued press releases via email and social media.

I am an avid runner and biker. I have always enjoyed sports fishing and look forward to the largemouth bass opportunity. I enjoy reading autobiographies of historical figures.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

- Approachable- ability to relate to and engage respectfully with people from every walk of life
- Can-do-Spirit-with thick skin and accepts critical feedback with humility
- Innovative with entrepreneurial mindset (nonbureaucratic)
- Tactful and genuinely authentic leader; uses restraint and humor while obtaining results
- Reputation of candor and integrity
- Leader who inspires trust and builds collaborative teams and breaks down silos

REASON FOR DEPARTING PAST POSITIONS

CARPENTERSVILLE: The former Fire Chief, who I dismissed for lack of integrity and his repeated verbal intimidation of women, became Village President. The unexpected death of my strongest supporter and the resignation of a second to take a job out of state, resulted in the appointment of two supporters of the Fire Chief, to the Council, and I was terminated the very same week.

WESTERLY: I loved the beauty of the Atlantic and New England, but after Covid and the inability to travel back to my children who were in College and completing H.S. caused me to prioritize family. (Yet, at this point in 2023 my two oldest have completed college and have joined the Army and my daughter is in her Senior year of college.)

ROUND LAKE BEACH: I am grateful for the opportunities Round Lake Beach has provided me, however the position has become routine and I realize that the mayor and I are a bad fit. Having earned my Illinois municipal retirement, my goal is to take advantage of that financial security and seek opportunities that align with my personal values over the next decade of my professional career.

J. Mark Rooney

I have a strong desire to work and live in a community that values strong leadership and appreciates the collaborative partnership between its City Manager and the community. My extensive experience in negotiating over 60 intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) will be immensely valuable in addressing budget and service level challenges while prioritizing the City's objectives. Throughout my career, I have been passionate about capital infrastructure projects, despite the stress of financing, managing timelines, and mitigating construction impacts on businesses and residents. The satisfaction of working with staff and elected officials to achieve the end product is deeply rewarding, as it embodies the Athenian Oath's spirit of civic duty – leaving the city greater and more beautiful for future generations. I am passionate about city management because it allows me to transform the vision and dreams of elected officials and community stakeholders into reality. Building upon my past successes, I am confident in my ability to enhance customer service focus and boost morale among frontline staff in your organization. As a leader, I will make a positive contribution to both your community and organizational culture. Belle Isle presents a tremendous opportunity for me to be part of a thriving organization and community, where I can contribute and be inspired by the vibrant culture of this special place.

CURRENT / MOST RECENT SALARY

Westerly \$176,000 and Round Lake Beach is \$193,500.

Section 10

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
JAMES "MARK" MARK ROONEY**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Lake County, IL	No Records Found
Washington County, RI	No Records Found
Kane County, IL	No Records Found
Cook County, IL	No Records Found
State	
Illinois	No Records Found
Rhode Island	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Lake County, IL	No Records Found
Washington County, RI	No Records Found
Kane County, IL	No Records Found
Cook County, IL	No Records Found
Federal	
Illinois	No Records Found
Rhode Island	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

Illinois	No Records Found
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Credit

Excellent

Personal Bankruptcy

No Records Found

Sex Offender Registry

Not Listed

Education

Confirmed

Employment

Confirmed

Social Media

Nothing of Concern Found

**Background Check Summary for
JAMES "MARK" MARK ROONEY**

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

**Background Check Summary for
JAMES "MARK" MARK ROONEY
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: J Mark Rooney

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes No
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes No
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes No
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated?
Yes No
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes No
8. Please list links to all your social media accounts (Facebook / Instagram / LinkedIn / Twitter, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one. LinkedIn
9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes No
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.

Attested to: J Mark Rooney
Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to Monique@cb-asso.com or via fax to (561) 621-5965 no later than 5:00 PM MST 05/15/2023.

**Background Check Summary for
JAMES "MARK" MARK ROONEY
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: J. Mark Rooney

10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.

Jim Kelly – A former Village of Wheeling Building Inspector sued over his dismissal in 2008. The Village settled on the eve of the trial in 2013 to avoid further legal costs as advised by the insurance carrier.

Nannette Burns – A former Village of Carpentersville finance employee sued over her dismissal. The insurance carrier for the Village, over the objections of the Village Board, forced settlement as the case would exceed Village SIR.

J. Mark Rooney – Filed a lawsuit against the Village of Carpentersville for breach of contract and violation of the Illinois Wage Payment and Collection Act. (see attached letter from Walsh Law Group, P.C.)

Nancy Markey – A former Town of Westerly human resource employee sued over her dismissal. The insurance carrier recommended settlement as the settlement cost was less than Town SIR.

**Background Check Summary for
JAMES “MARK” MARK ROONEY
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

WALSH LAW GROUP, P.C.

WWW.THEWALSHLAWGROUP.COM

CHICAGO OFFICE:
30 S. WACKER DR., STE. 2200
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60606
PHONE: (312) 466-7683
FACSIMILE: (312) 466-5601

GENEVA OFFICE:
21 N. FOURTH STREET
GENEVA, ILLINOIS 60134
PHONE: (630) 457-4242
FACSIMILE: (630) 262-0644

June 17, 2020

Mr. Colin Baenziger
Colin Baenziger & Associates
2055 South Atlantic Avenue
Suite 504
Daytona Beach Shores, FL 32118

Re: J. Mark Rooney Application

Dear Mr. Baenziger:

My office represented Mr. J. Mark Rooney (“Mr. Rooney”) with respect to his separation from employment from the position of Village Manager with the Village of Carpentersville (“the Village”) on January 24, 2018. I was asked to provide an explanation of that litigation in support of his application to be the City of Brighton’s City Manager. I have reviewed extensive documentary evidence including emails, meeting minutes, memos and performance reviews and interviewed numerous witnesses about the circumstances of his separation. Based upon that review, I can say without reservation that all of Mr. Rooney’s performance evaluations had been excellent and he had always performed his duties beyond the expectations of his supervisors.

In 2016, Village President John Skillman was the Village’s Fire Chief. At that time, the Village commissioned a lengthy investigation into his management style. Based on the results, he was allowed to resign from his position as Fire Chief in lieu of termination. In April 2017, Mr. Skillman was elected Village President. Not long after his inauguration, Mr. Rooney learned through a co-worker’s complaint that President Skillman was referring to a trustee and a trustee’s spouse gender-specific derogatory names. Upon receiving the complaint, Mr. Rooney commissioned a brief investigation, which substantiated the claims. Mr. Rooney then insisted that President Skillman apologize to the complainant to defuse the situation. After apologizing, President Skillman told Mr. Rooney, “when I get the votes, I’m going to have you terminated for embarrassing me.”

On December 5, 2017, due to one trustee retiring and another passing, President Skillman was able to appoint two allies and create a majority bloc on the Village of Carpentersville Board of Trustees (“the Board”). President Skillman called a special meeting on December 12, 2017, at which time President Skillman announced his intention to terminate Mr. Rooney.

**Background Check Summary for
JAMES “MARK” MARK ROONEY
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

Mr. Rooney’s employment with the Village was governed by an employment contract, executed on August 31, 2010 and amended two times thereafter (collectively, “the Agreement”). Section 4 of the Agreement was entitled “Severance Compensation.” Section 4 (a) provided that “If Rooney is terminated as Village Manager by action of the Village President and Board of Trustees for any reason other than conviction of a felonious act, the Village shall continue to pay Rooney his then current salary and fringe benefits for a period of...nine (9) months after five years of service.” Section 4(b) provides “In the event the Village and Board of Trustees take action at any time to reduce Rooney’s salary and/or fringe benefits in a greater percentage than an applicable across-the-board reduction for all employees of the Village, or...refuse, following written notice, to comply with any other provision herein benefitting Rooney, or in the event that Rooney resigns subsequent to a suggestion, formal or informal, by the Village President and Board of Trustees that he resign, then Rooney may, at his option, be deemed to be ‘terminated’...and shall receive severance compensation in accordance with the provisions of Section 4(a) of this employment agreement.”

As noted above, on December 12, 2017, President Skillman sought to terminate Mr. Rooney’s employment in large part as retaliation for investigating a female staffer’s complaint about President Skillman’s disturbing language. In furtherance thereof, the Village and Board of Trustees offered a separation agreement to Mr. Rooney, with a deadline for acceptance of January 4, 2018 at 12:00 p.m. Mr. Rooney declined to execute the agreement. Shortly thereafter, and upon learning Mr. Rooney had declined to execute the separation agreement, President Skillman notified Mr. Rooney that he intended to terminate him on Saturday, January 6. President Skillman then called a special meeting for Saturday, January 6, 2017.

The agenda for the January 6, 2018 Special Meeting was for “Possible Action by Board on the Removal of a Specific Employee or Execution of a Separation Agreement.” Mr. Rooney and his representative David Limardi were present for the meeting. While the Board was in closed session, then-Village Attorney Steve Elrod stepped out of the meeting and asked Mr. Limardi if he could speak with him privately. Mr. Elrod said that the Board and Village President wanted Mr. Rooney to go on leave while the parties discussed separation. Based upon that representation, Mr. Elrod and Mr. Limardi devised a plan whereby Mr. Rooney would be placed on involuntary leave but would continue to get paid through exhaustion of his sick, vacation and personal time while the parties attempted to negotiate a separation agreement and ultimately end his employment on March 30, 2018. The Board approved of the plan and Mr. Rooney was notified by Mr. Elrod and President Skillman that he was being placed on leave, effective immediately. I have personally reviewed documents and emails indicating the same. Indeed, Mr. Rooney was paid consistently with the agreement for the next three weeks.

Monday, January 8, 2018, would have been Mr. Rooney’s next regularly scheduled work day had President Skillman and the Board not placed him on leave. At 8:20 a.m., more than thirty minutes before Mr. Rooney’s customary start time, President Skillman sent out an email noting “Mark Rooney will not be back to the Village.” On January 9, 2018, then-Village Attorney Hart Passman sent two emails to Mr. Limardi with suggestions of how to communicate Mr. Rooney’s status. The first suggested “Mark Rooney is out sick with a back injury. Marc Huber is acting manager in his absence.” The second email suggested “Manager Rooney and the Village are working out a mutual separation agreement. In the interim, Manager Rooney is on vacation, and Assistant Manager Marc Huber is responsible for all day-to-day affairs of the Village.” It is clear that no one in the Village believed that Mr. Rooney abandoned his position. Moreover, President Skillman would not have

**Background Check Summary for
JAMES “MARK” MARK ROONEY
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

known that Mr. Rooney would not be back to the Village on the morning of January 8, 2018 if he hadn't placed him on leave.

On January 16, 2018, the Village and Board of Trustees again met with the purpose of proposing a third “Resignation Agreement and General Release.” The agenda for the January 16, 2018 meeting read “Action by Board on the Removal of a Specific Employee or Execution of a Separation Agreement.” During the meeting, the Board voted to approve an amended separation agreement for Mr. Rooney. The consideration for the separation agreement was only a fraction of what Mr. Rooney was contractually entitled to if he were separated from employment involuntarily. Mr. Rooney declined to accept the proposed agreement. On January 20, 2018, the Board met again and approved another agreement with amended language. On January 22, 2018, Mr. Rooney notified the Village that he declined the offer.

Upon learning that Mr. Rooney declined to accept a separation agreement, President Skillman immediately called for another special meeting. The agenda for the January 24, 2018 special meeting again read “Possible Action by Board on the Removal of a Specific Employee or Execution of a Separation Agreement.” At that meeting, the Village and Board of Trustees terminated Mr. Rooney by characterizing his involuntary leave as abandoning his position. This was an obvious legal fiction created in an attempt to circumvent the Village’s contractual obligations pursuant to the Agreement.

Mr. Rooney was undoubtedly “terminated” under Section 4(a) or (b) of his employment agreement. The motivation for his termination was solely President’s Skillman’s vendetta against Mr. Rooney as a result of embarrassing himself, not anything that Mr. Rooney did. Mr. Rooney had an excellent reputation in the Village as well as among his colleagues. His unfortunate termination was the result of an impulsive and inexperienced individual, not misconduct and certainly not job abandonment.

On June 20, 2018, my office filed a lawsuit on Mr. Rooney’s behalf against the Village of Carpentersville for breach of contract and violation of the Illinois Wage Payment and Collection Act after attempts at informal resolution failed. In December 2019 and after very limited discovery, Carpentersville agreed to settle the lawsuit with Mr. Rooney. The litigation is concluded and the claim has been dismissed, with prejudice. Please understand that Mr. Rooney is not litigious. He had no choice, however, to enforce the contract that he bargained for to obtain the benefits for which he had provided significant consideration. It would be my pleasure to provide any further information available to assist Mr. Rooney with job placement.

Regards,

WALSH LAW GROUP, P.C.

By: _____
Patrick J. Walsh, Esq.

cc: J. Mark Rooney

CB&A Reference Notes

**Reference Notes
J. Mark Rooney**

Ed Morrone – Former Town President, Town of Westerly, RI 401-932-4768

Mr. Morrone was on the Council that hired Mr. Rooney and he did a remarkable job. Westerly is a tight Italian generational community, and it is not easy to assimilate in a place where everyone knows everyone, and they are all related. Hiring him was a leap of faith, but Mr. Morrone sensed something in Mr. Rooney during the interview process and was never disappointed with the selection. Mr. Rooney became so much a part of the community.

Before you can be a good manager, you have to be a good person and Mr. Rooney was. A mechanic in the public works department was killed on the job shortly after Mr. Rooney was hired, and he found out after his plane landed in Illinois to spend Christmas with his family. He hopped on the next plane back, and never went home to his family that Christmas. He and the Police Chief went to the home of the family to console them. He could not have been more warm, gentle, and caring had he been the manager of Westerly for years, which speaks highly of him. He made a wonderful mark with his performance, his empathy, and his ability to assimilate in the community. He was not perfect, and he had some rough edges but the human part of him and his loyalty is extraordinary.

Since Mr. Rooney was not able to return home for Christmas after the accident, Mr. Morrone invited him to spend Christmas with their family. While there, Mr. Rooney noticed the volunteer fire fighters preparing to protect the community from stray fireworks and walked over to shake everyone's hand and thank them for being there on a holiday. He was authentic and had a great perspective from his military experience. He could not be intimidated, but he had an affinity for the community and the residents cared about him.

When hiring, Mr. Rooney fully vetted the candidates, but some applicants do not always show their weaknesses in the process. He kept the Council informed and worked with them as a team, and he did not favor individual members. He anticipated as much as he could and then moved forward to accomplish much.

A pond in Westerly was decimated and ruined by hurricane Sandy and the dredging was stuck in the permitting process. Mr. Rooney led the process to move 35 cubic yards out of the pond in the dead of winter. Once the pumps were turned on, they could not be turned off because they would have frozen. The process was fascinating, and he handled it well.

The constitution in Rhode Island guarantees access to the beach for residents. For decades the topic has been contentious. Mr. Rooney led the process to determine right of way and had the area surveyed and marked so there would be no question in the future. Some of the paths were overgrown or blocked by fences and he led the process very well. The end product was successful though it was not easy working with wealthy individuals who think they own the water. Another instance of his problem-solving ability involved a veteran's group that was fractured. He brought them together to resolve the issues.

Reference Notes

J. Mark Rooney

Mr. Rooney and the Police Chief had an exceptional relationship and worked extraordinarily well together. They faced a host of recurring issues related to covid with closures and restrictions to bars and businesses. They were timely in submitting reports to the state and the Department of Health. Their vaccination program was excellent, and they vaccinated hundreds of residents seamlessly. They utilized the senior center, staff and more to accomplish the goal. They pulled together and the effort was the pride of the community. As an added challenge, their governor was appointed to a federal board but did not relinquish control, so the Lieutenant Governor's hands were tied. As such, Westerly could not depend on state assistance, but they still moved forward through Mr. Rooney's guidance. He showed great leadership and received only praise for his handling of the vaccine process. He was fearless in an unprecedented and uncertain time.

Mr. Rooney handled the City's finances like his own, he was very astute. Their bond rating is on the way up and he did not overextend the community. He worked very well with the finance director and planned for the future. He was respected by everyone, even those who may not like him personally. He was hands on and worked with staff in the trenches. He led by example. He was very loyal to the community and rode on police boats on weekends to monitor the harbor as part of the mooring and safety program.

One fourth of July weekend Mr. Rooney picked up Mr. Morrone and they drove all over town to talk to business owners in the beach area. In the 45 years that Mr. Morrone has been in business, no town official ever stopped to talk to him on a holiday. Extend yourself and people respond, and the word gets around. Actions like this are why Mr. Rooney is so well respected. He is professional and has so much going for him.

Mr. Rooney has done so much for the community and moved them forward kicking and screaming at times. He brought them through controversy successfully. One such issue related to roads the City plowed for years even though they did not own them, and another was related to a bond issue. Everyone in the community loved him because he was committed to the job and the safety of the community. He was not only respected in the community, but also in the state. Any community would be well suited to have him.

Mr. Morrone has tremendous respect for Mr. Rooney and misses him both personally and professionally. He did a wonderful job in Westerly and is a good family man.

Words or phrases used to describe Mark Rooney:

- Devoutly religious,
- Caring father,
- Laughs easy and appropriately,
- Still knows how to have fun,
- Humble and
- Loyal friend.

**Reference Notes
J. Mark Rooney**

Strengths: Committed and loyal, extends himself, does what is right for the community, professional.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Lisa Pellegrini – Former Development Services Director, Westerly, RI 860-227-9057

Ms. Pellegrini has known Mr. Rooney since 2018 and reported directly to him until 2021. Mr. Rooney was an excellent manager. Communication was a two-way street and they were good at keeping the other informed.

Hiring decisions made by Mr. Rooney were excellent and he made good decisions in general. He thought outside the box and was very innovative. His vast experience was helpful, and he understood the basics of town government as well as the nuances of each community he serves. He easily identified key individuals to work with him, which was a gift. He knew how to assess the task and put the best group together to complete it.

Immediately upon arriving in Westerly Mr. Rooney was very active in meeting everyone and talking to them, and he continued to be active in the community. He met with various groups to establish communication and was very effective. When covid first hit, he realized they could not shut down completely or they would lose that personal connection. Westerly was one of the few towns that stayed open, but he was also very sensitive to residents who were uncomfortable or at high risk and found ways to safely connect with them. He hired employees who were good at making those personal connections. The executive team interacted together, and their projects coordinated with each other. He effectively overcame the silo mentality that existed when he arrived to create a very interactive group. He empowered Directors to make changes in their department for the good of the organization. Working with him was a wonderful experience.

The Town had been working on their comprehensive plan for ten years when Ms. Pellegrini was hired, and it fell under development services. The Council seemed afraid to make any decisions before adopting the plan, so they created many different committees and bypassed the planning Board. Mr. Rooney held meetings and really listened to the obstacles that the senior leadership team was facing. He identified two members of the Council to bring into the process and helped everyone realize that the planning commission needed a new Chairman. Once the new Chairman was in place, they were able to complete the comprehensive plan. Mr. Rooney is extremely supportive not only to the Council members but to the staff and the public. When residents were abusive in public meetings, he remained positive and did well in his approach to them. Another issue was when some wanted to remove the Columbus statue in town. He kept everyone calm and helped diffuse the situation. The statue remains and everyone is calm.

Mr. Rooney is absolutely customer service oriented, and he has excellent financial skills. To relieve stress, he exercises. When upset, he stays very cool but is direct, so you know what the issue is. Working with him is refreshing as compared to a manager who is passive aggressive and

Reference Notes
J. Mark Rooney

will not tell you what the issue is. He talks to staff about any issues and expects them to fix it but will assist if they are having any trouble. When they need guidance, he breaks down the situation to help them determine how to move forward, rather than taking over. He has an excellent leadership style, most likely from his military career.

Everything in Westerly is controversial. The former HR director blamed Mr. Rooney for something related to covid that was not his fault, everyone in the organization feels that the accusations are unfounded. Nothing in Mr. Rooney's background would embarrass an employer.

Ms. Pelligrini would hire Mr. Rooney and his departure was a significant loss. When Ms. Pellegrini's parents both died in a short time frame, he encouraged her to take time off. He cares about the staff. He is an excellent and dedicated manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Mark Rooney:

- Fearless,
- Extremely dedicated,
- Very loyal,
- His word is his bond,
- Fiscally conservative,
- Compassionate,
- Very willing to mentor staff, and
- Very seasoned.

Strengths: Unifies everyone in one direction, keeps everyone in sync, encourages discussion and working together to accomplish crazy impossible things, excellent leader.

Weaknesses: At times he can expect much and perhaps moves at too fast of a pace. However, you can tell him you need to slow down a little and he acknowledges it. He is just on overdrive most of the time and has an enormous amount to do.

Dyann Baker – Former Finance Director, Town of Westerly, RI 401-348-2548

Ms. Baker reported to Mr. Rooney from 2018 to 2021. Mr. Rooney was financially astute and helped Ms. Baker assimilate to the municipal environment because she came to Westerly from a non-profit organization. He provided good leadership while she worked through the nuances of public finance. He was very supportive of high performing employees.

Finding good talent willing to work in the public sector can be difficult. Mr. Rooney often could not hire the best person for the job because the Town could not pay them what they are worth. He does the best he can within the financial limitations of the organization. His decisions in general are good.

Reference Notes J. Mark Rooney

Mr. Rooney was very much about change and improvement, and he was a very community-oriented person. He attended community meetings and interacted well with the public. He understood the nuances and tried to understand the concerns and the sticking points. He worked to maintain relationships in the community.

Considering his schedule, Mr. Rooney kept everyone informed to the best of his abilities. He had to be reminded at times, but he really did the best he could. He was stretched even further in Westerly because they did not have a public works director for most of his tenure and he ran that department as well as the Town.

Due to the nature of finance, Ms. Baker and Mr. Rooney met one on one, but he truly helped to resolve any issues. During stressful circumstances he was very fluid, but he also showed great strength. The only time his stress elevated slightly was when his leadership was challenged.

Westerly has had a few controversies, one that involved a lawsuit. Some in the organization may have a different opinion of Mr. Rooney because there are differences of opinions about styles. Some employees may feel put upon because his expectations are high.

Ms. Baker would hire Mr. Rooney, he is a good manager. He did a tremendous job in Westerly, particularly for a person running a town while their family lived in a different state. He worked very hard for their community.

Words or phrases used to describe Mark Rooney:

- Strong,
- Knowledgeable,
- Employee centered,
- Financially astute, and
- Very taxpayer and citizen oriented.

Strengths: Very strong in finance, provides good leadership, supportive of high performing employees, understands when to be hands off and when to be involved with department heads.

Weaknesses: He allows his emotions to get in the way at times. For example, he is very loyal to the organization and staff. He wanted to reward employees with compensation equal to job performance, which was difficult for the Council to approve given the pandemic. As such, there was tension and emotion in the room.

**Reference Notes
J. Mark Rooney**

Kay Teeter – Former Trustee, Carpentersville, IL 847-894-8804

Ms. Teeter was a Village Trustee for ten years and worked with Mr. Rooney as the Village Manager for five of them. She has served on the Business Development and the Planning and Zoning Commissions since she left the Board.

In terms of job performance, Mr. Rooney was on point. They did not hire him because they wanted people to like him, although he was a nice person. Change was absolutely necessary for Carpentersville. Staff had not been held accountable by the previous manager. Hiring was done based on who you knew, and the previous manager was personally doing some of the work that employees did not know how to do. They conducted an intensive interview process because they needed a change agent who could sustain a high-performance group. They selected Mr. Rooney and he was the right person for the job.

Mr. Rooney came in and mentored some of the employees and they improved so they are still with the organization. Some were already doing well, and he solidified them. When employees left or were not performing, he helped identify the qualities needed for that position, so they hired the right person to replace them. He always did what needed to be done. He made good decisions because he always focused on what was good for the whole and not one single entity.

Mr. Rooney attended every community event and many of the community meetings. When interacting with the public he was very friendly, open and approachable. He greets people with respect and listens to their comments and concerns. He is very good about keeping the Board informed and he meets deadlines.

The departments were not working well together which made community development very challenging. Developers and business owners met with one department and were given a to-do list. When they completed that list, they went to the next step and were given a second list, etc. The back and forth was incredibly frustrating for them. Mr. Rooney helped the departments put a master list together while putting the right staff in place, even if it meant moving employees around. He balanced out the issues and helped the departments work together. When someone wants to do something in the Village, every department that needs to be involved in that particular project is sitting at the table for the very first meeting. It has not only streamlined the process but has made it very customer friendly. The changes are significant and wonderful.

The person who owns the business that employs the most residents would not do any economic development in Carpentersville because the departments gave him grief and the process was not defined. He was very critical of their organization and took his business to surrounding communities. Since the change in the process, he is doing business development in Carpentersville and he speaks well of the City. He has seen the leadership of Mr. Rooney and is now willing to invest in the community.

The public works department had not been remodeled since the 1950's. The plan to remodel it received much pushback from the community, but Mr. Rooney guided them through the process

Reference Notes
J. Mark Rooney

and helped them see the vision. Since the project has been completed, the residents are so excited about the changes, even those who complained in the beginning. The right thing to do is not always the easy thing, but Mr. Rooney can always discern the right thing to do and work in the right direction. He brought the project in under budget because he utilized the staff for the project when he could. With the money saved, he did an expansion and redevelopment of their City Hall which had not been updated since the 1970's. He helped the Board see the possibilities when they could not envision them. Mr. Rooney realizes that investing in the staff is beneficial and helps the organization to be more efficient. The end result has been wonderful.

The Village had never saved for capital purchases and projects before Mr. Rooney was hired. He put money aside every year so that when they need to buy a fire truck or ambulance, or need to paint the water tower, the funds are already available.

The Village had full time and part time firefighters. The part time fire fighters filled in the gaps and are cost effective because they do not require benefits. The full timers try to get rid of the part timers to increase their own pay by demanding that all firefighters have the same education level. Rather than dismissing the part time fire fighters, Mr. Rooney and the Board worked with the part timers to increase their education. An additional benefit is that they are able to step into a full-time position as openings occur. The full timers went public with allegations that Mr. Rooney was against fire safety and claimed he was a detriment to the community. The situation was very controversial but none of what they claimed was justified or accurate. Ms. Teeter is not aware of anything controversial in Mr. Rooney's history.

Ms. Teeter would hire Mr. Rooney. He was a great leader for Carpentersville, he did the job that needed to be done.

Words or phrases used to describe Mark Rooney:

- Driven,
- On purpose,
- Open,
- Futuristic, and
- Visionary.

Strengths: He looks at a situation from both perspectives because he is very objective, but he does have a heart. He sees what changes need to be made and what strengths the organization already has. He was very good at working through the process and provided the Board with enough information to make educated decisions.

Weaknesses: He has a military background and at times can be more focused on the task at hand rather than being warm and fuzzy. He is very personable, but he is also strong willed which is not a bad thing if it is channeled in the right direction. He is sometimes so passionate, and he could be softer when presenting his ideas.

**Reference Notes
J. Mark Rooney**

Dean Argiris – Former Village President, Wheeling, IL 847-845-6990

Mr. Argiris has known Mr. Rooney since 2003. Mr. Arigis was a Trustee when Mr. Rooney was the Manager. Mr. Argiris was an aggressive Trustee who was always suggesting ideas, Mr. Rooney always found ways to accomplish them. They had a great relationship.

Mr. Rooney was a hard worker and a smart person. He was very good and dedicated to his field. He liked challenges, which was a good thing. Each of the Trustees has a different personality and he worked well with all of them.

When hiring personnel Mr. Rooney made good choices and they were happy with his selections. His decisions in general are good, he was very focused on the job. He answered the phone, even late at night on the weekend, and communicated well. He quickly supplied any information they requested. He managed 245 employees, worked with the unions and managed the TIF districts, which was a significant undertaking. He worked seven days a week and did well.

Because of the climate in Illinois, Mr. Rooney was always looking for ways to save money and find new revenue sources. He was always trying to keep businesses in the community and was really good at growing the community and maintaining services.

Mr. Rooney attended City events and other events like Chamber meetings. They held some fundraisers, and he was always in attendance. When in the community he has a great personality and the gift of gab. He can speak to anyone.

Keeping the Board informed was a mandate and Mr. Rooney did well. The elected officials created the vision, Mr. Rooney made sure the vision was set forth in the organization. He knew how to address hair brained ideas and suggested better ways to get to the end result. He listened and researched options. The residents gained a sense of pride by his example.

Schools, libraries, and parks were against TIF districts but the only way the Village could fund economic development was to create them. Mr. Rooney met with supervisors from the taxing bodies to explain why the district was important and how it would benefit their organization. He assured them that it was the right choice because he knew that they all had to work together. They now have five TIF Districts. One expired after lying dormant for twelve years because of the past administration. Mr. Rooney declared a surplus to expand the District, which is now bringing in some nice revenue. He was very creative.

During Mr. Rooney's tenure, they had to lay people off and teach employees to multitask. The situation was challenging but he was able to lead the organization while keeping the funding in place and their bond rate consistent. They received financial awards during his tenure. He was creative in refinancing the bond debt. He saved millions by changing from a 5% interest rate to a 2% interest rate. He is very skilled with finances and was very instrumental in what they were able to accomplish.

**Reference Notes
J. Mark Rooney**

Mr. Rooney is visionary and always looks ahead. He is very transparent. He has a good head on his shoulders. If he has a Board who supports him and a good team to work with, he will thrive.

Before he came to Wheeling Mr. Rooney was involved in a controversial situation involving the union members who were backed by lobbyists. He did what was right for the community. He left Wheeling after a new Mayor was elected who decided to go in another direction. It was based on politics and not on Mr. Rooney's job performance. People were happy with him, and it was unfortunate that politics interfered.

Mr. Argiris would hire Mr. Rooney, he is a good Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Mark Rooney:

- Good personality,
- Military background,
- No nonsense approach,
- Leads by example,
- Fun to be with socially,
- Creative, and
- Innovative.

Strengths: Good personality, separates the politics and dealt with each of the seven board members well. Good work ethic, just a great Manager.

Weaknesses: In Wheeling he was a bit of a micro manager. However, Mr. Argiris knows employees in Carpentersville, and they have confirmed that Mr. Rooney has improved in this regard.

Mr. Pat Horcher – Village President, Wheeling, IL 847-331-4234

Mr. Horcher was a Trustee in Wheeling when Mr. Rooney was selected as the Village Manager in 2006. Mr. Rooney was excellent and always did a great job. At least two of the employees he hired are still working for the Village. He explained every decision he made, and they all made sense. Working with him was very easy.

The Village went through a big growth spurt before the economy tanked. Mr. Rooney definitely maintains an organization, but he was able to be innovative because of revenue streams from the growth spurt. He coordinated the construction of a new Village Hall, Fire Station, Public Works Building, and turned the old Village Hall into a dedicated Police Station. He definitely kept the Village moving forward.

Reference Notes
J. Mark Rooney

Mr. Rooney was always at community events like the 4th of July celebration, but meeting with the general public was not his responsibility, Mr. Rooney primarily met with developers. He became involved when the job progressed to the point that it required coordination with the Village Attorney, Engineers, the developer's attorneys and the engineers.

Mr. Rooney always presented every option rather than just highlighting those that might be favorable to one side of the board or the other. He kept them very well informed. He led the project to buy a parcel of property that is now being developed as the Village Town Center.

When they began to feel the loss of tax revenue after the economic downturn, Mr. Rooney had to reprioritize departments, functions and services. He looked at employees who were close enough to retirement that they could buy out. He managed the Village during a volatile time and did very well. He always meets deadlines.

The Village had a fueling station with gas pumps and tanks. The Park District uses the station and pays for the gas. The Board decided that the Park District should contribute to a new building. Mr. Rooney sent them a memo outlining this idea and they were not happy about having to contribute. Even though Mr. Rooney was only doing as he was instructed, the Board declared he had overstepped his bounds and asked him to apologize to the Park District. Mr. Horcher thought it was absolutely wrong to ask him to do so, but Mr. Rooney understands the chain of command and that he needed to make the apology. He is honorable and did his job.

Mr. Rooney has not been involved in anything controversial. Over a period of several years a developer was given over 10 million dollars in TIF money, which put the Village in a difficult situation because they have maxed out the funds but did not receive the benefits they had hoped to receive. At the time the Village President was the Vice President of the bank who financed the developer on the other end and another Trustee backed the developer no matter what. On a day that this developer was coming before the Board to ask for more funds, they discovered that the developer had allowed his associates to dump material on a piece of Village owned designated wetland, of up to eight feet of debris. The Board had to hold an emergency executive session. The Trustee who backed the developer stated that she did not understand why they were making a federal case out of it. Mr. Horcher responded that it was a federal case as the land was federally owned wetland. The Trustee convinced the Board to give the developer more money anyway, which Mr. Rooney was opposed to. He pointed out that they were not receiving much value per unit being built. This situation factored into his departure from the Village and was part of the reason that Mr. Horcher resigned from the Board.

Mr. Horcher would hire Mr. Rooney in a heartbeat and really enjoyed working with him. Mr. Rooney's information was always accurate, and he relayed all the options even when they were not in the best interest of the community. He implemented whatever the Board decided.

**Reference Notes
J. Mark Rooney**

Words or phrases used to describe Mark Rooney:

- Dedicated,
- Loyal,
- Honest,
- Diligent, and
- Honorable.

Strengths: Very thorough with his research, absolutely committed to the chain of command – his job was to give the Board the facts and then implement the decision made. Working with him was very simple.

Weaknesses: He trusted people.

**Oneida Fehring – Administrative Assistant to Police Department and Village Manager,
Carpentersville, IL 224-293-1660**

Ms. Fehring met Mr. Rooney in 2013. She has worked for the Village since 1999 and is the administrative assistant for the police department. After his administrative assistant left, he began utilizing her as his administrative assistant, too, until he left in 2018.

Mr. Rooney was tough, but fair. He was the best Village Manager they had during her tenure. He made good decisions when hiring and likes to promote from within if he found the talent. He made good decisions in general.

The Village was very rundown with many potholes when Mr. Rooney was hired. She never would have moved into the Village at that time but with the upgrades and changes that he introduced, and she would gladly move into town. He maintains operations at a high level.

Mr. Rooney was often out in the community and was very friendly with residents. He was always happy and shook their hands. When residents called, he answered the phone and spoke to them. He was very involved in the community.

Even though Ms. Fehring was an admin, Mr. Rooney always treated her as though she was part of the senior staff. His leadership was exceptional. All department heads did their best to please him, and whatever it took to make sure the organization is running smoothly and well. He had good financial skills and was very responsive.

Controversy always exists in municipalities and people do not always agree, but those who are critical of Mr. Rooney do not always see the whole picture. Ms. Fehring does not believe that anything in Mr. Rooney's background would concern an employer. People did not complain

**Reference Notes
J. Mark Rooney**

about Mr. Rooney to Ms. Fehring because she came to his defense, but she acknowledges that sometimes union employees were unhappy because they did not get their way.

Ms. Fehring would hire Mr. Rooney and enjoyed working with him, he is excellent. The town really turned around through his leadership. When he was walking to her office, he spoke to people on the way to find out how their day was going. He was very involved in City Hall. He was with Carpentersville longer than any previous Manager and was very, very fair. An employee in finance told Ms. Fehring she was very grateful to him because he gave her the opportunity to prove herself. He offered a position in payroll to another employee who did data entry for the police department, and it worked out very well. He encourages talent and makes sure that employees grow within the organization. He is fantastic.

Words or phrases used to describe Mark Rooney:

- Fair,
- Great leader,
- Good natured, and
- Great leadership skills.

Strengths: Leadership, knows how to lead his departments heads. The Village ran so much better and comradery between departments was better than it ever has been.

Weaknesses: When people do not follow orders, he calls them into his office though this does not happen often nowadays.

Kathy Lamkin – Former Human Resource Director, Carpentersville, IL 630-464-4690

Ms. Lamkin does Human Resource consulting. Another manager recommended her to Mr. Rooney, and they worked together from September 2015 to January 2017.

Overall Mr. Rooney had an excellent job performance. He was extremely analytical. He was hired to help Carpentersville from a budget perspective and did an excellent job. He was a good match for the Village at that time.

Everyone makes a mistake or two, but Mr. Rooney made good hiring decisions overall. He made great decisions for the organization. From Ms. Lamkin's perspective in Human Resources, she would have liked him to think more about the individual employee, but she understands that the Manager has to look at the big picture.

Mr. Rooney is definitely innovative. He came up with many ideas, some of which Ms. Lamkin questioned, but they almost always worked. If someone does not like change, they might be

Reference Notes
J. Mark Rooney

frustrated working for him because he always has new ideas to try. When employees do their work, he is good to them. If they do not, they will know they are not meeting expectations.

Mr. Rooney attended Board and staff meetings. He kept Ms. Lamkin informed most of the time, but she was only in the office three days a week, which made it challenging. When she felt she should have been informed about something, he always listened. He was always responsive.

During a police department investigation, they had to decide how to handle it to keep the employee from filing charges. Mr. Rooney asked some questions and helped them determine the best route. He used the newspaper test, meaning he asked them what each decision would look like on the front page of the newspaper.

The Fire Chief was investigated and rather than being fired, he was given the option to retire. He then ran for Mayor and won which created a very uncomfortable situation. This Chief grew up in the Village. Ms. Lamkin gained a great deal of respect for Mr. Rooney during this time. It was a difficult decision and asking for the Chief's resignation could have been the end of Mr. Rooney's career. Even so, he did what was right for the organization. Also, there was a situation about a disagreement that ended up in the paper. Ms. Lamkin does not know much about it, except that Mr. Rooney was exonerated. In Illinois, Administrators do not hire their department heads. Mr. Rooney will do better if he has control over who his department heads are.

Depending on the culture, Ms. Lamkin would hire Mr. Rooney. He is not a good fit for her client that is extremely focused on doing everything for the employee even if it means changing the rules. To be clear, Mr. Rooney was fair to employees and offered benefits that were cost neutral to part timers, but he did not bend over backwards to make sure that everyone gets what they want. In general, she recommends him and enjoyed working with him.

Words or phrases used to describe Mark Rooney:

- Smart,
- Creative,
- Wants to do the best for the organization,
- Loyal, and
- Assertive.

Strengths: Extremely smart, analytical, understands the politics, keeps the Board informed, handled very sensitive issues including union negotiations or investigations, knew what to tell the Board without getting them involved in the minutia.

Weaknesses: He can be pretty business oriented and some who are sensitive might not think that he cares as he is just not touchy feely. While it did not bother Ms. Lamkin, she had hoped he would open up a little more.

**Reference Notes
J. Mark Rooney**

Mike Angus – President, Chicago Area Mountain Bikers, Carpentersville, IL 630-804-9521

Mr. Angus and Mr. Rooney met in 2013. They worked together on projects for the community which mainly consisted of identifying land options and approaching owners to see if they were amenable to using the land for a bike park. The park they envisioned is now in construction.

They participated in eight formal meetings together. When issues occurred, Mr. Rooney was very quick to address them, and he even visited the park to see the progress. He was very supportive. He is a great person and did everything that they asked of him.

Mr. Rooney was open to the idea of a bike park when many people were negative, and the resulting project has improved the Village substantially. When Mr. Angus had a question Mr. Rooney either responded quickly or delegated to the staff if he was busy. He was very good about keeping others informed.

The park had an issue with gangs and graffiti, Mr. Rooney was quick to offer police support and City staff to clean up the graffiti. If they had leftover rubble or trash, Mr. Angus called the City. Mr. Rooney swiftly took care of any issue.

Mr. Angus had limited exposure to Mr. Rooney but is not aware of anything controversial that is related to him. Mr. Angus would hire Mr. Rooney, he did very well in Carpentersville. They would not have the bike park without his efforts, he was very supportive.

Words or phrases used to describe Mark Rooney:

- Open minded,
- Direct,
- Caring,
- Supportive,
- Responsive, and
- Collaborative.

Strengths: Can make decisions and does not beat around the bush, he deals with issues.

Weaknesses: Employees have said that he can be pretty direct, but Mr. Angus has not witnessed it firsthand.

Prepared by: Lynelle Klein
Colin Baenziger & Associates

Section 10

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information pertaining to Mr. Rooney is included.]

<https://biz.crastr.net/illinois-has-spent-nearly-5-billion-in-pandemic-funds-heres-how-some-suburbs-used-it/>

August 20, 2022

Illinois has spent nearly \$5 billion in pandemic funds. Here’s how some suburbs used it.
by Shawn Johnson

In Illinois, more than \$14 billion is expected to be divided and spent over the next four years from the American Rescue Planning Act, among state, county and local governments. The amount is about 4% of the \$350 billion state and local Financial Recovery Fund aid package approved by Congress and President Joe Biden in 2021. The funds were intended to stabilize government budgets, which could experience revenue deficits related to the pandemic, as well as operating expenses to maintain government services during the pandemic. According to a recently released report by the US Treasury Department outlining the first year of ARPA spending across the country, government agencies in Illinois have so far spent nearly \$5 billion on a wide range of initiatives and projects. But experts from some government finance organizations have limited details about how that money was spent and its effectiveness.

Round Lake Beach officials last year spent \$53,500 received from the American Rescue Plan Act on a COVID-19 vaccination incentive program for their employees.

Village manager **Mark Rooney** said 63 of the city’s 73 full-time employees received an incentive of about \$1,000 “because it wasn’t a mandate.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Herald (IL)
October 21, 2021

Top Priority is Economic Development

Author: Mick Zawislak

Round Lake Beach has a new full-time village administrator for the first time in nearly three decades. **Mark Rooney** has 25 years experience in suburban government, with stints in Highwood, Wheeling, North Chicago and Carpentersville. He assumed full-time duty in Round Lake Beach on Oct. 4 and was sworn in Monday to succeed Dave Kilbane, who retired in April after 28 years.

Rooney returned to Illinois and his longtime home in Highwood after three years as town manager in Westerly, Rhode Island, a tourist town known for its beaches and a summer population of 52,000. Round Lake Beach Mayor Scott R. Nickles said it was a hard decision but **Rooney** emerged from three highly qualified candidates. "We made our decision based on some of the issues facing our village now and in the future," Nickles said. "The future is our economic development and filling our empty voids," he said. The village doesn't have a lot of space for new development, making infill projects a key, he added.

Handling various intergovernmental agreements, continuing cooperation with surrounding communities and hiring a full-time finance director are other considerations moving forward, according to Nickles. **Rooney's** annual base salary is \$175,000, with a \$6,000 annual car allowance. He must give the village six months' notice if he voluntarily resigns within the first three years and 60 days' notice after that. As an "at-will" employee, **Rooney** can be fired at any time with or without cause.

Rooney's team and leadership approach was cited as a factor in the choice. He noted the stability created by Kilbane and long-term former mayor Rich Hill. "I want to build on the success the village has had," **Rooney** said. In the bigger picture, the Round Lake-area communities work together on regional decisions and understand the economies of scale, he added. The village offered **Rooney** the job on Sept. 4. Days later, he resigned as Westerly town manager. He'd been hired there as interim manager in May 2018 and given the full-time job that August.

Rooney served in the Army for 31 years, including seven on active duty. He retired as a lieutenant colonel in 2014. He was a staff assistant to the late Sen. Paul Simon before being hired as Highwood's first village administrator in 1996. In 2003, **Rooney** was named assistant village manager in Wheeling serving three years before being named manager. He left in 2009 for a brief stint in North Chicago before being hired in Carpentersville. He served seven years in Carpentersville before the village board in January 2018 voted to accept what it considered to be **Rooney's** "voluntary resignation," saying he had stopped reporting for work.

Rooney sued the village, claiming he was placed on involuntary leave and then fired without the severance and benefits he was owed. The parties settled in 2020 for \$220,000. Former Buffalo

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Grove Village Manager Bill Balling, who served as interim administrator in Round Lake Beach, said the village was looking for a highly experienced manager who understood state and county government and who had the experience to sustain and build activity along Rollins Road, its main business corridor. "I think we're setting the table with the management structure we have in place," Balling said. "We think we're getting the right person in place to mature the organization" and build on successes, he added.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
J. Mark Rooney
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Westerly Sun (RI)
Sep 15, 2021

Rooney still on the job in Westerly ... for now

By Dale P. Faulkner

WESTERLY — If you're not sure who's running the town, you're not alone. As it turns out, according to town officials, Town Manager **J. Mark Rooney**, who on Sept. 9 announced his intention to resign, will stay on for at least the rest of this week. But on Monday, the Town Council did not discuss **Rooney's** status during the public portion of its meeting, even though he had already tendered his resignation. The council did, however, go into a private executive session to evaluate Rooney's job performance.

Rooney, who attended Monday's council meeting and participated in the executive session, declined to answer questions for this article, saying he had been asked by the council to refrain from making public comments. Following the executive session, Town Council President Sharon Ahern announced that the council had not taken any votes pertaining to **Rooney's** job performance or on the other topics listed on the agenda for the private session.

On Sept. 9 Ahern acknowledged that she had accepted **Rooney's** resignation and said he had discussed interest in staying on to assist the council with the transition to a new town manager. At the time, Ahern said she anticipated discussing **Rooney's** resignation and offer to stay on for a period of time during the council meeting on Sept. 13.

On Tuesday, Ahern said that **Rooney** was continuing to work for the town. "**Mark Rooney** is still the town manager as of today," Ahern said. "The Town Council has a plan and a firm leadership agenda and because, as you know, we were in executive session under personnel, we were advised by Town Solicitor [William] Conley that we could not discuss any details at this time, but action will be taken on Monday."

When asked whether **Rooney** would continue on for the rest of this week, Ahern initially said she was uncertain she could answer, but eventually said, "Yes. I don't want people to think that the town is without leadership. It most certainly is not."

Ahern said she had communicated with the chairpersons of some of the town's boards and commissions. "I have reached out to some of the board chairs and told them 'Please rest assured we have a plan' so no one thinks we are in an era of disruption," Ahern said. While the departure of a town manager can be "disturbing," Ahern said the position in Westerly and other municipalities tends to be one with a high turnover rate.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Westerly Sun (RI)

August 3, 2021

Town Council Considers Ways to Balance Transfer Station Budget

Author: Dale P. Faulkner

WESTERLY — A new \$50 annual transfer station fee would be charged to all dwellings in the town, and the cost of town-issued orange trash bags would increase by \$1.00 under a plan being considered by the Town Council. The fee and bag-cost increase were some of the options developed by Michael Serra, assistant superintendent of the Department of Public Works, as a means to reduce the transfer station's reliance on the annual municipal budget to balance its financial ledger. The transfer station is designated as an enterprise fund that many officials say should be financially self-sustaining based on user fees. The Board of Finance, during deliberations on the municipal and enterprise budgets last spring, asked the Town Council to study the transfer station's financial performance, noting its increased reliance on funds from the town budget rather than fees charged for use of the facility to balance the facility's annual budget. The transfer station is relying on \$488,571 from the annual budget in the current fiscal year to balance its \$2.96 million budget. In return for the \$50 annual fee, which officials said would likely be included with municipal tax bills, property owners and residents would receive a permit that would grant entry to the transfer station.

Serra and Town Manager **J. Mark Rooney** discussed the recommendations with the Town Council during a workshop meeting on Monday. **Rooney** said use of funds from the municipal budget has increased in recent years because expensive equipment used at the transfer station has required replacement. He also reminded the council and residents that the town no longer receives money for recyclable items because of the decline in the international market for recyclable items. The recommendations come as Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation, which operates the state landfill in Johnston, which receives the town's trash, is increasing its fees to municipalities. In the current fiscal year, the corporation's fee increase to the town is estimated to result in a 4% overall increase from \$1.049 million to \$1.086 million and an estimated 13% overall increase in 2022-23 to \$1.22 million. Additionally, the vendor that supplies the orange bags is increasing the cost of the bags by 15%. Members of the council stressed that the recommendations they are considering are intended to mitigate reliance on the annual town budget. They also noted that ultimately residents all pay for the transfer station either through taxes that support the municipal budget or fees imposed for use of the facility. "We're not trying to make money. What we're trying to do is close the gap. We need to figure out how we can break even every year," Councilor Suzanne Giorno said. Councilor Caswell Cooke Jr. said he supported the proposed new permit fee and increase to the cost of trash bags, and said Serra and **Rooney** should be given authority to increase fees when the town is facing increases in the fees charged for use of the state landfill. The council is expected to consider an ordinance that would establish the permit fee and trash bag cost increase in the future. **Rooney** and Serra agreed to study a proposal by Councilor Karen Cioffi to eliminate use of the town-issued trash bags. Cioffi said the bag system would no longer be necessary if the permit fee is adopted.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

NPR Radio (USA)

August 22, 2021

Rhode Island Braces for Tropical Storm Henri

Author: Susan Davis

Susan Davis speaks with **Mark Rooney**, town manager of Westerly, Rhode Island, about how the town is planning for Tropical Storm Henri.

SUSAN DAVIS, HOST:

Henri is already dropping rain on New England and hitting the coast with high winds. The tropical storm spent much of yesterday as a hurricane and is expected to officially make landfall this afternoon. **Mark Rooney** is the town manager of Westerly, R.I., and joins us now. Thanks so much for taking the time.

MARK ROONEY: You're welcome.

DAVIS: Other officials in the region today say they're expecting something akin to Superstorm Sandy. Is that what you're preparing for?

ROONEY: That is exactly what we're preparing for because we're - with the high tide of the full moon - causes about a 3-foot rise naturally, and then the 3 to 5 feet of storm surge could be very detrimental because it'll breach the dunes and bring sand and water inland. And that - it leaves a lot of sand on the road and causes a lot of infrastructure issues.

DAVIS: So what kind of preparations are you making, and what have you been telling your constituents about how to prepare for the storm?

ROONEY: Well, we've issued a shelter-in-place at about 9:30 this morning, and we had a temporary - or a recommended evacuation of the area that is most prone to the storm surge. And we're - at this time, we're closing off some of the access roads into the most prone flooding areas on - along the shore.

DAVIS: Have folks been listening to the evacuation order? I know, oftentimes, people decide to stick around even when they're told to leave.

ROONEY: For the most part, they did. The hotels, I think, had check-out this morning in the affected region. And so some of those visitors did leave the cottages or their Airbnb. But we do have - we still continue to have people that come in to the area because they see the Weather Channel. But we do have police cars advising people to leave those areas.

DAVIS: Can you talk us through the preparations that you've made and what you're telling your constituents about how to weather the storm?

ROONEY: Well, we've issued a shelter-in-place to every resident of the community. And in the heavily impacted areas, we have police blocking access into those areas and escorting people out that have gotten in there to do observation or - we had surfers earlier in the day. So those all have been moved out of the area.

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J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

DAVIS: What's your biggest concern right now in terms of safety?

ROONEY: Downed power lines. I saw some preemptive shutdowns of gas lines in the beach areas to preclude any problems to the system overall. And they do have crews that will work to restore power as long as the winds are below 35 miles an hour. So they have been working, even in the storm, to restore power. We've got scattered power outages but not widespread.

DAVIS: It's been nearly 30 years since a storm of this measure has affected the New England area. Do you think that the local area is more prepared for a storm like this now?

ROONEY: The communication systems are much more robust now in the coordination between the fire district, national grid and the town, and then we have state assets, as well. That cooperation and interdepartmental level of training is there, and we find that the fire department - they have been staffed up and very responsive this morning to any trees on roads and opening them up within 30 minutes.

DAVIS: All right. That's **Mark Rooney**. He's town manager of Westerly, R.I. Thank you so much for your time.

ROONEY: You're welcome.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Westerly Sun (RI)
July 24, 2021

Westerly, Former HR Director Settle Lawsuit; Town Admits No Guilt

Author: Dale P. Faulkner

WESTERLY — A lawsuit filed against the town by its former human resources director claiming she faced illegal retaliation and that her rights under whistleblower and family leave laws were violated has been settled out of court for \$98,500. The four-count lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Providence in December on behalf of Nancy M. Markey, who worked as human resources director for about two years, claimed Town Manager **J. Mark Rooney** violated her rights as a whistleblower and rights she had under state and federal medical leave legislation, as well as rights she had under the federal Family First Coronavirus Response Act.

Terms of the settlement agreement were reached after both sides participated in a voluntary mediation session aimed at avoiding a trial. The agreement does not constitute an admission of wrongful or unlawful acts by **Rooney** or the town, according to terms of the agreement. The Town Council voted unanimously to approve the agreement in late June but did not announce the vote until Monday because the town's lawyers advised not announcing the agreement until it was signed by all parties, said Town Council President Sharon Ahern on Monday.

Lawyers for Markey and the town said the agreement reflected give and take by both sides. "Both parties compromised significantly. I think it's in the best interest of the taxpayers," said Matthew Oliverio, the lawyer who represented the town in the case. By settling early, Oliverio said the town avoided the cost of additional legal representation, which would have started to mount if the case was decided by a judge, regardless of whether the town won the case.

Employment law claims generally involve economic damages related to the claimant's salary and livelihood and whether they found alternative employment and at what level of compensation, as well as an analysis of economic damages including pain and suffering, said Richard Sinapi, Markey's lawyer in the case. Potential settlement agreements are also based, Sinapi said, on clients' risk preference. "My client felt it was a fair settlement and it was acceptable to the town as well and that was the compromise that was reached," Sinapi said. Markey is now working for a school district and is "doing very well," Sinapi said.

According to the agreement, the settlement payment was broken into three components: \$32,400 for unpaid wages, less applicable deductions and withholdings; \$32,400 for non-economic damages (such as pain and suffering); and \$33,700 for legal fees and costs. Markey claimed, in the lawsuit, that **Rooney** retaliated against her after she told him she planned to report violations of COVID-19 protocols she observed in Town Hall in March 2020 as the pandemic started to take hold and wreak havoc throughout the country.

The retaliation continued, the lawsuit alleged, when the town unsuccessfully contested and appealed Markey's application for unemployment benefits. The town argued, according to

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Markey's lawsuit, that Markey had been terminated for insubordination and failure to follow leave and attendance policies, but a state Labor and Training Department appeal-hearing officer found Markey had followed routine steps for leaves she took and that there was no evidence of intentional wrongdoing. **Rooney** did not return a telephone message seeking comment for this article but typically does not discuss matters involving employees.

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J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[**CB&A Note:** We have spoken to the Town about this matter and, we are confident the suit described below is without merit.]

Westerly Sun, The (RI)
February 7, 2021

Westerly's former HR chief sues the town

Author: Dale P. Faulkner

In federal suit, Markey alleges she was fired after blowing whistle on alleged violations

It was the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic last March, and tensions were running high, including on Broad Street in Town Hall. Workers were, allegedly, pushing for permission to work from home and asking for the building to be sanitized and for the public's access to be limited.

According to a federal lawsuit filed recently against the town by Nancy M. Markey, its former human resources director, it was against this backdrop that she was fired by Town Manager **J. Mark Rooney** in retaliation for informing him she planned to report alleged violations of COVID-19 protocols to state and federal agencies. It was, the lawsuit asserts, a violation of both federal and state family medical leave protections.

The lawsuit also describes the mood in Town Hall when two workers tested positive for the coronavirus and detailed concerns with how **Rooney** was handling the pandemic, including whether employees would be informed if other employees tested positive for the virus. Many of the events depicted in the lawsuit occurred prior to Town Hall eventually being closed for a special cleaning and before an appointment-only policy was put in place during the first surge of the virus.

Rooney and Town Attorney William J. Conley Jr. declined to comment or answer questions for this article, citing personnel policies of not commenting on pending litigation. The town has yet to file a formal response to the lawsuit, which was filed Dec. 22 in U.S. District Court for the District of Rhode Island in Providence.

The lawsuit also alleges that **Rooney** failed to quarantine himself after experiencing symptoms of the virus and getting tested and that he ordered Markey not to tell anyone that he had been tested. Other accusations made by Markey include that **Rooney** initially failed to inform her that a Town Hall worker had tested positive for the virus, despite **Rooney** having asked Markey to handle employee COVID-19 issues, that **Rooney** criticizing the state's handling of the virus and that **Rooney** swore at Markey on one occasion.

Rooney and the town are named as defendants in the lawsuit, which contends that **Rooney** retaliated against Markey when he put her on administrative leave the day after she sent him an e-mail stating her intent to complain to state agencies about the town's alleged failure to comply

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

with COVID-19 executive orders issued by Gov. Gina Raimondo. Markey worked for the town from October 2018 until she was removed from her position in May following her placement on administrative leave in April. The retaliation continued, the lawsuit alleges, when the town unsuccessfully contested and appealed Markey's application for unemployment benefits. "... The director of the Rhode Island Labor and Training Department issued a decision that [Markey] was entitled to unemployment benefits because the investigation conducted by [the department] failed to show evidence of intentional wrongdoing" by Markey, the suit asserts.

The town appealed the director's decision, arguing that Markey had been terminated for insubordination and failure to follow leave and attendance policies, but the appeal-hearing officer found Markey had followed routine steps for leaves she took and that there was no evidence of intentional wrongdoing. "The [hearing officer] further found that the alleged insubordination was centered on disagreement over the handling of COVID-19 protocols that eventually led to her termination, which did not constitute misconduct in connection with the workplace," the lawsuit states. A second appeal by the town to stop Markey from receiving unemployment benefits also failed.

Markey's Family Medical Leave Act claims stem from leaves she took in March and April. The lawsuit also alleges Markey's rights under the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act were violated when she was placed on administrative leave after taking a medical leave to await the results of a COVID-19 test.

The termination of her employment also amounts to a violation of Markey's rights under the state Whistleblowers Protection Act, according to the the suit, which alleges she was fired for filing complaints with Raimondo's office and other state agencies. The lawsuit seeks unspecified back and other pay or reinstatement of Markey's position, compensatory and punitive damages, as well as attorneys' fees and court fees.

Richard Sinapi, Markey's lawyer, said the damages that will be sought had not been calculated but would be based on lost wages and benefits and on the impact of the termination on Markey's reputation. "... And there is some emotional pain and suffering that is associated with an abrupt termination from a publicly appointed position where you are trying to do your best job and you get the rug pulled out from under you," Sinapi said.

In July of 2019 Markey received an "exceeds expectations" job performance review from **Rooney** and her pay was increased from \$85,000 per year to \$90,125, according to the lawsuit.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Brattleboro Reformer (VT)

February 1, 2021

R.I. COMMUNITIES OFFER VACCINE

Bennington Banner

Cities and towns are administering a limited number of COVID-19 vaccines to residents ages 75 and older. The Rhode Island Department of Health announced Thursday that they could get vaccinated. Many appointments filled up quickly. Each city and town has been allocated a certain number of doses.

In Westerly, most of the people who were called were selected using the municipal voter roll. Their names were sorted randomly using the last four numbers of their phone numbers, Town Manager **J. Mark Rooney** told the Sun.

Some of the 34 housing authority and senior center individuals were not taken from the voter list in order to include others who might not be registered to vote. "We tried to get across the demographic as best we could," **Rooney** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Westerly Sun, The (RI)
January 27, 2021

Progress made on Westerly rights of way

Author: Dale P. Faulkner

Council lauds Rooney's efforts to clean up beach access pathways

Two-dozen rights of way that provide access to the shoreline have been surveyed and many cleared and marked with granite posts under a program directed by Town Manager **J. Mark Rooney** at the request of the Town Council.

The work was performed in conjunction with development of the municipal Harbor Management Plan. An interim version of the plan, mostly focused on moorings, was adopted by the council in 2018. The council thanked and praised **Rooney** Monday following his presentation on the work that was accomplished by a professional land surveyor and public works personnel with input from Lisa Pellegrini, director of Development Services, Julia Beasley, interim Recreation Department director, and Kimberlie Rayner- Russell, assistant harbormaster.

Rooney also reviewed four potential new sites around Winnapaug Pond that could be formally designated as municipal rights of way in the future. The four sites have been used historically but are not listed on town documents as designated rights of way.

Councilor Caswell Cooke Jr., who serves as executive director of the Misquamicut Business Association, said residents and business owners have asked for formal access points to the pond for decades. "It's something that people have really talked about since I started down at the beach more than 20 years ago, and it never happened," Cooke said.

One of the proposed new rights of way to the pond is at the end of Terrace Avenue, where Rooney said officials hope to create a launch area for small watercraft. The other three proposed sites are all off Atlantic Avenue.

Rooney also reviewed photographs of the 24 rights of way that were surveyed. The photographs depicted clearing and sturdy granite posts that officials are hopeful will mark the paths to the shoreline indefinitely and stop a pattern of rights of way becoming overgrown and their location and status as public unclear. Officials are also seeking permission and grants from the state to install kayak and canoe racks at some of the rights of way, **Rooney** said.

Pellegrini said officials hope a map depicting the rights of way can be added to the Harbor Management Plan. "To make it easy for the public to just flip through the plan and see where the rights of way are," Pellegrini said.

Rooney assured residents that rights of way to the shoreline have been a priority in recent years but said the work is time-consuming. "I would ask the public, again, for a little bit of patience ...

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J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

we are, as the council has promised, moving on the rights of way. They have not fallen off ... the staff has worked on it. I want the public to understand that it's not that they were ignored," **Rooney** said.

Councilor Christopher Duhamel and other councilors joined with Cooke in praising **Rooney's** work. "**Mark** is a great asset. He's really made this happen and he's calmed a lot of battles on this," Duhamel said.

Prior to **Rooney's** presentation, the council reviewed proposed language changes to some of the rights-of-way descriptions in the Harbor Management Plan. As part of the review, the council agreed to strike proposed language that would have stated that public parking would be added adjacent to the Waters Edge Road right of way in Watch Hill. Council President Sharon Ahern said the council had received numerous written comments critical of the proposed language on parking. Residents and others who participated in the meeting remotely were critical of the decision, saying it was premature and that parking was needed at the right of way.

A lawyer for the Watch Hill Fire District and the Watch Hill Conservancy, Gerald Petros, questioned proposed new language in the plan related to Fort Road in Watch Hill. Petros said the road is not a public road and that a lawyer working for the town had previously reached the same conclusion. References to Fort Road as a right of way to the shoreline are unnecessary, Petros said, because the fire district and conservancy have demonstrated commitment to allowing public access to Napatree Point.

Anthony Palazzolo, who owns property in the town, asked the council to study the Fort Road question more closely and raised questions about the legal opinion cited by Petros.

Ahern asked residents and other interested citizens to submit comments to the council prior to Feb. 22 when she said the council would resume a workshop meeting on the rights of way section of the Harbor Management Plan.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Westerly Sun, The (RI)
November 19, 2020

Westerly councilors praise town staffers for road work

Author: Dale P. Faulkner

Duhamel: Recent work on infrastructure, Duhamel says, has been completed quickly

Members of the Town Council are praising the municipal Engineering Department and town manager for their work on projects paid for with a \$15 million bond approved by voters in 2018. With the bulk of the bond funds spent or committed, long-serving council members say the work surpasses anything they had seen before. Work under previous road bonds of \$6 million in 2014 and \$6.5 million in 2010 was often slow to proceed.

"I'd like to go back to 2018 when the electorate approved the \$15 million bond. I thought it was insurmountable. How could we ever keep up with that? How could we get it all done? But you made it happen," said Town Council President Christopher Duhamel on Monday. Duhamel, who has served 16 years on the council, was speaking to Town Engineer Kyle Zalaski and Town Manager **J. Mark Rooney**.

Zalaski provided an overview of work accomplished under the \$15 million bond and what remains to be done. **Rooney** asked that former Town Engineer Sheila McGauvran also be recognized for her work on the bond projects before Zalaski started his job with the town and when she served as a consultant during Zalaski's first year in Westerly. "It's an incredible feat and you should be commended for what you've done. We sat on other councils when we didn't get any real results," Duhamel said.

In 2019 about 11.5 miles of roads were resurfaced and the School Street reconstruction project, which is set to begin in March, was designed. This year about 8.2 miles were resurfaced on 42 roads. All of the 58 roads on the original road bond list have been resurfaced except for Pearl Street, which will be worked on next year. An additional 28 roads were also addressed under the bond. "In all the years that Chris and I have been up here, it's never gone this smoothly or this quickly, so it's pretty amazing," said Councilor Caswell Cooke Jr., who has served on the council for 14 years. "It's an incredible feat and you should be commended for what you've done. We sat on other councils when we didn't get any real results." - Christopher Duhamel, council president

Councilor Suzanne Giorno thanked Zalaski for providing the council with regular updates on road bond projects, which she said enabled council members to easily answer residents' questions.

The council recently authorized **Rooney** to proceed with a \$2.95 million contract with Ferreira Construction of New Jersey for the School Street reconstruction project. The utilities department will pay \$750,000 toward the cost of the project to cover the cost of upgrading the water system on the road and \$2.2 million of the road bond is earmarked for the project, which is set to occur

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J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

from March 1 to Nov. 1. A 25% contingency to cover potential cost overruns and the cost of project oversight has been established for the project. Councilor William Aiello said the contingency was too high and will unnecessarily tie up funds that could be used for other projects. Zalaski said town officials decided on a 25% contingency in light of cost overruns that occurred with a similarly expansive project on Cross Street a few years ago. "There is some concern that we thought warranted the 25%," Zalaski said. Aiello was also critical of decisions to add certain road projects during the course of the bond.

Not including the School Street contingency funds, there is about \$2.1 million remaining from the bond. In the running for those funds are projects on Bowling Lane, Breen Road and Pasadena Avenue, and Riverview Avenue. Other projects on the horizon include Church Street sidewalks, Atlantic Avenue resurfacing, work to rights of way on Waters Edge Road and Manatuck Avenue, and the reconstruction of Uzzi Avenue.

Rooney said he anticipated recommending a new \$5 to \$7 million road bond to be considered in a referendum in the spring to cover the cost of some of the more expensive projects that remain to be accomplished.

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J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Providence Journal

May 21, 2020

On R.I.'s south shore, opening town beaches gets down to nitty-gritty

Author: Donita Naylor

Correction: Visitors to state and town beaches will not be required to wear cloth face coverings if they can consistently stay at least six feet apart from those in other groups. All beachgoers are asked to bring face coverings to the beach and wear them in any crowded area, such as bathrooms, concessions or parking lots. An earlier version of this story did not accurately describe the policy.

Remember before, when the things that triggered fear at the beach were a fin circling, a stomach cramp from swimming too soon after eating, or maybe sunburn, bullies, creeps or undertow? This year, danger at the beach is invisible and so much deadlier. Now, sitting downwind and within six feet of someone who sneezes, or touching a door handle last touched by someone who doesn't know they have the virus, or talking with someone not wearing a face mask can land you in a medically induced coma, and, if all turns out well weeks later, a wheelchair for your ride home from the hospital. Gov. Gina Raimondo has been careful to open only two state beaches, to test whether infection rates rise. Scarborough in Narragansett and East Matunuck in South Kingstown will open Monday, free of charge, but they will have no lifeguards, no concessions, no changing rooms or showers. Towns have to meet strict requirements before opening a town beach. They're tightening the rules for proving residency and, in some cases, allowing only residents to buy season passes. Nonresidents have to buy day passes. Towns will have to clean their beach facilities more frequently each day; require everyone to wear a mask in crowded areas such as bathrooms, concessions or parking lots; and enforce a limit of five people in a group and a distance of six feet between each group's beach blankets and umbrellas. Nobody wants a coronavirus carrier who doesn't know it, who hasn't served two weeks of self-quarantine upon entering Rhode Island and who doesn't wear a face mask. Seeing a spike in coronavirus cases in the saltwater beach towns would set back the progress that has come at so high a price to so many Rhode Islanders.

Only Westerly has announced it will open its town beaches in time for Memorial Day weekend, all three of them. Town Manager **Mark Rooney** said they'll open Friday. At the same time, the executive director of the Misquamicut Business Association, which represents about 40 businesses along a three-mile stretch with half-mile Misquamicut State Beach in the middle, is asking Raimondo to open that beach this weekend, or at least install trash containers and portable toilets and allow cars to park in the giant state lots. "People are going to come," said Caswell Cooke, executive director of the business association. "You can't stop them." With 2,800 parking spaces at the state beach shut down, those cars will flood the village. Cooke said that, with the state beach closed, his association will be picking up trash strewn along Atlantic Avenue for the half-mile of the state beach parking. He suggested that the governor might hope for rain this weekend. "By not opening that beach, it's going to be a public safety hazard," he said.

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J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Rooney said people from New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Florida own second homes in Westerly, and they can get parking stickers for Wuskenau Town Beach and Larkin Road for access to East Beach, but they can't get passes for Westerly Town Beach. The problem is that it's impossible to know if a carload has been here two weeks or more for quarantine, he said. "Unless we see them cross the river, we don't know." The police approach will be officer discretion. "We're going to seek compliance, not confrontation," **Rooney** said.

Saltwater beach towns in South County — Westerly, Charlestown, South Kingstown, Narragansett and North Kingstown, are following directives from the governor that are outlined and detailed in ReOpeningRI.com. Towns are required to meet the new beach standards, Narragansett Town Manager James Tierney said. In Narragansett as in the other towns, the price of beach passes has not gone up, but residency rules have tightened. As issues arise, the town will have to solve them case by case, he and Narragansett Parks and Recreation Director Steve Wright said. Tierney promised that Narragansett Town Beach will open, but he wouldn't say when. It will be announced on the town website and social media.

The beach will have the same hours, 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., but unlike other years when the parking attendants left at 5 p.m., this year they will stay on duty until 8, turning away cars from elsewhere. Narragansett Town Beach has been widely perceived as a free beach after 5 p.m., but that will change this year. Narragansett beachgoers will see signs instructing them about the rules. "Please do your part to stay six feet apart," is one, Wright said, and another is that face coverings must be worn in the pavilion, restrooms, concession areas, when walking among others, but not in the water. Also, "If you're not feeling well, please stay home."

North Kingstown Town Manager A. Ralph Mollis said his town's beach is opening this weekend, but he didn't say which day. South Kingstown, like most towns, will open its town beach on weekends only until mid-June. In Charlestown, people who walk to a town beach can enjoy it for free. The towns are selling beach passes and parking stickers at the beach, through the mail or online. Residents who order and pay online are asked to call ahead, then wait at the curb for someone to bring them out. Each town's website has details about prices, hours, locations and who's eligible. "Everybody's adapting," said Terry Murphy, South Kingstown's director of leisure services. "We've found everybody to be very patient and understanding." It could be worse. Some "famous popular tourist places," she said, are selling beach reservations. Beachgoers turn up at a specified time and get an assigned spot.

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J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Westerly Sun (RI)

March 2, 2020

Council Seeks Funding Details as it Weighs Reduction in Transfer Station Operations

Author: Dale P. Faulkner

The Town Council is seeking more details on transfer station funding before it will consider approving a staff proposal to reduce the facility's operations one day each week. Town Manager **J. Mark Rooney** and Mike Serra, who manages the facility at Larry Hirsch Drive, asked the council to sign off on having the facility open to the public five days per week, but said they were aware that commercial haulers would likely need to continue on the new day of closure. **Rooney** and Serra said they preferred to close the facility on Mondays but would accept Wednesday or Thursday. The facility is currently open Monday through Saturday. On Mondays, workers from the Public Works Department staff the transfer station because the regular facility workers have the day off. By closing on Mondays, **Rooney** said overtime costs would be reduced and public works staff freed up to do their usual tasks. When the council approved a new fee schedule for the transfer station in July, **Rooney** said he planned to return in the near future to seek the council's consensus on closing the facility an additional day each week. Serra said closing an extra day is necessary for him to meet one of **Rooney's** requests. "I'm trying to eliminate some of the spending," Serra said. **Rooney** said the transfer station, which has been set up as a so-called enterprise fund since 2017, has required money from the general fund to balance its budget. In 2018, the facility required \$234,000, and in 2019 \$135,000 was needed. This year, **Rooney** said, the facility is on track to need \$330,000. In 2020-21, he said the facility will require \$1 million including expenses for equipment replacement. Enterprise funds are intended to function in a manner similar to businesses or come close to breaking even through revenues collected from charging for services. The loss of the international recyclable market has hurt municipalities throughout the country including in Westerly. "Recycling costs the town now," **Rooney** said. Handling and separating recyclable items takes time and is labor intensive, Serra said.

In addition to reducing days of operation, Serra said he is considering only accepting certain recyclable items on certain days. Some members of the Town Council asked for more time and data on expenses, while others said they had made up their mind already. "I'm not in favor of dropping days ... this is a public service," said Councilor Sharon Ahern, adding that cost savings might be possible through a change in how the aspects of the facility are managed. Councilor William Aiello asked for more information but remained open **Rooney's** request. "Maybe there are other changes to reduce costs and the you would not have to reduce hours," Aiello said. "Give us the data and let us look at it. If push comes to shove maybe some sort of change is warranted." Aiello also recommended seeking input from commercial haulers. Councilor Karen Cioffi questioned, as she had previously, whether closing an additional day would save money. "I need some data on what's behind all this ... these operations have gone on for many years and I don't understand why we got to this point," Cioffi said. Council President Christopher Duhamel said the request from **Rooney** and Serra would be better handled when the council deliberates on the proposed 2020-21 municipal budget.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Westerly Sun (RI)
December 12, 2019

Rooney Receives Performance Bonus, Drops Bid for Job in Florida

Author: Dale P. Faulkner

The Town Council has approved a \$3,200 bonus for Town Manager **J. Mark Rooney**, amounting to 2% of his annual salary. The decision came on a 6-0 vote Monday after the council met in an executive session called to complete **Rooney's** annual performance review. **Rooney** announced before the vote that he had decided not to pursue a job opportunity in Florida, and Council President Christopher Duhamel said the two issues were unrelated. Duhamel said the performance review had been on the agenda, "and then news of him potentially interviewing elsewhere broke, and then he pulled out" of consideration for the other job.

An article on the website of the Panama City News Herald on Dec. 4 reported **Rooney** was a finalist for the position of city manager in Panama City Beach, Fla. At the time, **Rooney** declined to comment except to say that he had applied for the job after a recruiter encouraged him to do so. On Monday, during the public part of the Town Council's meeting, **Rooney** announced that he had decided not to seek the position and would not travel to Florida this week for an interview. **Rooney** did not respond to a request for further comment. According to Duhamel, the council had largely completed **Rooney's** review in September and scheduled Monday's executive session to consider giving him a bonus, as **Rooney** had requested. **Rooney's** three-year contract, which expires in August 2021, calls for him to receive a base salary of \$160,000 per year and includes a provision that allows the Town Council to grant performance bonuses at its discretion. "Given the review the council had of the manager we felt a bonus was in order," Duhamel said.

Rooney's review involved an assessment of his work by each member of the council. Individual councilors submitted their reviews to Duhamel, who compiled the results. His report, describing positive achievements and areas in need of improvement, was distributed to the full council. **Rooney** was named interim town manager in April 2018 and was later given permanent status. He previously worked for 20 years as a municipal administrator in Illinois. "I think he's doing a great job. It's tough to walk into a town with no basis of potential support but he has gained support from several organizations in town ... and the staff is respectful of **Mark** and listens to **Mark** and he's respectful of them," Duhamel said.

Duhamel also praised **Rooney** for appointing Shawn Lacey, a Westerly Police Department veteran, as chief of police. **Rooney** arrived to find a police department awash in ill feelings related to former Town Manager Derrik M. Kennedy's appointment of Richard Silva, and out-of-town candidate, to the position. Under **Rooney**, Silva entered into a separation agreement with the town and left the department. Duhamel also praised **Rooney's** work in renegotiating terms related to the town's solar project, which is to be built off of White Rock Road, and for successfully managing, in collaboration with his staff, the road work that is being performed under a \$15 million bond approved by the voters in 2018. "That was my biggest concern walking onto the council last November. In years past it was not made a priority," Duhamel said,

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J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

referring to the management of previous road bonds. Councilor Karen Cioffi, in a telephone interview on Tuesday, also praised **Rooney's** work. "He clearly has dug into the community and made himself seen," she said. Cioffi, a former human resources director for the town, credited **Rooney** with helping to improve employee morale, which she said had plummeted before his arrival. "They were in down in the dumps. Morale was terrible and he had to lift those people up," she said. Like Duhamel, Cioffi also pointed to **Rooney's** handling of the police administration, the solar project, and road work as noteworthy achievements. Duhamel and Cioffi were joined by Councilors Suzanne Giorno, Caswell Cooke Jr., William Aiello and Brian McCuin in voting to give **Rooney** a bonus. Councilor Sharon Ahern, the seventh councilor, did not attend Monday's meeting.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Westerly Sun (RI)
November 8, 2019

Town Considers New Approach in Dealing with Risky Potter Hill Site

Author: Dale P. Faulkner

The Town Council has asked for more information about a proposed legal proceeding aimed at demolishing the dilapidated Potter Hill Mill property. The council met for 35 minutes in executive session on Monday to discuss hiring a lawyer who would petition a Superior Court judge, on the town's behalf, to be named as a special master to assist the town with its long-running goal of demolishing buildings on the property that are falling into the Pawcatuck River. A special master is appointed by a judge to oversee one or more aspects of litigation. "The council made no decisions, in fact, we asked for more information," said Town Council President Christopher Duhamel. Officials and neighbors of the 4.5-acre property are concerned that the run-down buildings pose a threat to people who might trespass on the property, and that a dam associated with the property is not being maintained. "There's a lot of liability with that property," Town Manager **J. Mark Rooney** said Thursday. **Rooney** said he asked the council to consider mastership as a means to address the mill property after discussing the idea with John Dorsey, a lawyer who is serving as special master in a case involving the former Bradford Dyeing Association site. Ideally, **Rooney** said, mastership would allow the town to eliminate the safety hazards without taking ownership of the property. Dorsey, who has not been hired for the case, declined to comment.

The town obtained a demolition order from the Superior Court in the 1980s but never followed through on the demolition. The property, which remained subject to the demolition order, was then sold to Edward Carapezza in 1992. The town agreed to hold off on demolishing the property to give Carapezza time to redevelop it, but eventually moved to commence demolition in the belief that Carapezza had failed to meet provisions of the agreement. Carapezza's Renewable Resources Inc., of Hopkinton, obtained a restraining order against the town to stop the demolition but the order was eventually lifted in 2013. The Superior Court judge who vacated the restraining order said the town had demonstrated its willingness to work with Carapezza and shared his hope that the property could be redeveloped. But by holding off on demolition, the town had "placed itself at risk. By not immediately eliminating the hazard, the town risked that people might get hurt in the buildings," Associate Justice Brian Stern wrote in 2013. Carapezza appealed, but the state Supreme Court upheld the demolition order later in 2013. Two years later, however, Carapezza was approved for \$500,000 in tax credits through the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission and the state Department of Revenue for what was estimated to be a \$3 million renovation to two buildings on the property. The tax credits are believed to have expired. Carapezza did not respond to messages seeking comment. Between 1762 and 1958, when the Westerly Woolen Co. closed, the site was home to grist, saw, cotton and wool mills. A fire in the 1970s decimated much of the property. In 2018, Carapezza was cited by the state Department of Environmental Management for violating wetlands regulations at property he owns in Hopkinton.

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J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Westerly Sun (RI)
November 6, 2019

Residents Challenging Town's Findings on Private Roads

Author: Dale P. Faulkner

Residents of four roads are disputing the town's position that they should no longer receive services such as plowing and paving. The town has said the roads are private, but the residents argue that they should be considered public. Their lawyer made their case before the Town Council on Monday. "My purpose in coming to this meeting tonight was to request the council stay enforcement of this private road issue so that we can get a better handle on this issue," the attorney, Michelle Buck, told the council. Specifically, Buck asked the town to continue plowing her clients' roads until issues she raised were resolved. She represents Greenspace LLC, which she said has an interest in Guarino Avenue, Maggio Street, and Gavitt Avenue, three roadways that are in the Oak Street neighborhood. Greenspace LLC owns several properties on Trackside Drive, which is adjacent to Guarino Avenue. Buck, who formerly served as a member of the Town Council and as town attorney and town manager, also represents Susan and Michael Bookataub, who live on Michael's Way.

Town Manager **J. Mark Rooney** said he had directed the public works department to continue plowing Guarino Avenue, Maggio Street, and Gavitt Avenue because property owners had presented town officials with material showing that the roads probably qualify for acceptance as town roads. According to **Rooney**, the property owners are developing a petition for eventual submission to the Planning Board asking that the roads be accepted as public roads by the town. Buck said some historical records indicate that the town owned Michael's Way and the other roads connected to her clients. "There are, at this point, more questions than answers relative to the status of these roads," she said.

Rooney also offered to have town crews continue plowing Michael's Way at least until a title search that the town is performing is completed, but he questioned whether Michael's Way will qualify for acceptance as a public road. "I can hold it in abeyance until the title search and see if it's going to change, but I spoke to the developer who said, 'I dedeed it'" to a private property owner, he said. The practice of the town plowing and providing other services on private roads has been on **Rooney's** radar for several months. Last fall he wrote to property owners on the roads and informed them that the town would stop providing the services. The Town Council intervened, saying that the residents had not been given adequate notice and that the plowing services were provided last winter.

But after the council's public works subcommittee and Town Attorney William J. Conley Jr. studied the issue, town officials announced in September that they had determined which roads in Westerly were public and which were private, and said services would no longer be provided to the private roads. More recently Buck's clients received another letter telling them the services would no longer be provided. On Monday, Buck said the letter contained errors, including an incorrect citation to state law. "So if this letter was meant to put people on notice as to what the

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J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

town was saying or what the process was, it's really inadequate," she said. **Rooney** acknowledged that the citation was wrong, because of a typographical error. Buck said her clients have not had enough time to arrange for a private company to plow their roads and said there were "no mechanisms in place. There's no homeowners' association and no revenue available for residents of these roads to address these issues," she added.

Council President Christopher Duhamel thanked Buck for speaking to the council and noted that town officials had previously asked residents to provide information to prove their roads had already been formally accepted as part of the town's road system. Duhamel also asked that town officials' side with residents in cases where there were questions or doubt about the status of particular roads. Councilor Sharon Ahern, a lawyer, also thanked Buck but said she was not certain that the town was legally required to send residents a notice of the change in policy. "I'm not confident a letter is required," she said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Westerly Sun (RI)
August 20, 2019

Pleasant Surprise: A Budget Surplus in Westerly

Author: Dale P. Faulkner

Town officials are projecting a \$135,601 surplus from the 2018-19 budget. The surplus would have been greater, but funds had to be redirected to make up shortages in the transfer station budget as well as an overage in an insurance fund. "The positive news is we did finish still in the positive not in the red," Town Manager **J. Mark Rooney** told the Town Council Monday during an overview of the fiscal year that ended June 30. **Rooney** noted that the council had approved in December the use of \$334,000 from the surplus or fund balance to use as a deposit to secure the town's option to purchase 100 acres of land off White Rock Road. The land is the designated site of a planned public-private solar power project. "Otherwise, staff did a great job of staying within budget items, and revenues came in a little more positive [than projected]," **Rooney** said.

The transfer station will require an infusion of \$211,481 from the municipal general fund to balance its books for fiscal year 2019. Finance Director Dyann Baker said the facility's overage could be due to the facility running as an enterprise fund for the first time. The move to run it as an enterprise fund means costs that might have been paid through other parts of the municipal budget are now accounted for as part of the station's expenditures. Enterprise funds are government services that charge a fee for the service and are sometimes self-sustaining. **Rooney** has proposed new measures to reduce costs at the transfer station.

Councilor William Aiello said the transfer station was not expected to become fully self-sustaining in its first year as an enterprise fund. Council President Christopher Duhamel said the facility seemed to face the same financial challenges that have existed for years. **Rooney** said officials, before his arrival, appeared to have underestimated the costs associated with running the transfer station.

The insurance fund required expenditures of \$93,699 to cover the town's responsibility for claims made against the town such as slip-and-fall cases before the town meets its deductible and its insurer takes over payment. "What was not budgeted in 2018-19 was anything to support claims. We have a high-deductible plan to keep our premiums low, and that requires more out of pocket for small claims and we saw more than usual in this particular fiscal year," Baker said, noting that **Rooney** sought a special fund to help cover the claims costs in his budget proposal for 2019-20 but the fund did not survive the budget deliberation process.

Expenditures on legal fees of \$491,684 were more than twice the \$234,680 that was budgeted. Baker attributed the overage to legal work on contracts, including for labor unions and the lease agreement for the planned solar project on White Rock Road. Tax revenue, Baker said, was "pretty much in line with the budget," and she noted revenue from invested funds exceeded projections by \$200,000. "Investment revenue was very strong this year, and we can thank Barbara Perino for the work she did on that," Baker said, referring to her predecessor. Licensing

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

and permit revenue was up as a result of increased permits for solar projects and mooring permits, Baker said. Competing with the gains were lower than anticipated hotel and meals tax revenue and lower than expected revenue connected to the state motor vehicle tax phase-out. Duhamel praised the work of both **Rooney** and Baker. "I'd like to acknowledge how well Dyann Baker and the manager, **Mark Rooney**, and his department heads, have followed this budget in the last months of the fiscal year to bring us within this target," Duhamel said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Westerly Sun (RI)
July 20, 2019

Former Town Planner Threatens to Sue for Severance Package

Author: Dale P. Faulkner

Rui Almeida, who was fired from his job as town planner in May, is seeking a severance package from the town. The Town Council discussed Almeida's request with Town Attorney William J. Conley Jr. during a closed-door, executive session that followed a regular meeting on July 8. No decisions were made or votes taken during the executive session, according to Town Council President Christopher Duhamel.

Almeida started in May 2018 and worked for the town for just under one year. He was initially placed on paid administrative leave by Town Manager **J. Mark Rooney**, who announced a few days later that Almeida would not return and that he had not been offered a severance package. **Rooney** has declined to discuss details surrounding Almeida's termination. The July 8 executive session was listed as a "potential litigation" item on the council's agenda. In response to a request for documents made by The Sun under the state Access to Public Records Act, Town Clerk Donna Giordano provided a letter from Lori Caron Silveira, Almeida's lawyer.

Silveira referred to a draft version of a lawsuit "asserting constitutional and other claims" on behalf of Almeida and said that it would be filed in court "if we are unable to reach agreement on severance terms." The letter also stated that Silveira had previously reduced Almeida's proposal for severance benefits "significantly." The lawsuit had not been filed as of Friday. Silveira said last week that she would check with Almeida when asked to share a copy of the proposed lawsuit. She did not return a message seeking comment for this article on Friday.

Almeida filled a vacancy created after former town Planner Jason Parker was placed on administrative leave by former Town Manager Derrick M. Kennedy in March 2018 and never returned to his job. Parker is now a member of the town Planning Board. Almeida holds architectural degrees from Roger Williams University and the School of Architecture of Lisbon and has a master's degree in the history of art — architecture and urbanism from the New University of Lisbon. He was assistant director for architecture and redevelopment in Central Falls, and deputy director of planning / city planner and administrative officer for Woonsocket from September 2016 until he took the job in Westerly.

Rooney appointed Nancy Letendre as town planner in June. Certified as a land planner by the American Institute of Certified Planners since 2007, she served as assistant town attorney for planning and zoning from 2017 until February and had worked in an of-counsel capacity at McGunagle Hentz, a Cranston-based law firm, since 2016. She was also principle planner for Mason & Associates Inc. of North Scituate, and worked for 18 years as a land use attorney at Ursillo, Teitz & Ritch, a Providence- based law firm.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Westerly Sun (RI)
April 15, 2019

Westerly Finds Savings in Settlement with Union on Payroll Irregularities

Author: Dale P. Faulkner

Faced with an initial bill of about \$179,000 to settle payroll irregularities alleged by a labor union that represents both town and school department employees, town officials succeeded in negotiating the figure down to about \$60,000. Town Manager **J. Mark Rooney** confirmed the settlement last week, giving credit to Patricia Main, who he said first suggested that calculations performed by an auditing firm hired by Laborers International Union of North America were skewed. When **Rooney** started his job in May, he learned the town was about to pay the full \$179,000 but Main told him the figure was too high. "I trusted her and she proved worthy of the trust," **Rooney** said of Main, who first went to work in the school department in 2004 and now serves as senior payroll and human resources specialist in the municipal human resources department.

Audits of payroll records are conducted routinely on behalf of the union, which represents the town's public works employees as well as school district bus drivers, secretaries and maintenance workers, to monitor the town and school district's contributions to employee pensions. Salter & Company LLC., a Maryland-based accounting firm, reported school employees were shortchanged \$150,000 and that public works employee pensions were underpaid by about \$29,000. Both figures included interest. After speaking with Main, **Rooney** asked former interim Finance Director Barbara Perino and Nancy Markey, the municipal human resources director, to analyze the auditor's findings and the town's payroll records. **Rooney** said that former employees had recommended paying the full \$179,000. "Basically, I believed Patty Main more... Patty Main was the hero in this," **Rooney** said. According to **Rooney**, part of the town and school district's exposure in the case was due to antiquated record keeping and payroll processes used by the school department. He told the Town Council recently that a proposal to consolidate aspects of the town and school human resources functions would help modernize those functions.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Westerly Sun (RI)

April 5, 2019

Rooney Says One Dispatch Center Could Save Money

Author: Dale P. Faulkner

Dispatch services currently handled by personnel at both the Westerly Ambulance Corps and the Westerly Police headquarters would be centralized at the police station under a proposal being floated by Town Manager **J. Mark Rooney**. **Rooney** discussed the idea with the Town Council Thursday during its second workshop on his proposed \$98.28 million combined general government and education budget for 2019-20. The council authorized **Rooney** and Chief of Police Shawn Lacey to begin discussions on the proposal with the ambulance corps. Under the current setup, fire and other non-police calls are dispatched by personnel at the ambulance corps, while dispatchers at the police department handle police calls. The ambulance corps is seeking \$75,000 as its annual subsidy from the town, double the \$37,500 it received in the current budget. More than half of the request, \$50,000, would be used to help cover the cost of upgrading dispatch center radio consoles at the ambulance corps' Chestnut Street headquarters. **Rooney** estimated the total cost of the new dispatch center at \$250,000.

Rooney said that his proposal "would help the residents by avoiding having to pay the duplicative cost of two dispatch centers." The police dispatch center was upgraded to a state-of-the-art level in 2017 and has the capacity to handle ambulance and fire calls, Lacey said. "It's not uncommon for police to take the 911 over," Lacey said. If the proposal takes effect, the police department would likely increase its dispatch center staffing from the current level of one full-time and one part-time employee per shift to two full-time dispatchers per shift, Lacey said. The added cost would easily be covered by revenues from fire departments that pay for dispatch services, Lacey said. The revenues would exceed the cost of running a centralized center, according to Lacey. "Actually, it would be a moneymaker," Lacey said. Dispatchers who currently work at the ambulance corps would be considered for positions at the police dispatch center, **Rooney** said.

Cost cut at animal shelter. The council also backed **Rooney's** plan to move the animal shelter back into the public safety section of the general government budget. At former Town Manager Derrik M. Kennedy's behest, the shelter was designated as an enterprise fund - a governmental function that provide services for a fee and is generally self-supporting. **Rooney** said the shelter has never been self sustaining and is not likely to be. Under **Rooney's** plan, one animal shelter position would be eliminated, reducing the shelter's budget to about \$247,000 per year. The council asked **Rooney** to review his proposal with Town Attorney William Conley. The council is scheduled to continue its review of the proposed budget during a meeting scheduled for Saturday morning at 9 in the Municipal Courtroom at Town Hall.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Westerly Sun (RI)

April 4, 2019

Councilors' Wish List at Odds with Town Manager's Budget Proposal

Author: Dale P. Faulkner

The Town Council started its review of Town Manager **Mark Rooney's** proposed \$98.28 million combined general government and education budget for 2019-20 on Wednesday with a discussion of individual councilors' wish lists and the appropriate assumed tax collection rate. Several councilors questioned **Rooney's** decision to reduce spending for annual road work from \$750,000 in the current budget to just \$25,000, and to completely eliminate spending for sidewalks, after allocating \$125,000 this year. **Rooney** said he made the reductions in an effort to devise a balanced budget. He noted that road work would continue as a result of the bond approved by voters in November. That initiative calls for borrowing up to \$15 million from the state Infrastructure Bank over five years for road and infrastructure work.

Councilor Caswell Cooke Jr. called for restoration of the road and sidewalk accounts to current levels. "I understand the logic but the reason we need the bond is because we never put enough in. It's self defeating," Cooke said, noting that previous councils established a goal of spending \$1.3 million per year to maintain the town's roads. Councilor William Aiello proposed increasing the sidewalk expenditure to \$300,000. Councilor Suzanne Giorno called for \$125,000 for sidewalks and "close to \$750,000 for roads." Giorno and Cooke also asked that \$30,000 for the summer beach concert series be restored. **Rooney** had eliminated that spending from the budget.

As part of its line-by-line analysis of the budget, the council restored a \$5,000 request submitted by Flock Theater, the New London-based theater group that plans to stage Shakespeare and other plays in Wilcox Park after the Colonial Theatre's traditional Shakespeare in the Park presentation. The council decided against funding Colonial Theatre's request for \$10,000 for the summer series, with some councilors saying the organization should seek funding from the school district. The Colonial did not conduct its summer series last summer. Instead, the organization focused on programming it developed for students. The Granite Theatre's request for funding was also denied by both **Rooney** and the council.

Rooney's budget would require a tax levy increase of 3.85 percent, close to the 4 percent cap established by state law, and is based on an assumed tax collection rate of 98 percent. Councilors Christopher Duhamel and Brian McCuin called for basing the budget on a lower assumed collection rate. Duhamel said the lower rate would provide flexibility. McCuin said the lower rate provides a means to build up the town's undesignated fund balance when actual collections exceed the assumed rate. Unlike the Board of Finance's recommended budget, **Rooney's** spending plan would not use the undesignated fund balance or surplus to help balance the budget or reduce its effect on taxpayers.

Rooney advised the council not to follow the finance board's recommendation. "The rating agencies don't like it," he said. He was referring to bond rating agencies such as Moody's

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Investors Service. Moody's made a slight downward adjustment to the town's rating in 2016, citing the use of the fund balance to balance the budget as a factor in its decision-making. Bond ratings affect interest rates charged to municipalities when they borrow for major projects such as road work or new buildings. Duhamel, after the meeting, acknowledged "a big gap between the councilors' wish lists" and **Rooney's** budget proposal. "But that's the process and this is the beginning. There will be significant changes as we move forward," said Duhamel, the council's president.

The Board of Finance recommended a \$96.3 million combined municipal government and education budget with \$38.65 million in town spending and \$57.7 million for the school district. The board reduced the budget request from school Superintendent Mark Garceau and the School Committee by \$1 million and **Rooney's** request by \$2.36 million. **Rooney** is proposing an additional \$200,000 cut to the proposed education budget.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Westerly Sun (RI)
November 3, 2018

Rooney Sets Procedure for Choosing New Chief

Author: Dale P. Faulkner

With advertisements announcing the vacancy already running, Town Manager **J. Mark Rooney** hopes to name a new police chief by Dec. 20. Applications for the position will be accepted through the end of the business day on Nov. 26. **Rooney** said Thursday he plans to use two panels to conduct interviews: one that will consist of a mixture of citizens and municipal employees and one consisting of former and current police chiefs from the town and the region. A current Westerly Police Department patrol officer or detective will serve on one of the committees. The search became necessary Monday when the Town Council voted 5-2 to approve a separation agreement with former Police Chief Richard Silva, whose last day as chief was Wednesday. **Rooney** has refused to discuss why Silva left, citing personnel privacy concerns, and Silva did not respond to messages seeking comment on his status.

Silva's two-year tenure was marred by near-constant attacks by the International Brotherhood of Police Officers Local 503, the union that represents the Westerly Police Department's rank and file officers. The union was critical of former Town Manager Derrik M. Kennedy's decision to hire Silva rather than Capt. Shawn Lacey, at the time a 28-year veteran of the department who worked his way up the ranks from patrolman when he started in 1988 to second in command. Silva canceled a speaking engagement before the Westerly Lions Club after he was announced as Kennedy's choice for the job, but before his actual start date, when rumors of a planned police picket outside the meeting place circulated.

Upon starting he had to deal with several grievances filed by the union as well as a vote of no confidence approved by a majority of union members and later a call for his termination by the union. Town Councilor Mario Celico has continued to question the circumstances surrounding Silva's departure, saying **Rooney** misled the council during a private, closed-door executive session. "He said something in our session and then it proved to be inaccurate," Celico said Thursday.

Celico acknowledged meeting with Silva in the days before to his departure but said he followed Town Attorney William J Conley Jr.'s advice not to discuss what was then a proposed severance package. As part of the separation agreement, Silva agreed he would not file a lawsuit against the town, and the town agreed to pay him \$59,044 over the course of the next six months in increments equal to his normal biweekly pay. "I met with the chief because an accusation was made against him that if true would have shown a lack of professionalism on his part. The chief provided me with a document that showed the accusation was false," Celico said. Celico said he deliberately met with Silva at the Westerly Police Department. "Knowing full well that other people would see me," he said. Lacey, who is currently running the department, said Thursday, "I plan to pursue the position and am looking forward to and welcome the opportunity and hope that I'm selected" as chief. **Rooney** said the two interview panels would likely interview five to

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J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

seven candidates and recommend two or three finalists. The town's human resources director and a former police chief would do an initial screening of the resumes to determine which candidates are selected to be interviewed by the two panels. **Rooney** said he would interview the finalists and likely appoint one of them.

Lawsuit on age bias

In January, Lacey filed a lawsuit claiming that a law requiring all Westerly police officers to retire after 30 years is an attempt to circumvent age discrimination laws and is a violation of the state Civil Rights Act, the state Employment Practices Act and the federal Discrimination in Employment Act, which permits state and local governments to institute a mandatory retirement age of 55 for police officers. The law in question is a public law that applies to a specific town, as opposed to a general laws that applies to the entire state. **Rooney**, who started his position in April, directed Conley to let Lacey serve out the remainder of the current calendar year. The question of whether Lacey can continue working beyond Dec. 31 remains open. **Rooney** said he expects the court case to be resolved within 30 days, before he appoints a new chief.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Westerly Sun (RI)
August 26, 2018

Town Manager Says Missing Laptop Reappeared After Threat of Prosecution

Author: Dale P. Faulkner

A missing town-owned laptop that had been issued to the town's former human resources director was turned in following the threat of legal action, according to Town Manager **J. Mark Rooney**. Joshua Putman, who left his position in June, turned the laptop in after initially saying he did not know where it was and at other times saying a different town employee had it, **Rooney** said. Ultimately, Putman, who now works in Mansfield, Conn., gave the computer to Mark Tate, the town's information technology director, on Aug. 10, a few days after **Rooney** sent a Westerly police officer to Mansfield Town Hall. The device was a Dell Latitude that the town purchased in 2016.

Putman now serves as assistant town manager in that Connecticut town. Putman was hired by former Westerly Town Manager Derrik M. Kennedy, who left his position in Westerly to become town manager in Mansfield. Kennedy started his new job in May. "The former H.R. director forgot to turn in his laptop and said it didn't happen. I didn't believe him and he produced the laptop," **Rooney** said, adding that he "made it very clear that I would prosecute." Putman did not return messages left Thursday morning and Friday on his voicemail at Mansfield Town Hall.

Rooney also said Westerly town staff have found human resources computer files missing. Some of the missing files pertained to a background check performed on **Rooney** before he was hired to become interim town manager. Some other personnel and employee pension files are also missing, **Rooney** said. "He deleted the files in a very deliberate manner ... he did a work-around on defeating the server backup system so it was willful and deliberate and has caused a great deal of work for his assistant to recreate and in some cases start from scratch," **Rooney** said.

The missing files delayed the Town Council's ability to hire **Rooney** on a permanent basis and caused other problems, **Rooney** said. According to **Rooney**, Putman left instructions for other human resources staff telling them where to find various computer files, but, according to **Rooney**, the files did not exist. "It was very unexpected and unprofessional in the way he departed the organization, and we did not know until we tried to retrieve different information and it did not exist," **Rooney** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Westerly Sun (RI)
August 26, 2018

Rooney's Taking a Liking to Westerly

Author: Dale P. Faulkner

In his three months as interim town manager, **J. Mark Rooney** has orchestrated the response to a high-profile quarry blasting accident, helped devise a response to a summertime trash problem at the beach, and resolved one of the pending grievances that pitted the town's police union against town administrators. **Rooney**, during an interview Thursday, said getting involved with those issues and others ultimately played a role in his decision to see if the interim tag could be removed. The Town Council, pleased with **Rooney's** early performance, did just that, and he was sworn in as permanent town manager Monday. "After being the interim town manager for three months, I grew fond of the staff, and I saw the challenges and opportunities and issues, and they were very professionally rewarding, and it was a great opportunity," **Rooney** said. **Rooney** chose Westerly over other job possibilities. "I had a couple of opportunities in Florida, but when you have a job offer and you like where it is, why go to the next place? Florida might have nicer sand and warmer water, but it's the same ocean," **Rooney** said in the laid-back, straight-forward, folksy style that has emerged as a trademark characteristic. **Rooney** brings more than 20 years of experience as a municipal administrator in towns and villages in Illinois to Westerly. To his surprise, **Rooney** said, he has also become fond of his new hometown in New England, a region he said is not always embraced warmly in the broader town manager community. "I didn't think I would like New England. It doesn't have a good reputation in the business nationwide," **Rooney** said.

The complaints, **Rooney** said, center around a more difficult municipal budget process when compared to other regions in the country, concern that municipal business can move at a crawl if citizens excessively avail themselves of the right to speak during meetings, and an inclination toward "being parsimonious in pay." According to **Rooney**, when taken as a whole, New England towns pay their town managers and administrators less than any other part of the country. When the Town Council started its search to fill the vacancy created by the departure of former Town Manager Derrick M. Kennedy, the position was advertised as having a salary of \$120,000 to \$135,000. Eventually, members of the council agreed to consider paying more, and gave **Rooney** a base salary of \$160,000 per year with the possibility of financial bonuses for each year of the three-year agreement that **Rooney** signed Monday. To secure their investment, councilors insisted that **Rooney** be required to pay the town \$15,000 if he resigns within two years. The \$15,000 equates to the amount the council paid to a recruitment firm that assisted with the search that landed him. Town Councilor Mario Celico said **Rooney's** salary is a significant bump from what the town has paid town managers in the past. Kennedy was making about \$125,000 per year when he left. "It became clear that we really needed to step it up significantly," Celico said. It was Celico who asked **Rooney** to consider accepting a stable rate of base pay for three years. "I was concerned about the jump to \$160,000 and asked if he would consider an agreement with no guaranteed raises, and he agreed," Celico said. **Rooney** scored among the top three candidates in a matrix Celico used to rate the candidates, he said. The high

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**J. Mark Rooney**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

score combined with his performance as the interim manager led Celico to believe **Rooney** was a solid choice, Celico said. With less than three months remaining before a new Town Council is elected, **Rooney** and current Council President Edward Morrone cited a few goals and priorities for the new manager. Morrone said he joined his fellow councilors in selecting **Rooney** as town manager "because I believe he showed his ability during the interim period." His previous work and life experience were important factors too, Morrone said. "And I like his military background. I think it provides a certain approach and ability when difficult circumstances arise," Morrone said of the retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel. As he starts his tenure as the permanent town manager, **Rooney** said he is working on issues related to the proposed harbor management plan, including ensuring there is adequate access to mooring fields and to the shoreline. Some of the rights of way or paths to the shoreline have been partially absorbed over the years by neighboring property owners. In the case of Watch Hill, **Rooney** said he plans to speak with property owners with the goal of "making a manageable path to get to the beach."

He plans to use a diplomatic approach in recognition of the property owners' willingness to let the public use East Beach, even though the beach is privately held, he said. **Rooney** is also working with Town Engineer Sheila Mc-Gauvran to develop a clear plan for improving town roads. A new color-coded map in **Rooney's** office shows all of the roads. Different colors are used to rank the roads by condition. Along with the harbor management plan, **Rooney** said one of his immediate tasks is to help usher through an ongoing revision of the municipal Comprehensive Plan, which sets out development and preservation goals and priorities. Regarding the town's finances, **Rooney** said he'll work to "improve or preserve" the town's bond rating, an indication of the town's financial condition and a factor in determining interest rates when the town seeks bond funds for largescale building and road projects. **Rooney** is also working with Finance Director Dyann Baker to change how the town shows its cash reserves in budget documents to improve transparency for taxpayers and for the bond rating. "That can help how the rating agencies review the town's financial status," **Rooney** said. The bond rating, **Rooney** said, is of critical importance as the town prepares to ask voters to approve a \$12.6 million road bond in November and as school officials develop a proposed elementary school bond project that could go to voters in 2019.

Rooney is also looking to review town ordinances and regulations with the hope of making it easier to do business and start new ones in the downtown area. Morrone pointed to getting both the comprehensive and harbor management plans done as high priorities. Negotiations with municipal labor unions and filing vacant positions are also at the top of the list, Morrone said. The council focused on carving out an employment agreement that provides stability for **Rooney**, especially since he signed on so close to the election, Morrone said. "We don't want the manager to feel that a council change puts him in any jeopardy," Morrone said. When **Rooney** first moved to the town, he was living in a small efficiency apartment above a High Street restaurant. He has since moved to a full-sized apartment on Canal Street. His wife and two high school-aged children have decided to stay in Illinois until his son graduates at the end of the coming school year. **Rooney's** other son is in college.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Westerly Sun (RI)
August 25, 2018

Rooney OKs Pact to Settle Grievance

Author: Dale P. Faulkner

A grievance filed by the International Brotherhood of Police Officers Local 503, the labor union that represents the rank-and file officers of the Westerly Police Department, has been resolved in the union's favor. A memorandum signed Aug. 3 by union President Patrolman Anthony Alicchio and Town Manager **J. Mark Rooney** outlines the agreement, which was struck while the grievance was pending before the American Arbitration Association and an arbitrator was about to hear the case. Arbitration is the final phase of the grievance process, which begins with the chief of police and then moves to the town manager and finally arbitration.

The grievance, which was filed in July of 2017, centers around the union's argument that its contract calls for the town to pay 82.5 percent of the cost of town provided health insurance and up to \$6,000 per year to retired police officers who wish to purchase additional health insurance until age 65. The memorandum of agreement concedes the union's stance on the contract language. As part of the agreement, the union agreed to withdraw the grievance.

Former Town Manager Derrick M. Kennedy had disputed the union's interpretation of the contract, which caused it to move to the arbitration phase. Kennedy, who negotiated the contract with the union, claimed the contract limited the town's contribution to a maximum of \$6,000 per year to be used toward the cost of the town-provided insurance. Robert Lombardo, a frequent critic of Kennedy's and town government in general, repeatedly said during Town Council meetings that the contract, which was approved in late 2016 and covers the period from July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2019, gave retired officers up to \$6,000 in reimbursement for extra insurance, but Kennedy stated repeatedly that Lombardo was misinterpreting the contract. The union later made the same claim, in the grievance, that Lombardo had made. Westerly Police Sgt. Paul Gingerella said the outcome in the union's favor "again goes to show that these aren't minor grievances we have filed and also shows the prior manager and current chief were wrong again." Westerly Police Chief Richard Silva said he allowed the grievance to move immediately to Kennedy. "I really had no involvement with the grievance. It was an issue between the former town manager and the union involving interpretation of what was then the new collective bargaining agreement as it pertained to health care benefits in retirement," Silva said.

Rooney said he interpreted the contract more broadly than Kennedy and believes the union's interpretation of the contract will not create a significant expense for the town. "The amount of ill will and anger that it generated for that [small of a] potential savings was so slight that it made no sense to me to have a fight on something I could resolve and not have another issue that would damage employee morale and trust," **Rooney** said during an interview Thursday.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Westerly Sun (RI)
July 8, 2018

'Staunch Support' for Silva

Author: Dale P. Faulkner

The Rhode Island Police Chiefs' Association has entered the fray in the spat between members of the Westerly Police Department and town management. In a June 28 letter to interim Town Manager **J. Mark Rooney**, the association announced its "staunch support" for Police Chief Richard Silva. In May, the International Brotherhood of Police Officers Local 503, the labor union that represents the Westerly department 's rank-and-file officers, wrote to **Rooney** to inform him that its members had approved a vote of no confidence in Silva, who has served as chief since November 2016. The union wrote to **Rooney** again on June 13 and asked for the removal of Silva from his position.

Col. James J. Mendonca, president of the police chiefs' association, in his letter to **Rooney**, said Silva has "demonstrated an unparalleled level of professionalism" and has displayed selfless and devoted service to the organization during his four years on the association's executive board. Mendonca is police chief in Central Falls. Silva currently serves as vice president of the association. Silva has faced intense scrutiny from members of the local union since he was selected by former Town Manager Derrik M. Kennedy over Capt. Shawn Lacey, the other finalist for the position.

Lacey has worked for the department for about 30 years, starting as a patrol officer and working his way up through the ranks. The union announced its displeasure with the selection of Silva before he even started and members of the local police honor guard refused to participate in his swearing-in ceremony. The letter from the police chiefs' association was intended "as a character rebuttal with regard to the unfortunate events that have taken place within the Westerly Police Department - namely the 'no confidence vote' in opposition to Chief Silva - which is clearly void of substance and veracity," Mendonca wrote.

Town Council President Edward Morrone on Friday said the council will have little if any involvement with the ongoing clash involving the union's dissatisfaction with Silva. "Obviously it's the manager 's issue. He makes the appointment," Morrone said. Given **Rooney's** unfamiliarity with many of the issues, Morrone said it seems unlikely that he would act on the union's request. **Rooney** started his interim post on May 7. "I don't think the manager's in a position to, in any way, make this type of decision, at least not in the short term," Morrone said.

According to Morrone, **Rooney** is monitoring the situation and has communicated with the union and with Silva about the situation. Morrone said he has no reason to believe that members of the department are compromised in their ability to perform their duties. "I haven't been advised by my constituents of any such problem. I think the citizens of Westerly can rest assured they're protected and this does not seem to be affecting the delivery of the department 's vital service," Morrone said. Mendonca asked **Rooney** to consider the entirety of Silva's work in law

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

enforcement. He came to Westerly after completing a 28-year career in West Warwick, including eight as chief. "Chief Silva is a valuable and respected member of the law enforcement community that the RIPCA relies on heavily. It is with hopes that you see his value and leadership, and balance the hollowed accusations against him with his career accomplishments," Mendonca wrote.

The Fraternal Order of Police Association Lodge 10, a Westerly-based lay group that supports the town's police officers, has also inserted itself into the debate. The association wrote to **Rooney** and the Town Council on June 12 and called for Silva's dismissal. **Rooney**, Silva, Mendonca and Patrolman Anthony Alicchio, president of the Local 503, did not respond to messages seeking comment for this article.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[**CB&A Note:** The following article is one of several that follow related to **Mr. Rooney's** departure from the city of Carpentersville and a subsequent lawsuit. To summarize the situation, towards the end of **Mr. Rooney's** tenure in Carpentersville, the elected body made it clear it was time to part company and sent him home while they negotiated an exit agreement. Several weeks later, the Board withdrew its offer, stating he had voluntarily resigned when he ceased coming to work and denied him the severance money it was obligated to pay in the contract. **Mr. Rooney** subsequently pursued the matter in court. Ultimately, he was made whole financially and the city paid his legal fees. The net impact on Carpentersville is it paid about \$120,000 more than if it had simply honored the terms of the contract.]

The Daily Herald (IL)

June 22, 2018

Former Village Manager Sues Carpentersville, Seeking Severance

Author: Lauren Rohr

Carpentersville is being sued by former Village Manager **Mark Rooney**, who claims the village fired him five months ago and refused to pay him severance -- a violation of his contract. The village board voted in January to accept what it considered **Rooney's** "voluntary resignation," saying he had stopped reporting for work. The move came after weeks of negotiations surrounding **Rooney's** employment. The lawsuit filed Wednesday in Kane County argues **Rooney** was placed on involuntary leave, then terminated from the position he held for seven years. He never received the \$190,000 owed to him in severance and benefits, the suit says. It seeks at least \$217,000 in compensatory damages for breach of contract and violation of the Illinois Wage Payment and Collection Act. As of Thursday, village officials said they had not been served with the papers.

The complaint claims Village President John Skillman, the former fire chief, was "determined to terminate" **Rooney** since being sworn into office in May 2017. It also lists several instances in which Skillman apparently told **Rooney** he intended to fire him. As fire chief, Skillman underwent a disciplinary interrogation in 2016, at which point **Rooney** asked him to retire in lieu of being terminated, the suit says. Skillman was elected village president a year later, and three other newcomers were either elected or appointed to trustee seats by the time the village board started evaluating the manager position. Skillman said Thursday he never stated he would fire **Rooney**. He said the complaint is full of "inflammatory comments" personally attacking him. "This is about a contract. This is not about myself or any of the village board members," Skillman said. "It has nothing to do with what he's looking for (or) his end result. I'm really surprised to see him making these statements." Village Attorney Brad Stewart declined to comment, saying it would be "premature and negligent" to provide a statement before thoroughly reviewing the document.

According to his employment agreement, **Rooney** was entitled to nine months' severance pay at his annual salary of \$176,710, plus benefits and some unused sick time, if he were fired after five years. The contract also says **Rooney** can be deemed to be terminated -- granting him the

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

severance compensation -- if he resigns at the village board's suggestion. When **Rooney** left the village, Carpentersville's then-attorney, Hart Passman, said **Rooney** was not entitled to that money because his resignation was voluntary. "He packed up his office and left," Skillman said. "He was never fired or terminated until he abandoned his post and didn't follow his own policy," which states that multiple days of unreported absence is deemed a voluntary resignation.

Rooney's employment was the topic of various special meetings from Dec. 12, 2017, to Jan. 24, 2018. During that time, **Rooney** turned down multiple separation agreements proposed by the village board, none of which offered the full severance allotted to him through his contract, according to the suit. After closed-session discussions Jan. 6, attorneys for both parties agreed **Rooney** would be placed on involuntary leave and would be paid through accrued benefit time while negotiations continued, the suit says. He received compensation for a two-week pay period ending Jan. 13. In a Jan. 8 email obtained by the Daily Herald, Skillman told department leaders **Rooney** moved his belongings out of his office Jan. 5 and would not return to work. He said **Rooney** had requested a separation agreement and advised the employees not to contact him.

The village board voted in open session Jan. 16 to approve a separation deal, which Skillman said was being finalized by attorneys. When the parties were still unable to reach an agreement, trustees rescinded the offer a week later and accepted **Rooney's** voluntary resignation, effective Jan. 5. The lawsuit calls **Rooney's** resignation "a fiction" and says his employment was terminated without cause. **Rooney's** attorney, Patrick Walsh, said **Rooney** declined to comment beyond what is in the complaint. The parties are due in Kane County court Sept. 5.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Westerly Sun (RI)
May 8, 2018

**First Day on the Job
Town Welcomes Interim Manager**

Author: Dale P. Faulkner

On the night of his first Town Council meeting Monday, **J. Mark Rooney** was provided with a glimpse into a perennial topic of discussion - parking in Watch Hill. **Rooney** took his oath of office earlier in the day and then again during a ceremony at the start of the council's meeting. A 15-minute-long reception followed the ceremony, giving **Rooney** a chance to meet residents who were either on hand for other agenda items or who came to meet him.

The parking discussion had its origins in a proposal to lift a parking ban on Bluff Avenue to add 13 to 27 new parking spaces for the public. The Bluff Avenue proposal grew out of efforts last year to establish drop-off zones to improve shoreline access in Watch Hill and Misquamicut. On Monday, the Town Council agreed, by unanimous consensus, to drop the Bluff Avenue proposal after hearing the Watch Hill Fire District Council's proposed alternative - to establish seven parking spots in the district's Larkin Road parking lot for Westerly residents.

The spots would be free for residents parking for up to three hours. The district also plans to create a drop-off loop in the lot where an estimated three vehicles could pull in at a time, drop off their passengers, and then drive out of the lot without being charged. The lot will also be available for free after 5 p.m. in the hope of making parking available for residents. Rather than simply stand in opposition to the Bluff Avenue parking proposal, Randy Abood, Watch Hill Fire District moderator, said district officials developed the Larkin Road parking lot idea in the spirit of "seeking the common good and solutions."

Abood was joined by other district officials as well as property owners and representatives of businesses and other organizations including Daniel Hostettler, president and managing director of Ocean House Management, which runs the Bluff Avenue resort hotel, and Deborah Lamm, Watch Hill Conservancy chairwoman. Allowing parking on Bluff Avenue would detract from the look and feel of the village and could hurt business at the Ocean House, an important part of the town's tourism economy, Abood said.

Town Councilor Philip Overton praised the citizens of Watch Hill for "working in good faith." "I'm very impressed that in the spirit of community you have come forward with these really good ideas," Overton said. The fire district also plans to install an automated gate system and a security camera at the lot. Abood said he is in discussions with the district's legal advisor to determine whether the gate proposal will require approval by the district's voters. Regardless, he said, the drop-off loop and seven spaces for Westerly residents can be established immediately.

Rooney also witnessed another important aspect of the town - a group of citizens who pay attention to their local government. Hatsy Moore, a former Town Council member and a resident

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J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

of Watch Hill, took to the podium in Council Chambers to raise questions about the Larkin Road parking plan, saying it did not align with previous commitments made to Misquamicut Club members and residents who invested in the Lanphear Livery parking lot. "Welcome **Mr. Rooney**, I am your and the council's worst nightmare, but I have a sense of humor, and I've been threatened with being handcuffed," she said, alluding to a previous meeting during which she was asked to hold off from commenting at the podium because she was trying to speak at an inappropriate time.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
J. Mark Rooney
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Westerly Sun (RI)
April 26, 2018

J. Mark Rooney of Illinois is Council’s Choice for Interim Town Manager

Author: Dale P. Faulkner

The Town Council is prepared to offer the position of interim town manager to **J. Mark Rooney** of Highwood, Ill., pending completion of a background check. The council voted 6-0 Thursday in favor of offering the position to **Rooney**, contingent upon successful clearance of a background check that started Wednesday when the council named him one of two finalists for the job. Councilor Mario Celico did not attend the meeting. The decision followed a nearly 90-minute-long executive session of the council. A retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel, **Rooney** has more than 20 years experience working in municipal government in four municipalities and villages in Illinois.

Councilor Philip Overton said **Rooney’s** resume describes a career of “powerful leadership” and a “history of success as a town manager.” “He’s a great candidate,” Overton said. According to his resume, **Rooney** received a Bronze Star for valor and a Combat Action Badge. He was wounded while in Iraq, where he served during Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom. He served as village manager in Carpentersville, Ill., from 2010 until January, and as chief of staff in North Chicago in 2009-10. He was village manager of Wheeling, Ill., in 2006-09, where he previously served as assistant village manager for three years. His resume also includes a stint as a staff assistant to the late U.S. Sen. Paul Simon, D-Illinois.

Hatsy Moore, a resident and close observer of local governmental affairs, asked the council why it was considering candidates who live so far from Westerly. The other finalist lives in Ohio. Moore also read from a petition that circulated in Carpentersville toward the end of **Rooney’s** tenure there. The petition sought his removal as village manager. According to news accounts, **Rooney** ultimately resigned from the position. Moore also criticized the council for conducting interviews in executive session and for revealing only the names of three of the six candidates who were interviewed; 14 candidates submitted resumes. “These three candidates who were interviewed, we have no idea who they were. There was no input from the public, there was no information to the public but you people committed to transparency and open government,” Moore said.

Councilor Jean Gagnier said he was not surprised that someone would look to leave Illinois, which is beset with serious economic problems. “Let me see, why would someone want to move here? Why would someone want to live near the ocean in a community that has a low tax rate and has a good balance sheet and is paying its pension liability as opposed to Illinois or Ohio?” Gagnier asked. Gagnier also said that the candidates for the job were allowed, under the state Open Meetings Act, to choose to have their interviews conducted in private. When council members decided on two finalists, they asked the two candidates if they could release their names and the candidates consented, Gagnier said. “We wanted their names out. We wanted them to be vetted,” Gagnier said. Council President Edward Morrone, after the meeting, said

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

that **Rooney** discussed the end of his tenure in Carpentersville. “I’m comfortable that he disclosed everything we should know about the situation,” Morrone said. The council also completed the requirements and criteria it will seek from candidates for the permanent town manager position. The vacancy will be posted on the International City/County Management Association website starting Monday. Resumes will be solicited for 30 days. Today is current Town Manager Derrick M. Kennedy’s last day on the job after about 2.5 years in the position. He is leaving to become town manager in Mansfield, Conn.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Chicago Tribune (IL)
January 25, 2018

Ousted Carpentersville Manager Resigns, Board Withdraws Separation Deal: Officials

Author: Erin Sauder

Carpentersville trustees on Wednesday withdrew their separation agreement offer to **J. Mark Rooney**, saying the village manager voluntarily resigned when he stopped showing up for work earlier this month. Last week, the Village Board unanimously approved offering the deal to **Rooney**, who was hired as village manager in 2010. Village President John Skillman said at the time that attorneys were working out the terms. Trustees also approved naming Marc Huber, Carpentersville's assistant village manager/director of community development, as acting village manager on an interim basis. The board reconvened Saturday to continue discussing the separation agreement. At issue, according to village attorney Hart Passman, was the inclusion of a nondisparagement clause, a provision that means neither party can make negative comments about the other. "Mr. Skillman mentioned there was room for the attorneys to work out the details. We've been unable to do so," Passman said Saturday. "**Mr. Rooney** did not accept the village's effort to compromise on that provision."

During this week's board meeting, Trustee Diane Lawrence motioned withdrawing the village's separation agreement offer, saying **Rooney** voluntarily resigned his employment when he stopped coming to work. "Records indicate the last day he reported to work was Jan. 5. At that time, he cleared out his office of his personal belongings," Lawrence said. "According to the employee handbook, any employee who fails to come to work without notifying the village will be considered voluntarily resigned from the village. I motion to accept his voluntary resignation." Her motion was approved 4-2, with trustees Paul Humpfer and Don Burroway dissenting. "While the village was trying in good faith to find an agreeable solution to the subject of **Mr. Rooney's** employment, we identified that he had cleared out his office and stopped reporting to work," Skillman said in a statement following Wednesday's vote. "There is no circumstance in which an employee can just stop reporting to work and expect to maintain their status as an employee or expect taxpayers to foot the bill for a substantial salary and benefits package."

He added that the board had already been in the midst of addressing whether **Rooney** was the correct person to serve in the role of manager. "His voluntary resignation allows us to focus on moving the village forward in a new and better direction," Skillman said. "We are not interested in drawing unnecessary negative attention to **Mr. Rooney**, who we recognize has added some degree of value to the village in the past. But in the interests of openness, I do say that there have been increasing and continuing concerns regarding **Mr. Rooney's** communications with stakeholders in the village, his administrative decisions and his fiscal management of the taxpayers' resources." **Rooney** could not be reached for comment. Prior to coming to Carpentersville, **Rooney** was the village manager for Wheeling from 2006 to 2009 and Wheeling's assistant village manager from 2003 to 2006.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Herald (IL)

January 16, 2018

Carpentersville Approves Separation Deal with Village Manager

Author: Lauren Rohr

The Carpentersville village board Tuesday night approved a separation agreement with Village Manager **Mark Rooney**, who has served in the position for more than seven years. Village officials did not immediately release the details of the agreement, and Village President John Skillman declined to comment. The unanimous vote came after a nearly hourlong discussion in closed session, in addition to a two-hour closed session during a Jan. 6 special meeting. The measure was not discussed in open session. "I will leave my position with a sense of accomplishment and thanks for all I have learned through the inevitable challenges with a position such as mine," **Rooney** said in a statement to the Daily Herald. "I served with a specific set of values and principles with the overriding goal to make the lives of Carpentersville residents better." Trustees also voted Tuesday to appoint Assistant Village Manager Marc Huber to the interim manager role, effective immediately. **Rooney**, an Army veteran, was hired as village manager in 2010. Last year, he was earning a salary of \$175,710 plus benefits, according to village records.

During his tenure, trustees supported two amendments to **Rooney's** employment contract, the most recent of which included a 5.5 percent raise that brought his annual salary up to \$167,000 in 2015. His salary was adjusted each year based on performance evaluations by the village board, according to the contract. The village board has seen significant turnover since Skillman, a retired Carpentersville fire chief, beat out incumbent Ed Ritter for village president last spring. Voters elected newcomer Diane Lawrence to a trustee seat, and Skillman later appointed John O'Sullivan and Jeff Frost to fill vacancies on the board. "In this era of compressed time, constant commentary and polarized politics, things do not always work as they should," **Rooney** said. "Elections have consequences. I leave my position with my head held high."

In his statement, **Rooney** thanked trustees and Ritter for working cooperatively "with a mutual sense of respect and trust." He lauded the village's improved transparency rating, the creation of a community development department, new economic activity such as the Walmart Supercenter, and various other accomplishments in the last seven years. Skillman said no decisions have been made for finding a permanent replacement for **Rooney**. The village board is expected to discuss its next steps at a later date. **Rooney** previously served as village manager in Wheeling, a position from which he resigned in 2009. At the time, two trustees said his departure came after a majority of the board indicated in closed session that they no longer supported him. Before Wheeling, **Rooney** served as village administrator in Highwood.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Herald (IL)

June 29, 2017

Carpentersville OKs Settlement with its Former Director of HR

Author: Lauren Rohr

Carpentersville's human resources director resigned last month after village officials indicated they were contemplating her termination, according to a separation agreement. Samantha Brunell, who had been on the job since last July, was placed on administrative leave May 10 while the village assessed her performance and the needs of the department, Village Manager **Mark Rooney** said in a memo to the village board. She resigned from the position six days later as part of a settlement that would pay her salary and benefits through June 30.

What led to Brunell's departure — and the village's roughly \$13,738 payout — remains unknown. **Rooney** declined to discuss personnel matters, and Brunell was unavailable for comment. Under the agreement, which was approved last week by the village board, both parties are releasing one another from any "claims, demands, causes of action or liability" related to Brunell's employment or departure. Brunell will also receive a letter of reference from **Rooney**.

In addition to her human resources role, Brunell served as the assistant to the village manager and handled public relations responsibilities. She was employed in the finance department, and her starting salary was \$70,000. Carpentersville officials are now working with an outside consulting firm, GovHR USA, to review the vacant position and consider a possible staffing reorganization, **Rooney** said.

Jeff Monteleone, the village's senior management analyst, is taking over Brunell's human resources duties on an interim basis with help from **Rooney** and Assistant Village Manager Marc Huber. The village will not backfill the analyst position until they determine whether Monteleone is a good fit in human resources, **Rooney** said. Additionally, he said, department heads have been trained to handle some public relations responsibilities, such as writing news releases. The village might also consider hiring part-time consultants to help with special projects. **Rooney** said the review and reorganization period is expected to be complete by the end of August, when planning for the 2018 budget cycle begins.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Courier News (IL)

March 30, 2017

Carpentersville, Illinois Policy Institute, Website Transparency

Carpentersville Lauded for Transparency

Author: Erin Sauder

Carpentersville has been recognized by the Illinois Policy Institute for its "highly transparent" municipal website. "This kind of transparency is critical for trust," Village Manager **Mark Rooney** said in a news release. "We strive to make sure we remain accountable to our taxpayers." The transparency score of 96.2 percent represents nearly a 5 percent improvement since the last audit in December, and more than a 45 percent increase since 2013. Those scores were 91.6 percent and 50.6 percent, respectively.

The Illinois Policy Institute ranks municipalities, townships, school districts, libraries and other entities for transparency based on their websites. "Over the past few years, the IT Department has consistently worked with the village board, village manager, and village staff to evaluate ways to redesign our website in order to make key information more readily available to our citizens and businesses," said IT Director Kevin Goethals.

After receiving the dismal score in 2013, a new page was created dedicated to government transparency (cville.org/Reference-Desk/Website-Transparency.aspx) and allows searching through links to all of the information from a 10-point transparency checklist in just one click. The checklist evaluates how accessible it is to find information on a municipality's taxes and fees, lobbying activity, bids and contracts, salary and benefits, expenditures, financial audits, budgets, public records, meeting information, and contact information for elected and administrative officials.

Carpentersville received perfect scores in seven out of the 10 categories on the checklist in the latest audit. "Our goal is to reach 100 percent transparency," Goethals said. "We want Carpentersville residents to have the ability to easily contact village officials, while making key village information readily available to anyone visiting our website."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **J. Mark Rooney** is listed below.]

<https://www.ilcma.org/programs-and-services/awards-program/special-service-award/>

J Mark Rooney

2016

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Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Herald (IL)

June 23, 2016

Lawsuit Headed Back to Court, with a New Judge

Author: Lauren Rohr

A lawsuit filed by East Dundee officials, who are trying to prevent Wal-Mart from obtaining more than \$4.3 million in special taxing funds for its new Carpentersville store, is headed back to court, this time with a new judge. East Dundee Attorney Tom Gardiner said state law prohibits tax increment financing funds from being used to entice a business to relocate within 10 miles. Because the new store is less than three miles away, East Dundee argues Wal-Mart does not qualify for TIF funds, Gardiner said, noting the village wasn't trying to stop the store from opening. Kane County Judge David Akemann dismissed the lawsuit last year, saying East Dundee's case lacked standing. The village appealed that decision, as well as an order denying the village's motion for a substitution of judge.

After the appellate court decision Monday, the lawsuit will go back to the circuit court, and East Dundee can continue making its case in front of a new Kane County judge. The decision also means Akemann's ruling is void. "This shows we have standing, we have merit in this case," East Dundee Village President Lael Miller said. "The important thing is for us that this validates the fact that we did have a valid case and that the previous judge's ruling is tossed out."

Carpentersville Village Manager **Mark Rooney**, who argued the village did not violate TIF laws, said the appellate court decision to put a new judge on the case doesn't mean Akemann's initial ruling isn't valid. Wal-Mart and Carpentersville officials have argued the company's decision to move was market driven and a result of circumstances beyond its control. "It's a meritless case," **Rooney** said. "It's a complete waste of the taxpayers' money in East Dundee, and now they're also wasting Carpentersville taxpayers' money to defend a meritless case." **Rooney** said the village has not yet decided its next steps.

In a TIF district, the property tax revenues that go to local governments are frozen for up to 23 years at a certain level, which is set on a base assessed property value. Any taxes generated above that level can go back into redevelopment. The new Wal-Mart Supercenter in Carpentersville held its grand opening early Wednesday. East Dundee estimated it would lose an estimated \$60,000 to \$80,000 per month in sales tax revenue after the closing of its Wal-Mart store.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**J. Mark Rooney***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Daily Herald (IL)
April 27, 2016

Carpentersville Firefighter's Union Seeking Arbitrator in Disputed Layoffs

Author: Lauren Rohr

Amid contract negotiations with the village, the Carpentersville firefighter's union is asking an arbitrator to negotiate the layoffs of two full-time firefighters. The layoffs took effect Friday, but the union filed a grievance last month after they were announced, claiming the move violated the current contract, which expires at the end of the month, said Rick Nieves, president of the Carpentersville Professional Firefighters Union. But the union and the village disagree vehemently on the circumstances that resulted in the layoffs, mainly centering on cost savings.

In 2014, the union and village signed a "side letter" agreeing to a swing shift, which moves firefighters from normal to short-staffed shifts. The agreement called for the village not to lay off any firefighters during the duration of the contract, as long as the swing shift structure saved \$75,000 annually. "It's the village's position to end our side letter because the savings that were promised did not materialize," Village Manager **J. Mark Rooney** said. Nieves said the swing shift did reduce overtime costs by \$75,000, but the village used the additional funds ineffectively, "not at the fault of the union." He also argued the layoffs wouldn't result in significant cost savings, as the village would have to pay overtime costs and part-timers to make up for the loss. "We strongly feel that these layoffs are not really necessary and are against the agreement we had with them this last time around," Nieves said. "We don't feel there's a true bona fide economic problem." The two parties were unable to come to a resolution during negotiations, Nieves said, and the union is requesting a third party to settle the dispute.

Rooney said he made an offer during contract negotiations to postpone the layoffs until the end of negotiations, but it was rejected by the union. "If we didn't find the savings, (layoffs) could've still happened," **Rooney** said. "But it wouldn't have to happen until that point in time when we concluded those negotiations." Nieves said the union never received a formal offer to stave off the layoffs. Instead, he said, **Rooney** indicated he would rescind the layoffs if the union paid the full salaries and benefits for the two firefighters. **Rooney** denied such an offer was ever made.

Contradicting statements from both parties don't end there. Nieves claimed the fire department is the only unit in the village experiencing layoffs, while **Rooney** says cuts are being made across several other departments. Nieves says the two firefighter layoffs would save only \$20,000 per year, and **Rooney** argues it'll result in about \$100,000 in net savings. **Rooney** said the union linked negotiations about the layoffs to an unrelated issue: Allowing firefighters to wear shorts while on duty. Nieves said the union always handled the two issues separately. Now, Nieves said, arbitration is the union's last chance to restore the firefighters' jobs. "I'm hoping at some point in the near future (the village will) still rescind the layoffs and we can come together," Nieves said. "Losing two guys is an unfortunate situation, not only for the community but also for the guys and their families."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Courier News (IL)

March 18, 2016

**Carpentersville, Branding, Spring Hill Mall, Meadowdale, District 300
Carpentersville Trying to Change Village's Public Perception**

Author: Erin Sauder

Carpentersville officials know that changing the village's public perception could be an uphill battle. But it's one they're willing to take on. About 30 individuals, including staff and board and commission members, took the first step in the branding campaign process by attending a brainstorming workshop Wednesday, led by Bill Balling, managing director of the WRB LLC consulting firm. His colleague, Adriane Johnson, an associate consultant, also attended the workshop. "Branding is essentially everything you do," Johnson said. "It isn't just the logo. It's a specialized type of marketing to help tell a community's story. It gets to the foundation of what makes a place desirable. It's also what people say about you when you're not around."

She said the goal of branding is to enhance and/or improve the community's image and attract the desired residents, businesses and visitors. Attendees were asked to weigh in on the village's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and ultimate threats. Carpentersville's industrial base, diversity, residents, services, walkability, location and long-range planning topped the list of the village's strengths. "Most of our town is pretty well kept up," Village President Ed Ritter said. "There's some dark spots here and there and we have to keep fighting them but that percentage is much lower than it was 10 or 12 years ago."

As for the village's weaknesses, "public perception," said former trustee Kay Teeter, who is currently a member of the Business Development Commission. "That's huge." "The lowest hanging fruit on the weakness side is the perceived level of crime and the actual level of crime which is lower than our surrounding communities," added Trustee Kevin Rehberg. "There are metrics out there that prove this." Traffic flow and the negative perception of the area's public schools were also noted as weaknesses.

Village Manager **Mark Rooney** said the village's business corridors also provide a challenge. "We have Randall Road, Route 31 and Route 25 — they don't have any correlation," he said. "There's a very different challenge of marketing Randall Road than Route 25." As for Carpentersville's opportunities, the riverfront was suggested. "Our section isn't developed yet," Rehberg said. "You can't get a motorboat in there. You have to paddle, with a canoe or kayak. But the fishery has rebounded tremendously. When you get to the Dundee area it turns more urban. We're in this transition zone between a highly boatable area to this urban Dundee area." He added the village "has a real opportunity to make ourselves attractive to new families that are fleeing Chicago." "Most people don't want to raise families in the Chicago public schools anymore," he said. Trustee Jeff Sabbe said District 300 also "is a huge opportunity for us." He cited the district's partnership with Elgin Community College which is allowing qualified high school seniors the opportunity to enroll at ECC full-time and earn up to 32 college credit hours, tuition free. Another suggestion was implementing community events throughout the year

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

instead of just spring through fall. As for threats to the village's success, declining equalized assessed values, lack of revenue, and Spring Hill Mall were mentioned. Rouse Properties, which owns Spring Hill Mall, asked to partner with both Carpentersville and West Dundee to bring the \$40 million renovation project to fruition. Plans call for a movie theater, restaurants, and a new layout. Mall officials were seeking \$8.6 million total in financial assistance from Carpentersville and West Dundee, with the majority, about \$7.4 million, coming from the latter since most of the shopping center falls within the village. Carpentersville's ask is about \$1.2 million. "Two villages have spent a lot of time and money but it is very possible that mall will fail," **Rooney** said. "That's a pretty big threat."

He cited the Meadowdale property which runs from Besinger Drive to Lake Marian Road. At one time, the shopping center on the property was a popular draw due to anchor stores such as Wieboldt's and Woolworth's. It was such a high-trafficked area in 1960 that John F. Kennedy delivered a stump speech there while running for president. "That threat would be a repeat of what happened to Meadowdale and create a perception problem," **Rooney** said. "It went from a JFK rally point to nothing." The next workshop on the initiative is set for next month. "I'd like you to think about and reflect on the topic we're discussing this evening and come back in early April and get additional feedback," Balling said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)
September 18, 2015

Ex-Kaneland teacher settles federal lawsuit over DUI arrest

Author: Harry Hitzeman Legal Affairs Writer

A former Kaneland School District 302 teacher has settled a federal lawsuit against Carpentersville police that argued he was roughed up after a 2010 DUI arrest. Ryan Wlodek, 35, of Elgin, reached a settlement last month after suing the village of Carpentersville, along with Officers Donald Wells and Matthew Lipke, records show.

Carpentersville Village Manager **Mark Rooney** said officers did nothing wrong and the village wanted to fight the lawsuit. However, the village's insurance carrier decided it would be better to pay \$7,500 in a no-fault settlement than to go to trial and pay some \$20,000 in legal fees, plus risk more in damages if the village lost the case.

"He was not in any way mistreated. The officers did nothing wrong," **Rooney** said. "(The insurer) made a business decision that the village didn't support but had no power to stop. It would have been more costly to defend."

Wlodek initially was charged with felony obstruction of justice, DUI and attempted fleeing and eluding and stemming from his July 4, 2010, arrest. After years of delays in his case, he pleaded guilty to the reduced charges of misdemeanor DUI and obstruction of justice earlier this year and was sentenced to court supervision, records show. He was charged with felony obstruction because he refused a breath test and wanted his blood drawn at a hospital instead. Wlodek, a former science teacher at Kaneland High School and most recently a teacher at Kaneland Middle School, resigned from his post effective Sept. 11, according to the school district.

Wlodek filed an excessive force lawsuit in 2012 against the village and officers. In the lawsuit, Wlodek argued he was punched in the groin and officers purposefully drove erratically, turning quickly to slam him from side to side while he was handcuffed and in the rear of the squad car.

David Lipschultz, the attorney representing Wlodek in the federal lawsuit, said he "could not comment at all" on the lawsuit or settlement when reached by phone.

Jeannine Gilleran, an attorney who represented the village and two officers in the lawsuit, did not return messages.

Federal Judge Charles Norgle dismissed Wlodek's suit "with prejudice," meaning it cannot be refiled in the future.

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J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Herald (IL)

April 30, 2015

Carpentersville Manager Gets 5.5% Raise in New Village Budget

Author: Madhu Krishnamurthy

Carpentersville village leaders approved a 5.5 percent pay raise for Village Manager **Mark Rooney**, part of a roughly \$46 million budget of expenditures for the remaining eight months of this year, which officials say includes no staffing or service cuts. **Rooney's** yearly salary goes up from \$158,000 to roughly \$167,000 retroactive to Jan. 1. He also gets five more vacation days (25 in total) and guarantees nine months of severance pay that equals his current pay, plus fringe benefits, if he is fired after five years of service for any reason other than being convicted of a felony.

Rooney said the salary increase is comparable to what managers/administrators of neighboring communities receive. "I'm still nine out of 10 in the ranking of salaries (of managers)," **Rooney** said. "I just bumped ahead of Lake in the Hills village manager." **Rooney** received a similar salary increase last year, as did a few other department heads.

Chris Scholl, a firefighter who ran unsuccessfully for the village board in April, said **Rooney's** pay hike is "fiscally irresponsible at a time when the village is talking about deficits." "What concerns me is also that this contract spells out his severance package, and severance packages should be dealt with at the time for severance and based upon the reasons for that severance," Scholl said. "The taxpayers should not be on the hook for (paying) \$125,000 plus the fringe benefits ... he will also be compensated for unused vacation time and unused sick leave, which no employees get in the village."

Rooney said the increases are justified by how much money the village has saved through his leadership. "I had a good year last year," **Rooney** said. "We successfully got a \$400,000 OSLAD (Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Program) grant and a U.S. EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) grant of \$628,000. Wal-Mart Supercenter successfully coming to town is a pretty significant event, which will be \$1 million in sales tax (revenue) every year."

The Wal-Mart project — targeted for 26 acres along Lake Marian Road and Route 25 — is a nearly \$30 million development, which includes a \$4.3 million village incentive funded through a special taxing district to help with site improvements, such as the widening and signalization of Lake Marian Road, said Joe Wade, assistant village manager. Construction of the supercenter is expected to begin this summer and open by fall of 2016, officials said.

The village seems to have turned the corner after eliminating 34 positions during the past four years through layoffs, consolidation, reorganization, retirements and attrition. No personnel cuts are in this budget, **Rooney** said. "We save on an annual basis on salary and health care costs of over \$1.5 million," **Rooney** said. The village also has saved roughly \$195,000 by refinancing an

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

IEPA loan earlier this year, and nearly \$100,000 in yearly debt service when borrowing \$10 million for infrastructure improvements that will be completed over four years, he added. The 2015 budget includes a salary increase of 1 percent for public works employees, and 3 percent for police and firefighters. On average, personnel costs increased 2.2 percent, and health insurance costs increased 2.5 percent, Finance Director Hitesh Desai said. The village will be spending nearly \$10 million on water and sewer improvements, and \$3.5 million on infrastructure projects this year, and roughly \$2 million on water main and road improvements related to the Wal-Mart project, in addition to the business incentive. Starting next year, Carpentersville will follow a calendar year budget once the tax levy is determined in December, officials said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Courier News (IL)

April 5, 2015

In Wake of Spat, Official Hires Private Detective

Author: Mike Danahey

Carpentersville Village Manager **Mark Rooney** said he is spending his own funds on a private detective after a March 14 altercation with a member of the Finance and Audit Commission. Harry Brown, of H. Brown Investigations, said he was hired by **Rooney** shortly after the incident with Humberto Garcia. Garcia, a Carpentersville trustee candidate, filed a police report regarding **Rooney's** actions during and outside a Finance and Audit Commission meeting March 14 at the town's public works building. "**Mr. Rooney** has a reputation to protect, with military service and an exemplary career," said Brown.

During the March 14 session **Rooney** questioned claims some people in town and some firefighters have been making that the Fire Department is understaffed. Garcia responded that he had heard those claims and that the department is understaffed. He asked **Rooney** if those people are lying. **Rooney** asserted that they are lying, noted Garcia has been on the commission for several years and that the numbers were there before him.

Rooney commented, "If you can't figure it out, I can draw you a picture. But if you can't understand what's before you, I can't help that God didn't give you enough gift to process the information." That escalated into a heated discussion in the public works building lobby at a break during the meeting. Police investigated and did not pursue charges. Brown said he is now investigating the matter. "This is in no way about the police investigation," **Rooney** said.

On Wednesday, after an executive session at its village board meeting the prior night, trustees issued an online statement that communicated to **Rooney** "its expectation that all village employees, especially those in leadership positions, conduct the village's business in a way that is professional and respectful of others at all times." Beyond that, the board took no action on the matter. Garcia was disappointed the board apparently took no disciplinary action. "As a public official, he should not behave like that," Garcia said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Courier News (IL)

April 1, 2015

**Carpentersville Meeting Gets Heated; No Charges
Police Investigate After Trustee Candidate and Village Manager Trade Insults**

Author: Mike Danahey

Insults about intelligence and bitter debate between the Carpentersville village manager and a village trustee candidate spilled over into an angry confrontation outside a meeting room, leading to a police investigation but no charges, officials said this week. Carpentersville trustee candidate Humberto Garcia filed a police report regarding Village Manager **Mark Rooney's** actions during and outside a Finance and Audit Commission meeting March 14 at the town's public works building. Garcia has been serving on the commission for about four years.

Responding to a Freedom of Information Act request from The Courier-News, Carpentersville released a video, police reports and the results of a police investigation about the incident with a memo that states: "Based on interviews and review of the evidence, there is no basis for pursuing criminal charges against any of the individuals involved." Still, Carpentersville Village President Ed Ritter said that the matter would be discussed in executive session following the Village Board meeting Tuesday night and that an official statement would be posted on the village's website after that discussion.

What led to the heated discussion and the ensuing report and investigation was a comment **Rooney** made to Garcia during the March 14 meeting. On an audio of that meeting obtained through the FOIA request, more than 20 minutes into a discussion of the fire department's proposed budget, **Rooney** calls into question claims some people in town and some firefighters have been making that the fire department is understaffed.

Garcia responded that he had heard those claims and that the department is understaffed. He asked **Rooney** if those people are lying. **Rooney** asserted that they are lying, noted that Garcia has been on the commission for several years and that the numbers are there before him. **Rooney** commented, "If you can't figure it out, I can draw you a picture. But if you can't understand what's before you, I can't help that God didn't give you enough gift to process the information."

According to Garcia, the matter escalated at a break several hours into the session, prior to him leaving to participate in the East Dundee St. Patrick's Day parade. The report released Monday notes a surveillance video from the lobby that caught the incident. The video, with no audio, shows Garcia using a finger to emphasize a point and **Rooney** immediately stepping into Garcia and using the same gesture, the report states. "Humberto did not appear to be threatening at that point, and **Mark Rooney** appeared to be the aggressor by stepping into Humberto," the report states. Then, "as Humberto was walking away **Mark** suddenly turns and approaches Humberto again at a fast pace and **Mark** is again using his finger in a poking motion to emphasize his point," the report states. Garcia exited the front door but then comes back into the lobby, the report states. Garcia looked toward the meeting room, then **Rooney** walked toward Garcia, the

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J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

report states. Garcia does appear threatened at this point, the report states, "as he slowly edges toward **Mark** with (redacted name) in between them. As (name redacted) grabbed **Mark**, it appears he is trying to shepherd him away from Humberto." "It appears that **Mark's** body is leaning in towards the meeting room and not towards Humberto, and **Mark** appears to look directly at (redacted name) and **Mark** says something to (redacted name) who immediately releases **Mark** and lets him pass." The report states, it "doesn't appear that **Mark** is trying to physically harm or threaten Humberto. It appears to be a disagreement that became personal, not criminal. Although there were many things said that could be considered insulting and unprofessional, it does not appear that any of these things would rise to the level of criminal conduct in that no physical threats were muttered."

According to the reports, **Rooney** told police that Garcia stopped him in the lobby and asked for an apology for what **Rooney** said during the meeting. **Rooney** said he would not apologize, the report states. **Rooney** told police Garcia threatened to have **Rooney** fired if Garcia got elected as a trustee. **Rooney** also claimed Garcia made a comment about "beating an apology out of him." **Rooney** said he "told Garcia he was a son of a bitch if he thought he could use violence against him." **Rooney** also advised police that during the argument, "he did make a comment to Humberto about beating his wife."

Tuesday, Garcia said he would wait until after the Village Board meeting to make any further comment. **Rooney** could not be reached for comment Tuesday afternoon. As for **Rooney's** comment about Garcia and a domestic offense, according to a redacted police report, officers were called to the Garcia home on Oct. 13, 2013, about a physical altercation. Media outlets learned about the incident last week from a tipster. Garcia was taken into custody and charged with domestic battery, according to the report. Garcia and his wife, Bibiana, said that the Monday after the incident she and her daughter asked to have the charges dropped and thought they had been, but soon learned they had not.

According to online court records, on Jan. 30, 2014, Garcia pleaded guilty and paid fines and fees totaling \$820. He completed counseling, and the plea was vacated Nov. 20, 2014. The Garcias said Friday that they didn't want to bring up the matter because of their children and the attention it might receive. "It was embarrassing," Garcia said. Garcia has lived in Carpentersville for 20 years and owns and operates Meadowdale Performance Garage, He said he intends to remain in the race for one of the three spots on the village board up this April.

One of the other trustee candidates, incumbent Paul Humpfer was sentenced to a year of probation in October 2008 and ordered to enroll in a 26-week domestic violence program because of an incident with his wife in May 2007. Humpfer paid \$1,000 in fines and costs and was ordered to refrain from abusive contact with his now-ex-wife. After complying with the conditions, the case was discharged in October 2009. Other Village Board candidates are incumbent Don Burroway along with Sara Miller, Jeff Sabbe and Chris Scholl.

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J. Mark Rooney
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Herald (IL)
July 10, 2014

Investigation Clears Carpentersville Official

Author: Madhu Krishnamurthy

An independent investigator looking into allegations of gender discrimination, retaliation and harassment made by a former Carpentersville village employee against Village Manager **J. Mark Rooney** determined there was no validity to the claims. The allegations were made by the village's former human resources director, Linda Mogren, who resigned in May under a separation agreement with the village. At the time, neither village officials nor **Rooney** would discuss the reasons that led to Mogren's departure. Mogren, a village employee since 1998, served as human resources director for nine years. Several attempts to reach her and her attorney were unsuccessful. Mogren refused to cooperate with the investigation citing her severance agreement with the village in which both parties agreed to refrain from disparaging statements. Mogren was assured she would have immunity for any comments made during the investigation, according to independent investigator Dennis Walsh with the legal firm Klein, Thorpe and Jenkins.

The firm previously served as the village's attorney and was chosen to do the investigation because of Walsh's reputation, Village President Ed Ritter said. Walsh interviewed **Rooney** and several other village employees who either witnessed interactions between **Rooney** and Mogren or could speak to the allegations, and reviewed numerous documents of communication between Mogren and **Rooney**, according to documents obtained by the Daily Herald through a public records request.

Among Mogren's allegations were that **Rooney** "had a pattern of replacing women senior staff over 40 years old with males" and that he was trying to force her out after 15 years of service. She also claimed **Rooney** made several threats to physically harm village employees. According to the investigator's report several employees interviewed said **Rooney** would make references to his military service, but never expressly threatened to harm any employees. The police chief also looked into that allegation and determined it was unfounded. The investigation determined **Rooney**, formerly village manager in Wheeling, didn't break any state or federal laws or violate village policy, and acknowledged he is a demanding manager.

Ritter said the report puts an end to the matter. "I have a lot of confidence in our manager, the way he operates and how careful he is in anything that he does involving personnel," Ritter said. Ritter's only comment about Mogren was that she was "an excellent employee." "She chose to leave, and she was not forced to leave. She was a good employee while she was here," he said. Ritter said the village hired the independent investigator only to avoid potential litigation. "We're being proactive," he said. "We did not have to investigate. We could have just left it. But I didn't want to do that because sometimes when you just leave something, it seems like you are afraid to investigate."

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J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Herald (IL)
March 22, 2014

Village Postpones Laying Off Firefighters

Author: Lenore T. Adkins

Carpentersville has delayed the planned layoffs of two full-time firefighters while union officials discuss cuts they can make to save those jobs, Village Manager **J. Mark Rooney** said Friday. "I'm very optimistic that the firefighter's union will help us find a solution to avoid the layoffs," **Rooney** said. This action comes after the union met with **Rooney** on Wednesday to discuss the pending layoffs of the firefighters who were originally going to be let go March 28. There are 32 full-time firefighters, and the two at risk of losing their jobs have the least seniority.

Rather than work with a specific dollar amount, the union will instead make cuts from its recent contract and present the proposed savings to **Rooney**. The village board has final say and will vote on the new fiscal year budget April 1.

The extension gives the union time to consider what cutbacks it can take. Three years ago, during contract negotiations, the union agreed to several concessions so the village would not lay off three firefighters. The concessions included reduced holiday pay, no salary increase during the first year of the contract and a reduction in overtime pay. The union last fall agreed to another employment deal, which is what's being reviewed. "We are actively discussing our options with our members," said Lt. Rick Nieves, president of International Association of Fire Fighters Local 4790. "We are happy to see the village extend the timeline."

Last month, **Rooney** announced staff cuts of the two firefighters and three other village employees to help plug a projected \$429,000 deficit. **Rooney** said similar negotiations are also afoot with the union that represents the other three employees. Since the announcement of the layoffs, the firefighter's union has filed a grievance. Also, several firefighters and retired chief John Schuldt have attended various board and budget meetings.

In the aftermath, firefighter Chris Scholl, a Carpentersville resident, publicly questioned whether the village is really in a financial bind and created an online petition to oust **Rooney** over what he calls his "poor management of village affairs."

As of Friday afternoon, 114 people had signed the petition. Scholl said most of them have family members working in the village or are firefighters elsewhere. He said 14 people are from out of state and others are from outside the area, according to information Scholl released to the Daily Herald. **Rooney** said he is aware of the petition and is ignoring it. "It does me no good to study every blog that is ever out there about me," **Rooney** said. "I just never made it a practice to read blogs. And I'm not going to start now."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Herald (IL)

January 9, 2014

Carpentersville Approves Settlement with Firefighters

Author: Lenore T. Adkins

Carpentersville officials approved a contract settlement with the village's full-time firefighters Wednesday — a move that puts to rest the issues between the two parties and gives residents the protection they need without breaking the bank, officials said. In doing so, both parties also avoided settling their disputes through an often lengthy and costly arbitration proceeding. "That would have been the next step had we not come to a resolution," union President Lt. Rick Nieves said. The settlement stipulates that the village use a daily minimum of eight full-time firefighters spread among the three stations; the village previously staffed them according to daily demands.

In exchange, village officials can also use as many part-time firefighters as needed. Other highlights in the settlement include a round-the-clock lieutenant at every station, and the elimination of the village's right to remove fire engines from service when an unusual number of firefighters are absent. In turn, the union agreed to drop the six grievances it filed against the village related to staffing and seniority issues. "We're moving in the right direction; obviously we've got this compromise, and we think it's good for both sides," said Nieves, who could not stop smiling after the vote. "We're looking towards the future." The settlement, meanwhile, is expected to cost the village less than \$50,000 in overtime, Village Manager **J. Mark Rooney** said.

Wednesday's board action came nearly three months after the village and the union agreed to a three-year contract for the 32 full-time firefighters. But several weeks later, the union complained the staffing changes would lead to slower response times that would endanger residents. Village officials, however, said the community was never in jeopardy, and the union actually was upset over the anticipated loss of overtime. The contract, they said, was meant to help curb \$300,000 in overtime expenses. In the ensuing months, the full-time firefighters launched a social media campaign against the new pact, met with a pair of neighborhood groups and with Tom Roeser, an influential businessman and philanthropist. Also in the aftermath, resident Chris Scholl, a full-time Carpentersville firefighter, started a that was critical of the board and of **Rooney**.

At the end of November, the board authorized **Rooney** to request a meeting with the union to resolve the impasse. The interest was in a workforce concentrated on the business at hand, rather than problems on the periphery. "This is an example where compromise should not be a dirty word," **Rooney** said. Wednesday's vote was unanimous, with trustees Paul Humpfer and Pat Schultz absent from the meeting. Village President Ed Ritter heralds the process as a win for everyone and thanks everyone for their willingness to compromise. "We've put some of the biggest disagreements behind us, and we're moving forward cooperatively," Ritter said.

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J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Herald (IL)
September 19, 2013

Village Working to Resolve Driveway Issue

Author: Lenore T. Adkins

Business owner Tom Roeser continues to feud with the village of Carpentersville over the brick driveway he installed that violates village code. While brick pavers are a no-no for driveways, they are allowed for patio construction, Village Manager **J. Mark Rooney** said. So if Roeser treats the driveway like a patio, it will comply with village code, **Rooney** said. "I'm not going to make a mountain out of a molehill," **Rooney** said. "If it's not looking like a driveway and it's not acting like a driveway, it's time to move on."

But Roeser, owner of, the village's largest employer, doesn't want a patio; he wants a driveway. And he says he intends to use that property as a driveway instead of playing a game of semantics with the village. "These guys are trying to make a problem go away that they created by calling a duck a swan," Roeser said. "This is not a small issue, and it's not about a driveway. It's about management that is so bad and inconsistent, they make me laugh."

The driveway lies between and the Order of Odd Fellows Lodge. Roeser owns the building that houses Sign-A-Rama. He says he built the grass-friendly driveway to blend in with the nearby residential area. The village rejected his original application for a brick driveway, and the community development department fined his contractor \$150 for building it without a permit.

Roeser caused a stir last month when he complained to the village board about the miscommunication and misinformation he said he received from the community development department on several matters, including the controversial driveway at 3 N. Washington St. He told the board to get more involved in day-to-day operations but stopped short of asking trustees to fire Community Development Director Jim Hock.

In response to complaints from Roeser and others, **Rooney** ordered Hock and several members from that department to attend in-house educational seminars on customer service. Villagewide training on communication and customer service will take place later this month, **Rooney** said. Within the next six to 12 months, trustees could also consider changing the code when they address gravel driveways in the village, **Rooney** said. That, he added, has nothing to do with Roeser's complaint. "It was something that was under consideration for the last year," **Rooney** said. "We don't write laws for one person."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)
February 8, 2013

1 town suing another over Walmart

Author: Lenore T. Adkins

Although a Kane County judge recently refused to issue a temporary restraining order that would have blocked Walmart from getting money through a special taxing district in Carpentersville, East Dundee will proceed with additional legal action. East Dundee's lawsuit seeks to prevent the retailer from getting any financial incentives from Carpentersville's tax increment finance district. A hearing is scheduled Feb. 14. Walmart plans to close its store in East Dundee and open a Supercenter by 2015 in Carpentersville.

"What the village filed was just asking the judge to make sure that the law is followed as it relates to the TIF and the expenditure of TIF funds," East Dundee Village President Jerald Bartels said. "I would think that Carpentersville would want to make sure all the laws are upheld as well." Carpentersville Village Manager **J. Mark Rooney** says the village knows the law. "The law is very specific on what is allowed and what isn't and we will follow the letter of the law and the spirit of the law," **Rooney** said.

Last year, Walmart said it would close the store in East Dundee to build a larger store at Lake Marian Road and Besinger Drive. Walmart officials did not specify why the Carpentersville location is more attractive. If the project reaches fruition, East Dundee will lose about \$850,000 in annual revenue. The Carpentersville land lies within a TIF district the board created last year to spur development. In a TIF district, property tax levels are frozen for a period of up to 23 years. As redevelopment occurs and the land appreciates, taxes from the increased value are used to pay for improvements or to help defray development costs. East Dundee is pointing to a part of the law that says a business would not qualify for TIF funding if it moves to another TIF district less than 10 miles away in another town. The proposed Walmart would be less than three miles from the East Dundee site, also in a TIF district.

Carpentersville officials accuse East Dundee of stalling the development, of acting prematurely and of wasting their time and money. While Carpentersville is anticipating a TIF request from Walmart, it has not yet happened, said Joe Wade, Carpentersville's assistant village manager in charge of economic development. Wade pointed to a second part of the law that says TIF dollars can be spent in the new location if the old location "contained inadequate space, had become economically obsolete or was no longer a viable location for the retailer or serviceman." "My reaction (to the lawsuit) was why aren't they quoting the full portion of the statute?" Wade asked. Bartels said he would rather wait to see what happens in court. "We'll see what the judge says. (Carpentersville) can make that argument in front of the judge," Bartels said. "Both sides will be heard in court and we'll see where it goes."

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J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Courier News (IL)

February 1, 2013

Report Says C’ville Fire Chief Put on Administrative Leave

Author: Mike Danahey

Village Fire Chief John Schuldt has been put on administrative leave, according to a Chicago radio report. WBBM News Radio reported Thursday morning that Schuldt had been put on leave and that Village Manager **Mark Rooney** would not comment as to why the move had been made. Village President Ed Ritter told The Courier-News Thursday morning that he had received several calls about the report but he could neither confirm nor deny it. He referred calls to **Rooney’s** office. **Rooney** was not available for comment, and his office also would neither confirm nor deny the reports. Schuldt was not in his office Thursday morning and could not immediately be reached for comment.

The Illinois Fire Chiefs Association named Schuldt, 52, the Illinois Fire Chief of the Year for 2011 from among departments with a population of more than 25,000. Schuldt was nominated for the award by Assistant Fire Chief John Skillman. At the time, Skillman told The Courier-News that Schuldt had been with the department for 34 years, including 31 in a full-time role. Schuldt was named chief in 1996 and has served with fire safety organizations on the state and even the national level, Skillman said. Skillman noted in his nomination that “in May 2001, Chief Schuldt was asked by his village board to serve as acting village manager. He faced several key village staff positions that were vacant and the need to develop a village budget, at the time \$40 million. He was responsible for a staff of 300 people during his 12 months as acting manager until his return to fire chief in May 2002. He was asked to stay in the position, but his love for the fire service returned him to his chief’s position.”

In the community, Skillman noted, Schuldt was on the founding board of the local Boys & Girls Club in the 1990s. Schuldt served on a 2010 committee that brought the Healing Field to Carpentersville to honor war heroes. Since 1998, he has participated in a community-wide paint-a-thon in which volunteers’ paint homes of those unable to do so. He helped coordinate area fire departments’ sending of help to victims of the 2004 Utica tornado and Hurricane Katrina in 2005. In 2010, when a local family was left homeless by a fire, Schuldt worked first to solicit donations of furniture and clothing the family needed and then worked with the owner of a storage facility to create a permanent cache of such items for future fire victims. Schuldt helped bring “Remembering When,” a fire- and fall-prevention program for older adults, to Carpentersville as a pilot project and was instrumental in setting up a division technical rescue team for the area.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Northwest Herald (IL)
August 28, 2012

Lawsuit Claims Brutality, Racism in Carpentersville

Author: Lawrence Synett

A Crystal Lake man has filed a civil lawsuit against the village of Carpentersville and its police department, claiming that he was battered and racially mistreated during a traffic stop last year. Johnny Perez, 21, is seeking more than \$50,000 in damages in relation to an incident more than a year ago when Officer Alan Webb arrested him for misdemeanor resisting a peace officer and aggravated battery, according to the lawsuit filed in Kane County earlier this month. The 12-count lawsuit against the city and its police officers alleges that Perez was physically and verbally abused during a traffic stop March 16, 2011, on Route 25.

It also states that the village's nonbinding resolution to make English its official language gives police a license to discriminate against Spanish-speaking people. Perez was pulled over that day by a member of the Carpentersville Police Department for driving 5 mph over the posted speed limit, the lawsuit states. He then was asked to step out of the vehicle to read the speed limit sign and return to the car before Webb and several other officers arrived. According to the lawsuit, Perez again was asked to exit his vehicle by Webb and was shoved in the chest. Webb punched him twice in the face, kneed him and struck him in the back of the head. Other officers held Perez while the abuse occurred, his lawsuit states. The officers also shouted racial slurs and verbally threatened Perez, a U.S. citizen who speaks Spanish and English, the lawsuit states. He suffered bruising on his face and body.

The charges later were dismissed, court records show. Perez was treated for bruises to his face and body at Centegra Hospital – McHenry, which cost \$3,000 in medical bills, according to the lawsuit. Carpentersville Village Board members approved making English the official language in June 2007. At the time, proponents said it would strengthen the village and save taxpayers' money. Others argued that it would make the village a more difficult place to do business. Latinos make up more than 44 percent of the village population, according to 2010 Census data. The lawsuit alleges that resolution "was the product of pervasive racism of the village government, and some village residents against individuals of Mexican descent." "Police officers were permitted and emboldened by the village's institutional racism to use force against individuals of Mexican descent at a frequency disproportionate to their use of force against other individuals," the lawsuit states.

The counts include civil-rights violations, false arrest and imprisonment, physical abuse, unlawful search and deprivation of liberty, excessive force, civil conspiracy, and assault and battery, among others. The lawsuit also accuses Webb of lying in the subsequent police report by making it out as though Perez was the aggressor. That includes Perez yelling and bumping Webb, as well as refusing to be handcuffed. Carpentersville Village Manager **Mark Rooney** said the village had not been served the lawsuit as of Tuesday afternoon, and could not comment on any litigation.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Herald (Arlington Heights, IL)
January 3, 2012

Carpentersville lays off two department heads

Author: Lenore T. Adkins

This marks the final week for a pair of Carpentersville department heads. Officials have laid off Engineer Scott Marquardt and Economic Development Director/Special Projects Coordinator Janice Murphy, both of whom have worked with the village for about a half dozen years. Details of their severance agreements were not available Monday.

Also this week, the village board will consider whether to furnish Village Manager **J. Mark Rooney** with a small raise and additional perks. The village made the decision to eliminate Marquardt and Murphy this fall, citing rising fuel and health insurance costs and the pay increases for the four unions that negotiated small raises last year, Village President Ed Ritter said. In the end, officials decided they could merge Murphy's responsibilities with another department and realized there wouldn't be enough projects to justify Marquardt's continued employment. "It's very hard," Ritter said. "We had to think long and hard about it because they were good employees and they did some important things for the village. But in today's reality, you have to cover your expenses and you have to make sure you can cover them." Assistant Village Manager Steven Jones will absorb Murphy's duties, while the rest of the engineering staff will take on Marquardt's work and hire outside contractors as needed. Eliminating the two jobs saves a combined \$229,779, according to Finance Director Lisa Happ.

Meanwhile, **Rooney** is up for a raise and additional perks — his reward for a job well done, officials said. Tonight the village board will vote on whether to increase **Rooney**'s salary from \$130,000 to \$132,600, his monthly vehicle stipend from \$300 to \$500 and whether to cover his life insurance policy. The adjustments would be effective in August.

Rooney has been village manager since September 2010, and the board completed his review and evaluation late last month. Ritter gave **Rooney** high marks for his leadership skills, for improving customer service at every level and for streamlining village operations. "He's done a really good job of reorganizing village hall and working at a lot of cost-saving things, and we've been very happy with his service so far," Ritter said. "There were some things he originally asked for (when he was hired) and we said we can't do it, but if things went well, when next year came around, we'd add a couple of things to his contract."

Trustee Kay Teeter said **Rooney** took on a difficult job, and without the cuts and other cost-savings measures he instituted residents probably would be facing higher property taxes. "We're not giving him everything that he could be asking for, but we are basically rewarding him," Teeter said. "He was given a tough job when he came in, and he has really stepped up to the plate." **Rooney**, a member of the U.S. Army Reserves, could not be reached for comment due to a training obligation with the organization.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Herald (IL)
November 7, 2011

Carpentersville Wins Award for Labor Negotiations

Author: Lenore T. Adkins

The Illinois Public Employer Labor Relations Association has recognized Carpentersville for its four contract negotiations in 2011 that saved hundreds of thousands of dollars, avoided layoffs and kept public services intact. The village received the Rosemont-based association's James Baird Leadership Award, which notes "leadership and achievement" in Illinois public sector labor relations. "The IPELRA board has determined that Carpentersville's labor relations efforts ... are positive contributions to the Illinois public sector labor relations field," Awards Committee chairwoman Mary Rath wrote in her congratulatory letter to the village.

The village this year negotiated four, three-year contracts with unions representing firefighters, police officers, police sergeants and public works employees. But it was the talks with the fire department that set the tone for how the other three sessions went, Village Manager **J. Mark Rooney** said. The firefighters' union accepted smaller pay increases and other concessions that saved the village \$192,640, and agreed to hold contract negotiations without an attorney. "It gave some level of trust and probably assurance that policemen could do the same," **Rooney** said, adding that the village also kept attorneys out of the mix until the very end. "(Attorneys) didn't come to the table; that was just kind of an email and a conference call situation."

Rick Nieves, president of the firefighters' union, said the union also kept the taxpayers and their struggles in mind during the negotiations. "It's not just about us; it's about the public," Nieves said. "What we do is public service. It's tough now; everybody's struggling economically." In the end, after the firefighter's contract was ratified, the other unions agreed to smaller raises and other cutbacks. Last year, the village's dire financial situation resulted in the layoffs of five public works employees, two employees from the community development department and a part-time information technology worker, said Linda Mogren, director of the human resources. She also is the liaison between the union representatives and the village. "When we learned what the economic picture was, we worked hard to work with the unions and we felt that we both came to the table with some good compromises, so we felt very good about the results," Mogren said. Carpentersville officials are in the middle of negotiating contracts with unions representing part-time firefighters and civilian employees that include building inspectors, clerks and code enforcement officers. They hope those go as smoothly as the others. James Powers, the village's labor attorney, nominated Carpentersville for the award and Carpentersville Fire Chief John Schuldt accepted the award. He presented it to the village board last week. It marks the first time Carpentersville has received the recognition. "I think it shows the effort that was put in by the village and the unions," Schuldt said. "The village coming together and negotiating four successful contracts that reduced overall expenses, without laying anybody off in those units, I think that was remarkable."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Courier News (IL)

October 30, 2011

Injured Cop Sues C’ville for Health Insurance Coverage

Author: Mike Danahey

Former village police Officer Joseph Cecala is suing the village, Village Manager **Mark Rooney** and village human resources Director Linda Mogren for health insurance benefits for himself and his family he feels are owed him under Illinois law. Cecala, 40, was injured Dec. 29, 2008, while on duty at the scene of an accident at Route 31 and Spruce Road. According to the lawsuit, a driver had knocked down a tree that led to a traffic signal falling onto Route 31. Believing the situation to be an emergency and that, due to the hour, no help would come for several hours to remove the signal, Cecala and another officer moved the item off the road. In the process, Cecala injured his back in what the lawsuit calls a “catastrophic injury.” In November 2010, Cecala, the married father of two children, was awarded an in-the-line-of-duty disability pension by the village’s police pension board that went into effect that December. That month, he applied to the village for health insurance benefits he felt were his under the state’s Public Safety Employee Benefits Act (PSEBA).

The act states if a police officer suffers a catastrophic injury or is killed in the line of duty, his employer shall pay the entire premium of the employer’s health insurance plan for the injured employee, the injured employee’s spouse, and for each dependent child of the injured employee until the child reaches the age of majority or until the end of the calendar year in which the child reaches the age of 25 if the child continues to be a dependent. To be covered under the act, the injury or death must have resulted from the officer’s response to fresh pursuit or is reasonably believed to be an emergency, an unlawful act by another, or during the investigation of a crime. The lawsuit includes a copy of a Dec. 9, 2010, letter from Mogren to Cecala’s attorney, Ryan Theriault, stating that Cecala does not qualify for benefits under PSEBA. “In particular, his injury did not occur as a result of any of the circumstances enumerated in (the act). Consequently, Officer Cecala’s application for receipt of benefits is denied. Officer Cecala is eligible for insurance coverage as a retiree under the Illinois Insurance Code provisions relating to police officers. If Officer Cecala elects and pays the total cost of such coverage, the benefits will be available as of January 1, 2011,” the letter states.

Theriault is an attorney at Foote, Meyers, Mielke and Flowers in St. Charles. He said that Cecala currently is covered under the policy his wife has at her job. The suit seeks reimbursement for \$212 per month since December 2010 for those premiums. “This lawsuit has been filed to force the village to uphold its legal obligation to provide health insurance to police officers who are catastrophically injured in the line of duty,” Theriault said Friday. The village, he said, “has intentionally chosen to turn its back on an officer and his family who sustained career-ending injuries as the result of his dedicated service to the village and the people of Carpentersville.” **Rooney** was out of the office Friday and could not be reached for comment.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Herald (IL)
November 11, 2010

Carpentersville Officials Weighing Higher Levy

Author: Tara García Mathewson

What looks like bad news for taxpayers is, at the same time, a village trying to keep its income steady — or at least, stem its losses. At Carpentersville's Audit and Finance committee meeting Wednesday night, the village manager and finance director presented recommendations for next year's levy. Last year, the village asked for — and received — about \$10.2 million in the levy. This year, the board must decide if it wants to ask for the same amount and end up with \$1.1 million less in the budget because of decreasing assessed values, or ask for a little more.

The village manager, **Mark Rooney**, is suggesting the board request almost \$10.9 million to keep the budget losses at just more than \$400,000. Both options will mean a tax rate increase for residents. "Are we going to reduce revenues or increase taxes? I have a feeling we're going to have to raise our tax rates, but we're not going to raise any more money," said Ed Ritter, Carpentersville village president. **Rooney's** recommendation would mean a 15 percent increase in the tax rate over last year, though that will likely not increase individual taxpayers' bills by much.

The Audit and Finance committee did not make a formal recommendation to the board, but Paul Lanspa and David High, the only two members who would not be voting on the levy as trustees, both endorsed **Rooney's** recommendation. "I don't want to pay any more, but it's not egregious," Lanspa conceded.

The board will decide on the levy at its Dec. 7 meeting where the public can comment. To access the PowerPoint presentation with information about the village's revenues and the various levy options to be discussed by the board, residents can go to the village website at vil.carpentersville.il.us. On the home page, there is a link called "Village Board Presentation: 2011/2012 Budget."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Courier News (IL)
September 2, 2010

Former Wheeling Manager is Hired by Carpentersville

Author: Jacob Hurwith

After extensive interviews and lengthy debate over which of 48 candidates would fit the position of village manager, trustees decided to go with the one they say has the most experience and professionalism. **Mark Rooney**, a former village manager in Wheeling, was chosen for the job Tuesday night. He will start on Sept. 21. **Rooney** served as Wheeling village manager from 2006 to 2009 and was the assistant manager for three years before that.

While in Wheeling, which has a population of about 40,300, he helped implement two new tax increment financing districts and extended a third TIF district, something familiar to the village of Carpentersville. **Rooney** also helped maintain Wheeling's AA+ Fitch Investor Services and S&P AA bond rating in addition to helping raise \$40 million in bond debt to construct new municipal facilities.

Carpentersville officials said that experience will come in handy as the village begins to build a new public works facility. **Rooney** is a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army Reserves and was a senior adviser for the Army's Military Transition Team, where he trained and mentored two separate Iraqi regiments composed of 900 Iraqi soldiers. **Rooney**, 50, will be paid an annual salary of \$130,000. He said he is looking forward to getting to know village staff. "I'm excited to do more listening than talking," **Rooney** said. "I want to learn the specifics and the intricacies of how Carpentersville functions. The formal structure is important, but the informal structure is just as important."

Rooney hold a master's degree in public administration from Northern Illinois University. He enlisted in the Army immediately after earning his degree and served in Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait. He later went to work as a staff assistant for the now-late U.S. Sen. Paul Simon, helping facilitate the passage of legislation that resulted in the redevelopment of Joliet Arsenal, Fort Sheridan and Glenview Naval Air Station. Simon "taught me the greatest lesson," **Rooney** said. "Disagree without being disagreeable is the quality you have to have to be in public service."

Rooney will take over from Assistant Village Manager Dawn Wucki-Rossbach, whom the board praised for her work since the retirement of former manager Craig Anderson earlier this year. "We made a great choice, and I am happy for the residents of Carpentersville," Trustee Brad McFeggan said. "He will lead us in the right direction and the direction we need."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Herald (IL)
September 24, 2009

Village Leader is Out

Author: Madhu Krishnamurthy

Wheeling Village Manager **J. Mark Rooney** has resigned his post as of Wednesday, Village President Judy Abruscato confirmed Wednesday night. Two trustees say **Rooney's** departure was imminent after a majority of the board indicated in closed session Monday that they no longer supported him. Abruscato did not confirm that but would not offer an explanation for his departure. She said the village board is grateful to **Rooney** because under his leadership a new village hall, fire station and public works facility were built, and the staff and board successfully negotiated police and fire union contracts. "The village board wishes **Mark** the best in his career," Abruscato said. "There are no problems with **Mr. Rooney.**"

Assistant Village Manager Jon Sfondilis has been designated acting village manager, and he will remain in that post for the foreseeable future, said Martin Seay, administrative assistant. **Rooney** declined to comment Wednesday, directing all questions to Abruscato. He joined Wheeling in 2003 as assistant village manager and was named acting village manager in December 2006 when then-manager Wally Douthwaite resigned. **Rooney** was named manager in February 2007. Before Wheeling, he was city administrator in Highwood.

Trustees Pat Horcher and Dean Argiris said that in a poll taken Monday night among the six trustees and Abruscato, **Rooney** had lost the support of five of them. Neither Argiris nor Horcher would fully explain what caused **Rooney's** loss of favor. They said Horcher and Robert Heer supported **Rooney** staying, while Argiris, Abruscato, Ken Brady, Dave Vogel and Ray Lang did not. "Most of what happened in my mind was politics and clash of personalities, really," Horcher said.

Horcher said some trustees complained **Rooney** did not keep them fully informed about village business. "They were basically not liking the way he was managing the village," Horcher said. Argiris, meanwhile, disagreed **Rooney's** departure was political. "It wasn't about personality conflicts and it wasn't about politics," Argiris said. "There were issues. This was a business decision by a majority of the board."

Argiris said the problems have been going on for more than a year, but he would not divulge the actual reasons why **Rooney** was leaving. He said it was not because of any illegal actions or financial mismanagement. "I believe it was hurting the village keeping him on and that's why we need to move on," Argiris said. "His style ... the way he would do business, eventually it would hurt the village, if it hadn't already. And these were issues that never seemed to be going away. They needed to be addressed." Argiris said he has a high opinion of **Rooney** and was an advocate of hiring him at first, but he said **Rooney** was "jeopardizing things." Horcher, meanwhile, believes **Rooney** has been one of Wheeling's best managers. "Look at what got done under this guy," he said. "We built the public works building and the village hall. We finally

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

finished the space study for the village. He managed two police and fire contract negotiations without going into arbitration. "The guy did a really good job. He was dedicated to this village." A lieutenant colonel with the U.S. Army Reserve, **Rooney** served 18 months in Iraq while he was Wheeling's assistant village manager. **Rooney's** \$140,000 salary for this year was frozen last November in a joint decision he made with the village board. The terms of his departure are still being worked out, Seay said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Wheeling Countryside (IL)
February 28, 2008

Rooney Gets 12 Percent Raise

Author: Kit Kadlec

A year after he was hired to be village manager, **Mark Rooney** was given a \$15,000 raise last week. Previously making \$125,000, he will now receive an annual salary of \$140,000, or 12 percent more, under a resolution signed and put into effect Feb. 19. **Rooney** was hired as village manager on Feb. 26 last year, after first serving as the village's acting manager. In becoming manager, he replaced Wallace Douthwaite, who resigned in December 2006.

In unanimously approving the raise, which was tied to a performance review, no trustees made a comment during the Village Board meeting. Reached after the meeting, Acting Village President Patrick Horcher said he and others had been pleased with how **Rooney** has done in his first year. "I think everybody is pretty happy," he said. "We've had a lot going on, and he's handled it well." **Rooney** is Wheeling's seventh village manager since it adopted the board/manager style of government in 1970. He first joined the village staff in 2003 as an assistant village manager. In 2005, as an Army reservist, **Rooney** was called into active duty and sent to Iraq. He trained soldiers for the new Iraqi army, then returned 15 months later.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Des Plaines Times (IL)
December 13, 2007

Wheeling Manager Responds to Prospect Heights Criticism

Author: Charles Berman

Four days after the city of Prospect Heights and the village of Wheeling came together to appoint the new chairman of the Chicago Executive Airport, bad blood between the two municipalities continued to boil over. The hiring of former United Airlines pilot E. Allan Englehardt was supposed to signal a new era in leadership of the airport, formerly known as Palwaukee Municipal Airport.

Recent board meetings have focused on future airport business, not the alleged misconduct of former board Chairman Kevin Dohm and Vice Chairman L. James Wylie. Both leaders resigned within a one-month span earlier this year after concerns were raised regarding the payment of an airport contractor that was never approved by the board. On the surface, it appeared that the Airport Board moved on from those allegations, or at least kept its ongoing investigation and now apparent feud behind closed-session doors.

However, on Dec. 5, a letter attributed to five Prospect Heights aldermen was sent to Acting Wheeling President Judy Abruscato. The letter accuses Wheeling Village Manager **Mark Rooney** of sidestepping the board in an attempt to seek Federal Aviation Administration approval to build a Wheeling fire station on airport property. "It has come to our attention that since September, **Mr. Rooney** has ignored our collective understanding and pursued a course of conduct which mirrors the very conduct he complained about in the Fall," the Prospect Heights officials wrote.

The letter, which made it to the news media before Wheeling's Village Hall, also claims that **Rooney**, who sits on the Airport Board, threatened Airport Manager Dennis Rouleau's job for not obtaining the FAA's consent. "**Mr. Rooney's** conduct hurts airport morale and the important relationship of the City and the Village as partners in the ownership of the airport," the Prospect Heights officials wrote.

'Nothing to hide'

Rooney adamantly denies all of Prospect Heights' charges. Before the Dec. 10 Wheeling Village Board meeting, he presented a litany of evidence, including e-mails, that he said proves he did not overstep his authority. "Prospect Heights is questioning my integrity," he said. "I have nothing to hide. "They are baseless and meaningless allegations. Now we'll have full disclosure of what's gone on (at the airport). You'll see I don't lie, cheat or steal and I don't tolerate those who do. "My job is to protect Wheeling's assets, including the airport."

Wheeling has been planning to build two new fire stations because the village's Police Department is taking over the entire building that police currently share with the Fire Department and Village Hall. To avoid the problems that the Alexander Graham Bell Montessori School

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

faced in trying to build a school in a runway zone, **Rooney** said he wanted to at least know if it was usable land before recommending any location. **Rooney** said he never received that answer, so there were never any real plans to build on that property.

Abruscato surprised

The letter came as a surprise to Wheeling officials. Abruscato said the two municipalities met last week to discuss lingering issues and that the two sides left the sit-down on a positive note. Abruscato said she supports **Rooney** and does not believe he did anything inappropriate. "**Mr. Rooney** does a good job fulfilling the direction of the Wheeling board," she said. "That was poor judgment by Prospect Heights," she added. "They should have sent me the letter before going to the press. That makes for a bad relationship."

'Positive' chairman

E. Allan Englehardt will officially take over the chairmanship of the Chicago Executive Airport Wednesday (Dec. 19) when he leads the board's next meeting. "I've been around this airport for a long time, and I want to do everything I can to see the airport get back on track," said Englehardt, who was appointed Dec. 1.

The 60-year-old former United Airlines pilot started as a flight instructor at Palwaukee 40 years ago. He retired as a Boeing 777 international captain on Feb. 1, but he still trains and certifies new pilots. Englehardt said it's not his place to comment on the tumultuous last few months at the airport, and he is focused on reaching the airport's full potential for all users. "I am a positive person and I see things continuing to spin that way," he said.

Rouleau spent last week showing Englehardt around the airport and brought him up to speed with ongoing airport business, good and bad. "He is very aware of the past," Rouleau said. "He is going to work to get everybody back on the same page. "I see us working past it. There are a lot of people who love this airport and when it comes down to it, people will roll up their sleeves and get back to business." Rouleau said Englehardt was an excellent choice. "He's very energetic, he understands the position and he will be a tremendous asset to the board of directors."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Wheeling Countryside (IL)
March 8, 2007

Wheeling Drops 'Acting' from Rooney's Job Title

Author: Casey Moffitt

The Wheeling Village Board gave **Mark Rooney** 90 days as the village's acting manager as an audition to the permanent role. However, **Rooney** impressed trustees so quickly, they gave him the job nearly a month early. **Rooney** was officially hired as Wheeling's village manager during the board's Feb. 26 meeting. Trustees voted unanimously on the decision. "I just want to say, 'Thanks,' for the last two months," **Rooney** said after the vote. "I've had a great deal of satisfaction working with the staff and the board." **Rooney** replaces Wallace Douthwaite, who resigned in December. His contract was bought out at the end of that month. Since then, **Rooney** has been the acting village manager.

Local knowledge

Village President Greg Klatecki said **Rooney** is very knowledgeable about the issues in the village, and showed an aggressive edge while performing as acting village manager. "It makes the transition a lot easier," Klatecki said of the hire. "He is aware of most everything going on in the village." Klatecki said if the Village Board were to search for a new village manager, it could easily have taken six months, and then that person would have acclimated himself or herself to the issues in the village. As village officials are working on redevelopment projects, building a new village hall and two fire stations, along with other projects, Klatecki said a long transition is not in the best interest of the village. "We would end up in a lull waiting through the transition," he said. "Everything is falling into place and we don't want that momentum to stop."

'Personality fits'

Other trustees also praised **Rooney's** work over the past few months as acting village manager. "His personality fits the timing," Trustee Dean Argiris said. "It takes good leadership to get things done. I see the attitude changing at Village Hall. He comes with leadership." "We need to continue to work as a team," Trustee Bob Heer said. "This hiring makes us proud." **Rooney** first joined the village staff in 2003 as assistant village manager. As an Army reservist, **Rooney** was called into active duty in 2005. He was sent to Iraq where he trained soldiers for the new Iraqi army. He spent 15 months in active duty. "What a country," **Rooney** said. "I was gone for 15 months, and the Village Board still has the confidence in me to work for the village." **Rooney** was previously the city administrator for Highwood, where he worked for seven years. His tenure there was marked by the conversion of Fort Sheridan to civilian uses. **Rooney** becomes Wheeling's seventh village manager since the village adopted the board/manager style of government in 1970.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Herald (IL)
December 19, 2006

Wheeling Board Names Acting Village Manager

Author: Sue Ter Maat

The Wheeling village board Monday formally appointed an acting village manager to temporarily replace the current manager, who handed in his resignation last week. **J. Mark Rooney**, who was the assistant village manager, was designated as acting village manager, and he presided as such during the meeting.

The board also accepted the resignation of Wally Douthwaite, who was not present at the meeting. Last week, Douthwaite put in his resignation. He will remain with the village until the end of the year to tie up loose ends on projects he was working on, village officials said.

Douthwaite has declined to comment on his resignation. Some board members had hoped Douthwaite would've continued as village manager. Trustee Judy Abruscato said she was sad to see him go. "I thought he did a good job," she said.

Douthwaite was city manager of Des Plaines until 2001. He left the city to take a job as city manager in Springboro, Ohio. Douthwaite, 53, was hired as Wheeling's village manager in September 2002 after a seven-month search to fill the position. **Rooney** may become the village manager after a three-month trial. The board will decide to promote him or look for a new manager after that time. Before coming to Wheeling, **Rooney** was the city manager of Highwood.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Glencoe News (IL)
November 10, 2005

For Rooney in Iraq, Thoughts Will Turn to Veterans Day

Author: Kenneth L. R. Patchen

For Lt. Col. **Mark Rooney**, a former city administrator for Highwood who is now in Baghdad, Veterans Day offers a chance to consider anew the meaning of ceremonies intended to honor armed forces personnel. He has more time to think about remembrance these days. With a more normal schedule than he had in July when located near Tal Afar in northwestern Iraq, **Rooney** now is part of a group of 100 American soldiers working with 15,000 Iraqis. No longer assigned to improve water and sewage treatment plants, he is an adviser for Iraqi soldiers working in Taji to protect their country. Each day he is training and advising a regiment of 800 soldiers. "I think every day is getting better," he said.

Rooney's family lives at Town of Fort Sheridan. In March, 2003, he left Highwood to work as assistant village manager in Wheeling. A year later, he was called to serve in Iraq. While working in Highwood, he would take his children to participate in ceremonies sponsored by Highwood American Legion Post 501 to honor armed forces personnel. "You think about (Veterans Day) here more than you do there," **Rooney** said.

For many people, Veterans Day is a singular holiday of remembrance, he said, whereas in a war zone, it's more common to think of those who have died at any time of the day or year. In either case, both in a war zone or at home, a time of remembrance is not a time of enjoyment. "It's a traumatic event for those who have seen something," he said. On the home front, he said, "The families of deployed soldiers are unduly stressed."

Spouses live every day with the responsibility to maintain a household and to raise children. At any time, a military representative in dress greens may knock on the door with news that their life as they knew it is now over and the children have lost a parent. **Rooney** said this can create a tougher year for those left behind than for those who are deployed. Karen **Rooney**, taking care of their three children, agrees that explaining their life can be difficult. "It really is tough," she said. "It's hard to explain to (children)."

Veterans Day, she said, can be a time for people to remember those who are left at home while a spouse or child serves overseas. The focus can include those who were or are in the armed forces and their families. **Rooney** sees differences between the experience of World War II and Desert Storm veterans which is reflected in how they may view an occasion such as Veterans Day. World War II soldiers had cohesive units and a more common experience with one another and could share their experiences among themselves. That is not the pattern for today's soldier. **Rooney** has served in both Gulf War invasions and said the battlefield experience is different for a modern soldier. Military service is much more technological and specialized than it was I World War II. These days, some personnel do not see gunfire so that alone creates a difference among armed forces personnel in the same war. For example, his own experience in the past

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

three months has exposed him to more gun fire than in previous assignments there. "(Service here is) violent, but not really as violent as portrayed in the media," he said. "The Gulf War was, in retrospect, a very easy operation. This one is much tougher. Operations (such as) fighting insurgents are never easy." He is comfortable serving in Iraq. "I'm not troubled by anything I've seen or done," he said. "The part that helps me is that I know what the mission is." He is helping Iraqi soldiers protect their country. He said many citizens there have a lot of motivation to make things better and adopt change. "The Iraqi soldiers are fighting and dying for their country here a lot more than the media portray," **Rooney** said. "It's good they're doing it. It's their country."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
J. Mark Rooney
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Herald (IL)
June 26, 2004

Wheeling Could Benefit Twice from Federal Flood-Control Plan

Author: Avian Carrasquillo

Wheeling's decision to take part in a federal flood mitigation program has economic implications for the town center, businesses and local homeowners, village officials say. The Army Corps of Engineers and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources are working with communities throughout the state on six projects meant to curb flooding in Illinois.

Wheeling holds a major stake in one of those projects, known as Levee 37, which calls for a Buffalo Creek reservoir expansion. The project calls for obtaining another 476 acre-feet (the amount of water required to cover 1 acre with 1 foot of water) of water storage at additional sites in Wheeling. Assistant Village Manager **Mark Rooney** said Wheeling's interest in this project is to protect existing businesses and houses from flooding. But he added Wheeling has a secondary goal of economic redevelopment of the downtown and Metra train station areas in mind with this project.

Rooney said development cannot occur in a heavy flood plain. Areas where homes and businesses exist in a flood plain were built before any study identified them as being in a flood plain, but it could affect future development there. "It's very expensive, if not impossible, to get permits to rebuild and build new things (in a flood plain) without this program," he said. "The federal project is a win-win situation as we see it in Wheeling," **Rooney** added.

Of the 33 sites being considered for water storage throughout the area, only two would be in Wheeling. One of the more visible sites is at the Wheeling Park District, 333 W. Dundee Road, where 205 acre-feet would be used. The other site identified is in the northwest corner of Wheeling on farm land. **Rooney** said the site would not be a detention pond, but would be designed to hold small amounts of water from the Des Plaines River when it overflowed until it subsided, and would not be enough to do any damage.

Jan Buchs, executive director of the Wheeling Park District said the park district will take a serious look at the federal plan. "We're excited to explore future opportunities to continue the future development of the park district," she said. The project would be federally funded and could be ready to break ground as early as fall 2005, **Rooney** estimated.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Herald (IL)
October 23, 2003

Wheeling Sues to Acquire Property for Redevelopment

Author: Matt Arado

The village of Wheeling has filed a condemnation lawsuit against the owners of property on North Milwaukee Avenue in an effort to facilitate redevelopment of the area. The village is trying to acquire the property at 597 N. Milwaukee Ave., now home to a warehouse building and a used car dealership. The property owners could not be reached for comment. The property sits in a tax increment financing district the village established in February near the intersection of Milwaukee Avenue and Lake-Cook Road.

Wheeling officials would like to join the property with other parcels just to the north, forming a 20-acre site that could then be developed with shops and other commercial outlets. The village is negotiating purchase prices with the other property owners. "We believe commercial is the best use for that land," Assistant Village Manager **Mark Rooney** said. "A strong commercial area would be to the betterment of the entire community."

A TIF district is a redevelopment tool that allows towns to freeze property tax levels in a designated area for up to 23 years. As the value of the property rises, property owners in the district pay taxes as usual, but towns can use the amount paid above and beyond the frozen levels to cover redevelopment costs.

Wheeling now has three active TIF districts. In addition to the North Milwaukee-Lake-Cook Road area, there is a TIF district near the intersection of Dundee Road and Milwaukee Avenue and one further south on Milwaukee near Hintz Road. Next month, the village will hold a public hearing on a proposed fourth TIF district, which would be located around the Metra train tracks across Dundee Road. That hearing will be held Nov. 10. All of the redevelopment efforts are designed to give Wheeling a strong commercial tax base and improve the village's image.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Herald (IL)

March 3, 2003

Village Works to Fill Out Staff in Top Spots

Author: Cass Cliatt

A year ago, Wheeling trustees tried to steer the village toward improvement, but with a shortage of hands to work the helm. The vacancies in Wheeling's top village staff began to mount. Now, the village is about finished amassing the administrative muscle it needs to push toward upgrading Wheeling's image, with the latest hire of a new assistant village manager.

J. Mark Rooney, the city administrator of Highwood, has been named Wheeling's new assistant village manager. "The volume of work here is such that we need two people to not only handle the day-to-day business, but also keep an eye on the bigger picture - being, where the village is going long term," Village Manager Wally Douthwaite said. If the village manager has to focus on such things as reviewing liquor licensing fees, he'll be distracted from "what are we doing downtown, what are we doing with a Kmart lease, what are we doing with a transit study," Douthwaite said.

Rooney, 43, will coordinate Wheeling's three redevelopment districts, negotiate the renewal of Wheeling's waste contract and manage special projects. He served seven years as Highwood's administrator and will fill a position left vacant in February 2002 when former Assistant Village Manager James Grabowski temporarily stepped in to fill Wheeling's top executive position.

That job was left empty by the dismissal of former Village Manager Craig Anderson, which later added to vacancies at the top of Wheeling's public works, community development, airport management and village attorney divisions. All of those vacant positions are now full. Wheeling is interviewing to fill a newly created position of public relations coordinator to be more efficient in informing residents of village news, Douthwaite said. The new staff member also will work with the Wheeling Special Events Commission on publicizing the annual Taste of Wheeling and other events.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Highland Park News (IL)

June 24, 1999

Highwood Cops Say City Dragging its Feet

Author: Kenneth L. R. Patchen

The Metropolitan Alliance of Police has filed an unfair labor relations practice complaint with the Illinois State Labor Relations Board against the City of Highwood on behalf of Highwood Police Officers. As of Tuesday afternoon, village officials and city contract negotiators had yet to receive notification of the filing and were unable to discuss the charges contained in it. City Administrator **Mark Rooney** said he expected the contract negotiations to take place during the first week of July. Negotiations had been set for that time because attorneys for both sides would be able to meet at that time. Union attorney John Rossi said that a draft contract for Highwood Police Officers had been submitted to the city in late April or early May. The city had expressed a desire for more and more time to review the language of the contract.

During the week of June 7, the union filed an unfair labor relations practice charge with the Illinois State Labor Relations Board, according to Rossi. Highwood Police union President Jeff Neimark expressed optimism about the ultimate outcome of negotiations between the union and city. "The future definitely looks optimistic, especially because of state labor laws in place." Highwood Police Officers voted to be represented by the Metropolitan Alliance of Police in March. At that time, City Administrator **Mark Rooney** had said, "We will negotiate in good faith if they decide to have a union or if they don't." Incorporated in 1984, MAP is made up of sworn police officers up to the rank of lieutenant and civilian employees who work full or part-time with state, county, or municipal law enforcement agencies. MAP officials have stated that their union is concerned with the ideals of police professionalism. In the past, Highwood union officials have expressed "The future definitely looks optimistic, especially because of state labor laws in place. Concern about overtime pay, scheduling, and the amount of turn-around time between work shifts.

Union officials have expressed additional concerns. "We're hoping for fire-arms training. We haven't had it for several years and (it is) a mandate of federal law," Neimark said. Neimark also said that regular pursuit training is needed for officers. "It is also mandated by federal law." "Basically we want to solidify our benefits," he said. There is a concern about salary, according to Neimark. He said he expects the police department union contract to benefit the city. A negotiated agreement will lead to better police equipment and better additional training. "It is one of the things that will help us and the city down the road." Negotiations on a contract between the city and union were initially delayed last summer when the city claimed it did not have enough employees to meet eligibility requirements for cities that can negotiate with unions. Highwood argued that on-call firefighters are independent contractors and should not be included in personnel counts. That argument was not accepted and the city was told to negotiate with the new police union. "We're very optimistic," Neimark said. "We're going to move ahead."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Highland Park News (IL)

July 24, 1997

Rooney Called Up to Serve Tour in Bosnia

Author: Steve Zalusky

The U.S. Army will get to see two sides of Highwood City Administrator **Mark Rooney** this month.

HIGHWOOD

On Wednesday, **Rooney**, who is in the Army reserve, will be called up for a brief tour of duty that includes trips to Germany, Hungary and Sarajevo, the former capital of Yugoslavia. By the end of the month, though, **Rooney** will travel to Washington, this time to wrangle with the Army as he takes part in negotiations for the transfer of Fort Sheridan to Highland Park and Highwood.

During his European stint, **Rooney**, a captain, will help the Army identify its needs for the next 18 months, if troops continue to be deployed in Bosnia that long. "It's kind of ironic," said **Rooney**, as he recalled that he argued for the deployment with his then-boss, former Sen. Paul Simon. "It came home to roost for me."

Rooney has already seen plenty of action. He volunteered for duty in the Persian Gulf, where he narrowly missed being hit by a Scud missile. He was walking toward a building that blew up right in front of him. "I saw a lot of people die in front of me," he said. "Everything gets easier after that." **Rooney** now serves in a data processing unit that, among other duties, enables e-mail to be sent across the countries where the operation is being conducted. It has also kept track of inventory being shipped into the theater.

He originally joined the Army as an enlisted man in 1983. He eventually attended Officer Candidate School. The U.S. force, originally as high as 18,000, has dwindled to 12,000, **Rooney** said, mostly in Hungary and Bosnia. "The troops over there know they're doing something worthwhile," **Rooney** said, adding that if the Americans don't do the job, the Europeans won't either.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Highland Park News (IL)

March 14, 1996

Highwood Gets Administrator

Author: Barbara Bell

Highwood is a changing town. For the first time in the city's 109-year history, Highwood has a professional city administrator. He is 36-year-old **Mark Rooney**, who was a liaison for Sen. Paul Simon on the Joint Fort Sheridan Planning Committee and helped write federal legislation to transfer the property to Highwood and Highland Park as well as transferring the golf course to the Lake County Forest Preserve.

Rooney, who is a captain in the Army Reserves at Fort Sheridan, has completed the course work for his master's degree in public administration at Northern Illinois University and is working on his thesis. **Rooney** will be paid a salary of \$35,000. "This is the last community on the North Shore to my knowledge not to have a professional form of government," **Rooney** said.

Mayor John Sirotti said he and the City Council had been considering hiring an administrator for two years. "We have to look at the city as a business," Sirotti said. "A city administrator is almost a must in this world." Sirotti is particularly pleased to have hired **Rooney**, who has been on the job about three weeks. "We were real fortunate to get him, I felt," the mayor said. "He's sincere about his interest and wanting to help us improve and move forward. The best thing everyone liked about him is he's excited about the future."

Indeed **Rooney** is. He said he feels "blessed" to be Highwood's city administrator. He's particularly excited about the development of Fort Sheridan by Stein & Co. because the fort will be the last piece of lakefront property to be developed on the North Shore. As Highwood's city administrator, **Rooney** will oversee the day-to-day operations of the city. In June, Highwood will receive its first payment of property taxes for city operations. Voters approved a referendum proposal last fall to raise taxes to pay for more city services.

Eventually, **Rooney** will develop a budget for all of Highwood's operations. Currently, the city operates under an appropriations ordinance in which a sum of money is approved for expenditure but not broken down by line item. Under a budget, each department is given a certain amount of money, and big expenditures such as a new fire truck are planned by placing money in cash reserves. "It tells the citizens where their money is being spent. It's the highest form of accountability," **Rooney** said of a formal budget. He hopes the city will be able to adopt a budget in 1997. "That's a goal," he said.

Another one of **Rooney's** responsibilities will be coordinating community policing at North Shore Estates, an apartment complex primarily inhabited by Hispanics. The police department plans to have an officer based there seven days a week to help residents and deter crime. In addition, other services such as health care would be provided to residents. A goal of community policing is to integrate Hispanics into the Highwood community. "They need someone to

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

J. Mark Rooney

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

coordinate a lot of that actual work with outreach agencies," **Rooney** said. "You have to manage change in a positive fashion."

Rooney and his wife, who live in Northbrook, were the last couple to have their wedding reception at Fort Sheridan. In fact, the officers club had officially closed but it was reopened for **Rooney**, a veteran of Desert Storm. "I have an emotional attachment to Fort Sheridan," **Rooney** said. He's also affectionate toward Highwood. "For me, it's going to be a great opportunity," **Rooney** said.

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