



To: City Council
From: Rich LaBombard
City Manager
Date: December 19, 2022
Subject: Monthly Department Activity Report
December 2022

Assessor:

We had our December Board of Review this week and had one clerical error on the docket to correct a square footage entry error.

We now have all our final ratios for the 2023 assessment roll:

Commercial 47.35	-	5.6% increase
Industrial 44.50	-	12.4% increase
Residential 43.47	-	15 % increase

I am certainly not surprised by the increase in residential class after the last two years of incredible sales. There are some areas going up as much as 30%. The market is currently flat, and we will see what the spring brings for the next round of real estate sales.

Continuing work on many projects:

- Reappraisal using aerial maps – ongoing
- Processing incoming Property Transfer Affidavits
- Processing deeds monthly
- Processing monthly building permits
- Year-end permit site visits to determine complete and partial values
- Personal Property Canvass

If anyone has any questions, please let me know.

City Manager:

Film Scout – A location scout for a film called Holland, Michigan was in the area looking for locations for a movie currently under production in Nashville. I understand there are some notable actors starring in the film.

<https://www.hollandsentinel.com/story/entertainment/local/2022/06/17/report-amazon-studios-nicole-kidman-working-thriller-called-holland-michigan/7663847001/>

CVB Board Meeting – I attended the Convention and Visitor's Bureau Board meeting where the board received an update from each of four municipalities before reviewing their marketing efforts. In addition, the board discussed two grant opportunities. One would be in support of events to

increase tourism particularly during the shoulder season, and one for local governments to apply for to fund projects that would meet the objectives of the CVB. I will work on a list of project ideas in the coming months while the CVB finalizes details about the grant application process.

Salary Study – Using data from the Michigan Municipal League, I studied four positions to ensure the City’s wages are in line with the salaries paid by other communities. While the data is valuable, not all communities participate in the study, so the results can be interpreted in various ways.

Credit Card Policy Training – A training session for employees assigned municipal credit cards was conducted. The training reviewed the policies and procedures for card holders and card users. All in attendance signed off acknowledging their participation. More training will be coming soon on the following topics (freedom of information, document retention, and non-discrimination and harassment).

Blue Star Trail Grant – The tri-communities have heard from MDOT that they are the recipient of a conditional commitment award in the amount of \$1.34 million to complete the construction of the trail from Douglas to Saugatuck Township.

Roundabout – I understand survey and engineering have started for a planned roundabout at the intersection of Blue Star Highway and Old Allegan Road. Construction is planned for 2025 using \$2.2 million of federal funds.

Drinking Water Asset Management Grant – The City was informed that they are the recipient of the DWAM grant from EGLE in the amount of \$349,500. The City originally applied for \$425,000 and after refining the costs, EGLE lowered the amount of the award, but we’re still very fortunate to receive as much as we did. The funds will be used to field survey water service lines throughout the Douglas community. The information gathered will help us understand the true cost to replace lead or lead containing water service lines in the City. Another benefit is that we will gather sufficient information to use as a foundation for a water rate study.

City Council Meeting – The regular meeting of the City Council was held on Monday, December 5, 2022, and outside of board and commission appointments, Council had one item of business to attend to. City Council approved the appointment of an interim Public Works Director until a replacement is hired. Mr. Ricky Zoet was unanimously approved by City Council to be the interim Public Works Director. Mr. Zoet, Public Works Supervisor, has been with the City since 2019 and was promoted to Supervisor in 2020.

Public Art – Another sculpture is proposed to be purchased and donated to the City of Douglas using private funds. I’m working with Maryjo Lemanski to follow the public art policy and identify a suitable location for the sculpture. The public art policy provides guidance for the City to acquire and display artwork throughout the City on municipal property. Ms. Lemanski was instrumental in coordinating the procurement and installation of a Jason Quigno sculpture called “Seven Grandfathers” at the History Center. The Quigno sculpture is owned by the City, but displayed on History Center property by written agreement.

City Hall Exterior Repairs – The Department of Public Works is working with contractors to provide quotes for the repair of woodwork on the exterior of City Hall. City Hall was built in two sections dating back to 1875 and 1902. During this fall’s exterior painting project, a number of wood siding and window trim areas were identified that need attention. The quotes will be provided to City Council for inclusion in the next fiscal year’s budget.

Planning Commission Meeting – The PC met on Thursday, December 8 at its regular meeting for December and took the following action:

- 324 W. Center Street – Site Plan Review and Special Land Use Request for Mixed-use development with first floor residential – known as Centre Collective Commercial – approved with conditions
- 324 W. Center Street – Site Condo review for a 20-unit single family residential development – known as Centre Collective Residential – approved with conditions
- 485 Ferry Street – Site Plan Review and Condominium – known as Forest Gate – tabled.

Economic Outlook for 2023 – I attended a session about the economic outlook for 2023 for the state and West Michigan Region this week. The presenters anticipated that we would experience a mild recession in the last half of 2023. They expect interest rates will remain high to fight off inflation. Supply chain issues are stabilizing, and commodity prices are decreasing. Inventory is increasing except in the automotive industry. Manufacturing is coming back to the US. Housing purchase prices are down slightly, but housing rent costs are trending higher. We are experiencing historic labor gaps as there are more jobs available than job seekers. Labor shortages are driving employers to restructure their workforce. Employers are experimenting with split shifts, shorter working hours to accommodate employee's family situations, retaining older workers, and trying to avoid worker burnout. During Covid a lot of workers migrated to the southeast of the United States. Large expensive cities saw employees leave areas like San Francisco, Boston, New York to relocate to more affordable areas. In Michigan, the Grand Rapids region is anticipated to continue to grow due to its relatively low cost of living. Allegan County is anticipated to grow its population by 4 percent over the next 30 years. The Allegan County employment outlook is optimistic as well with a projected 7.5 percent increase in employment over the next 30 years. Bottom line is 2023 could be rough for a bit, but the future of the region is looking bright.

Clerk:

Merry Christmas from the Clerk's office!

Prioritizing and Organizing - The City Clerk has been taking this time to do a lot of much needed document scanning, cleaning, updating, and organizing city files, agreements, and reviewing contracts. Additionally, securing quotes for big items such as IT services and insurance for use at the next budget session.

Research - Closed Session council questions need answers, the City Clerk has been compiling the answers and materials that will address these questions. If further information is needed or you would like to sit and discuss any of the materials provided, the Clerk's office is always open. I invite new council members to visit with any questions they may have.

Election – There is always work to be completed on voter cards, registration, and file updates.

Onboarding – Training the new Deputy Clerk is one of the top tasks that will be focused on. She has proven to be a big asset to the department and will be attending Clerks institute in the spring.

Deputy Clerk:

Records Retention- The Clerk is training me on the responsibility and maintaining of City records. I am working on gathering current information from the State of Michigan on record retention and disposal schedules for each City department. I will be passing on the information to each pertaining department as well, in order to help us continue to maintain all City records.

Meetings – Will continue to work with the Clerk training me on meeting procedures and minutes. I am planning to attend more meetings with her guiding me through the process. I am looking forward to the hands-on training and understanding of the meeting rules and process.

Short Term Rentals/Building BS&A- Continued work on organizing, uploading, and digitalizing our records of short-term rental applications and inspections. This process will be utilizing our Building Department program through BS&A. This will help streamline our tracking of renewals, failed/passed inspections, and payments for all short-term rental registrations. As I am continuing this project, I have researched and planned to set up other processes utilizing the Building Department program.

Police Department:

	November	Fiscal Year	YTD
<u>Complaints Answered/Investigated:</u>	160	862	1,804
<u>Criminal Arrests/Filings:</u>			
Felony:	00	06	20
Misdemeanor:	01	16	30
<u>Warrant Arrests:</u>	02	07	07
<u>Traffic Enforcement:</u>			
OWI/OUID/Impaired Driving Arrests:	01	04	07
OWI High Blood Alcohol Content:	00	02	04
OWI 3 rd Offense:	00	01	01
Traffic Stops:	42	275	788
Civil Infraction:	01	20	37
Parking Tickets:	00	42	93
<u>Community Contacts:</u>			
Personal Contacts:	927	5,710	12,652
Business Contacts:	196	1,115	2,381
Property Security Checks:	794	5,390	11,208
Foot Patrol: (November)	1,507 Minutes (25 Hours & 7 min.)		

Misdemeanor Charges: (November)
Operating While Intoxicated

Activity Time on Follow Up Investigations: (November)
1,192 Minutes (19 Hrs. & 52 Minutes)
Number of November Follow Up Investigations: 58

Investigation of Felony Cases:

Larceny (22-1742): Open Investigation.

Larceny (22-1793): Open Investigation. Submitted to Prosecutor's Office.

Fraudulent Checks (22-1496): Open

Fraud/Bank Account \$82,900 (#22-1261): Open/Inactive.

Criminal Sexual Conduct (#22-0905): Open Investigation.

Stolen Watercraft (#21-1420): Open/Inactive.

Robbery-Armed Huntington ATM (#20-1827). Open.

Fraud (22-0091). Open investigation.

Fraud (22-0133). Open investigation.

Fraud (22-1261): Open investigation.

Out of Jurisdiction Responses: (November)

Saugatuck Township:

- 22-1645: Personal Injury Rollover Accident. Closest LE Unit. Turned over to the Sheriff's Office.
- 22-1695: Back up the Sheriff's Office on a burglary alarm.

Saugatuck City:

- 22-1723: Priority 1 Medical Emergency/CPR turned into Death Investigation.

Laketown Township:

- 22-1704: Requested to assist Sheriff's Office on a traffic crash.

Ganges Township:

- 22-1769: Backup Sheriff's Office on a Domestic Violence Call.

Manlius Township:

- 22-1756: Backup the Sheriff's Office on a Threat of Workplace Violence.

Total Out of Jurisdiction Responses for November: 06

Total Complaints Handled within Douglas City for November: 154

Noteworthy Incidents: (November)

22-1680: On Wednesday 11/9/22 at 6:34 A.M. I was dispatched to the 6700 block of Enterprise Drive for a gas odor and employees evacuating the building. Upon checking with Saugatuck Fire Personnel it was determined to be an overheated battery charger causing the odor.

22-1682: On Wednesday 11/9/22 at 2:17 P.M. I was dispatched to the 400 block of Mary Knoll to a missing person with suspicious circumstances. After an extensive investigation the missing person made telephone contact with family members and was not disclosing their location however indicated that they were okay.

22-1693: On Friday 11/11/22 at 5:50 P.M. Officer Brown was dispatched to a suspicious vehicle in the area of Chestnut Lane. Officer Brown checked the area and stopped the suspect vehicle making contact with the driver and charges were submitted to the Allegan County Prosecutor's Office for Driving While License Suspended. The case was also referred to ICE due to a deportation status that was indicated.

22-1696: On Saturday 11/12/22 at 11:19 A.M. Officer Reyes was dispatched to the area of Center Street and Hamilton Street for a female subject who jumped from a vehicle and was in a manic state. Officer Reyes spoke with the subject and convinced her to get back in the vehicle with her daughter so they could seek further assistance.

22-1715: On Wednesday 11/16/22 at 9:19 P.M. Officer Brown was dispatched to the 200 block of Riverview Drive for a subject who was making multiple calls to 911 and was paranoid that he was being watched by officers. He continued to make multiple calls to 911 and had to be warned to cease and that misuse of 911 is a criminal offense.

22-1744: On 11/21/22 at 12:51 P.M. Officer Reyes and I responded to the 400 block of Amity Lane for a priority 1 medical with CPR in progress. Upon arrival a neighbor had initiated CPR and the victim was moved to the ground and CPR was continued by officers. CPR was continued by STFD and AMR Ambulance Service. Eventually CPR was ended by AMR Ambulance Service after reviewing care with Holland Hospital E.R. Physician and the incident became a death investigation. Our investigation along with the Deputy Medical Examiner concluded that the death was from a medical issue.

The Department also responded to the following types of calls during November: Narcotics Investigation, noise complaints, intoxicated person complaints, medical emergencies, disorderly person complaint, suspicious person/vehicle/situation complaints, mental health complaints, harassment complaints, trespassing complaints, property damage vehicle crashes, vehicle/deer crashes, motorist assists, child custody complaints, residential & business alarms, malicious destruction of property complaint, delinquent juvenile complaints, fraud complaints, Larceny complaints, abandoned vehicles, lost/found property complaints, peace officer complaints, conservation and animal complaints, a tree fire complaint, fire alarms, check welfare complaints, general non-criminal assists, and open doors on area businesses.

Events: (November)

Douglas Elementary School Safe Kids Classroom Training with STFD.

Assist Douglas Elementary School with mandated emergency drills.

Staff Training: (November)

Radar Training for Officer Dyer.

Project Management:

Planning and Zoning Assistance – Continue to meet with Williams and Works as the interim Planning and Zoning contact. Receive zoning review applications and process them with either Williams and Works or Michigan Township Services. Continually learn the procedure of flow for each application and filing them accordingly. Assisted residents with application submittals and directed them to Williams and Works with questions I'm unable to answer. Issued notices for the January Planning Commission meeting and Zoning Board of Appeals meeting.

Refuse Agreement – Made changes to the Refuse Agreement per our City Attorneys comments. Continue to work on the final Agreement with Republic and prepared a memorandum for Council.

Notice to Abate – Issued one notice to a location with code enforcement issues such as junk/trash.

Permit Applications – Continue to improve and recreate outdated forms for Planning and Zoning needs.

FY 22-23 – Scheduling of various capital improvement projects. Updated the Master Project List for staff reporting. Starting to gather quotes for FY 23-24 for the budget process.

DPW – Assist with ordering supplies, permit requirements, and updating list of various DPW items. Helped contact Consumers for meter issues, as well as Michigan Gas for repairs to the Wiley Rd non-motorized path. Designed and ordered decals for trucks and equipment. Help set up a laptop for use by the department.

Spark Grant – Assist the Schultz Park Community Playground ad-Hoc Committee with a Spark Grant opportunity. Met with the Committee and our City Engineer, as well as wrote a resolution of support with memorandum for City Council. Submitting final application by December 16th.

Deer Survey – Created a Deer Survey for the community and added it to the back of the Winter Tax bills for submittal instructions.

Public Works Department:

Downtown - DPW renovated and installed the message board outside City Hall at its new permanent location.

Point Pleasant – Property has been cleaned up of leaves and brush and an anti-backflow device has been installed per KLSWA requirements.

Beery Field – Leaf accumulation at the ballpark fence has been blown and picked up.

Road Maintenance - DPW crews have filled in potholes on Lawn St., Wiley Rd., Ferry St., Union St., Water St., and Chestnut St. Road signage has been installed/improved on Campbell Rd., Wiley Rd., Center St., Union St., Blue Star Hwy/Wiley Rd., and Schultz Park for proper enforcement and safety.

Leaves and Brush – Crews have made the last rounds of leaf and brush pickup for the year. Not counting contracted loads, DPW took 39 loads of leaves and 8 loads of brush out of the City in the month of November.

Budgeting – DPW is working on getting quotes for the upcoming budget process for FY 22-23.

Schultz Park – Dead/unsafe trees along the water's edge by the boat launch were removed and the shoreline line was cleaned up.

Equipment - Pickup trucks and the leaf vacuum equipment has had oil changes. Old City decals/logos have been removed off all DPW equipment and new decals have been put on.

DPW Shop - DPW yard has been organized for snow removal and visual improvement. Inside shop has been cleaned and organized for employee morale and safety.

Treasurer:

Taxes – Tax bills started arriving in mailboxes on December 1st. Since then, we have had a consistent stream of tax receipts coming in. I am working on reviewing and finalizing the December tax autopay for those property owners who have signed up.

- New this year you will be able to pay online via credit card or e-check. Please see tinyurl.com/PayItOnline for further information.
- The City encourages people to sign up for our tax autopay program. Forms and further information can be found at tinyurl.com/DouglasTaxAutoPay
- Look up your balance and payment information anytime at bsaonline.com/?uid=484
- Please check the back of your tax bill for information about a community deer survey

Audit – The City's annual audit was completed and required forms submitted to the State. The auditors will be making an audit presentation to Council at the second meeting in January.

Accounts Payable – This month I continued working on switching to ACH payments for vendors. This process will take some time to implement as information will need to be collected from each vendor.

Cash Balances – The City's cash balances were down from last month. Some of the larger expenditures were DPW equipment purchases and final payment on road projects done this fall. The latest inflation report provided hope that inflation is cooling off, hopefully this becomes the trend.

City Revenues and Expenses – Revenues and expenditures were generally consistent with where we would expect for this point of the year. The elections and insurance department expenditures are weighted near the front of the year but are in line with expectations.