



**To:** City Council

**From:** Rich LaBombard  
City Manager

**Date:** March 20, 2023

**Subject:** Monthly Department Activity Report  
March 2023

### **Assessor:**

**March Board of Review** - (MBOR) is in session this week to hear appeals for 2023 assessments. It has been a quiet year with a few more calls than usual, but only a couple of appointments as of this report. I hope to wrap up all the paperwork and settle with Allegan County on Tuesday (3/21).

Continuing work on many projects:

- Reappraisal using aerial maps – ongoing
- Processing incoming Property Transfer Affidavits
- Processing deeds monthly
- Processing monthly building permits
- Processing incoming Personal Statements

### **City Manager:**

**Blue Star Bridge Navigation Lighting** – The design is completed for the Blue Star Bridge navigation lighting project being coordinated among the three communities of Douglas, Saugatuck, and Saugatuck Township. The bids are being advertised and we anticipate the selected bidder will go to the Douglas City Council on April 17<sup>th</sup> for acceptance. The Saugatuck City Council and Saugatuck Township Board will have to accept the bid as well before the project can be officially awarded. Once awarded, the contractor will provide us all a schedule to complete the work.

**Gateway Signage** – I met with a gentleman interested in working with the DDA on a solution for the gateway signage located at Blue Star Highway and Center Streets. The gateway sign may need some modification to incorporate more design elements to direct visitors to the downtown. The DDA is working on relocating the sign out of the public right of way.

**Employee Healthcare** – The City's benefit provider met with City staff about healthcare options for the upcoming fiscal year. Every year at this time, staff meet to learn about new products and pricing for benefits. City staff are investigating the opportunity to get into a healthcare pool made up of municipalities and school districts to help reduce the cost of employee benefits.

**Interviews** – Interviews were held for candidates who applied for the Director of Public Works position as well as the Planning and Zoning Administrator positions.

**Blue Star Trail Meeting** – The Blue Star Trail engineering firm C2AE held a meeting to go over initial conversations about design of the trail extension starting in Douglas and extending into Saugatuck Township.

**Planning Commission** – The PC met this month and discussed revisions to the sign ordinance and bylaws. They also directed staff to engage consultants to complete a traffic study review and review of an environmental study for the Forest Gate project. The next Planning Commission meeting is on April 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Community Energy Management Grant** – Staff was successful in their application to EGLE for an energy grant to make improvements to the HVAC and interior and exterior lighting at the Police Department. The grant in the amount of \$19,650 requires no match.

**MDOT Bridge Work** – In a meeting this month with MDOT, we learned that upcoming bridge work at exit 36 and exit 41 will impact traffic this summer. The exit 36 bridge will be completely redecked starting in April and lasting through October. While we didn't get an opportunity to review the detour plan, those in attendance had concerns about how traffic would be managed while the work is in progress. MDOT stated that the detour would be complex. I took the opportunity to ask for a temporary traffic signal to be placed at the Blue Star and Wiley intersection based on our last experience with MDOT work and traffic using Blue Star. Their suggestion back to me was a four way stop at the intersection. The exit 41 bridge will be resurfaced and shouldn't have a long term impact on traffic, in the sense I got from the meeting. Another meeting will be held in the coming weeks to review the detour plan and safety concerns.

**Forest Gate** – The Planning and Zoning Administrator held a site plan review committee meeting to look at updates to the Forest Gate condominium plan. The meeting is necessary to gather input about the plan from the Developer, City Engineer, Public Works, KLSWA, Police and Fire.

**Law Enforcement** – A committee met last week to discuss policing and out of jurisdiction calls. We received a copy of the department policy that guides out of jurisdiction priorities. The Police Department was asked to continue with data gathering and reporting of out of jurisdiction calls and assists.

**Budget Workshop #1** – Staff and City Council met to go over the first of at least four budget workshops to start the capital budget planning for the next fiscal year. This workshop focused on utility projects and public infrastructure. The feedback received by City Council will be incorporated into a project ranking system at the end of the workshops with the highest priority projects receiving funds allocated to complete. We've used this process for the last several years and it seems to work well for the City Council and staff to have organized discussions.

**Budget Workshop #2** – At the upcoming budget workshop, City Council will take a closer look at budget priorities related to facilities, property, and parks. The budget workshops are beneficial to City Council and staff to determine where to allocate funds for the upcoming fiscal year.

**City Engineer** – Staff met with the City Engineer to go over projects in progress and requested quotes for projects proposed in the next fiscal year.

**Manager's Lunch** – Last week I was invited to attend lunch with the Holland and Saugatuck City Managers. The meeting was beneficial to talk about collective projects and opportunities to collaborate when possible.

## **Clerk:**

**Clerk's Office** - Concentrating heavily on training for the Deputy Clerk. We have gone over how to put together an Ordinance/Resolution, how to post public hearing to the paper, and more importantly how to manage the timing of these postings to the press. Other completed work has been interviews for the DPW Director and Planning, updating internal working of Human Resource, and gathering information for the budget.

**Cyber Securities** - As you may know the Clerk's office is dedicated to protecting the City from external hackers to the City's data, and most recently the Clerk has attended a course on the legalities of Social Media postings. This is an area the City and Police Department must address to protect against legal matters. In the future this department will be making suggestions and requests centered around the legalities of Social Media.

**Elections** - The city will not have a May election this year. Per the passing of Proposal 2 of 2022 the City must now comply with the following amendments to the election law:

- Require Military or overseas ballots be counted if *postmarked* by election day.
- Provide voter right to single application to vote absentee in *all* elections.
- Require state-funded absentee-ballot drop boxes, *and* postage for absentee applications and ballots.
- Require nine days of early in-person voting (which means processing through the machines)
- Allow donations to fund elections, which must be disclosed.
- Require canvass boards certify election results based only on the official records of votes cast.

The office of the Clerk will be very busy this year training and implementing these new laws into the City elections.

## **Deputy Clerk:**

**Clerks Meetings** - I attended the Allegan County Clerks Association (ACCA) meeting on March 15. This was a terrific opportunity to connect with area Clerks and gather the latest information from the County. The West Michigan Regional Clerks Association (WMRCA) will be holding a workshop event in May with guest speakers and a presentation from the Ottawa County Clerk, Justin Roebuck. The Clerk and I are looking forward to attending.

**City Meetings Training** – Continued training with the Clerk on meeting procedures, bylaws, minutes, resolutions, and ordinances. I have been attending our City's Board and Commission meetings and have conducted a couple as well. This has been very helpful for me with learning Douglas's meetings process.

**Business Licenses-** Annual Business License Applications were sent out to area businesses last month. We have been receiving several daily and anticipate continued returns throughout the next few weeks. They are due by April 1<sup>st</sup>.

**MAMC Institute-** March 19<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> I will be attending the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks Institute. This weeklong course is the first step in the three-year institute program for clerk certification. This week I have received my updated class roster and there will be 118 others attending from municipalities throughout our state. It will be a great chance to network with Clerks statewide. I am excited for all the direct training, and I am looking forward to learning and understanding the duties of City Clerk.

## **Police Department:**

	<b>February</b>	<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>YTD</b>
<u>Complaints Answered/Investigated:</u>	157	1,326	306
<u>Criminal Arrests/Filings:</u>			
Felony:	04	11	05
Misdemeanor:	02	25	05
<u>Warrant Arrests:</u>	01	05	01
<u>Traffic Enforcement:</u>			
OWI/OUID/Impaired Driving Arrests:	00	06	01
OWI High Blood Alcohol Content:	00	02	00
OWI 3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense:	00	01	00
Traffic Stops:	58	428	110
Civil Infraction:	09	379	61
<u>Community Contacts:</u>			
Personal Contacts:	861	8,428	1,956
Business Contacts:	149	1,693	340
Property Security Checks:	762	8,051	1,580
<u>Foot Patrol: (February)</u>			
1,307 Minutes (21 Hours & 47 min.)			
<u>Felony Cases: (February)</u>			
Possession of Meth Amphetamines			
Receiving & Conceiving a Stolen Vehicle			
Carrying a Concealed Weapon			
Fleeing & Eluding a Police Officer 3 <sup>rd</sup>			
<u>Misdemeanor Charges: (February)</u>			
No Valid Operator's License.			
Driving while License Suspended.			
<u>Activity Time on Follow Up Complaint Investigations: (February)</u>			
1,110 Minutes (18 Hrs. & 30 Minutes)			
Number of February Follow Up Investigations: 34			
<u>Investigation of Felony Cases:</u>			
Larceny (22-1742): Open.			
Larceny (22-1793): Open.			

Fraudulent Checks (22-1496): Open.

Stolen Watercraft (#21-1420): Open.

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

Fraud (22-0091). Open.

Fraud (22-0133). Open.

Fraud (22-1261): Open.

#### Out of Jurisdiction Responses: (February)

Saugatuck Township:

- 23-0223: Back up Sheriff's Office @ Jars on Stop with Vehicle Search Conducted.
- 23-0272: Assist MSP & Sheriff's Office blocking entrance onto I-196 regarding a Traffic Crash requiring I-196 closure.

Saugatuck City:

23-0263: Back up Sheriff's Office on a Disorderly Subject Trespassing.

Filmore Township:

- 23-0299: Back up Sheriff's Office on Domestic Violence Complaint.
- 23-0251: Back up Sheriff's Office on Threats/Domestic Complaint.

Total Out of Jurisdiction Responses for February: 05

Total Complaints Handled within Douglas City for February: 152

#### Noteworthy Incidents: (February)

23-0171: On Saturday 02/04/23 at 11:33 pm Officer Brown observed a vehicle speeding on Bluestar Hwy. near 129<sup>th</sup> Ave. and upon stopping the vehicle found that two minors had been drinking in the vehicle. Both minors were cited for Minor in Possession of Intoxicants. The minors were released due to their ages.

23-0174: On Sunday 02/05/23 at 10:27 pm Officer Brown observed a vehicle with motor vehicle code violations and the passenger was ducking down to conceal her identity. Officer Brown stopped the vehicle on Bluestar Hwy. near Enterprise Dr. Officer Brown stepped out of the patrol vehicle and the suspect vehicle sped away Southbound at a high rate of speed. The suspect vehicle fled South on Bluestar Hwy. failing to stop at the intersection of M-89 Hwy. At this point the suspect vehicle's tires left the ground and upon landing the suspect vehicle lost control leaving the roadway into the West Side Ditch and striking a private driveway, sending the vehicle into the air. The Suspect vehicle came to rest on the next driveway South along Bluestar Hwy. in Ganges Twp. where Officer Brown caught up and stopped to begin rendering aid. The driver was transported by ambulance to Holland E.R. and then transferred to Spectrum Butterworth in Grand Rapids. He has since been released. The passenger was flown by W.M. Air Care to Bronson E.R. and has recently been transferred to a rehabilitation facility. The driver and passenger were travelling in a stolen vehicle during the incident and the driver has been charged with Fleeing and Eluding a Police Officer 3<sup>rd</sup>, Possession of Meth Amphetamines, Receiving and Concealing a Stolen Vehicle, and Carrying a Concealed Weapon. The driver has a valid warrant for Probation Violation from this incident and an additional Felony Charge of OUID Causing Injury is being sought. The driver is being sought on the described charges after he was released from the Hospital without notice given to our Department.

23-0221: On Tuesday 02/14/23 at 2:25 pm Officer Giles was dispatched to check the welfare of a male subject threatening suicide in the 00 block of Fremont Street. Officer Giles was able to contact the male subject and assess his situation. The male subject refused any assistance and was determined to not be a threat to himself.

23-0231: On Thursday 02/16/23 at 6:05 am I was dispatched to a priority 1 Medical with CPR being instructed on the phone in the 100 block of St. Peters Drive. Upon arrival the patient was assessed, and CPR was not started. I then conducted a death investigation along with the Medical Examiner and the death was determined to be of natural causes.

23-0255: On Monday 02/20/23 at 10:41 pm Officer Dyer was requested to attempt to locate a vehicle which was fleeing a Sheriff's Unit North on I-196 and had extinguished its lights near the Douglas (Exit 36) Exit. Officer Dyer observed the suspect vehicle Northbound on Bluestar Hwy. near Wiley Road and upon attempting to stop the suspect vehicle it fled North on Bluestar Hwy. to Exit 41 and then turned around, now fleeing South on Bluestar Hwy from Officer Dyer to Exit 36, where the suspect vehicle entered back onto I-196 and spike strips were deployed. The spike strips were successful on all four of the suspect vehicle's tires and unfortunately on two of the tires on our patrol vehicle. The suspect was taken into custody by the Sheriff's Office and our Department is seeking restitution to replace our equipment.

23-0292: On Sunday 02/26/23 at 9:09 am Officer Dyer was dispatched to the 400 block of Harbor Lake Drive for a priority 1 Medical possibly deceased subject. Upon arrival Officer Dyer determined the subject was deceased and Officer Dyer then completed the death investigation along with the Medical Examiner. The subject was determined to have passed by natural causes.

The Department also responded to the following types of calls during February: Assault Investigations, Weapons/Shots Fired Complaint, Noise Complaints, Malicious Destruction of Property Complaints, Medical Emergencies, Suspicious Person/Vehicle/Situation Complaints, Threats/Harassment Complaints, Driving while License Suspended Complaint, Property Damage Vehicle Crashes, Motorist Assists, Fire Investigations, Residential & Business Alarms, Delinquent Juvenile Complaints, Peace Officer Complaints, Conservation and Animal Complaints, Reckless Driving Complaints, Traffic Hazards/Trees Down, Welfare Checks, and General Non-Criminal Assists.

Events: (February)

Douglas Elementary School Safe Kids Classroom Training with STFD.

Training: (February)

Non-Discrimination and Harassment Training at City Hall.

## **Project Management:**

**Planning and Zoning Assistance** - Continue to meet with and assist Williams and Works as the interim Planning and Zoning contact. Receive zoning review applications, sign applications, and fence 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. Arranged and published the agenda packets and answered questions by Commissioners.

**EGLE Grant** – In February I applied for a zero match Community Energy Management Grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). The grant request

was to replace the Police Departments two outdated furnaces with a single high efficiency furnace, replace the two outdated air conditioning units and replace them with a single high efficiency furnace, and to replace the fluorescent / incandescent lighting fixtures with new LED lights, all of which should reduce utility costs. In March I received an email awarding the City of Douglas grant funding for \$19,650 with no match required. An agreement is yet to be signed but I hope to get the updates started shortly after.

**Refuse Agreement** – Continue to work on the final agreement with Republic. The legal team at Republic is now reviewing it.

**Permit Applications** – Continue to improve and recreate outdated forms for Planning and Zoning needs. Update the fees according to the new schedule of fees and add an online payment link. Created a new rezoning application and I'm in the process of doing a major revamp of the planned unit development application with Williams & Works.

**Budget & Capital Planning** – Scheduling of various capital improvement projects. Received bid proposals on the mill and overlay road resurfacing work and the 333 Blue Star Highway storm drain project. Updated the budget worksheets for the City Council workshops and followed up on quotes still needed.

**DPW** – Assist with ordering supplies, permit requirements, and updating list of various DPW items.

**Social District** – Started the process for the 2023 social district. A new resolution will seek approval from City Council to allow the social district through the state's expiration date of December 31, 2024.

**DWAM & Service Line Replacement** – Continue to meet regarding the DWAM grant and the lead and copper state rule of five percent lead service line replacement each year for 20 years.

**Leaf and Brush Pickup Guidelines and Schedule** – Worked with the DPW Interim Director to revise the leaf and brush guidelines along with the 2023 schedule. Pictures were added for further clarification and to provide examples. The revised information is posted on our website and was emailed via our bulk emailing system.

## **Public Works Department:**

**Downtown** - DPW employees used their telescoping loader and safety cage to switch 36 banners on both sides of Center Street from winter to spring. Next on the list is to switch out the banners on Blue Star Highway and Center Street from Blue Star Highway to Lakeshore Dr.

**Road Maintenance** - Using the heated asphalt trailer, DPW staff members were able to pothole patch on several streets by taking advantage of the warm days and clear roads. The twisted road sign along Blue Star Highway was straightened. Miss Dig was called in so that ditch work along Ferry Street near Campbell Rd. could be cleaned and reshaped with the mini excavator. Any excess dirt was then loaded and removed. Similar work was done on West Shore Dr. near St. Peters Dr. after large rain events the roads with gravel and dirt washed onto them and were broom cleaned with the loader using the hydraulic powered sweeper. After hours, on-call staff responded to a call from the Police Department stating there was an underground water leak at the corner of Wall St. and Water St. DPW blocked roads while the Kalamazoo Lake Sewer and Water Authority got the problem under control until major work could start the following day.

**Budgeting** - DPW continues to work on getting quotes for the upcoming FY 23/24 capital expense workshops.

**Schultz Boat Launch** - Two docks at the boat launch were in need of repair. Several 4x4 boat bumpers were either broken off or severely cracked. Leg adjustments were also worn out so new holes needed to be drilled, and rusted hardware was replaced with new. DPW employees used the loader with drag harrow to loosen and smooth parking areas for vehicles and boat trailers.

**Pickle Ball Court** - DPW staff noticed that the plywood backboard used for practice was leaning away from fencing with very few fixtures left keeping the whole wall from collapsing. New securement fixtures were purchased and installed.

**Equipment** - Plow trucks with movable scraper blades, apron chains, and augers were all greased, as required, to extend the life of the parts that are exposed to salt for prolonged periods of time. Warranty work on the tele loader, skid steer, and mini excavator was scheduled and completed by a certified technician. New tires were ordered and installed on one of the DPWs' pickup trucks.

**Brush** - Crews have been out picking up brush due to heavy snow events and an ice storm that brought down trees and branches.

**Buildings** - Staff installed a gutter on a back section of the DPW facility to prevent water from entering the bathroom during heavy rains. Staff then applied a slip resistant epoxy paint to the bathroom floor for safety. Water entering the building has been a persistent problem.

**Miss Dig Training** - Another DPW staff member has passed the Miss Dig exam and now has full access to the Miss Dig online portal. An emergency Miss Dig was placed by Kalamazoo Lake Sewer and Water Authority for storm drain repairs located near the intersection of Wall St. and Washington St. The utility flagging was completed by DPW in the required time frame.

**Leaf & Brush** - Staff assisted with the revised 2023 Leaf and Brush Guidelines and Schedule. The schedule will start in April and is now posted on the City website.

## **Treasurer:**

**Taxes** - On March 1<sup>st</sup> any unpaid tax bills will be turned over to the Allegan County Treasurer for collection. They can be reached at 269-673-0260. This month I worked with the County through a process called settlement. During that process we confirm proper amounts were distributed and the County will pay the City any outstanding tax balances on real property.

**Budget** - City staff have been busy getting quotes for potential capital purchases for next year as well as starting to think about their operating and staffing needs for next year. I have been pushing our health, dental, life/short-term disability, and workers comp insurance providers for quotes, as well as working with potential new providers to get quotes. Council will be busy with workshops scheduled before every meeting until the public hearing for the budget on June 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Comcast bills** - I reached out to Comcast to discuss if there was any way to decrease our monthly bills. The representative I spoke with mentioned they were running a promotion on internet that would increase our internet speeds 10X. Upon receiving the quote, it showed the cost to the City would increase approximately \$70/month during the promotional period. I will work with department heads during the operational budget discussions to see if there are any services being provided that aren't being utilized in a manner that is cost efficient.

**Investments** - In March, two banks failed and were taken over by Federal regulators. The City through its investment policy and in accordance with State law is very limited in what it can invest in, with a focus on security and liquidity. When the City purchases CD's it is mindful of FDIC insurance limits and limits the overall time to maturity.



**Inflation** - In January, the monthly inflation report came in higher than expected leading to concerns that inflation might be headed back up. The February report was in line with expectations, but still came in at six percent year over year.

**Cash Balances** - The City's cash balances were down slightly from last month. This was primarily related to the payment of standard bills.

**City Revenues and Expenses** - Revenues and expenditures were generally consistent with where we would expect for this point of the year.