



**City Manager's Monthly Update
October 28, 2024**

Staff Update:

The city clerk will be moved into an enclosed office space, and the deputy city clerk will move into the space where the city clerk is currently located. This will allow the city clerk to have privacy and work without disturbance. The city clerk's office is currently open to the public, who can start communicating with the clerk if she is available or not. She will have additional privacy to take telephone calls without being disturbed. The small conference room will be turned into the city clerk's office.

Danny Stauton will return to work next week as a part-time employee of the City's water operator. He will work 2 hours a day, 7 days a week. I will need Danny for a few days for the Surf Internet project. I aim to call Danny for an emergency on the Public Works side. Whenever we use Danny, he will be paid an hourly rate.

A new Department of Public Works laborer will start on October 23, 2024.

Shared Streets and Spaces Program:

The first exciting news is that Governor Whitmer announced yesterday that Hartford was awarded the Shared Streets and Spaces program grant for \$200,000. There is no local match for this grant. The grant will construct approximately 1,800' of ADA-complaint concrete sidewalk from Center Street Apartments on S. Center Street south to 60th Avenue and then east along 60th Avenue to connect to the existing sidewalk at Woodside Drive. This would provide a safe, continuous sidewalk route from the mobile home park and Center Street Apartments to Red Wood Elementary School.

DWSRF Project:

I have been working with the DWSRF team to create a resolution to bring to you at the November city commission meeting. The team consists of the same team the city had for the WWTP bond of Dickinson Wright: Roger Swets as bond counsel and Andy Campbell with Bendzinski & Co. as Municipal Finance Advisors. Several resolutions will come before you for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) project, which consists of the following: Attached are both proposals from Dickinson Wright and Bendzinski. Please read both carefully.

- Dickinson Wright PLLC to serve as Bond Counsel for DWSRF Water Revenue Bonds & Bond Anticipation Note (BAN)
- Dickinson Wright PLLC To Serve as Bond Counsel for The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) Project Michigan Transportation Fund Bond
- Bendzinski & Co. to Serve as The Registered Municipal Advisor for The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) Water Revenue Bonds & Bond Anticipation Note (Ban)

- Bendzinski & Co. As The City’s Municipal Finance Advisor for The Michigan Transportation Fund Bond
- Purchase, Acquire, And Construct Improvements to The Water System and Publish Notice of Intent To Issue Revenue Bonds

We have not received a formal offer from EGLE; therefore, all the resolutions will be contingent upon an offer from EGLE.

AT&T Update:

Nick Curio is communicating with MasTec communications group, which AT&T is contracting to improve the cellular tower. Nick is trying to get a contact person from AT&T to talk to regarding a claim; they stated we are in a holdover tenancy.

The original lease is from 1995. It stated that the term would be five years. The lessee would have three options to renew the lease for additional five-year periods.

A ten-year lease renewal was completed in 1999. The term may be extended for two additional five-year periods.

AT&T has a different understanding and believes it is in an automatically renewed extension term, with the right to continued extensions through 2043. However, AT&T has not produced any documentation supporting that understanding. Instead, AT&T stated a document entitled “Second Amendment” that is not fully signed, which differs from the fully signed “Second Amendment” the City has on file.

Spark Grant/DNR/Council Michigan Foundations:

This past Friday, the Southwestern Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) published the request for proposals on engineering services. The proposals are due on Tuesday, November 12th. I know the Strawberry Festival Committee and the Lions Club, which hold weekly concerts in the park, are worried about the construction in the park. I will update the preliminary schedule as I receive additional information.

- Engineering Services Acceptance – November City Commission Meeting
- Community Meetings and Update Conceptual Drawings – December – January 2025
- Request for Proposals for Contractors – January – February 2025
- Acceptance of Contractors – February or March 2025 City Commission Meeting
- Meet with contractors regarding construction schedule – April 2025

I spoke to Pete with the Lions Club regarding the concerts in the park. I encouraged Pete to look for another location for the concerts in the summer of 2025. I suggested the High school stadium. Also, Stephanie from the Strawberry Committee stopped by the office to meet with me. I told Stephanie that the City would work around the Strawberry Festival, scheduled for June 13th—14th, 2025. Stephanie mentioned that she would suggest the Library as an alternate concert location.

Planning Commission Meeting:

The Planning Commission met on November 14th to hold a public hearing on rezoning the property at 61827 CR 687, adjacent to Shell’s gas station and I-94. The property is currently zoned for General Business, but Casey’s Retail Company submitted a rezoning application to the planning commission. According to the

zoning ordinance, the planning commission has recommended that this item be brought before the city commission for review and consideration of approval at the city commission meeting this month.

9 S. Center Street

A building permit was never requested or issued for 9 S. Center Street. We have received several complaints regarding this building (the complaint was from Mayor Pro-Tem Miller), a garage that may be turned into an apartment. The original complaint was sent to Safebuilt **on April 23rd**. My staff called the Building Official, Rich McGrew, regarding the status of the property because we are still receiving complaints about the property.

Staff followed up on a recent complaint and asked the building official, Rich McGrew if he had been to 9 South Center St to follow up on the complaints we had received. The original complaint was sent to Safebuilt on **April 23, 2024**. I wanted to know the status because we are still receiving complaints. Rich stated he had been to the property in **July and August**. **In July**, Rich's report noted that the building, without a permit, looks like a sewer line coming out of the side of the building, 4 feet off of the ground. Rich said he was tagging the unit. **In August**, Rich stated a failed code violation. (Attached are the pictures and reports).

Rich said he had tagged the property, and they had 24 hours to comply by either getting a permit and making corrections or dismantling everything and turning it back into a garage. It is now October, and nothing has been done. The owners have a sewer line from the house into the garage but still haven't obtained a building permit.

I met with Glenn Lindsey, Safebuilt Midwest's Director of Operations, over the telephone last week. Glenn stated that the city has been reporting that we have people building without a building permit, but Safebuilt never told city staff that they do not have a code enforcement contract with us, which is part of code enforcement. Therefore, city staff thought Safebuilt would handle the 9 S. Center Street owners regarding building without a permit. After hearing that information, I contacted Nick Curio to draft a letter to the property owners regarding the code violations.

I have contacted a couple of Building Officials about working for the City, but I have had no luck so far. I'm working with McKenna on a proposal for a building official and code enforcement. I have two other contacts that I will be contacting.

I was checking emails and responding to emails. I processed payment requests to Wightman for our outstanding construction projects.

Streetscape Downtown Improvement:

I'm working with USDA to closeout the grant.

Projects Compass:

Hartford Task Force Meeting 3 Summary - September 26, 2024

ACTION ITEMS

- Task Force Meetings are still tentatively scheduled for the third Thursday of the month. However, the Compass team will be reaching out to identify if evening times work better for the task force.
- Review the notes from September's meeting (below) and let me know about additional needs or observations we should include

- Think ahead to our next meeting topic for Meeting 4 on Governance and Contexts. What policies are in place and/or what programs around digital access are on offer in and around Hartford? What community conditions and characteristics should be considered to make sure any future solutions are meeting residents where they are?
- Invite others to join the task force (or try out the next meeting for size). Tech savvy is not required!

KEY POINTS

Upcoming Listening Session

- The task force members expressed the need for Spanish interpretive services and Spanish-translated materials for the event.
- The task force discussed the different means of getting the word out about the event.
- The Compass team is working to identify the best place and time for the event.
- Discussed providing flyers to the schools; will just need clearance from the school district and principals.
- Task force attendees requested resources in Spanish to distribute among the community.

Community Partners and Organizations

- Recommended participation from the Southwest Michigan Migrant Resource Council, which can help spread materials among the migrant worker communities.

Digital Skills Service Delivery

- Families use mobile apps for school communication and access to grades.
- IT training is provided in middle school; high school students often seek help from IT staff.
- Internet safety is paramount among students and parents.
- The task force Highlighted dual enrollment through KVCC and a shift towards tech education, with a preference for hands-on learning.
- Awareness of local programs or initiatives for digital skills training.
- Uncertain about resources for people with disabilities or supportive technology.
- Different use cases for digital skills, such as finding job resources through Michigan Works!, hospital check-in and health records access, and churches streaming services online.
- Facebook and websites are of great value to local businesses.

The first listening session will be at Hartford's Public Library, which will host Hartford's first listening session on **November 14, 2024, from 6-8 pm** at the library.

Meetings:

I had the following meetings this week:

- Andy Campbell, Bendzinski & Co.
- James Hanna, Municipal Water Contract Operations Business
- Project Compass Task Force Meeting
- Nick Blackmer, Superintendent Hartford Public Schools
- Planning Commission Meeting
- Local Revenue Sharing Board – Pokagon Hartford Area Meeting

19 West Main St * Hartford * MI * 49057 * 269-621-2477 * 269-621-2054 Fax
www.cityofhartfordmi.org

- Attorney Curcio, Attorney
- Mickey Bittner, Wightman & Assoc.
- Interviewed two applicants for the Public Works position
- Met with painting contractors
- Mike Chappell, Van Buren County Commissioner
- Jackie Morgan, USDA

Respectfully Submitted,



Nicol Brown
City Manager

**CITY MANAGER'S GOALS
JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2025
NICOL BROWN**

	GOALS	STEPS TO REACH GOAL	WHO IS INVOLVED	UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2024	UPDATE OCTOBER 2024
1	RITE AID REDEVELOPMENT	Rite Aid Building - Investigate the ownership Seek a business Check to see if there is a deed restriction	Market One Van Buren County		Have not started
2	WATER/SEWER STUDY	Contact Baker Tilly Receive a quote Recommendation to City Commissioners	Baker Tilly		In the process of working with Bendzenski. Going before commission the water and sewer study
3	COMMISSIONERS WEEKLY REPORTS	Include invitations and informational flyers Include time sensitive information	Staff		Currently sending weekly reports.
4	ZONING	Research lot size to build Amend Zoning Ordinance Amend Rental Registration Ordinance	Wrightman & Assoc Safebuilt		Rental Registration Ordinance need to go before commission. Would like to apply for a MEDC grant for updating master plan and zoning ordinance.
5	INFRASTRUCTURE	Capital Improvement Plan/Schedule of Maintenance Pavement and Surface Revaluation Rating/ Condition of Local & Major Roads Curve Painting Discussion Mileage on Roadways	Wrightman & Assoc & DPW Wrightman & Assoc & DPW	Road assest management/VBCRC	Have not started.
6	DEPARTMENT RESTRUCTURING				

**CITY MANAGER'S GOALS
JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2025
NICOL BROWN**

	GOALS	STEPS TO REACH GOAL	WHO IS INVOLVED	UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2024	UPDATE OCTOBER 2024
	Iron Removal Plant (IRP)	Contract Danny Staunton contract Recommendation to City Commission	Nick Curio		Working Part-time
	DPW	Write Job Description for DPW supervisor Make a Decision Hourly/Salary Recommendation to City Commissioners Promote Implement	Nick Curio		Complete
	Code Enforcement Officer	Post Code Enforcement position Interviews Background check/physical Job Offer Hire	Nick Curio		In Progress
	WWTP	Write Job Description for WWTP Supervisor Make a Decision Hourly/Salary Recommendation to City Commissioners Make Job Offer Promote Implement	Nick Curio		Complete
	Police Dept.	Request assistance from VBC Sheriff's Dept Review contract w/VBC Sheriff's & City of Hartford Recommendation to City Commissioners Implement the contract Create Police Dept Committee Recommendation to City Commissioners	Sheriff's Dept Michigan State Police		In Progress
7	EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK	Update Staff Review Changes @ Dept Head Meeting Send changes to Attorney Recommendation to City Commission	Nick Curio Dept Head Staff		In Progress

**CITY MANAGER'S GOALS
JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2025
NICOL BROWN**

	GOALS	STEPS TO REACH GOAL	WHO IS INVOLVED	UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2024	UPDATE OCTOBER 2024
8	TREASURER & UTILITY SOFTWARE	Implement Request for quotes Review quotes with Joe Mangan (Lauterbach & Amen, LLP) & Pam Recommendation to City Commission	Pam Schultz		In Progress. I will bring before commission in November.



Grant Summary

Date: 10/18/2024

Page: 1 of 1

Grant Type: Shared Streets and Spaces Grant

Grant Number: 6624

Section	Applicant	Description (rpt)	Current Grant Amount	Total Match	Total Amount	Grant %	Status	Grant Year
01	City of Hartford	60th Avenue Sidewalk Extension	\$200,000.00	\$0.00	\$200,000.00	100.00%	Approved	2025
Total:			\$200,000.00	\$0.00	\$200,000.00	100.00%		

Section Grant Section Description

01 Construct approximately 1,800' of ADA-compliant concrete sidewalk from Center Street Apartments on S. Center Street south to 60th Avenue and then east along 60th Avenue to connect to the existing sidewalk at Woodside Drive. This would provide a safe, continuous sidewalk route from the mobile home park and Center Street Apartments to Red Wood Elementary School.