

November 12, 2015

Lynda Beaton has joined the City Council and our Organizational Meeting has been held. Congratulations to Mayor Kenney and Mayor Pro Tem Gustad on their selection by City Council for the 2015 – 2016 year.

I look forward to the second year of my term and there are still many issues facing the City of Manistee. We anticipate the arrival of Mr. Thad Taylor as City Manager around December 7th. I've started reviewing the current budget and hope to find some areas we can address to add funds for continued street improvements. The funds obligated by previous debt against revenue from the Oil & Gas fund continue to make this a challenge.

I'm still looking for numbers on the Water Meter issue and hope to be able to publicize the number of incorrectly read meters and what we have gained in revenue through replacements and corrections in reading of the larger meters. There is a capital improvement plan to change meters city wide, they have a useful life of about 20 years and many are nearing that time frame. Meters degrade over a period of time and become less accurate with age. The rate structure established as a result of the Burton and Associates study were intended to provide a source of funding to avoid future debt (bonds) to replace aging infrastructure and improve the efficiency of the water and sewer system. Lighthouse Park is still being assessed for the extent of potential hazard and necessary corrective action. The Riverwalk is under evaluation for erosion and the most cost effective, long term solution. Grant funds may be available to offset part of the repairs. The SAW grant previously identified will give us additional resources to evaluate the infiltration that has resulted in combined sewer overflows and aid in developing long term solutions. The proposed business model for the Ramsdell should be available soon so a meaningful discussion can take place on how to deal with the large subsidies required to operate the facility. There is a group attempting to establish foundation funding for the Paine Pool to sustain the \$40,000 (10 year obligation) subsidy without the need for tax dollars. I've started reviewing documents on Street Asset Management and other studies for recommendations for improvement in our government operation and efficiencies for the upcoming budget process.

While the issues facing the city are numerous, my enthusiasm for seeking solutions remains. Keeping the public informed is also high on my list of priorities. Your feedback and suggestions are always welcome – I attempt to respond and follow-up to all request for information and assistance. As always, thank you for your continued support - Jim