

November 2, 2015

Election tomorrow for the single contested seat on City Council – don't forget to vote!

City Council meeting is Wednesday, November 4<sup>th</sup> due to elections on Tuesday – a fairly full agenda (agenda posted in PDF – 90 pages) including discussion on proposed City Manager contract for Thad Taylor, presentation by Public Safety Director Bachman as Harbor Master and Main Street DDA by Director Patrick Kay. Manistee City CFO Ed Bradford will also be giving a quarterly financial update. A great opportunity for citizens to get up to date information and speak on the agenda items.

Riverwalk – posted a letter from the PWD on the Riverwalk erosion issues last week and there were questions on how I got the information. Mr. Bifoss sent an email to City Council stating his intent to walk the impacted area with the PWD and Spicer Group, then provide greater detail on the extent of the erosion and potential solutions. As soon as the update was received (everyone on City Council got it) it was posted to the City of Manistee Facebook page and I posted it. Public Works is working with the Spicer Group on solutions to present to city Council and I'll update as soon as additional information is available.

City Manager - The proposed employment agreement is posted as part of the November 4<sup>th</sup> City Council Agenda. My review of typical agreements and compensation packages indicates the proposal is a fair agreement overall. Annual pay raises and increases in the severance payment are based on reviews and performance – and the severance tops out at 6 months (after 3 years of service). Also included in this agreement is a “just cause” clause that was not in the previous manager's agreement where no severance would be given.

Filer City Sewer Agreement – Roger Zielinski and I attended a presentation of the City of Manistee Sewer Treatment Agreement (40 year term) at 8:00 PM on October 28<sup>th</sup>. The presentation was given by Mr. Bifoss and supported by Mr. Bradford and Mr. Mikula – went well and we are waiting for a review by the Filer Township attorney and elected officials. A lot of work went into the negotiations and getting the City of Manistee back into consideration. Hopefully we will get an agreement that benefits both the City of Manistee and Filer Township, setting the stage for even greater coordination and cooperation between the governments for the future.

Subsidies – The City of Manistee has incurred debt for the Ramsdell, Marina, and Paine Pool operations and maintenance the last several years. Citizen input addresses concern over this long term debt and subsidies – and solutions seem to be difficult to achieve. Suggestions on the sale of the Ramsdell and Marina continue to be offered (or closure). I'm optimistic we can continue address these issues through the budgeting process. Simply closing the Ramsdell would still result in a debt/maintenance liability to the City of Manistee in excess of \$200,000 a year until the debt is paid. I hear the concerns and remain committed to a resolution of all the subsidy issues, as well as appropriations that increase the payment of citizen tax dollars to support the County Tax dollars paid for Alliance of Economic Success (AES) and 2-1-1 services that don't appear to bring any “added value” for the supplementary payments.

November 10<sup>th</sup> Organization Meeting - Will be held following election for City Council. Only 1 seat is contested (2<sup>nd</sup> precinct) so there is potential for one Council Member to be replaced. City Council will select a Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem – with the mayor making appointments to the Utility and Audit Committees and setting the dates for City Council for 2016. The City Council Guidelines Policy (posted in

PDF on this site) may be addressed for changes at that meeting or may be taken up at a later date. This is a good opportunity to make your wishes known to your City Council member or make a public statement.

As always – thank you for your continued support and input on issues facing the City of Manistee. Also, thanks to the many citizens for supporting the “lights on” campaign and calls to the Police Department to aid in ending the home invasions. Jim