

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

OLMSTED FALLS, OHIO • MAR 2019

Letter from the Mayor

Dear Residents,

Our administration and staff truly consider it an honor to serve you. We want to continue to demonstrate high accountability and invite residents “in” to understand the workings of city business, especially when it comes to how taxpayer dollars are spent and where emerging development opportunities are concerned. We always want residents to participate in the legislative process as fully informed, proactive voices of the community. As we work diligently to establish a vibrant economy through careful legislative planning efforts and responsible and conservative management of city finances, we want citizen involvement each step of the way.

We are serious about creating opportunities to relieve the tax burden from residents and expanding the city’s tax base by working to help existing businesses grow and by expanding and attracting new business through tax incentives. We also want

to help strengthen small business by providing support in partnership with federally funded small business programs.

Our finance report contained in these pages shares budget details, which offer the blueprint for financial and policy decisions implemented during each fiscal year. As the single most important document we have for establishing control over the direction of operations and plans for the future, it lays the groundwork for what will be our community’s goals to ensure appropriate management and future viability. We will continue to work hard for all residents in this community.

Your public servant,

James P. Graven
Mayor

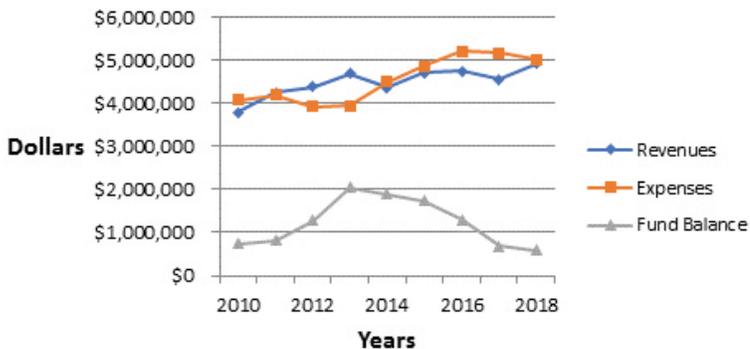


Mayor James Graven and members of City Council with coaching staff & 2000 Division II State Champion Football Team players Paul Stibich, Jr. and Joe Stanton

Budget and Financial Update

During fiscal year 2018, the City's General Fund stabilized itself in mainly addressing the deficit spending of expenditures exceeding revenues. During the two year period between 2016 and 2017, the City's General Fund balance decreased \$1,055,757 as depicted in the chart below:

General Fund Balances - Rev/Exp (2010-2018)



The current Administration made several personnel changes early in the 2018 year. Salaries, wages and benefits are the City's major expenses. The overall gross payroll decreased more than 4% by approximately \$140,000 during 2018. The City's gross payroll for the last five years is as follows:

2014	\$2,902,654	2017	\$3,267,532
2015	\$3,102,239	2018	\$3,127,128
2016	\$3,045,321		

Each and every department continues to review their operations to make them as efficient as possible. The current Administration continues to "trust the process" in turning around the financial predicament that the City is still currently

in. Department heads will continue to analyze and review all operations to reduce expenses by employing cost saving measures while maintaining and enhancing City services to our citizens.

According to Cuyahoga County records, there are 3,397 residential units in Olmsted Falls. During 2018, the average appraised value of a residential home from the County's data base is \$156,700. For 2019, if the residential property is owner-occupied and not receiving the "homestead reduction" the amount of property tax paid is calculated at \$4,064.96.

Compared to other nearby communities with the same value home:

North Olmsted	\$4,491.63	Fairview Park	\$4,278.20
Olmsted Township	\$4,435.61	Bay Village	\$4,268.13
Lakewood	\$4,590.84	Cleveland	\$4,364.87

The \$4,064.96 property tax paid by an Olmsted Falls resident is allocated in the following way:

15.70% or \$638.21	Cuyahoga County
5.06% or \$205.85	Cuyahoga Community College
0.12% or \$4.94	Cleveland/Cuyahoga Port Authority
59.22% or \$2,407.28	Olmsted Falls City School District
3.28% or \$133.25	Polaris Joint Vocational
2.67% or \$108.44	Cuyahoga County Library
3.07% or \$124.70	Cleveland Metro Parks
10.88% or \$442.29	City of Olmsted Falls

The \$442.29 that is received by the City is further allocated as follows:

\$9.56	Southwest General Hospital		
\$9.60	Cemetery	\$24.84	Parks & Recreation
\$55.74	Street Operations	\$70.13	Police Operations
\$129.57	General Fund Operations	\$142.85	Fire Operations

How to Get Information

"We are a democracy, and there is only one way to get a democracy on its feet ... and that is by keeping the public informed about what is going on." Joseph Pulitzer

Find Us Online at OlmstedFalls.org

Check the City's website for information about all City departments. In emergency circumstances, you should rely only on the City of Olmsted Falls' website, social media and CodeRED for accurate information. While many people try to be helpful, information can change and only authorized City staff and information providers can offer reliable information.

Legislative & City News

City Council makes all legislative changes initiated by the mayor and its members. The best way to learn about what is proposed, and hear the debate is to attend meetings. Residents are always invited. Meetings are held the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 7:30 p.m. with July and August recess. Holidays affect the schedule. For City Council legislative news, go to departments/legislation2019. If you can't make a meeting, minutes of each Council meeting are posted within a few days. To address members of Council at the meeting, forms are located at the entrance to Council Chambers and must be filled out and given to the Clerk of Council in advance of the meeting.

City Boards & Commissions

For minutes from all City Board and Commission meetings, including Architectural Board of Review, Civil Service Commission, Park and Recreation Commission, Planning and Zoning Board, Shade Tree Commission and the Charter Review Board, go to departments/boardsandcommissions. All meetings are also open to residents.

Social Media

The city also uses social media to share news and updates. There are many Facebook community opinion pages, but for the most reliable facts go directly to the city's Page. "Like" and "Follow" us. City service announcements, such as trash pickup or leaf pickup will be announced there as well as special initiatives, news and other announcements.

News and special announcements are also are posted on Twitter @OlmstedFalls_OH.

Contact information for each individual Council person can be found on the City's Web site at departments/City Council and on the back page of this newsletter.

Vietnam Veterans War Memorial Unveiling Ceremony – Saturday, June 22 at 2:00 p.m.

In the fall of 2018, Mayor Graven announced the initiative to create a Vietnam War Memorial honoring the men and women who served in Vietnam. Vietnam War Silver Star Medal recipient Rick Adler mentioned to the mayor that OFHS Class of '66 graduate Gary Martell made the ultimate sacrifice in the Vietnam War. Shortly thereafter, a committee made up of Vietnam veterans and their family members was formed and began to plan the memorial that will honor Mr. Martell and “all those who raised their right hand in the Vietnam era.” Contributions for the memorial are being accepted at City Hall and may be made by writing a check to City of Olmsted Falls/Vietnam Memorial.

Please mail to: City Hall, ATTN: Economic Dev. Director
26100 Bagley Road, Olmsted Falls, OH 44138

Please call 440.427.2357 with questions. The memorial will be placed at The Village Green Park and an unveiling ceremony will take place on Saturday, June 22 at 2:00 p.m. Members of the community are invited to attend. The Parks and Recreation Board will host an ice cream social immediately following the unveiling ceremony.



Ohio Flags of Honor Display Olmsted Falls City Hall - Friday, June 21- Sunday, June 23

The City of Olmsted Falls will host the Ohio Flags of Honor display over the weekend of June 21-23 at City Hall. This very moving display, featuring 900 U.S. flags, travels throughout the state of Ohio, honoring each man and woman from Ohio who made the ultimate sacrifice to their country. Specifically, those who gave all in the Wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and the War on Terrorism since September 11, 2001.

This year, the event will open with a ceremony at 6 p.m. on Friday, June 21. There will be a patriotic concert on Saturday, June 22 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Donations in support of the Flags of Honor are also being accepted. Contributions may be made by sending a check to City of Olmsted Falls/Ohio Flags of Honor.

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26100 Bagley Road, Olmsted Falls, OH 44138

Please keep our Armed Forces' service men and women in your thoughts and prayers. They defend our freedom both at home and abroad....And never forget our fallen heroes or their families.

A Strategic Approach to Attract Business

The city administration has been working to lay the groundwork for a strategic economic improvement plan that will stimulate business development. In simple terms, we are designing a system to make our community a viable partner for private sector businesses to increase the number of jobs and attract new business opportunities here. That is the long term, sustainable approach that will relieve the tax burden from residents and ensure city services remain strong.

At the same time, the preservation of our “bedroom community feel” is at the forefront. The mere mention of development and new business for many in our community creates concern. The fact is, there are many proven methods of thoughtful community design that both preserve the character of the community and enhance the quality of life by bringing in jobs, services and companies that expand the tax base.

That is one of the reasons why the city is also making an investment in historic preservation through Explore Olmsted Falls, which is now a Main Street affiliate organization. The effort is entirely volunteer led and will produce economic investment through its board member corporate affiliations as well as personal philanthropic contributions and their own methods of creating cultural vibrancy.

New Zoning as a First Step for Downtown

At the end of last year, City Council passed legislation to zone 9.74- acres adjacent to historic downtown as mixed use traditional neighborhood development (MUTND). MUTND means that the area in and around the post office has changed from professional/medical and industrial use to allow a blend of residential and retail uses. A development plan is not in place at this time, but the future plan is for architecturally appealing shops and restaurants with apartments and condominiums in a walkable downtown that is an extension of Grand Pacific Junction.

In the summer, the administration applied for a Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative (TLCI) Study grant from NOACA to explore ways to develop a reduced auto traffic street design with a meadow-like center and paver sidewalks and streets, instead of all-concrete to help with drainage, bicycle-friendly street design, and groundlighting in streets and sidewalks, instead of overhead streetlights. The TLCI grant is still pending, but if awarded, the city's economic development department would engage residents in the study to solicit plan feedback.

CRA to Make Olmsted Falls Competitive

Since coming into office in early 2018, the administration has held discussions with several large and mid-size business owners and a few developers about locating their businesses and undertaking projects here. Without incentives, it is difficult for the city to compete with other Northeast Ohio communities, and for that matter, communities throughout the country that can offer multiple incentives. In order to provide more tools in our economic development toolkit, the city is considering a Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) that would extend community-wide to offer real property investment stimulus in the form of term-limited tax abatements.

When the concept was shared with City Council in the fall, it was met with positive interest. We also had an initial discussion with the Olmsted Falls School board president and will soon hold more discussions with school administration officials. Ultimately, we will prepare a proposal for Council approval that would offer residents tax incentive in the form of 50-percent tax abatement for 10-years on the improved real property value of their home.

For existing businesses that want to grow and/or expand, they would also be eligible for 50-percent, 10-year real property tax abatement. New businesses would similarly be attracted to the community with the real property tax incentive and potentially other tools available to municipalities. Public hearings will be announced to take questions and share more specific information.



Rain Barrel Workshop

Rain barrels harvest rainwater for garden needs and help mitigate stormwater pollution on your property and street. The city is hosting a rain barrel workshop in cooperation with the Cuyahoga Soil and Water Conservation District and the Rocky River Watershed on Tuesday, April 30 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Olmsted Falls Service Center located at 9234 Columbia Road. The cost is \$60 to attend and make a rain barrel, but free just to attend. Registration is required. Register online at cuyahogawcd.org/events or contact Rocky River Watershed program manager Jared Bartley at 216.524.6580 x 1003.

Recycle Right

Recycling costs are rising for a number of reasons, including international market factors, but you can help by recycling right.

Leave Recyclables Loose – not bagged. Plastic bags do not belong in your recycling bin or cart. Plastic bags get tangled in the sorting machines at the recycling facilities and cause major problems for the recycling process. Plastic shopping bags can be recycled at many retail locations, including Giant Eagle, Lowe's Home Improvement, Marc's, Target and Walmart stores.

Make Sure It's Clean And Empty. Rinse residue from cartons, containers, bottles and jars or any other recyclable that may contain food particles. For example, greasy pizza boxes are not accepted.

Keep It Dry. When it comes to paper and cardboard, keeping it dry is imperative for the recycling process. Please flatten all cardboard boxes as well.

Don't Wishcycle. Think you can throw everything into your recycling bin and it will get sorted out at the recycling plant? Think again. Recycling only these five core items is paramount: cans, cartons, glass, paper and plastic along with plastic bottles and jugs.

Once you've got the hang of recycling, you can also learn about various other eco-friendly topics from composting to zero-waste lifestyles. There's seemingly no end to the ways we can reduce, reuse and recycle for a cleaner and greener today and tomorrow.



FREE Community Shred Events

You can also help ease the burden on our landfill and protect your personal information by participating in two community shred events. Thanks to a recycling education grant of \$4,640 from the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District, Olmsted Falls will host two shred events that you can bring your papers only to for free shredding on:

**Saturday, June 15
9 AM to Noon at City Hall**

**Saturday, September 14
9 AM to Noon at City Hall**



Police Department Updates

New K9 Officer

On February 12, K9 Officer Gauge was sworn-in as the newest member of the Olmsted Falls Police Dept. Gauge is now a four-month-old Belgian Malinois who has already been in training for several months with his handler, partner and caretaker, Officer Dan Daugherty. Having a K9 officer presents some distinct advantages to the police force, including engaging the public with police work and putting an even friendlier face to it, as well as dramatically increasing the effectiveness of the force's ability to find narcotics and resolve missing persons

cases. Gauge will be certified in narcotics, article searching and tracking by the end of summer. He will achieve his suspect apprehension certification after 12 months of training. The OFPD and City are deeply grateful to Tom Schmidt who bred and donated Gauge. Tom also runs Buckeye Area Regional K9, which is devoted to training police dogs and their handlers. To make a gift in support of K9 Officer Gauge, please mail a check to: OFPD Benevolent Fund c/o Tom Lang, 26100 Bagley Road, Olmsted Falls, OH 44138.

Fundraiser to Support K9 Officer Gauge

On June 1, the Olmsted Falls Police Dept. and the Police Patrolmen's Benevolent Association will host a special event to raise funds for Gauge's food, veterinarian care, supplies and other needs at Tony K's in Berea. Tickets are \$25 and include pizza, wings, salad and beer. Food, drinks, 50/50, baskets and sideboard raffles will be available from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Drinks are available until 10 p.m. Tickets may be purchased at the OFPD located on the 1st floor of City Hall with cash or check. For more information, call 440.235.5550.

Keeping Citizens Aware



Keeping citizens informed

"Ready Notify" is Now "Code RED"

The City participates in Code RED, formerly known as Ready Notify, which provides emergency notifications about weather related power outages and other emergencies. This is a service provided through Cuyahoga County. The County recently changed their emergency notification system provider, so even if you were previously signed on to Ready Notify, you will need to register on the new system. You can register to receive phone calls, emails and/or text message alerts.



Alertizen

The goal of Alertizen is to quickly notify individuals who sign up for the free alert service that a crime may be occurring in their neighborhood, and to make them aware of their surroundings to quickly get them out of harms-way. Members can download Alertizen apps for iPhone and Android or simply elect to receive text messages. Emails can also be sent to the desktop. To subscribe and set up preferences for alerts, go to Alertizen.com and follow instructions.

Legal Update

Donegan Sues City

On January 23, 2019, former Mayor Ann Marie Pryzbys Donegan filed a lawsuit against the city. Donegan is claiming that she is entitled to vacation pay, sick leave pay, and pay for unused personal days. The city intends to defend against these allegations, which are without merit. The law director reviewed all related codified ordinances and employee policies, and determined the former mayor is entitled pay for 15 days of unused vacation earned, which she received in 2018. She did not earn sick time as a part-time City Council member.

Only full-time employees who have served with the city for 10 or more years are entitled to payout of sick time. The former mayor served only four years in a full-time capacity. There is another issue regarding the distinction between benefits for elected officials compared with public employees.

The city's insurance rates increased as a result of Donegan's settlement of \$450,000 against the city in 2017. The city will do all it can within the limits of the law to protect taxpayers against further litigation.



City of Olmsted Falls
26100 Bagley Road
Olmsted Falls, OH 44138

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Economic Development staff has published the Report to the Community in cooperation with the Finance Department and Mayor's Office. Additional copies are available at City Hall and in digital format at www.olmstedfalls.org.

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