

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

OLMSTED FALLS, OHIO • NOV 2018

Letter from the Mayor

Dear Fellow Olmsted Falls Citizens,

In this Report to the Community, I want to share details and highlights of what we've experienced and accomplished since January.

On September 21st, our entire community together underwent the most devastating fire that the City has ever witnessed. Thankfully and due to the outstanding work of Safety Forces – both Fire and Police – there was no loss of life and no serious injuries. I am deeply proud of Fire Chief, Chad Gluss, and Police Chief, Odis Rogers, along with all the men and women who are important members of these fine departments. Many of them worked for 36 hours straight from the time the fire started to help save and protect people.

The fire demanded all of our City resources and I am extremely grateful to all who helped. While the tragic loss of property in the 48-unit Chandler's Lane Condominiums will have long-term financial and emotional impact, I am grateful that the Carlisle Management Company and the local American Red Cross helped our residents in a quick and caring manner and that they continue to do so.

As for City business, our financial picture has improved. In the third quarter, revenues exceeded expenses and we are on our way to recovery from the overspending of the past four years that drained the City's General Fund. We are spending less on outside law firm fees, which has helped dramatically. Please see the Financial Report for details.

We have worked hard and will continue to seek additional grants and low-interest loans for services



and projects. We are laying a strong foundation for economic development to improve our tax base and relieve the tax burden on our residents and businesses. We're also taking steps to improve the business landscape with the expansion of our historic downtown and economic incentives that will be true business attraction tools.

Finally, we are taking steps to improve communication, including the launch of Alertizen, the electronic block watch that notifies citizens of safety situations by neighborhood as well as Community Contacts.

Many thanks to all of you for your support, optimism and participation in our efforts to strengthen all aspects of our community.

Your public servant,


Mayor James Graven



Letter from Olmsted Falls Fire Chief

On September 27, the City suffered the largest fire in our history. The three-alarm fire raged throughout the three-story, 48-unit Chandler's Lane Condominiums that day and an outpouring of assistance was quickly provided by 13 fire and safety departments from surrounding communities.

Through the response of our firefighters and with the assistance of the other departments, there was no loss of life, no significant injuries, and the fire was contained to one building.

On behalf of the city administration, we are proud of the heroic work of our firefighters, police officers, Olmsted Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Southwest General Hospital, the American Red Cross, our Service Department staff, City Hall staff, and all who immediately jumped into action to do whatever they could to aid and support residents who lost their homes to the fire. The desire to help weeks after the fire continues to impress me and is one more reason to love our community.

I was assisted by Mayor Graven, who is also the city Safety Director, and was on scene in under 10 minutes of the first arriving engine. Having the professional experience of the mayor, who is a 30-year veteran firefighter, was a valued addition that helped us manage our response and fireground tactics, which was critically important.

I am grateful, too, for the assistance of the State Fire Marshall, and the U.S. Dept. of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms in the investigation. As of this time, the official cause of the fire remains undetermined. All of us in the Fire Department and City administration will remember the support and caring from safety professionals in other communities and the tremendous support from the people of our own community. We continue to keep residents affected by the fire in our thoughts and remain grateful to all who helped.

Chad Gluss, Olmsted Falls Fire Chief

Safety & Fire Prevention Reminders

With winter coming, furnaces that have collected dust will be under demand. It's highly recommended that furnaces and wood burning fire places be professionally inspected before use this season. The use of heating in homes increases chances for fire, so please be certain to check batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. It is always a good idea to be in the habit of doing this when clocks are adjusted from Daylight Saving Time. The Fire Department offers aid to older adults and persons with disabilities who might not be able to reach smoke detectors easily. Call 440.235.3238 for assistance.

Service Department Reminders



Leaf & Brush Collection

The City began curbside leaf collection on October 15 and will continue to do so through November 30. Leaves must be piled along the roadside or curb (not in bags) not more than five feet from the roadway. No other materials should be put into leaf piles. After November 30, there will be one last leaf collection, if weather allows. Bagged leaves may be left on the curb with trash for pickup by Republic Services. The Service Dept. must change over their equipment and be ready to respond immediately for snow plowing beginning December 1. The City does not pickup branches, brush or leaves on private streets.

Brush collection by the City is suspended through March and resumes in April. Bundled brush, in 3- to 4-foot sections, can be left out on trash days for pickup by Republic Services.

Please check olmstedfalls.org for information about leaf and brush collection and for instructions on proper disposal of other items, including paint, carpet, furniture, appliances and more.

Snow Plowing

The Service Dept. works tirelessly, sometimes all night and day, to ensure City streets are plowed throughout the winter. Please observe the "No Parking" on City streets ban that goes into effect once the first 2-inch or more snow accumulation occurs.

Police Department Updates



Police Officer Promotion

Officer Ralph Saxer was promoted to the position of Police Sergeant in July. Sgt. Saxer is a 24-year veteran of the department and also serves as a field training officer, evidence room manager and vehicle maintenance officer.

Community Contacts Initiative

Since April, the OFPD has had nearly 600 non-police business contacts with residents, business owners and visitors under the initiative. The dept. is on pace to have over 1,000 social visits with community contacts in the partial first year of the program.

Grant Provides Body Armor and Plate Carriers for Officers

OFPD officers will have extra protection in dangerous situations thanks to a \$7,985 grant that covers 80-percent of the cost for each officer to have state-of-the-art body armor and vest carriers. The new armor pieces weigh just over three pounds, but can protect against rifle fire to an unprecedented degree.

No Parking Ban

The OFPD wants to remind residents there is a year-round overnight parking ban between the hours of 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. There will also be a snow ban in effect once the first snow accumulation of two inches takes place. After that time, there is no parking on any City street to allow snow plowing.

“No Shave November” for Officers

If you see officers with beards in November, they’re taking part in a charity campaign throughout the month of November to raise funds for the Christmas “Shop with a Cop,” which provides underprivileged children the opportunity to shop for the holiday. Each officer donates \$40 to participate and forgoes shaving for the month.

New Police Cruisers

The City has upgraded the fleet with two new cruisers. Another new vehicle has been ordered and is scheduled to be put into service in early 2019. The new vehicles are white with black lettering and the Olmsted Falls Police Department logo.

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www.facebook.com/olmsted.pd

Finances and Taxes

Finance Department

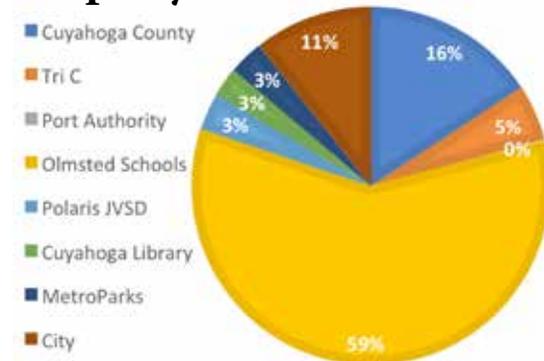
The Finance Dept. has restructured personnel and reduced its payroll by over \$25,000. The Dept. also upgraded its payroll system earlier this year. The new system is user-friendly for employees, and provides a more efficient and less expensive way of preparing the City’s payroll.

Additionally, the Dept. will move to a new accounting system beginning in 2019. The City currently pays over \$25,000 annually for its software. The State of Ohio’s Uniform Accounting Network (UAN) software is less than \$4,000 per year and will save the City \$21,000 annually.

City Finances

The City’s third-quarter financials have been completed. The City’s General Fund revenues have exceeded expenses by over \$300,000 as of the first nine months of the year. Income tax collections are up overall by 8.69-percent. Personnel cuts earlier this year, restructuring of some Department staffing schedules and a substantial decrease in outside legal expenses have kept the expense side of the ledger below 2017’s pace.

Property Tax Allocation



15 Highest Income Taxpayers for 2018

Olmsted Falls Board of Education
Evergreen Packaging
First Source Employee Management
City of Olmsted Falls
Columbia Building Products Co.
Cuyahoga County Auditor
St. Mary of the Falls Church
Key Bank National Association
Discount Drug Mart Inc.
Milestone Management
PNC Bank
Olmsted Falls Erecting Co., Ltd.
KidsFirst Learning Centers LLC
Dr. Melissa Kronholz DDS Inc.
Myers & Lasch, Inc.

Economic Community Advancement

Over the past 10 months, the City has strived to lay the foundation for an economic development strategy that will further improve the quality of life in Olmsted Falls and relieve the tax burden on residents. By pursuing grant funding, the City is using grant awards for special projects and directing more tax payer funds toward services. As of print time, \$1,187,463 in grant funding (See grants list below) has been secured with another \$648,405 pending.

Grants & Sponsorship January – October 2018

Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District

\$1,090,500 Phase V Sewer Project

Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District

\$4,280 Community
Recycling Awareness

NOPEC Community Partner Grant (unsolicited)

\$36,636 Fire Dept. Energy
Efficiency Initiative

NOPEC Sponsor

\$2,000 First Fridays Events

Symphony at Olmsted Falls

\$1,000 First Friday Event

Cuyahoga County Community

Social Services Partner

\$20,000 Senior Services at
Jenkins Place

Ohio Bureau of Worker's Comp

\$7,985 Body Armor Plates for Police

Ohio Attorney General

\$3,062 D.A.R.E.

Ohio Dept. of Public Safety

\$3,500 EMS Grant

Ohio Bureau of Worker's Comp - Fire

\$15,000

EMS – Fire

\$3,500

TOTAL \$1,187,463

Pending grant requests total \$648,405. Details of pending applications can be found online at olmstedfalls.org under City Council Legislation 2018.



\$1,090,500 Grant Award Reduces Phase V Cost

In September, the City was awarded a grant of over \$1,000,000 by the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS) to reduce individual property owner assessments. The grant will lower costs by approximately \$2,800. Residents in the Phase V area will also be eligible for a partial reimbursement of costs to close their septic systems, once it is time to connect to the new sewer. Only residents in the Phase V area are eligible for this reimbursement. A new assessment figure will be provided and steps outlining the reimbursement process will be shared with property owners in 2019, when the work is close to completion.

Zoning Legislation Will Expand Historic Downtown

After several months of consideration, City Council enacted new legislation on October 23 that rezones 9.74 acres adjacent to the existing downtown from Professional/Medical/Industrial to Mixed-use Traditional Neighborhood District (MUTND). This enables expansion of the historic downtown and paves the way for creation of better walking and bicycling connection from Grand Pacific Junction. The zoning has a requirement of at least 30-percent residential. MUTND, by design, calls for a balanced mix of residential and commercial occupancy. Before a development plan is adopted, traffic, parking and neighborhood needs will be studied carefully.

The expanded downtown will also create opportunities for greater awareness of the Cuyahoga Valley and West Shore Model Railroad Club in the historic train depot. All development planning will focus on enhancing the historic nature of the City and creating an inviting gathering space with respect for the character and nature of the neighborhood.

Communicating Changes

All public meeting content on developing issues can be found on olmstedfalls.org/dept/citycouncil.

Revitalization District to Attract Restaurants

In October, City Council passed legislation that creates a Revitalization District within a 52-acre designated area in and around historic downtown and encompassing the newly expanded downtown. The first Revitalization District was created in 2007 in historic downtown Wooster with help from Heritage Ohio, which is the state level of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the managing organization for the Ohio Main Street program. Revitalization District legislation was designed to reinvigorate historic downtowns by driving revenue into the City via restaurants under the proven model that restaurants move into refurbished historic buildings to create destinations that people love to visit, which in turn stimulates the local economy for additional retail. The legislation has helped revitalize historic downtowns such as Wooster, Chardon, Vermilion, Kent and many other vibrant, historic downtowns throughout the country.

The legislation will serve to resolve the issue of liquor license quotas that has created economic disincentive. For example, if a restaurant owner wished to open in a City whose license quota had already been met, he or she would have to go through the process of transferring a license in from another area. That process typically costs the restaurant owner between \$13,000 to \$23,000, and can take many months, adding to startup expenses and slowing opening. Restaurant owners who want to open within the new Olmsted Falls district may now do so with the availability of D5L licenses that will allow them to serve a full bar menu, as long as they demonstrate 75-percent or more of their revenue comes from food sales. Their cost from the State of Ohio will be the standard rate of approximately \$2,300. Olmsted Falls' 52-acre district extends throughout the downtown to Lewis Road on the southeast and Mapleway to the west, and will provide up to 10 licenses. A map of the district can be found on olmstedfalls.org under Departments/City Council/Legislation 2018 #43-2018.

Community Reinvestment Area

In September, the administration introduced the idea for a citywide Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) to City Council. A CRA could provide tax abatement for up to 10 years on increased property values for residential and commercial real property improvements. A homeowner who adds substantial square footage to their home by building an addition could be exempt from paying tax on the increased property value. Similarly, a business that adds or builds new construction within the City would be exempt from property tax on the improved value. CRAs are widely used by nearly every community as a proven tool to attract business and dramatically improve housing stock. Public meetings will be held for citizen input.



Olmsted Falls Revitalization Group to Form Main Street Organization

Since the spring, a devoted group of community leaders who are passionate about historic preservation and the long-term economic vibrancy of the community have been meeting to establish a strong historic downtown revitalization group. The group unites stakeholders who will work on organization, design, promotion and economic vitality in ways that will establish downtown as the cultural center of the community. Recently, the officers of the board of directors and board members were announced.

Dr. Scott Sedlacek of The Eye Place will be board president. Brent Repenning, executive vice president of U.S. Utility at Davey Tree Expert Co. and Tom Helmick, branch manager of First Federal of Lakewood, will be co-vice presidents. Amy Sanfilippo Steadman, vice president of acquisitions and development systems with Sprenger Health Care Systems will be treasurer, and Rachel Stallard, who is a digital marketing consultant and former reporter for Channel 19, will be secretary. Board members include Lee Fenrich of Lee Builders; Andrew Harant, branch manager of Cuyahoga County Public Library Olmsted Falls and North Olmsted Branches; Brian Pauley, owner of Remodel Me Today; Clint Williams of Clint Williams Realty and GPJ; Paula Hennessey Accordino, economic development director for the City of Olmsted Falls; and, two other pending applicants. Stay tuned for much more on this exciting group that will further strengthen pride in Olmsted Falls.

Wayfinding, Navigation and Community Branding Study

Both residents and business owners alike have expressed concerns over the lack of directional signage throughout the City for many years. During summer road closures, the need for wayfinding came into relief when business owners at Grand Pacific Junction repeatedly noted their new customers weren't aware of all the shops until they had to detour down Mill and Orchard.

As a way to enhance economic vibrancy, address safety and navigation concerns, create a recognizable brand for our central business district, and, establish "gateway" entrances and signage "looks," the City has applied for a Wayfinding & Community Branding Study under the Cuyahoga County Supplemental Grant Program. The grant would provide funds for a consultant-led study involving a citizen steering committee to develop a signage system that uniquely identifies city entrances, the downtown, and parking.



City of Olmsted Falls
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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.

Insurance Update

The City received notice in late October that liability premiums and deductibles will rise on insurance coverage for public officials and employment practices in 2019. This is a result of the many lawsuits and threatened lawsuits settled over the past few years, including the \$450,000 settlement against the City that was not disclosed until August 2017.

Deductibles will increase significantly from \$10,000 to \$25,000 for employment practice and public officials. For law enforcement liability, the deductible will rise from \$5,000 to \$25,000. The current administration continues to seek cost-savings to help the General Fund recover from the litigious culture, problematic employment practices and overspending of the last four years.

D.A.R.E. Program Benefits Falls Lenox 2nd Graders

Through a Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E) grant from the Ohio Attorney General's Office, second graders at Falls Lenox are learning skills to recognize and resist pressures to experiment with drugs from a specially trained police officer. For five weeks, from September to early November, the police officer is in the school every day to provide supportive skills. In addition to drug abuse prevention education, children receive reinforcement to help strengthen self-esteem and develop good decision-making skills, as well as support with communication and conflict resolution skills.

D.A.R.E. is an internationally recognized program for school-age children that was created by the L.A.P.D. and first used in 1983. Officer Bob Swope of



the Olmsted Falls Police Department received training under the grant and serves as the School Resource Officer for the program. Police Chief, Odys Rogers says, "D.A.R.E. is a great program to foster good relationships between kids and police. The kids love having Officer Swope there with them throughout the day. He even has lunch with them, which they love and it builds trust."

If you would like to receive City communications exclusively via email, please sign up to receive communications by going to www.olmstedfalls.org/signup.