



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council
FROM: Corey Schmidt, City Manager
RE: 2016 Annual Report
DATE: January 16, 2017

This report is meant to briefly provide the City of Marlette's major highlights and activities of the prior year for posterity.

Capital Projects

The City of Marlette completed several impactful capital projects in the 2016 calendar year:

- **Pool Liner and Splash Pad:** The pool liner was replaced and a new splash pad was built in place of the former baby pool at the park. Including engineering and in-kind labor, the total capital outlay for this project was \$190,498.90. Fifty percent (\$95,249.45) of this project cost was reimbursed to the City by the State of Michigan, thanks to a Land & Water Conservation Fund grant from the Department of Natural Resources. Renosys installed the pool liner and Penchura built the splash pad.
- **East Marlette Street Resurfacing:** The length of East Marlette Street from M-53 to Municipal Drive was milled and paved, and all sidewalk intersections and ramps were upgraded to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The total project cost was \$178,514.57, which included \$148,051 in state and federal grant funds. Ace-Saginaw Paving was the general contractor for this MDOT-sponsored project.
- **Carpenter Street Extension:** A culvert with supporting headwalls and new road base was installed over a ditch that previously separated the western and eastern portions of Carpenter Street. The project was completed for \$49,500. Marlette Excavating performed the work.
- **Main Street Sidewalks:** Sidewalks were replaced on the east side of Main Street from Euclid Street south to the Masonic Lodge building. The project cost was \$44,321.60. Donley Excavating was the contractor for this project.

Together these projects represent total capital investment of **\$462,835.07** in the 2016 calendar year. Of this amount, \$243,300.45 was paid for with state or federal grant funds, meaning for every dollar contributed by the City of Marlette, the state or federal government contributed \$1.11 toward our capital projects in 2016. The groundwork for such a successful leveraging of local dollars was laid out over several years. Grant programs require tremendous patience, both to save for the matching requirements and to get through long application and review processes. Council should be proud of its forward-thinking approach to saving for these grants and being ready to act when the appropriate grant became available.

Facilities, Grounds, and Equipment Improvements

A number of smaller but still highly visible improvements were made to public facilities and grounds in 2016.

- **WWTP Roof Replacement:** Marlette Roofing was hired to replace the roof on the main building at the wastewater treatment plant.
- **Park Picnic Tables:** Replaced wood boards on 24 park picnic tables.
- **Park and Cemetery Trash Receptacles:** Replaced 12 trash receptacles at the park and cemetery.
- **Pool Lift and Diving Board:** Installed a pool lift at the pool to increase accessibility into the pool and installed a new diving board base for the deep end.
- **Cemetery Chapel Landscaping:** Removed dead trees on south and north side of cemetery chapel and replaced with new landscaping.
- **Park and Pool Sign:** The Lion's Club did a wonderful job repainting and refinishing the entrance sign to the park and pool.
- **Equipment:** The City also invested in equipment replacement with the purchase of a new police vehicle and a new DPW equipment trailer. Several water meters were also purchased to replace old meters.

Private Investment Activity

Private investment in the community, as measured by dollar amounts submitted with zoning permits, totaled **\$2,357,900** in 2016. Of this amount, \$50,900 was on residential improvements such as new decks, porches, additions, garages, and fences. The remaining \$2,307,000 is from commercial properties, including large additions at Grupo Antolin, MVP Disc Sports, and RCA Trucking. This figure also includes interior remodeling costs incurred by Rite Aid (the company submitted a zoning permit even though the interior remodel did not require one).

Two new retail stores opened in the downtown while one other business closed. American Flooring Center and a new antique store opened in the fall, while Wilson Jewelers closed its doors in the summer.

The City consented to the sale of two parcels in the Industrial Park in 2016. Parcel #2 was sold by a private party to the owners of 31 Motorsports. The deed has a build-by date of December 31, 2018. Parcel #4 was sold by a private party to the owners of RCA Trucking. The deed has a build-by date of December 29, 2017. These two actions should lead to development on the two remaining vacant parcels in the Industrial Park in the coming years.

Community Programming and Engagement

During the summer months, the City offered swim lessons, swim specials, and summer recreation programs. The swim show had over 35 youth participants, and during the Saturday of the Dog Days of Summer Festival, the pool registered 197 attendees. The average daily attendance at the pool was 86 attendees. The summer recreation program was well attended by area youth.

A brand new, visually appealing website was launched at cityofmarlette.com. Important news and information was posted on the website throughout the year. An ad-hoc committee of Council was formed to look into ways to increase community engagement. Admittedly, this goal took a backseat to other endeavors in the second-half of 2016 and should be re-engaged in 2017.

Personnel

The City of Marlette welcomed three new employees in 2016:

- In January, Corey Schmidt was hired as City Manager following the retirement of Lou LaPonsie, who had served as part-time City Manager since 2008. Many of 2016's accomplishments were possible because the groundwork laid by Mr. LaPonsie.
- In March, James Sanchez was hired to fill a vacant Police Officer position.
- In July, Jason Schlueter was hired as a DPW Maintenance Worker to fill a vacant position.

In November, part-time office assistant Meranda Lentz was promoted to full-time Clerk-in-training to begin preparing to take over the Clerk role in spring 2017, following the retirement of Sandra Cargill.

The 2016 calendar year was also the first year of Sarah Kady serving through a contract as the City's Assessor, replacing Dale Wood, who retired from the Assessor role.

In the summer months, the City staff balloons when a dozen or so seasonal workers are hired to operate the pool. The pool consumes a lot of the City's time, effort, and resources, but it has long been an asset to the community. For those two and a half months, the facility is open every day to the public and requires skilled, trained staff to watch our public waters. A mix of veteran guards and new guards make this possible each summer.

Organizational Matters

Perhaps the largest organizational change in 2016 was the conversion to the BS&A Software suite of programs in early 2016. The software is heavily used by the City Hall staff for the major functions of City Hall. A hefty upfront investment, the BS&A Software conversion was greatly appreciated by the staff, and after almost a year of use, it has been quite a hit.

The City completed a PASER rating study of the street network. The process of rating the streets should help guide the City's road asset management for years to come. On the heels of completing a State-mandated water reliability study in late 2015, staff began the initial stages of a water asset management plan. This plan will be required by the State by the beginning of 2018.

The 2016 calendar year was also one of much review of our organizational practices and procedures. Most of these reviews and discussions have yet to bear fruit, but a number of improvements should result in 2017, including a comprehensive update of the Code of Ordinances, creation of utility billing procedures, and increased staff training. A customer service workshop held in late 2016 revealed a need to improve internal customer service, such as communications about work flow and procedures between departments, which will translate into a 2017 goal.

Conclusion

Despite continued threats to our General Fund revenue streams (elimination of the personal property tax and reductions in shared revenues), the City of Marlette still accomplished a great deal of impactful improvements in 2016. Many needed investments were made in parks, streets, sidewalks, and public facilities. Furthermore, many of these investments, big and small, were highly visible to the resident taxpayers of the community.