

Village of Holland 2020 Mayors Report

As all would expect, this annual Mayor's Report will be as different from any previous submitted report as this year is different than any previous calendar year. This is neither rationalization nor excuse...it is reality!

Our Village entered this past year with a very optimistic and stable outlook at our first meeting in January. Newly elected Mayor and re-elected Council members pledged their dedication to continued progress and guaranteed delivery of Village services. Our budget, carefully prepared, reviewed and adopted, had been submitted and approved and yet again directed all departments to operate within the resources that our community provides. It wasn't too long before everything changed! Throughout this tumultuous year, our Council has met countless challenges and unforeseen circumstances. Council has, in my opinion, stayed true to the charge of our resident-electors.

Specifically, at our second meeting in March, we and governments and institutions in Ohio and across the country were advised of the extreme challenges we were all facing which evolved in the COVID-19 emergency. State and County guidance helped, and in some cases demanded, we meet certain protocols in delivery of our services to protect the public and our own employees. Wherever possible, employers were told to assign work-at-home or on-call schedule orders. We maintained close contact with residents, the school district, and other local entities as well as our local business leaders as a communication clearinghouse. Starting in April, and continuing to this date, Village Council meets in a virtual format by Microsoft Teams or off-site phone meetings.

Throughout this entire challenging period, our staff has endeavored to maintain a continuity of operation as close to "normal" as possible. The State and Federal legislation and support has been used and appreciated but has been separately coordinated and managed by our Village clerk and Police Chief. We still, as part of day-to-day operations, face logistics of submitting Charter amendments to the voters, participating JEDZ or JEDD responsibilities, or working on utility aggregation concerns...only to mention a few!

HUMAN RESOURCES

The experience, dedication, and performance of all individuals in Village service continues as our most valuable asset. Elected and appointed officials, and committee members, represent more than two hundred years combined experience in a variety of roles. The Police Department is led by an experienced Chief and staffed by educated, well-trained officers. Our financial affairs are directed by our Village Clerk, Lyn Krasula, the recipient of numerous and continuing official state commendations. The zoning, planning and administrative services are managed through the office of Leslie Ferman as point of contact in our offices. Maintenance functions are capably handled and directed by Brian Yunker and his staff.

2020 saw personnel changes involving the addition of two auxiliary police officers trained as Holland patrolmen. These two officers have moved on to full time positions at nearby suburban communities.

Our long serving Village Attorney, Phil Dombey, retired after 28 years of service being replaced by Paul Skaff who has also been a legal consultant for the Village.

Of great impact to our community was the passing of Council President Noah Stone. Noah had served on Council since 1998 and was re-elected several times. We remember Noah and value his long, dedicated service to the Village. Ryan Spangler was elected by the members of Council to assume the President position. To fill the open Council seat, resident Scott Brown was appointed. We will soon be selecting another new council member to fill the seat vacated at the end of 2020 by Councilman Tony Kruczkowski.

Village employees were granted a one percent wage increase over 2020 wages and were advised that the current health insurance, pension, and fringe benefits will be continued with no increase of cost.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Our Fire and Rescue service is provided by contract with the Springfield Township Fire Department. Under the leadership of Chief Barry Cousino, the village is well served by the well-trained and equipped fulltime emergency service. Costs for this service increase each year and we must work on control without endangering level or quality of service.

Our Police Department is presently undergoing an exhaustive examination of policy and procedures to ensure total compliance with national standards (LEXIPOL) and certification with the Ohio Collaborative for law enforcement. The Chief, several police officers, and elected officials are involved in this review. During 2020, the department took delivery of new Ford Explorer cruiser and had major upgrades to communication and computer record keeping technology. The web-check fingerprint service provided through the police department staff was modernized and procedures adjusted to ensure compliance with COVID-19 protocols. All law enforcement supplies, and equipment are constantly evaluated and replaced as needed. New tasers with holsters have been purchased this year. Challenges for 2021 include department organization, completion of policy work and emphasis on aggressive recruitment strategies.

REFUSE/RECYCLING

Refuse and recycling services is provided through contract with Lucas County Sanitary Engineer and Republic Services. Weekly curbside collection of approved containers is outlined on the Village website. The containers are furnished by the Village. This is the second year with this provider, and they continue to be responsive to our concerns. Republic Services also provided an unlimited curbside pickup which went well. We will be scheduling this service again as a warm weather/Saturday project.

Clean Wood Recycling provided free recycling of yard wastes dropped off by Village residents with their free drop off card. Our Village crews also responded to a one-time windstorm emergency brush collection and made pick-ups throughout the Village.

INFRASTRUCTURE

2020 was also the culmination of a 25 -year process of replacing, repaving, or reconstructing every public street in the Village. Two projects, Holloway Road and Hamilton Drive, planned for 2020 were delayed and will be rebid, awarded, and completed in 2021. Plans for improvement of Hall Street from Holloway Road to Kittle are in progress with construction planned for 2022. Normal maintenance such as crack sealing, potholes, and catch basin repairs also represent work completed in this area. Completion of the municipal parking lot with the installation of lighting finished that project.

STREETS, LANDS, & BUILDING MAINTENANCE

Major improvements including front picture windows, siding, soffit, and gutters as well as new lighting were installed at the Village-owned Historical Society Museum in late fall. Activity at the museum will resume as soon as possible.

New trees were planted at our parks and in some of the right of way areas.

All streets south of the rail crossing had new blue and white street name signs installed.

Maintenance staff continued their effective snowplowing, leaf collection, mowing, salt application and facility management as well as being stretched to include many sanitation and sanitizing protocols associated with COVID-19.

PARKS

Our parks and recreational areas represent a source of pride to our community. Maintenance at all three parks, Strawberry Acres, Railroad Park and Rail Park Ball Field, remain a priority. Though some activity at the parks were limited, great effort was made to allow as many non-congregate activities as possible.

The park walking path was completely repaved as well as the north parking lot.

The Lodge was repainted as was the oldest of the restroom buildings.

The pickleball courts and ball field were available for limited use with strict protocols.

Unfortunately, all sponsored group events such as movies in the park, tournaments, Halloween pre-school trick or treat and the annual Tree Lighting event fell victim to COVID-19 and were suspended.

Rental facilities were also subject to the Toledo Lucas County Health Department directives and events were limited or canceled altogether.

CONCLUSION

All residents, businesses, staff, and visitors are thanked for their patience and support throughout a year of firsts for all of us. Our community is a great place to live and work.

We look forward to everyone keeping faith in themselves and others as we move into a better time we know is coming.