

MANAGER'S NEWSLETTER

January 29, 2016

FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

The Festival of the Arts gets underway today and extends for the entire month of February. Booklets are available at City Hall and from many locations across the community. We encourage all residents to take advantage of the activities, concerts, and learning opportunities that this wonderful festival brings to Big Rapids.

BORTH PROPERTY

Matt Ruelle has completed the fieldwork survey for the Borth property acquisition and, working with Maxcell George of Fleis and VandenBrink, has produced the work needed for the closing for this land. Thanks to Matt and Max, this work was completed at no additional cost to the City.

CHARTER COMMUNICATION

Ferris State University operates the local access channel provide by Charter and is interested in making programming on that station 'high definition'. Marilyn Passmore, from Charter, toured the Ferris studios Tuesday, and will carry that message back to her organization and see what can be done.

ENERGY AUDIT

Xavier Locke, a student at Ferris, and Dan Sovinski will be performing an audit of the water and wastewater plants as part of the classroom experience. We continue to work well with Ferris and to profit from the insights that students bring both to their education and to their practical application in the community. Xavier will also be working with Lela Saber from Consumers Energy on ways to economize power costs.

GRANT APPLICATIONS

Staff is anticipating filing three applications for grants for the upcoming year.

DNR Passport Grant. These funds capping at \$45,000 would be used to rework the parking lot, trail and other amenities in Mitchell Creek Park.

Area-Wide Planning Grant. This grant would look at planning the area around the Hanchett site, including possible future uses of the Simonds and water plant lands on the Muskegon River. The 'area' however, would include properties from the river to State Street.

DART transportation. The local transportation grant from the State has been funded to renovate the existing DART dispatch center. It is expected that full notification of this \$200,000 will be consummated in the State's 2016-17 budgetary cycle. Staff is interested in pursuing constructing this building on the DNR Depot site, selling the present DART location and using those funds to renovate the Depot itself. Timing will be everything and support of the State will be needed. However, this approach would be very beneficial for the City, for a trail head for the White Pines Trail, for tourists using the trail and for the State.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Dr. Henry Ho's marketing class at Ferris has completed the Community Survey, which is now available both as a printed booklet and on line. The sample for the study was exceptional – 705 respondents – so the data is statistically more valid than any in the past. The document is very interesting to review. As an additional bonus, Dr. Ho's class this semester is going to complete a survey for the Community Library. This should help the City and Townships view the positive use of the library and the attitudes that all organizations have of the programs there.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Evaluations of vacant positions continues. For the Police Division, 5 candidates are in the 'ride along' phase. After these activities are complete, backgrounds will be researched and offers will be made.

Fire testing will take place this Saturday at the department.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

The Police Division responded to 83 calls for service over the past week. Nothing noteworthy to report. Investigators continue to follow up on the attempt at stealing a catalytic convertor from a vehicle on Christmas day. Central Michigan University Police had a report of the same with video showing what appears to be the same suspect vehicle.

The Fire Division had 23 calls for service over the past week.

PARK & RECREATION

Coed volleyball had the first games of the season. There are 13 teams this year and two, possibly three, are interested in joining the Michigan State tournament, held in Waterford, MI, hosted by MRPA.

Girls on the Run coaches meeting is Saturday. The season will kick off with many new coaches and many familiar faces. Each year the program improves. This year, the Yoplait grant will offer all girls registered to receive shoes at a significant discount, along with other great sponsors.

The ice rink grand opening had to be canceled due to poor ice conditions. The forecast does not look great for making fresh ice, but as soon as it is possible to have this event again, it will be rescheduled. Stay tuned for more information at a later date.

Next Friday, February 5, 2016 is the annual Daddy Daughter Dance. Attached is the flyer. It's always a hit for the girls. If you haven't been to the event, you are missing out on an evening to remember for the rest of your lives with that special little girl in your life.

PUBLIC WORKS ACTIVITIES

DIAL-A-RIDE –

248 Adult Riders - (\$2.00 Fare)

371 Children Riders - (\$1.00 Fare)

743 (\$1.00 Fare) - Seniors (90) and Disabled (653) passengers of which 152 used the wheelchair lift to board

58 Free Riders - Aides that ride with disabled passengers and children 4 and under with an adult

36 No Shows - A person who calls for a ride and when we go to pick up and they are not there for ride

90 Safe Riders – Free rides from local establishments to anyone in the community on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights 12:00 am to 2:30 am.

2,461 Ferris Shuttle Bus – No service on Monday the 18th, closed for Martin Luther King Day. Free rides to anyone on Campus, The new route has nine stops on campus- Lot 28, Allied Health, Campus Community Center, Sports Complex, Lot 4, Rock Cafe', Recreation Center, University Center, Arts and Science, 7:30 am -7:00 pm

4,007 Total Passengers

416 Out of City Riders - Anyone we pick up or drop off outside the Big Rapids City Limits

STREETS & PARKS –

Safety Topic: “The Do’s and Don’ts of Lifting”

- Sanded & salted streets, sidewalks, parking lots, alleys & Airport
- Replaced street name signs
- Filled potholes
- Plowed Airport
- Repaired many different items at City Hall
- Checked frost depths
- Worked at Library

- Opened some drains
- Reading meters
- Washed trucks
- Checked and jetted sewers per normal daily and call ins
- Picked up trash downtown and in parks

MOTOR POOL –

- Staff vehicles & Miscellaneous Equipment:
 - 203P - pickup plow, repaired plow frame
 - 220- pickup truck, serviced and replaced all 4 tires
 - Airport Kubota, repaired broken plow main frame and sub frame
- Dump trucks:
 - 101 – repaired muffler pipe
 - 103, replaced underbody scraper
 - 104, repaired wiring to ignition switch for a stalling problem
 - 105, replaced rear brakes and door mirror
- Busses:
 - 901 - service call, replaced serpentine belt and tensioner
 - 903 - serviced and did a safety inspection, replaced front tires and checked brakes. Replaced both serpentine belts and an idler pulley
 - 908 - replaced 1 rear heater fan motor
 - 909 - repaired wiring on wheelchair lift and rear heater motor

MAIN MAINTENANCE -

- MISS Digs
- Miscellaneous reads

Stephen Sobers
City Manager