

VILLAGE OF MCCONNELSVILLE 2013 STATE OF THE VILLAGE ADDRESS
BY MAYOR JOHN W. FINLEY

As Mayor, I am required by the Ohio Revised Code to present a State of the Village address to the Village Council at the first meeting of each new year. As a reflection of the past year, I feel that we can all be very proud of our accomplishments in the village while working so frugally under a very tight budget. I am proud of all the staff within the village as everyone has worked very well together as a Team.

I am extremely proud of our employees who work in the village office every day. Our VA came back to work for the village in 2012, and we have a new Administrative Assistant who is helping with the daily activities which has greatly enhanced our customer service. We have an employee who works diligently with the water and waste water billings, as well as providing administrative assistance to both me and the VA, greeting the public, and administrating the court systems. We also have a Fiscal Officer who works as the Tax Administrator, Clerk of Council, and has even assisted in training other Fiscal Officers, Tax Administrators, and Clerks for other villages. These employees have attended various seminars throughout the year to enhance their education and their abilities to help make the village run more efficiently. In the past year, we have utilized local labor to perform some minor renovations at the Mayor's office. We also restructured the office hours for better service to the general public, and have implemented a new village website which was designed and installed by our own council members who donated many hours at no cost to the village.

Our police department is now under the direction of a new Chief of Police after the retirement of our long time Chief of Police. In the past year, the police department has reached new heights with the replacement of two aging police cruisers that were costing the village a lot of money in repair. This has provided our officers and citizens a much safer, more reliable, and more professional representation. We have added two full-time officers and one part-time officer so that our department is now working at full staff, and we have also been working together to improve documentation, policies and procedures, as well as training to assure our police force is professionally staffed and represents our citizens fairly and honestly.

The swimming pool facility saw a much needed major renovation. With backing from local merchants, First National Bank, and several citizens of the village, it became a reality to give the facility almost a complete facelift. It is now much safer and more pleasant for everyone using the facility and can be enjoyed by people from within the county and outlying counties.

We were able to regain a \$25,000 grant that had been lost to replace funds already spent on the Opera House and also to regain a \$75,000 grant to help install a new much needed roof on the Opera House. This project is very near completion and we are hoping to have funds left over that we will be permitted to use for updating the heating system and installing an air conditioning system in the Opera House as well.

We were able to completely and safely remove the old Kennebec high tower and convert that property back to real estate and back into the hands of the residents who live there. The removal of the old reservoir on Kennebec was also a much needed milestone, and greatly improved that area of the village. In performing the demolition, we were able to improve the lot across the highway as well. The old First Street Waterworks building was torn down, which made the entrance into our downtown area more pleasing. We were also able to improve the electric service into the water boost pump stations on First Street and improve their efficiency, all with the aid of our own village crews and a local electrical contractor. We worked with Englefield Oil to remove the old abandoned Duke Station and improve that property, and also worked with several home and landowners to improve properties throughout the village. We are currently working with Ashland Oil Co. to improve their property on North 7th Street, and are getting close to being able to improve that property greatly.

With the help of our local county Grant Writers and our Village Administrator, we have seen grant approvals for the Waste Water Treatment Plant with UV replacement to replace the chlorine and also add grinder screens for the plant. This will help the safety and welfare of the employees, operators, and village residents. Another grant applied for and received is the Community Distress Grant that is going to be a very big help to our village this year.

Under the direction of our VA and our Street, Water, and Sewer Departments, the village employees have been working together to clean, organize, and improve both our 14th Street facility and our 4th Street warehouse while still performing

several major water and sewer line projects throughout the year. We were able to complete the Phase 3 Sewer Separation Project, which came with quite an expense to the village but was needed for EPA approval and for the safety and welfare of many generations to come.

A number of other major projects have been completed, including paving several streets in town with grants and tax monies from the village, county, and state, repairing the street sweeper, improving the drainage at different locations throughout the village, installing new pumps at the Waste Water Treatment Plant, and purchasing a new plasma cutter for the Street, Water, and Sewer Department.

There have been many projects completed by our village crews, which has saved our tax payers funds by not using outside sources. Some highlights are: the new sewer line on 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, and 7th Streets as well as Sandy Bank and the Button Addition, a lot of work from our own crews on the Phase 3 Separation Project and the inspections completely performed by our own Village Foreman, while ensuring exact performance to our specifications and meeting the needs of the project. We still need to repair or replace two aging dump trucks in our fleet, and have other equipment replacement needs so that our crews are able to continue doing this type of work in order to save our tax payers' money.

Another accomplishment was working together with the Village of Malta and the Volunteer Joint Park Board for structure and future growth, with better communication for all people involved.

I have also made it one of my goals to attend educational and training sessions in order to expand my knowledge for the job of serving as Mayor for the Village of McConnelsville. I was able to attend a two-day training for Mayor's Court Certification in Columbus, Ohio at the Ohio Bar Association and a two-day Mayor's Training Seminar in Westlake, Ohio that was very informative. I have also attended many State level meetings along with some county level meetings while working towards the goal of improving our village.

In addressing the financial side of the village, we will continue being frugal and efficient and making sure we save where we can while we continue to improve the infrastructure of the village. When looking at the 2012 year-end balances, you will see the General Fund ended in the black at \$266,654.38. This is a decrease of \$10,917.90 from 2011; however, we have completed a lot of tasks of vital importance to the village in the last year. The Street M and R Fund had an increase of \$6,867.64, the Water Fund had an increase of \$105,945.26, and the Sewer Fund had an increase of \$54,914.56 from 2011. Part of these positive increases is due in part to the efficiency, capabilities, and professionalism of our crews.

Even though we see positive balances in all areas, the General Fund is still a concern. Part of the decrease in the General Fund was paying for retirements that were due, purchasing two new cruisers, and even though we had grants and donations toward the pool refurbishment, we still expended funds for the project. We continue to see less money coming into the funds year after year, as it is mainly funded through tax dollars, but our expenses are not going down. We will also see the cease of inheritance tax in the next calendar year, and the Street M & R Fund is funded through motor vehicle tax and gasoline tax, which have been decreasing each year. In the past this has covered about a third of our employee's salaries, but in the last year we were only able to pay one employee out of this fund.

We will see an increase in our Water Fund usage this new year. We continue to have a high cost for our water and no backup for the village water system. We set up a Water Capital Projects Fund for the purpose of repairing, replacing, upgrading, and maintaining the Hawk Water System. That fund now has a balance of \$9,267.97 in it and will continue to build up in the repair and replacement of the water system that feeds it.

I am extremely proud of the Team approach we have taken in order to perform the duties of the village. However you size it; from the top down or the bottom up, everyone is pulling their weight in the village and working hard to make sure that the Village of McConnelsville is one of the best, well-run villages in the State of Ohio. I am extremely proud to be a small part of this great team and am confident that we will continue to strive to work together to make McConnelsville a better, safer place to live.