

VILLAGE OF McCONNELSVILLE, OHIO
2016 STATE OF THE VILLAGE ADDRESS
MAYOR JOHN W. FINLEY

January 5, 2016

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. This will be my 5th address since becoming Mayor in October of 2011.

I would like to reiterate the statement of continuing to work together as a team as this will continue to be my approach as the Mayor of the Village of McConnelsville. I am extremely proud of all the accomplishments that we, as a team, have been able to complete in 2015. We continued to operate the village in a very efficient manner for the taxpayers by keeping costs to a minimum yet still keeping our wages fair and competitive and our benefits excellent. As Mayor, it is very important to me to make sure we accomplish these goals.

I believe the village to be in sound financial condition. Although, the mandated EPA required sewer separation projects that we will be forced to make in the coming year are certainly going to put a burden on our financial wellbeing. We also have some other much needed projects that we will have to face in the near future. Some of those projects include some major water line repair/replacements, painting of two water storage supply facilities, the continual upgrade of the Waste Water Treatment Plant, and replacing the roof on the 14th Street Maintenance Facility. Also, I cannot fail to mention how much of a burden health insurance has put a strain on our budgets and hardships on us as a village and our employees. As we continue to face these challenges, we must remain diligent to keep our water and sewer fees both fair and as reasonable as possible yet still meet the demands of the future safety and wellbeing of our citizens.

In reflection of our accomplishments in 2015, we were able to see a great addition to the McConnelsville Police Department with the introduction of our canine, Samo. We have a strong and stable police department with an excellent slate of officers who are making a difference, especially on our pledge to stamp out drugs in our community. We have made great strides in this and Chief Copeland, as well as all of the officers, has certainly made a lot of personal sacrifices. All of our cruisers are now up to excellent standards and represent our community well. Our Streets Department is doing well and we continue to upgrade our infrastructure when possible. Our Water Department and Waste Water Treatment Department are equally doing well with regards to operations, maintenance, and repairs. We continually strive to improve where needed and maintain an excellent standard of services to our community. I continue to personally invest a lot of time into various meetings and trainings as well as holding Mayor's Court and Council meetings. I continue to donate all of my mileage and expenses when I go on business trips for the Village of McConnelsville.

In looking at our funds, and quoting facts from our fiscal officer, all bills are paid through 2015 and our current checking account balance is \$2,172,980.29, which includes the following:

	2014	2015
General Fund	\$468,537.64	\$504,122.01
Street Construction Maintenance & Repair	\$55,474.64	\$36,803.63
Water Fund	\$509,421.81	\$730,552.34
Sewer Fund	\$525,856.41	\$704,975.55
Water Capital Projects Enterprise Fund	\$52,856.41	\$74,035.74

The Street Fund is definitely dwindling, and with paying for the loan out of it we will have to adjust what else we pay out of that fund in 2016. The Street Fund continues to be a challenge, with the cost of repairing and repaving streets, etc. This is something we will have to look at in the near future. The balance in both the Water and Sewer accounts is increasing as we strive to improve the funds in these accounts. We will, however, need to spend some of that for the mandated projects we have coming up, so it's important that we are not fooled by the balances. We continue to improve our income tax collections and processes, but with the new required laws, we will need to watch this closely. We were recently mandated to change our ordinances and under Ohio Revised Code, change some of the processes.

Reflecting on our major accomplishments in 2015, we had the major slip repair on North 4th Street as well as the new boat docks and improvements made at the Wharf Park behind the Kroger store. The new boat docks are user friendly, handicap accessible, safe, and efficient. Our own village crew did an excellent job on the installation work, and they are an extreme asset to our community.

We were able to make many improvements with the funds from the Issue One Ohio Public Works for the Waste Water Storm Water Separation Project that we applied for in 2014 and received in 2015 in the amount of \$318,063.00 in grant and \$324,922.00 in zero percent loan. We purchased a new pickup truck for the Waste Water Treatment Plant, replacing the aging and outdated truck that was in dire need of major repairs. We purchased a 'new to us' but slightly used street sweeper that certainly enhances the beauty and the cleanliness of our community, which I feel is very important. The new street sweeper is doing a great job and our crew operates it efficiently, improving the conditions of our village streets. We purchased a new John Deere tractor that we hope will enhance our mowing abilities as well as keep up with the sidewalks around the village properties so they are safe for pedestrians in the winter months. The new Council Chambers and Mayor's Court area on the Main Street square have certainly been a nice addition and our own crew has done most of the work, along with the Village Administrator, in an effort to save funds. We also hired a new employee to complete the street crew.

We are continuing to work on getting the Hawk and Kennebec interconnect project award complete so we can finally achieve completion on that, hiring engineers for the 8th, 9th and 10th Streets sewer separation projects which is 99% complete and we have secured almost all of the funding for that, new traffic light and cables at the new bridge and soon to have new traffic light and cables at Main and 10th Streets as well. We have signed a contract and will be proceeding to replace equipment in the clarifiers in the waste water treatment plant. It looks like we will be receiving the grant for the Opera House and the much needed renovation and repair necessary for this beautiful facility and building and we certainly give credit to the Morgan County Commissioners as well as Shannon Wells' county office for that project.

Looking forward to 2016, as previously mentioned, we have many projects in the works including many to come that are either necessary or mandated. We will continue to keep a close eye on our expenditures and make sure what we purchase and/or improve upon is necessary and that we have the proper funds to do so. We will need to keep a close eye on the swimming pool and the joint park expenditures. I look forward to working with the State of Ohio for the possibility of a new walking path for fitness and recreation along the river between the two bridges in the village. That project could include jointly working with the Village of Malta.

Also, in 2016 it looks like our Village Administrator is retiring. I will hate to see John go, as he has been an extreme asset to me and to the Village of McConnelsville. His hard work and extreme dedication to the village has not gone unnoticed. It will be a big loss to us to lose his tenure, experience, and knowledge.

I would also like to recognize each and every one of the village employees and staff, as they have each done a tremendous job in each department and also each and every Council Member who has worked so diligently as part of our team. Our Solicitor David Tarbert is coming back for 2016, and I am very pleased we were able to retain him. He does a super job and is great to work with as Solicitor for the village and as my Prosecutor in Mayor's Court. Last but not least, I would like to recognize our outgoing council member Mary Gessel. Mary was a member of council when I became Mayor 4 years and 3 months ago. She has been a constant source of support and has been very dedicated to the village and the village business as a whole. Mary never hesitated to attend meetings and work on special projects, even when they were out of her comfort zone. Her dedication will be sorely missed by the Village of McConnelsville.

In closing, I would like to say it has been both an honor and a pleasure again this year to serve as the Mayor of the Village of McConnelsville. Each day presents new challenges, new obstacles, and sometimes hardships. Each year presents different challenges, and while they may complicate or slow our path, through teamwork and dedication we will overcome for the benefit of our entire community.

Respectfully Submitted,
John W. Finley, Mayor
Village of McConnelsville