

December 2017

Dear Mosinee Resident:

The year is almost over and soon 2018 will be here. At City Hall, we are all set for next year with a recently passed 2018 budget. The budget is our guide for the year. It covers anticipated revenues, general expenses that change very little from year-to-year, and capital project expenditures. In this monthly update, I would like to take the opportunity to review some of the highlights of the 2018 budget with you and also discuss the challenges faced by the City in formulating a budget to accomplish as much as possible while keeping taxes low.

First, property tax revenue is the City's largest source of revenue. The amount of the City's tax levy is based on what it needs to cover expenses after accounting for other sources of revenue. This year, the City's tax levy remained the same and the rate at which the City taxes your property decreased slightly. However, you will likely see an increase in your property tax bill this year. That is because the City is only one taxing entity on your tax bill. The school district, county and technical college are other taxing entities on your tax bill and their rates, like the City's rate, fluctuate from year-to-year based on their own circumstances.

Second, because the City kept general fund expenses low in the budget, it has qualified for over \$40,000 in expenditure restraint aid from the State. While a welcome source of additional revenue it pales in comparison to the nearly \$120,000 in decreases of state shared revenue the City has sustained since 2003.

Third, general transportation aid from the State will increase this year by approximately \$40,000 (15%). However, road repairs have become back-breaking on many municipalities and, while a welcome source of additional revenue, this largely represents a recovery from a \$27 million plus decrease in local transportation aid statewide following passage of the 2011 State Budget.

Fourth, notable capital projects this upcoming year will include reconstructions of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> streets, a section of Brown Street, Orbiting Drive and Southview Drive in the Business Park. Most of this work will be accomplished through existing and new borrowing with the exception of Orbiting Drive. At one point in time the City was actually able to set money aside for local road improvements. However, borrowing has become an unfortunate reality of state-imposed policy and there is little way around it.

For example, the 10<sup>th</sup> Street reconstruction, a badly needed road repair, may cost \$300,000. On a 10 year loan through the State the City may pay \$60,000 in interest. Using a combination of cash on hand, a levy increase, and new revenue from sources like the increase in general transportation aid, a cash payment is not unrealistic and, at the end of it all, the City would save tens of thousand in interest payments that come with borrowing the same amount. However, we cannot accumulate cash on hand beyond a certain amount because of restrictions on non-lapsing reserve funds. We cannot increase the levy because while state law allows a levy increase to borrow money, it does not permit an increase to pay cash. Finally, if we used our increase in general transportation aid of \$40,000 to make a general fund expense cash payment toward roads, we would lose our \$44,000 in expenditure restraint aid resulting in a net loss in state aid. These are the unfortunate, and often times hard to appreciate, realities of budgeting around state policy we have no control over.

Like road repairs, the City worked hard this year to address other notable needs in the budget while keeping taxes stable. At the Fire Department, two of our three ambulances were in need of replacement due to age and mileage. A number of other capital purchases were also necessary from hoses to safety gear to training aids. As your Fire District Chairperson, I challenged staff to find new sources of revenue to meet debt service on borrowing to accomplish these needs. They demonstrated the ability to do so and, as a result, we will meet many of these capital needs next year.

The police department, likewise, had a number of capital needs from car computers that were failing regularly to new reporting software to soon-to-be obsolete tracking hardware that allows dispatch to easily locate an officer. Almost all of these needs were addressed in this year's budget. An officer's time on the street is important and we recognized the need to make sure our officers have the tools to do the administrative part of their jobs efficiently.

The budget is a complicated and challenging process even for a small community like Mosinee. Challenges permeate the budget from parks to economic development, from police cars to ambulances, from snow plows to lawn mowers. There is much to accomplish and little to do it with. I recognize and appreciate our tax base. I have been on residents' door steps, in the middle of winter, talking about the issues, and I know that for some even a small increase is big deal. Those conversations are always at the forefront of my mind and always will be as we continue to work to address the many challenges facing our community while being fiscally responsible about doing so.

For those interested in other aspects of the budget or in learning more about some of the topics I have highlighted in this update please do not hesitate to reach out to me, your council member, or City staff. Thank you for the opportunity to serve the City of Mosinee and I wish you and all of your family a safe and enjoyable holiday season and Happy New Year.

Mayor Jacobson

## Recycle Christmas Lights



Habitat for Humanity of Wausau is collecting Christmas lights. Every year tons of light strings are thrown away and end up in landfills across the country. Habitat for Humanities collects all kinds of light strings – old or new, working or not. Worn out extension cords are also collected. Habitat for Humanities recycles the copper and plastic from the strings and uses the proceeds to assist low-income families in our community. **A drop box is available at City Hall – 225 Main Street.** For more information please call City Hall – 225 Main Street or HFH at 715-848-5042.

## SECURE YOUR MAILBOX

Reminder to Check Your Mailbox Before Snowplowing Season *Please inspect your mailbox and post to insure that it is installed properly.* Just a reminder to make sure mail boxes are sturdy and able to withstand the force of plowed snow. Make sure the posts are solid in the ground, and boxes will not pop off if a pile of snow is pushed against it. Rotted wood posts and rusted steel posts will not withstand the weight of snow being pushed against them. Plow Operators are instructed to be cautious near mail boxes. In most cases a properly installed mail box will permit a snow plow to clear snow around it. Most cases of damaged mail boxes are caused by heavy snow hitting the box. The mail boxes are not usually hit by the plow. A mailbox with alleged damage from a direct hit by a City snow plow must be reported immediately and will be visually inspected by City staff. It is the policy of the City to only reimburse the owner for mail boxes broken from coming in direct contact with the plow.

## NOTICE OF SPRING ELECTION - APRIL 3<sup>RD</sup>, 2018

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that an election to be held in the City of Mosinee on the first Tuesday of April, 2018, the 3<sup>RD</sup> day of said month, the following officers are to be elected:

Ward 2 Alderperson	Nelson Pasha, Jr.
Ward 4 Alderperson	Thomas Helbach
Ward 6/7 Alderperson	Doug Mielke

A map of the ward boundaries is available online at our website [www.mosinee.wi.us](http://www.mosinee.wi.us) and at City Hall.

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN**, that the first day to circulate nomination papers is December 1, 2017, and the final day for filing nomination papers is 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018.

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN**, those who are interested may obtain nomination papers from the City Clerk at 225 Main Street, Mosinee, during the office hours of 8:00a.m. to 4:30p.m. **NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN**, that if a primary is necessary, the primary will be held on the Third Tuesday of February, being the twentieth day of said month.