

MOUNT GILEAD
STATE OF THE VILLAGE
JANUARY 17, 2023

This past year was one of unexpected challenges, but there were also many positive activities in our village. Even through the challenges, village council and the village staff stepped up to meet the needs of our residents.

The first challenge was the tornado that hit our community in June. Trees were uprooted, treetops broken off, power lines downed, roads blocked and roofs damaged. Thankfully, there were no injuries or loss of life. The community came together with neighbors helping neighbors and citizens being patient as Ohio Edison called crews in from other areas to restore power. The true character of our citizens was on display for all to see. Unfortunately, the months of brush and limb collection kept the village staff from doing other activities for an extended period. We continue to work on storm damage on N. Main Street and recently completed clean up on West High Street and Elm Street. We look forward to a return to normalcy in 2023.

In September of last year Mayor Jamie Brucker accepted the newly created position as Director of Operations for Morrow County. It was sad to see Jamie leave, but he is doing wonderful work for Morrow County and is still active in our community. When I stepped in to complete Jamie's term, a seat on the village council was opened and was ably filled by Mark Phillips. I continue to learn how to best serve as mayor and anticipate a very productive 2023.

The Village ended 2022 financially healthy, with an increase in our cash carryover. The 2023 budget is financially stable, and the Village will be fully funded. This is due to good investment management and sound fiscal practices. We will strive to maintain good financial stability into the new year.

Our Service Department employees worked hard throughout the year to provide reliable service to our citizens. The sanitation employees picked up and disposed of at the landfill 1,259 tons of refuse in 2022. This past fall they collected 1,220 cubic yards of leaves and hauled them to the compost facility. No record was kept of the amount of trees, brush and limbs collected from the June storm but we filled the compost facility twice in 2022. Thanks to the DKMM Solid Waste District the trees were ground up into mulch and repurposed.

When the recycling contract was bid in early 2022 the cost to the resident was going to double. With the assistance of a \$50,000 grant from the DKMM Solid Waste District the Village purchased a recycling truck and changed to an in-house recycling program starting September 1, 2022. From September 1st to the end of the year the village collected 95.5 tons of recycled material.

The Village maintained its Tree City designation for the 34th year and planted 25 new trees in our village. Our goal is to plant even more trees in 2023.

Streets received much attention in 2022. In 2021 the village bid a large amount of resurfacing and that contract was carried over into 2022 where \$372,000 of paving was conducted. Neal Avenue, Cedar Street, Elm Street, Pine Drive, the north end of Cherry Street and portions of Delaware Street were milled and repaved.

Through a \$172,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) the village was able to replace deteriorated storm and sanitary sewers under Lincoln Avenue and to provide much needed paving along the entirety of Lincoln Avenue. This project was completed in 2022.

The water plant pumped 118,856,514 gallons out to the system and our customers in 2022. We conducted preventive maintenance on our plant and distribution system and rehabbed well No. 1. Staff repaired 20 watermain breaks, replaced 7 lead water tap connections, and replaced 5 fire hydrants.

The wastewater staff efficiently operated the wastewater treatment plant treating 287,510,000 gallons of sewage in compliance with EPA regulations.

Much-needed maintenance was conducted on the Village Hall utilizing CARES act monies. The work was done being respectful of the historical importance of the former train station. The brick exterior was repaired and regouted and damaged bricks replaced. Then a new standing seam metal roof was placed on the building to stop the constant leaking of the roof. The overgrown vegetation surrounding the building was removed in preparation for new landscaping.

The wooden benches downtown had served faithfully for many years but were in drastic need of replacement. The old wooden benches were replaced by sixteen (16) new black cast iron benches; the beginning of many downtown beautification projects to come.

Much anticipated work on the Mount Gilead public pool began in 2022. Repairs to the stainless-steel walls and a completely new gutter system were installed in spring of 2022. In December the concrete deck was removed, and a completely new concrete deck will be installed with the pool scheduled to be reopened in May 2023.

Economic Development of our community welcomed new residential investment. A triplex was begun on West High Street and a new single-family structure was built at 379 North Delaware. A \$4,000,000 investment broke ground on Douglas Avenue for a 47-unit senior housing apartment building that will be completed in 2023. Morrow County received grants to conduct Phase I and Phase II environmental assessments on the HPM property and a grant for environmental remediation was received for cleanup of the HPM # 1 sight, current location of Mid-Ohio Sanitation.

The Police Department received 1,859 calls for Service. The department took 366 reports, 71 Felony, 270 misdemeanor, and 25 informational. The department responded to 72 accidents, initiated 1,318 traffic stops, conducted 4,597 foot patrols and business checks and issued 686 charges. The Department has provided excellent service to the village residents despite the fact that they are short staffed. The department is currently attempting to hire a fulltime and parttime Law Enforcement Officer. This is a difficult task as qualified candidates are in great demand and there are less people entering the safety field.

The village and the school partnered to place a school resource officer in the schools to provide additional security for our students. This commitment by both parties provides safety, security, mentorship, and an example of leadership to our children. This took a financial commitment on both parties but we both realized the importance of this endeavor. SRO Turner has fostered a wonderful relationship with students and provided a welcome presence in Mount Gilead Schools.

The Police Department and Fire Department teamed up for a community day which raised approximately \$11,240 which included a matching grant from the Modern Woodmen to support Safety Town and purchase a new Fire Safety House.

Immediately after the June storm, Police Chief Adam Lakey reported to work to help clear debris from the roadways. Chief Lakey met with then Mayor Brucker, Fire Chief Chad Swank, and Morrow County Emergency Management Agency Director John Harsch at the Mount Gilead Fire Department where a Command Center was established to direct personnel and resources to where they were needed.

All of the village street crew and approximately 16 firefighters reported from home as well. Officer Michael Turner stayed 10 hours past the end of his scheduled shift. He assisted with clearing roads, closing roads due to hazards; and, most impressively, he coordinated setting up an emergency shelter for campers who were stranded at the Jellystone Campground. The shelter was set up at the Mount Gilead High School for the evacuees where they had access to shelter, bathrooms, mats, and showers. Firefighter Alexis McCoy aided by obtaining water and diapers for those in need and Fire Chief Chad Swank arranged for transportation.

The Fire Department responded to 576 calls for service, a 139 call increase or 24% increase from 2021. 20 of those calls were on June 13th, the day of the tornado. Also in 2022 the Fire Department took delivery of our New Tanker 14 which was obtained by an AFG Grant with a 5% match. The total grant was \$390,000 with out-of-pocket for the village of \$19,500. The department also received a non-matching grant of \$37,500 for new rescue tools.

One member of the department completed Firefighter 2 school, two members completed Fire Officer 1, and One member completed Fire Officer 2.

The Department initiated a First Responder Program for Advanced Life Support calls within our coverage area. Two Members completed Paramedic School and two Members Completed EMT School.

The department was fully staffed for 52 hours straight during the December snowstorm and responded to approximately 20 calls including a broken sprinkler line at the Mount Gilead High School which was gushing water at the entrance doors. With assistance from the Cardington Fire Department, crews were able to stop the water flow and keep it from entering the gym.

The Fire department maintained an ISO rating of 3. A fire department's ISO rating is a determination by the Insurance Services Office of how well the department is able to serve the community. A fire department is assigned a score between 1 and 10, with lower numbers indicating a better score. High ISO scores can increase home insurance rates in the community. A 3 is excellent for the size of our department.

David Stamolis, our long serving magistrate of Mayor's Court, left at the end of December. We appreciate his many years of service. We welcome new magistrate Tim Roston. Mr. Roston has served in this capacity for other municipalities and was able to hit the ground running at his first Mayor's Court last week.

The village of Mount Gilead has a bright future ahead and I look forward to what we as a group can accomplish in 2023.

Donna J. Carver, Mayor