

**STATE OF THE VILLAGE
MOUNT GILEAD, OHIO
2024**

2023 was a very exciting year for the Village of Mount Gilead. Much progress was made, and many positive outcomes were achieved.

Finance

The Village ended 2023 financially healthy. The 2024 budget is 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.

Police

Statistics

During 2023, the officers of the Mount Gilead Police Department responded to 1,461 calls for service, conducted 1,305 traffic stops, investigated 232 criminal offense reports, issued 657 charges, and handled 49 crashes.

Staffing

The department started the year with 7 full-time officers (Chief Adam Lakey, Captain/K9 Thomas Cronenwett, Sergeant Chase Beekman, School Resource Officer Micheal Turner, Officer David Blanton, Officer Roger Meyer, and Officer Frank Ramos) and 2 part-time officers (Officer George Hinkle and Officer Jeffrey Cline). Officer Jessie Brady was hired as a full-time police officer in May. Officer Blanton resigned in June. Officer Meyer resigned, and Officer Ramos changed his status from full-time to part-time in July. Officer Jason Robinson was hired as a full-time police officer in August.

The department was awarded a recruitment grant that resulted in the creation of a "police officer recruit" position allowing the department to sponsor a recruit to attend the police academy. Caden Mosher, who was previously a Captain with the Mount Gilead Law Enforcement Cadet Program, was selected to fill this position and started attending the North Central State College Police Academy in August. Mosher will become a full-time police officer upon completion of the academy in February 2024.

K9 Nik was retired after faithfully serving the village for 8 years. K9 Niko was sworn in as the new K9 officer in December.

Equipment

The new 2022 Dodge Durango was placed into service, increasing the department fleet size to five patrol vehicles, and changing the patrol vehicle color from white to black. Village council approved the purchase of three additional radar speed signs to be posted in areas of concern for speeding.

Fire

The fire department ended the year with a total of 585 calls for service which was a slight increase compared to 2022. In addition to the Village of Mount Gilead, we currently provide contracted services to The Village of Edison, Gilead Township, and portions of Franklin and Canaan Township. Services include responding to emergency and non-emergency calls, as well as public education and critical risk reduction.

The fire department also serves as a training center throughout the year, providing state accredited fire service certifications to our staff, as well as other agencies who pay for the training services. This valuable program is a way to provide professional training to first responders in Morrow and the surrounding counties.

Looking forward into 2024 the fire department is focusing on our service delivery model, including our current staffing and the trending changes of our community to make sure we are matching the demands of today, as well as planning for the demands of the future.

Economic Development

For economic development the Village is partnered with the Morrow County Development Authority, a port authority as authorized by the State of Ohio. Our Village Administrator is a board member on the Development Authority. Specific to Mount Gilead has been working with potential businesses to locate in Mount Gilead and creating employment opportunities in Morrow County through business expansion or assisting businesses in building facilities in Morrow County.

In 2023 the Morrow County Engineer's Office made the commitment to build a new \$7.3 Million facility on Home Road in Mount Gilead. Morrow County Development has issued bonds and let construction contracts. In a spirit of cooperation, the Village agreed through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to extend utility services to the new county garage in exchange for the old county garage on West Marion Street.

Other investments made in 2023 included an over \$2 Million dollar building by the Mount Gilead system to house football locker rooms, restrooms, and concession area. An \$8.8 Million expansion of the Delaware-Morrow County Mental Health Facility on Meadow Drive was begun in 2023.

Housing expansion continued in Mount Gilead with construction of the Reserve of Mount Gilead. This 47-unit senior apartment building represents a \$4 Million investment in this community and is nearing completion. In 2024 construction is expected to begin on a second phase consisting of a 41-unit apartment building with an investment of \$3.8 Million.

New single-family homes were built as in-fill housing on empty lots in town in 2023. A \$425,000 home was built at 100 Fairway Lane, a \$295,000 home was constructed at 143 Iberia Street, a \$270,000 new home was built at 158 East Marion Street and a \$250,000 new home built at 221 North Main Street.

The Morrow County Land Bank oversaw State grant funding for Brownfields resulting in over \$300,000 of asbestos remediation at the old HPM #1 site now operated by Mid-Ohio Sanitation. The County also received Brownfield funding for Phase I and Phase II Environmental for the HPM #2 site. This is crucial to bringing this property to a stage where redevelopment can occur.

Parks

A nearly \$600,000 investment in our community swimming pool resulted in the re-opening of the pool for the first time since 2019. The pool which was closed in September of 2019 after leaking and consuming 2.7 million gallons of water operated in 2023 with water loss of less than 10,000 gallons, mostly from evaporation. The pool was renovated along with the sprucing up of the pool house.

After much stress caused by state permitting issues the pool opened on June 16th to an excited and receptive community. The pool had excellent usage and the decision to conduct free Fridays provided family recreational opportunities to those residents that may be struggling financially. There are 7,514 pool patrons in the summer of 2023. The Mount Gilead swim team utilized the pool for

swim practice and swim lessons were offered to children. With the construction of stairs into the pool senior activities were made available.

Sanitation

2023 was the first full year of in-house recycling. The initiative of utilizing grant funding to assist in the purchase of the automated recycling truck to keep recycling costs down was successful and resulted in the collection of 299,520 pounds of recyclable material removed from the waste stream.

Village crews kept the village clean by disposing of 1,230 tons of garbage to the Crawford County Landfill.

Wastewater

The wastewater plant processed 253,898,000 gallons of sewage and staff operated the plant efficiently and within EPA guidelines with no violations. EPA representatives made an investigatory visit on a complaint made by someone outside of the village resulting in confirmation that the plant was operated properly and in accordance with our NPDES permit.

Water

For the year 2023 the water plant pumped 108,037,400 gallons into the distribution system. The water plant also was operated without violations from the Ohio EPA. In 2023 both water towers were dived by Liquid Engineering cleaning and inspecting and will be reporting soon with the results. This is done every five years.

Well #5 was rehabilitated in 2023. Moody's of Dayton replaced 3 sections of column pipe, rebuilt the pump, and went through the motor.

On June 30th we suffered a watermain break at the intersection of Park Avenue and North Main Street. The intersection pavement was damaged and during the repair multiple valves broke. The Village received \$190,000 of emergency funding through the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC). This work was completed just this past December.

The Village received authorization from the State of Ohio to utilize \$225,000 in funding for design of the water plant critical infrastructure improvements. The Village conducted a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and selected GPD Group to conduct this work.

Conclusion

The village of Mount Gilead has a bright future ahead and I look forward to what we as a group can accomplish in 2024.