



## Mayor - City of Cortland

400 North High Street, Cortland, Ohio 44410

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### Annual Report of the Mayor to Cortland City Council

January 18, 2006

#### **Introduction**

The primary purpose of this report is to document activities during FY 2005 and the condition of the City of Cortland at the conclusion of FY 2005. I want to thank my staff for their support throughout the year and everyone else that contributed to making this year a successful one for the city.

The city completed the year with continued financial solvency. Progress has been made in several business improvement areas targeted by the city administration. Through the strategic planning process, a number of projects for improvement of the city have been completed with significant progress in several areas. Much of this progress has been through the hard work of volunteers.

#### **Finance**

The city completed 2005 with a total fund balance of \$1,800,000 which is an increase of \$193,000 or 12 percent from the carryover 2005 balance. This increase was primarily due to reductions in spending during 2005. Total expenditures for FY 2005 were \$4,589,200, a decrease of \$929,800 from 2004 of 16 percent.

The most significant balance increase was \$226,000 in the general fund. Spending reductions, timing of expenditures and additional revenue during 2005 resulted in this increase. Other fund increases were \$55,000 in the Police Levy fund, \$12,000 in the Fire Levy fund and \$22,000 in the Road Maintenance fund. There was a reduction in sewer funds of \$49,000 because of the Wodview sanitary sewer replacement and the sewer mapping projects. The water fund decreased by \$67,000 due to continued increases in expenses. The other significant fund reduction was \$19,000 in the State Grant fund.

#### **Service department**

Progress continues to be made in several business improvement areas targeted by the city administration. The focus throughout this year has been to continue to stabilize

city services through improved problem resolution and tracking, adherence to procedures, and documentation of procedures and processes. Long range capital plans have been developed for water and street paving and a survey of storm and sanitary sewer systems is started that should allow development of the capital plans for these systems. This will allow the city to plan for financial needs well into the future and continue to maintain or improve current levels of city services.

## **Water**

The water fund balance decreased by 59% to \$47,000 with expenditures of \$458,000 to support the water department. Total revenues from water billings were \$392,600 a decrease of 1.8 percent from 2004.

Water pressure continues to be a problem in several areas in the city and a model of the system was updated to study alternative solutions. These alternatives have been incorporated into a long range capital plan. The plan considers the age of the water delivery system and replacement requirements for well equipment, storage towers and water lines. In addition capacity upgrades and additional potential customer areas have been considered in the plan.

Major concerns are the lack of sufficient storage to support peak usage times that significantly reduce pressure in the system. The south water tower was constructed 13 feet too short and does not provide any storage within the current operating pressure of the system. The 100,000 gallon tank at Willow Park was constructed more than 50 years ago and should be replaced. The tower behind city hall only provides 22,000 gallons of storage at the normal operating pressure. The system storage must be addressed as a high priority to provide consistent adequate pressure and volume.

## **Sanitary Sewers**

The Sanitary Sewer fund balances decreased by 6.5% to \$700,000 with total expenditures of \$1,084,000 in 2005. Revenues from sewer billings were \$1,036,000 up 5.3 percent from 2004. The changes in the water and sewer fund balances and impending need for water system upgrades point to the urgent need for a rate adjustment.

A sanitary sewer upgrade was started in the Woodview - Russell system and will be completed in early 2006. This is being done to alleviate sewer backups in this area at a cost of \$192,000. Incentive programs for individual homeowner improvements have been investigated for reduction of infiltration and will be pursued.

A long range capital plan based on the survey being completed now will be developed for the sanitary sewer system and upgrades will be identified to support growth areas in the city. Problem areas that have been identified and corrective action will be

incorporated into the plan. The cover for the lift station on Old Oak was raised by 12 inches to avoid the infiltration problem that occurred in the August 2004 flood of the system.

## **Storm sewers**

Preliminary design for Phase II and III of the Rosewae/Charles storm sewer project was completed in 2005. Funds for the completion of the remainder of this project are being requested for 2006.

Mapping of the entire system will be completed in 2006. A long range capital plan based on the survey being completed now will be developed for the storm sewer system and upgrades will be identified to correct problem areas in the city. Particular attention will be directed to areas where improvement can be made to areas affected by the August 2004 flood. An upgrade to increase the capacity of the storm sewers on Laura lane was completed by the developer to improve drainage at the end of Laura Lane. Efforts to work with residents to resolve yard flooding issues will continue.

## **Streets and Roads**

Several projects were completed to improve the condition of streets in the city. Over 400,000 square feet of city streets were resurfaced in the vicinity of the Shepard Hills, and Huntington Acres.

A pavement condition assessment of city streets and the year of the last resurfacing has been completed and a 10 year paving and curb replacement plan is being utilized to determine paving plans for each year.

## **City Properties & Parks**

There were no additions to city properties during 2005. Several improvements were made to Willow Park including additional bleachers, playground equipment, basketball goals, tennis court wind screens and baseball diamond fences.

The City agreed to provide \$10,000 to help fund a feasibility study for a lodge on Mosquito Lake. This project could provide infrastructure improvements that would help with construction of the park area on North Mecca Street.

The appearance committee formed in accordance with the Strategic Plan completed their work This group continues to help complete improvements to Rotary and Point Park. They recommended the formation of a group to oversee volunteer efforts to improve the appearance of parks and city property and incorporated the Cortland Beautification Association to provide this function. They also designed landscaping around the new information sign at city hall.

## **Police Department**

The Police Levy fund balance increased by 26% to \$262,000 with total expenditures of \$828,000 to support the Police department. The primary contributing factors to this increase in fund balance were lower than projected personnel and operating expenses.

## **Fire Department**

The Fire Levy fund balance increased by 8% to \$158,600 with total expenditures of \$914,900 to support the Fire department. The increase was due to the delay of purchase of a replacement EMS unit and an increase in ambulance billings, up 25% from 2004 billings.

## **Strategic Plan Initiatives**

Progress was made in several areas of the Strategic plan during 2005 including:

**Appearance and Aesthetics of the City** – The committee to develop a plan to establish an historic district in the city continued their efforts through additional public meetings. They met regularly to pursue this goal and completed a proposal for the historic district legislation to be submitted to Planning and zoning in 2006.

The Appearance committee (Cortland Beautification Association) selected four residential properties and one business for the Cortland Pride Award. First Place Bank continued as the 2005 sponsor for the award. Four residential awards and a business award are planned for 2006.

The addition of benches and planters on west main street completed the streetscaping of West Main Street.

A property appearance ordinance was approved by City Council in 2005. The legislation establishes appearance standards and enforcement procedures for all properties in the city.

Several areas of concentration of the enforcement of zoning laws have been identified and enforcement of permits, abandoned/junk cars, and temporary signs have been pursued.

**Growth of Business, both new and existing** - The Business Development Committee completed incorporation of the Community Improvement Corporation.

Legislation was submitted for the designation agreement to council for approval, but was not accepted. The committee will work with council to establish the Board of Directors and make changes requested to the legislation for resubmission in 2006.

**City infrastructure and Services** - An agreement was completed with Norfolk and Southern for lease of an area along Erie Street for downtown parking. A preliminary plan has been completed and submitted to the Cortland Beautification Association for landscaping input.

An evaluation of the pavement of all city streets was completed. A ten year paving plan was developed from the evaluation and used in developing the resurfacing project for 2005. This plan will be updated annually and used to determine resurfacing requirements in the future.

A Model for the water distribution system was completed in May 2005 and has been used to develop a capital plan for the water system.

Water and Sewer lines were extended to the intersection of state roads 305 and 46.

**Attracting People to the Community** - A welcome letter and useful business and city information in plastic Welcome to Cortland bags are being given to all new water customers and other identified new residents. About 350 packets have been distributed through the end of 2005.

Cortland City Council voted to provide \$10,000 in support of a feasibility study for a lodge at Mosquito lake.

The Cortland Foundation has been incorporated and the federal tax exempt application has been filed. When this is approved, the board will be selected and promotional materials will be developed for distribution.

Respectfully Submitted,

Curt Moll