



Mayor - City of Cortland

400 North High Street, Cortland, Ohio 44410

Annual Report of the Mayor to Cortland City Council

February 18, 2007

Introduction

The primary purpose of this report is to document activities during FY 2006 and the condition of the City of Cortland at the conclusion of FY 2006. 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 service 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 progress in several areas. Much of this progress has been through the hard work of volunteers.

Finance

The city completed 2006 with a total unencumbered fund balance of \$1,657,000 which is an decrease of \$143,000 or 8 percent from the carryover 2005 balance. This decrease was primarily due to the sewer mapping project completed during 2006 and expenditures for the water system. Total expenditures for FY 2006 were \$5,129,500, a increase of \$540,300 from 2005 or 12 percent. Receipts for 2006 were \$4,985,900 an increase of 204,000 or 4% over 2005.

The most significant balance decreases were \$192,000 in the general fund and 195,600 in the sewer fund. Projects in both areas during 2006 and loans from the sewer fund to the water fund resulted in these decreases. There was also a decrease of \$13,000 in the Fire Levy fund. Fund increases included \$110,000 in the Police Levy fund, \$176,000 in the water fund, and \$15,000 in the Road Maintenance fund. The water fund increased both because of the higher water rates and loans from the sewer 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 substantially completed during 2006 will allow completion 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 unencumbered water fund balance increased from \$37,000 to \$176,400 with expenditures of \$579,400 to support the water department. Total revenues from water billings were \$473,900 an increase of 35 percent from 2005 as a result of the increase in rates passed by council in April. Although expenditures continue to exceed revenues, a loan from the sewer fund of \$198,000 allowed the city to continue to operate the water system and make progress on our capital plan.

Water pressure continues to be a problem in several areas in the city. To address these issues, the model of the distribution system along with a comprehensive study of the entire supply system resulted in the completion of a long range capital plan. The plan considers the capacity of the aquifer, the age of the water delivery system, 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 addressed in the plan are the lack of sufficient storage to support peak usage times that significantly reduce pressure in the system. The south water tower was constructed too short and provides little storage within the current operating pressure of the system. A problem with the south tower altitude valve adjustment was corrected in early 2006 that resulted in some improvement. 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.

Approximately 10 acres of land for an additional well field was purchased in 2006 to increase the number of wells to 8 as needed to support growth in the city. The 12 inch distribution line will be extended to the south end of the city early in 2007. The system storage will be addressed during late 2007 and 2008 through construction of a new elevated storage tank to provide consistent increased pressure and volume.

Sanitary Sewers

The unencumbered Sanitary Sewer fund balances decreased by 31.5% to \$425,400 with total expenditures of \$1,214,700 in 2006. Revenues from sewer billings were \$1,016,000 approximately the same as 2005.

A sanitary sewer upgrade in the Woodview - Russell system was completed in early 2006. This was 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.

Mapping of the sanitary system was completed in 2006. A long range capital plan based on the survey 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

Storm sewers

Phase II of the Rosewae/Charles storm sewer project was completed in 2006. This project included reconstruction of the road surface, new catch basins, curbing and some sanitary sewer repairs. Funds for the completion of Phase III of this project are being requested for 2007.

Mapping of the entire system was completed in 2006. A long range capital plan based on the survey 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. Efforts to work with residents to resolve yard flooding issues will continue.

Streets and Roads

We continue to utilize the 10 year resurfacing cycle to determine paving plans for each year. This year the annual resurfacing project included over 460,000 square feet of resurfacing. Streets included were Old Oak, Cherry Hill, Hawthorn, Sycamore, Cricket, Cedar, North Colonial, Woodview, Russell and Willow.

In addition to the annual resurfacing project, Rosewae was resurfaced through the storm sewer project and Warren Meadville Road was resurfaced through a joint project with the Trumbull County Engineer bring the total for 2006 to 515,000 square feet of new pavement.

City Properties & Parks

The city acquired approximately 10 acres of land for a third well field. The property is located east of State Route 5 and south of Bradley-Brownly road.

The Rotary Club completed a permanent sign in Rotary park to replace the temporary sign. Improvements were made in Willow park to the fences and ball fields. A tree fell and damaged the storage and restroom building. Repairs were made by the service department by removing the covered outside area and residing the front of the building.

The City provided \$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.

Police Department

The unencumbered Police Levy fund balance increased by 42% to \$372,000 with total expenditures of \$778,000 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 unencumbered Fire Levy fund balance decreased by 8% to \$145,800 with total expenditures of \$947,000 to support the Fire department. The decrease was due to the some increase in expenditures for personnel and supplies. The purchase of a replacement EMS unit was again delayed and resulted in high maintenance cost for the old unit. Receipts for the fire department were approximately the same as 2005. With the passage of the Fire Levy we will be able to replace the EMS unit and reverse the decline in the fund. This increase in receipts should be directed to the Fire Improvement Fund when possible.

Strategic Plan Initiatives

Progress was made in several areas of the Strategic plan during 2006 including:

Appearance and Aesthetics of the City – The committee to develop a plan to establish an historic district in the city completed their efforts in 2006, but an ordinance was not passed to establish the district.

The Appearance committee (Cortland Beautification Association) selected four residential properties and one business for the Cortland Pride Award. First Place

Bank continued as the 2006 sponsor for the award. Four residential awards and a business award are planned for 2007.

The passage of the appearance ordinance resulted in 12 complaints. Seven of the complaints have been closed and 5 are still pending. The enforcement of zoning laws for permits, abandoned/junk cars, and temporary signs continue to be pursued. The addition of a part time inspector should be considered to assist in these activities.

City infrastructure and Services - No progress was made in creating the parking area on the leased land from Norfolk and Southern along Erie Street.

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. Almost 500 packets have been distributed through the end of 2006.

Cortland City Council provided \$10,000 in support of a feasibility study for a lodge at Mosquito lake. The report should be completed very soon.

The Cortland Foundation has been incorporated and the federal tax exempt application has been approved. The board is now being formed and promotional materials were developed and distribution started at the Street Fair.

Respectfully Submitted,

Curt Moll