

To: Mayor Bearrows & Rochelle City Council

From: Jeffrey A. Fiegenschuh, City Manager

Re: Bi-weekly report to council during Covid-19 emergency

Date: April 17, 2020

City Manager

### **City Manager**

For the next several weeks as the Shelter in Place order remains in effect, I will be sending bi-weekly emails to keep you and the general public up to date with regards to the projects staff is working on. Our team is working diligently to make sure you know what is going on. As always call or email me with questions.

Covid-19 is posing numerous challenges to our nation, state and community. Most of our staff is either working remotely or on staggered shifts to reduce the chances of interaction with other staff and the public. We have been successful thus far, but new challenges await. They include how to plan for a return to “normalcy” and dealing with the potential financial impacts of the Covid-19 crisis.

Since late March staff has been tasked with finding ways to reduce expenditures in the current year budget in anticipation of revenue shortfalls beginning in May. Our team is looking at reductions of 5%-15% in each department. At the first council meeting in May, I will present a budget amendment for your consideration that includes these spending reductions. Staff understands the economic challenges facing our state and the residents of Rochelle. We are committed to reducing spending like they our residents and businesses are being forced to do, but we will also continue to provide the high level of service our community has come to expect.

Recently Sue was able to participate in a webinar hosted by the Alliance for Innovation focusing on Covid-19 and planning to run your organization during anxious times. I’m attaching links provided from the seminar. I encourage you to read them, it is ideas like these that will continue to guide our organization to successful outcomes through the crisis.

<https://www.transformgov.org/articles/scenario-planning-anxious-times>

<http://www.transformgov.org/articles/preparing-new-day-finance-and-innovation-local-government>

Our team continues to focus on other projects and initiatives as well. Last week the City formally closed on the Hickory Grove facility. As of now the timeline has not changed and the plan to demolish the facility this fall still stands. We are looking into possible new grant funds through the EDA to assist with the demolition and site preparation. Along with Hickory Grove,

staff is working to apply for newly available EDA funding for the Well 4 updates, repainting the City's water tower located near the overpass and for the South Main Street widening project. If the EDA funding does not come through the Well 4 project and the painting of the water tower will be deferred for another year.

I'm happy to announce that the City/RMU is working to establish a free internet WIFI hotspot located in the municipal parking lot south of the fire station. This project is intended to help those who need access to broadband service, but don't necessarily have the financial means. Our staff will be working with the Chamber, DRA, Rochelle Community Hospital and both school districts to promote this important initiative.

Finally, I would like to thank our partners at Kishwaukee and Waubensee Community Colleges and the Rochelle Chamber of Commerce for their collaborative relationship with the City of Rochelle. Our staff has been working very closely with these organizations to educate our community on the various federal and state programs that are now available due to the pandemic. It is because of our strong relationships and cooperation that we will get through this crisis. I will leave you with two quotes that are very fitting for these times:

“Alone we can do little; together we can do so much.”-Helen Keller  
“Efforts and courage are not without purpose and direction”-JFK

- Attend weekly Zoom meetings with staff
- Attend Emergency Operations Center meetings (Zoom) three times per week
- Attend weekly conference calls with the Ogle County, ECO rep, schools and the hospital\
- Attended multiple zoom meetings with staff to discuss business retention initiatives (see Jenny and Michelle's reports)
- Meetings with Union reps to discuss staffing and MOU for Covid-19
- Weekly zoom meetings with utility billing office and utilities leadership
- Attended SBA/City/Chamber business webinar
- Meeting to discuss property acquisition at South Main Street
- Meeting with staff to discuss establishing a micro lending program let by the City
- 1:1 meetings with Council members
- Attended City Council meeting
- Budget meetings with staff
- Attended various ICMA webinars related to leadership and the Covid-19 crisis

### **Police**

Over the last two weeks we have had a few bigger calls that the detectives are now working. Today, patrol has responded to three car burglaries where the cars were left unlocked. At this time, it doesn't seem that anyone is missing anything, but items were tossed around in the cars.

Comparing April 1<sup>st</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> of 2019 to the same time period this year, we have similar results. Crashes, traffic stops, fingerprints and other citizen interactions are down. Car

burglaries are up by three, domestics have almost doubled (13-7) and domestic batteries are also up (5-1). FOIA requests went from 24 last year to 5 this year. Our requests for ambulances went down from 57 last year to 43 this year. Suspicious activity calls were down as well.

At the department, we remain healthy so far. Whatever other bugs that are circulating haven't hit us yet. We are continuing to wash and use disinfectant where we can. We still must do the job, so Detective Albers and I went out the other day to conduct an interview with an individual and we were cautious while we maintained our distance.

At this time, I have the application deadline set for May 8<sup>th</sup> and the testing date set at May 30<sup>th</sup> for our initial eligibility list. I see that the company we use does offer an online option so if the same rules are still here in a month, we will probably investigate the online option for the candidates.

### **Rochelle City rep. to EOC**

Continue to serve as the Liaison between the City of Rochelle and the Ogle County EOC. In addition to this I am conducting the following additional duties in the EOC:

A - Coordinating assistance efforts with food pantry operations throughout the county. For example, helping them identify means to restock their supplies and arranging mobile pantries throughout the county.

B- Assisting the Ogle County Health Administrator with the investigation of COVID19 cases and enforcement of Governor Pritzker's Executive Orders.

2- In my capacity as the City of Rochelle Emergency Management Coordinator.

A- Submitting federal reimbursement applications to FEMA and IEMA.

B- Providing advice to City staff on questions of disaster response and recovery.

3- In my capacity as a Police Detective.

A- Continue to actively investigate felony crimes.

### **Fire Department**

- Reoccurring briefs with the Ogle County EOC every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 10am
- Reoccurring brief with Covid working group every Wednesday at 9am
- Reoccurring Staff Mtg every Thursday 8:30am
- Completed additional requests from OSHA from an inspection conducted in February
- Updates from CDC and IDPH are thankfully slowing down
- Working through an MOU with the FF Union regarding Covid exposures
- 4/14 facilitated an electronic Board Mtg for the Ogle-Lee FPD
- 4/5 two car MVA Hwy 38
- 4/11 overturned ammonia tank next to the bike path
- 4/13 three car MVA Hwy 38
- Continuing to meet and plan for additional exposures coming from a local industry
- Continuing to tract and facilitate delivery of PPE
- 4/17 Mtg with local EOC to coordinate for Ambulance transports

## **Finance**

- Fiber/Internet/Network Administration rate study
- Electric rate study
- Transmission tariff application
- Audit
- Budget reductions and meetings
- Conference call with Sarah, Blake, and Elster to learn about the electric meters and how they interface with the billing software
- Conference call with Jeff, Michelle, Peggy, and Bob Withrow from Flagg Township to discuss the microloan program offered by the Township
- Webinar – Budgeting During Crisis
- Helped Sarah with the supporting documentation for the PCA calculation

## **RMU Customer Service**

I was able to get everything moved from my City Hall office over to 333 on Saturday, April 4<sup>th</sup>. Over the past two weeks I worked in the office every day except Monday the 13<sup>th</sup>, when I worked at home. I still have a lot to sort through in the office and quite a few conference calls that were just easier to be in the office for. I processed payroll this past week and I think and hope that I will be able to continue that responsibility with this new position. I have also worked with Chris to continue supplying information to our auditors for both the Customer Billing side as well as Payroll. I've had a few calls with our electric meter software provider, our billing software, and our credit card processor to learn how they all operate and work together.

Depending on the day, there is either one or two staff members in the customer service office. With the holiday, we decided it would be better to have two people in the office to stay caught up with the mail and phone calls. Staff stays very busy all day long. Payments keep rolling in and bills keep rolling out! Carol is still also working a little from home, which is helping her with the billing processes.

## **City Clerk/Assistant to City Manager**

- Attended remote EOC briefings.
- Participated in multiple webinars, phone conferences and zoom meetings regarding COVID-19 including Governor's updates, revenue impacts, and employee leave.
- Participated in Regional Census planning meeting and promoted 2020 Census including News Leader interview, getting updated yard signs and planning for bilingual mailing in areas of town where the counts are lower.
- Assisted residents with completion of Census over the phone.
- Participated in ZOOM meetings to discuss business assistance available to small businesses.
- Prepared death certificates.
- Answered city hall phone calls.
- Continued to update project report.
- Prepared agenda, motions and tally sheet for April 13<sup>th</sup> council meeting, set up for meeting and participated.

- Approved management staff timesheets.
- Prepared plan for 5%, 10% and 15% budget reductions in city clerk and municipal building budgets.
- Prepared management staff agendas and participated in Zoom staff meetings.
- Processed payments from funeral homes and hotels.
- Scheduled budget meetings for all department heads with City Manager and Finance Manager.
- Prepared letter to all liquor license holders regarding extension of current license to December 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Prepared updated liquor licenses for all liquor license holders to be delivered the end of May.
- At the request of Regional Census group, prepared Census video telling our story about promotions to a hard-to-count population.
- Processed ordinances, resolutions and agreements approved at April 13<sup>th</sup> council meeting.
- Begin preparations for 4/27/20 agenda.

## **Water**

- Well 4: working with Fehr Graham to delay project until next year and secure new funding source.
- Well 8: work is underway, working with contractor to get through some problems.
- Well 12: working on continuing progress at the radium removal plant
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Houses: all homes have been demolished.
- Pilot Project: All water and sewer utilities are installed. Last thing to complete is the transformer for the lift station, the transformer has arrived need to pour a concrete pad

## **Water Reclamation**

- WWTP construction is underway. Working with contractor on several issues
- WWTP treatment problems. Working with staff to resolve the treatment problem caused by Rochelle Foods. Problem has been worked through
- Working on a solution to resolve anaerobic lagoon issue to avoid additional costs (50K) from contractor.
- Jetting sewers
- Installed 3<sup>rd</sup> new RAS pump

## **Electric Operations & Generation**

- Coordination Calls with Attorney regarding transmission sale
- Coordination with Com Ed on new substation
- Crew is working on WIFI to municipal lot.

- Crew has been working on fiber for ComEd sale
- Typical maintenance work, streetlight maintenance
- Engine's 7 and 10 repairs are basically complete
- Routine cleaning and maintenance work
- Coordination with water dept to provide fiber and transformer issue at well 12

### **Advanced Communications**

- Working on WIFI to municipal lot
- Working with electric dept. to fiber optic and power at necessary poles
- Working on SCADA issues with electric dept.
- Continuing to set up computers/remote access and zoom meetings
- Helping police dept with phone and computer issues

### **Golf Course**

As I write this the Governor hasn't opened golf courses in Illinois. There has been some confusion about his order. The order is for all golf courses in Illinois not to open. Some good news is the Governor is meeting with connecting states about how and when to open the economy. Yesterday the Governor of Wisconsin extended his state's "stay at home order" until May 27th., but when doing this allowed golf courses to open. If our Governor does allow us to open, we will have to abide by strict guidelines like Wisconsin. We have been following all these guidelines, so we are ready to open when authorization comes from the state.

As of now I have one part time employee helping me handle the maintenance on the course. The last couple weeks we have been cleaning up tree trimming debris that we cut down over the winter on cold days. On warmer days we are on mowers trying to keep up with the turf. The weather has been on our side for now. It's been a cold spring so far and has allowed us to keep up with mowing the turf with two people. We have had snow twice this week. This snow will give the added moisture the soil needs and with temperatures next week in the 60's we will start to see that flush of spring growth from our turf.

### **Human Resources Risk Management**

- COVID-10 related updates regarding employee relations and regulations/laws
- Employee Wellness Blood screening
- Employee Incentive Update
- Entering information into system of employee updates and with insurance vendors
- Working with Sarah on payroll
- Responding to emails from employees on various topics
- Insurance billings, audits and related updates.
- Attending employee related conference calls
- Viewing COVID-19 related webinars from HR Organizations and other noted organizations

- Washing my hands and sanitizing often 😊 lol

## **Marketing & Public Relations**

- Continued Hotel/Motel Budget revisions. Spoke with organizers of Heritage Festival and We Care Block Party. Cancelled billboard contract for Summer of 2020.
- Promoted Small Business Resource Call with Kishwaukee College and Waubesa Community College SBDC. Collected RSVPs and 37 participants joined the call.
- Began Restaurant Gift Card Giveaway Contest with Chamber of Commerce
  - \$750 in Gift Cards Resulted in \$2423 in Local Restaurant Spending to date. We still have 2 of the 30 gift cards to give away.
- Public Messaging:
  - Partnering with School Districts to compile & share food resources
  - Partnering with School Districts to compile & share free WIFI resources
  - Yard Waste/Brush Pickup
  - Emergency Siren Policy Update
  - Small Business Informational Webinar
  - IDPH Recommendations & Health Department updates
  - Census
- Conducted survey on Facebook to see what residents would like to see from us right now.
  - 36% - Positive Posts & News
  - 23% - COVID-19 Related Data & Information
  - 22% - Ideas of Things to Do
  - 14% - Other (suggestions included: show staff utilizing social distancing & PPE; encouragement; status of ongoing projects; all the above)
  - 4% - Employment/Unemployment Information
  - 1% - Small Business Information
- Facebook statistics
  - **Every message is being translated into Spanish! Thank you Rose!**
  - As of 4/3 6,226 Page Likes
  - 4/2-4/8 Posts reached: 30,609 people
  - 4/2-4/8 Post engagement: 22,199 (comments, likes & shares)
    - In comparison:
      - Rockford's engagement is 64,400 with 13,500-page likes
      - Dixon's engagement 14,700 with 7,000-page likes
      - Ogle County Health Department's engagement is 43,300 with 2,800-page likes
  - As of 4/16 6,395 Page Likes
  - 4/9-4/15 Posts reached: 18,046

- 4/9-4/15 Post engagement: 13,710 (likes, comments, shares)
  - In comparison:
    - Rockford: Engagement of 47,900 with 14,100-page likes
    - Dixon: Engagement of 4,100 with 7,100-page likes
    - Ogle County Health Department: Engagement 18,800 with 3,000-page likes

## **Engineering**

- Work along Mulford Road continues with storm sewer installation from the tributary to Creston Road
- 2nd Avenue reconstruction project will begin late April as RMU crews are adjusting watermain in advance of the project
- The asbestos abatement on the S Main Street structure to be removed near Steward Rd will be complete by the end of Month
- Engineering department is finishing plans for bidding on the N. 6th Street, Alley and Municipal Lot #4 Reconstruction project

## **Community Development**

- Rec Center- Onsite inspections
- Bright Farms-Onsite inspections
- Johnson Tractors- coordination and plan review
- Pilot- Onsite inspections
- Dobbs-self storage units, plan review (Rt. 251 next to Fastenal) new development
- Artist Garden- Onsite inspections
- Coordinate volunteer program for seniors with Connie Dougherty- Hub City Senior Center
- PZC- Public notice, petitions, agendas and report of findings
  - Lighthouse Dispensing, LLC- Special Use and Variance
  - Burton Foundation- Special Use and Variance
  - Sawicki- Variance
  - Kennay's- Special Use
- Code update review
- Review, become familiar with the Downstate Small Business Stabilization Program
- Business Impact conference calls
- Fence permits & inspections
- Sign permits
- Sewer repair permits & inspections
- Roof permits & inspections
- Microloan Program research, meetings

- SBA Disaster Relief Conference calls
- Processing permits - deposits (ongoing)
- Created fillable inspection report form
- Numerous phone calls- Sally Sawicki regarding her variance, helped her with paperwork
- Processed Business Registrations (ongoing)
- Phone calls- overweight truck permits, building permits, business registrations, etc.
- Went with Sam to Lyon, IL to notarize documents for a property acquisition
- Issued 7 permits, fence and roof
- Completed 5 inspections
- Phone calls from residents to discuss proposed projects
- Phone calls from residents to discuss property maintenance
- Reminder notice to residence about property maintenance
- Helped a lost dog get back home 😊

## Economic Development

### Report from the Economic Development Department April 17<sup>th</sup> 2020

The following is a summary of projects and activities in our office this past week.

**Project Updates:** Prospects for new businesses that are looking at Rochelle in their site selection process:

- 1) **Real Estate Search 313** is a project not likely considering Rochelle as a potential site due to the high employment requirement (up to 20,000 employees). Population density in our region will not support this size of project.
- 2) **Project Match** (formerly known as Project DOE) is an auto/truck/commercial vehicle component manufacturer. We received a formal RFI from Intersect Illinois this week and Peggy and I are working on completing a response. It is an extensive survey and it is due on May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- 3) **Project Proxima:** We were sent a list of questions regarding a timeline to the project. I prepared a response and sent it to Intersect Illinois.
- 4) No update on the UPS/FedEx shipping office project.
- 5) **Locator One (LOIS):** Peggy and I continue to work on inputting data on potential industrial sites and buildings. This is a little challenging doing this from separate places, but we are making progress (slow but sure).

## Railroad Operations

- 1) RMU has completed the repairs to the drainage ditch impacted by the construction and wiring of the new transmission poles along Steward Road. Additionally, RMU discovered and repaired several damaged field tiles which were likely caused by the

contractor installing the new transmission lines/poles. Hopefully this significantly reduces the drainage issues over the Brossman Farm.

- 2) A 90-day contract extension of the contract between BJRY and City was approved by the City Council. Work will begin to complete a long-term agreement next week.
- 3) New business opportunities for transloading and rail car storage.
  - A) 100 railcars with construction mats seeks to be transloaded in the RTC. A contract will be put together between BJRY and Bruns Trucking to handle the project.
  - B) No updates/changes on the transloading projects listed in the last report
- 4) Talking with Tim Bruns to restart negotiations on Road Salt Transloading with Lyons Salt. Potential for 400-600 railcars being transloaded in Rochelle this year.
- 5) Rockford Airport is drafting a MOU that would outline a partnership between RFD and the City of Rochelle Railroad to create a Freight Corridor that would promote both air and rail access.

### **Railroad Construction Re-starts**

- 1) Rail construction south (Contract #3) restarted this week and with dry weather in the forecast construction should be complete by end of next week. One week of QC work and the track should be open by no later than May 8<sup>th</sup>.
- 2) Tile inspection is complete, and we can verify drainage systems are functional
- 3) Council approved Contract #3 extension with provision to collect liquidated damages if the project is not completed by May 8<sup>th</sup>.
- 4) Held a conference call with Wm Charles and Hanson Engineering to discuss several issues outstanding for Contract #3. Goal is to have all work done by June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- 5) Worked with Meagan and contractors to get all 2019 invoices submitted before the audit deadline.

### **Airport Projects**

Mike's report will provide details on the projects, but we are well on our way to starting up the reconstruction of the runway, grinding and resurfacing the taxiway to CSC and constructing the new access taxiway. We were notified this week that RPG has been awarded a \$30,000 grant through the CARES Act and the FAA. Mike and I will provide Jeff with a recommendation on how to spend the money based on the specifications of the grant.

### **GREDCO Update**

- 1) A sub-committee is looking at establishing an office outside City Hall.
- 2) A sub-committee is putting together a list of recommended changes to the by-laws that will reflect changes in how GREDCO is structured and how it will work with the City on economic development projects going forward.

- 3) Plans are being made to hold a Zoom meeting with the GREDCO Board on April 22<sup>nd</sup> @ 7:00a.m. Agenda and minutes will sent to all attendees this week.

### **CONFERENCE/ZOOM CALLS**

- Small Business Development Center (SBDC) with Waubensee and Kishwaukee Colleges
- SBA Disaster Relief Information Session for Rochelle Small Business
- Micro Loan Program w/ staff & Accion
- Micro Loan Program with staff & Flagg Township
- Daily/weekly calls and updates with Jason
- Review and update Location One Website (sites and building maintenance)
- Project Match RFI conference call with Jason and Fehr Graham

### **DOCUMENTS DRAFTS**

- Microloan Program
- GFOA Distinguished Budget

### **LOCATION ONE UPDATE**

To fill work from home time, Jason and I are updating the LOIS GIS sites and buildings database created by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC). LOIS meets the needs of site selectors and real estate consultants.

### **BUSINESS RETENTION**

Staying in contact with the industries through email.

### **INDUSTRY RETENTION LUNCHEONS**

Working with local industries to set up Zoom retention meetings in the coming weeks.

### **INTERSECT ILLINOIS RFI**

**Project Proxima** (European Company in the agriculture and biotechnology sector) – Request for Additional Information – Permitting and construction timeline. \$165M Capital investment; 100 jobs

**Project Match** – Foreign manufacturer of lithium-ion battery cells and packs for the transportation industry. \$90M Capital investment; 480 jobs (within 3 years)

Administrative duties, as assigned.

### **Activity Report from Rochelle Municipal Airport April 6-April 17, 2020**

The tenants have been updated weekly on the construction activities and the option for them to fly off the grass on weekends.

The temporary taxiway leading to the grass surface has been marked off with construction cones.

The runway has been closed from April 7<sup>th</sup> to May 31<sup>st</sup> for the first phase of the refurbishment project; but this NOTAM can be cancelled if the first phase is done earlier.

One tenant moved out permanently and 3 tenants moved out temporarily. The 3 that moved out temporarily were offered a refund equal to ½ their rent payment for 2 months. One tenant moved from the A-row hangars to the Community Hangar to avoid being pinned in.

The runway project work started April 7<sup>th</sup> and the taxiway project started April 14. Both projects have been slowed down by snowfall.

We made “band aid” repairs to some leaks on the 2 chimneys on the house that is rented out on airport property. The tenant had complained about water coming into both fireplaces. Bruns Construction was also called to make an evaluation on these chimneys. No report on this yet.

CSC has pushed their start date back to May 15. Since the restaurant is closed, the runway is closed, and no skydiving until the 15<sup>th</sup>, the airport will be unattended on Sundays until May 17.

Milling of the runway started on April 16<sup>th</sup> and about half of the 200 trucks of millings are being dumped on a city storage lot off Jack Dane Road per the Street Department’s request - to be used to make a paved lot there.

A weekly meeting with the runway construction companies and the engineers is being held every Thursday morning at 8 to discuss progress on the project.

The 50-acre Farm lease for 2020 was signed and the 50% down payment was collected from the farmer, Mr. Ranken.

\$30,000 has been allocated to Rochelle Airport through the CARES Act (Corona Virus Aid...). We are working on the application process to hopefully qualify for some, or all of this.