

City Commission

Newsletter

February 09, 2018

City Activities Newsletter

By Matt Schooley

February 9, 2018



Additional Funding Through the Michigan Transportation Fund

On February 7th Governor Snyder's office announced the General Fund will be providing an additional \$175 million of road and bridge funding for cities and villages as well as counties during the fiscal year 2019. The proposal will distribute the funds using the existing formula from Public Act 51. The estimated additional revenue (21.8%) for the cities and villages is \$38,150,000. The City of Alma is estimated to receive \$67,631 based on this proposal. The \$175 million is lapsed funding from 2016-17 fiscal years.

Speaker Leonard has countered saying that he would like to see that money made available as a supplemental to the 2018 budget, seeing as it is lapsed funding and available. Some legislators are concerned that trying to utilize the money in 2018 may be difficult and ask if the work could be done due to a shortage of workers that are available.

Just as a side note: Governor Snyder's proposed budget had no recommendation for a statutory increase in revenue sharing for locals. Constitutionally, revenue sharing payments will increase by 3.1% this year.

GOAL SETTING FOLLOW UP

Once again, I appreciate all the discussion and feedback in our goal setting session In January. I am happy and encouraged to see that many of us have similar thoughts on what we can do to move the City of Alma forward. If you haven't sent your finalized goals to me, there is still time. I will be processing those in the next week and get them back to you shortly. I believe it would be beneficial to have one more meeting to really pinpoint the 5-10 goals we agree that are priorities for staff in the upcoming year. We will start to implement and publicize the Employee Value Statement in the near future. *The City of Alma employees are committed to serving our community by providing a transparent team centered approach. Our work is guided by our core values: L-TRIP Learning, Teamwork, Respect, Integrity, and Pride.* The Commission and staff need to continue to come together, taking the time and making the commitment to work together to make Alma the place we all want it to be.

INTERNAL SERVICE FUND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The following information is presented for consideration of a change to the way the City accomplishes management of its various information technology systems; both hardware and software. Traditionally, these costs have been accumulated in an internal service fund and then allocated among the various operating funds. The two employees charged with performing this work were Paul Borle and Karl Hagen. The amount budgeted for the information technology activity is \$187,855 for fiscal year 2017-2018. Therefore, that amount is also spread throughout all the operating funds.

I will be able to give you notes that show the internal service charges budgeted by operating fund, how much of those charges have been transferred to date and the internal service fund expenses to date.

There are a few reasons for the difference between Budget to Actual within the Internal Service Fund:

- The fiscal year is not complete
- The former Finance Director/Treasurer has left the employ of the City
- Karl Hagen personnel costs are reallocated to General Fund Treasurer activity

It will take a budget amendment to accommodate reallocating Karl Hagen to Treasurer for the remainder of the fiscal year. My estimate is an additional \$25,000. In following, Karl also picked up some Treasurer tasks. To accommodate that change in staff time availability, IT Right has provided a quote for services to pick up the information technology work. The quote is an annual price of \$30,220.

At the moment, there is a budget surplus of \$67,401 in General Fund Information Technology internal service fund charges (across all general fund activities). This is enough budget to cover both reallocation of Karl Hagen personnel as well as contracting with IT Right.

The important point of considering contracting with IT Right is recognizing the City budgeted to spend \$187,855 for Information Technology services internally it can obtain for \$30,220 externally. There are city departments with experience with IT Right. Additionally, their technicians are certified and bonded.

Looking forward, I believe another important consideration would be to replace our current New World financial software with BS&A software systems. The IT Right team would facilitate that transition.

REDESIGN OF CITY HALL

If you have been in city hall lately you may have noticed some of our recent changes. Public Services Director Alan Leute worked with other all of the departments in city hall to reconfigure many work stations. Everyone now has access in and out of their area, and I think everyone would agree that the setup is much more functional. Also, a big thank you to Alan who loaned the City some very nice murals that hang on the wall at the entry way to the administrative section of the building. We are continuing to look at inexpensive ways to make this building more inviting and useful to City residents. Any ideas would be appreciated.

CORRESPONDENCE ON REZONING OF MIDDLE SCHOOL BLOCK

Attached in this packet are [two documents](#) from City Attorney Costanzo in reference to the issues being raised in regard to the rezoning issue of the Old Middle School block. The first document is the City Attorney's opinion on if proper procedures were followed by staff with respect to the rezoning from R1 to R3. His opinion is that potential rezoning of that property has been brought to the Commission properly at this time.

The second document is the City Attorney's comments in response to a letter received from a property owner in the City of Alma requesting a hearing be held in front of the full commission reference the rezoning. The property owner has properly requested a hearing by certified mail. This hearing is not subject to the same requirements of a public hearing. The interested party making the request must be given notice of the hearing by personal service or certified mail 15 days in advance of the hearing. That mailing was delivered on 2/9/18. The hearing will be scheduled to take place at the February 27th Commission meeting.

ELECTION REMINDER

For those Commissioner's whose term expires this year, a reminder that if you plan on seeking re-election you must pick-up your petition packet from the City Clerk. Those packets will be due to the clerk's office by April 24th of this year. At this point and time the City Clerk has received two requests for packets from interested parties in the community.

Sincerely,

Matt Schooley

Matthew Schooley
Interim City Manager

FORTINO, PLAXTON & COSTANZO, P.C.

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1 February 2018

Aeric Ripley
City of Alma
525 E. Superior St
Alma, Michigan 48801

Re: Procedure followed relative to proposed rezoning of the old middle school block

Dear Mr. Ripley:

You have asked that I offer an opinion as to whether the proper procedures were followed up to the present date, with respect to the proposed rezoning of the old middle school block, from R1 to R3. It is my opinion, based on review of the procedures utilized, that through the present date, the proper procedures had been followed.

Initially, the request for the proposed zoning change was made by the owner of property within the City of Alma, as is allowed by Section 60-376 and following of the Zoning Ordinance. The information required by Section 60-379 of the Zoning Ordinance was provided. In addition, a public hearing was held before the Planning Commission, as required by the Zoning Ordinance, and the Zoning Enabling Act.

Further, since the block that is the subject rezoning request is adjacent to both an R3 District and a BMR District, the potential rezoning to R3 would not constitute spot zoning.

In conclusion, I believe that the issue of the potential rezoning of the old middle school block is properly before the City Commission for their consideration. If you have any further questions or concerns feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

FORTINO, PLAXTON & COSTANZO, PC

By: 
Anthony G. Costanzo

AGC:dks

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Re: Correspondence of January 25, 2018 from Sarah Horn & Michael Selmon

Dear Mr. Ripley:

You have asked me to comment relative to the procedure required given the above referenced January 25, 2018 correspondence from Ms. Horn and Mr. Selmon. MCL 125.3401 (4) requires that the City Commission as legislative body for the City of Alma, grant a hearing on a proposed ordinance provision to an interested property owner who requests a hearing by certified mail. On the other hand, this hearing would not be subject to the requirements of MCL 125.3103 relative to the notice of the public hearing, except that the interested property owner or property owners submitting the request, must be given notice either by personal service or first class mail, at least fifteen (15) days before the date of the hearing.

The notice must describe the notice of the request for hearing, indicate the property that is the subject of the request, when and where the hearing will be held and when and where written comments would be received concerning the request for hearing.

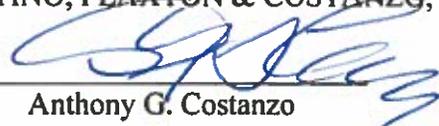
As we discussed, this "public hearing" could take place at a regular meeting of the City Commission, including the meeting where the Commission would consider enacting the proposed zoning change. The agenda for the meeting when the public hearing will take place, should list the public hearing as an agenda item. Approval of the zoning change requires a majority vote of the members of the City Commission.

If you have any questions or comments relative to the above please advise.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

FORTINO, PLAXTON & COSTANZO, PC

By: 

Anthony G. Costanzo

AGC:dks