

THE BLUE LETTER



333 James E. Bohanan Drive • Vandalia, OH 45377 • (937) 898-5891

February 7, 2025

Mayor Herbst & City Councilmembers:

On Thursday, I had the privilege to speak at the Rotary Club during their weekly meeting and to introduce myself as well as share an update on projects occurring in the city. It is great to have wonderful civic organizations, such as the Rotary Club, in our city, who contribute to making our community a great place.

Dayton Development Coalition Annual Meeting: This week, ACM Rob Cron, Mark Schwieterman, and I had the opportunity to attend the DDC Annual Meeting and 2024 Economic Review on Wednesday afternoon at the Dayton Convention Center. It was exciting to hear highlights on federal and state policy and administrative initiatives, regional growth and funding, and major economic projects that are developing throughout the region. Governor Mike DeWine was the keynote speaker as he highlighted proposals in the two-year state budget. We also heard from a panel on regional development in the aerospace and defense sectors.

Cit Income Tax Filing: The Finance Department is busy as we move into tax season and process 2024 City Income Tax Returns for residents, who can file either electronically or in-person. We have extended hours in April on Saturdays to assist any residents needing to file their tax returns.

Welcome New Employees: We welcome two new public safety specialists who joined the Police Division this week. Kayla Still and Chase Solberg began their employment on February 5th and will begin training in the Communications Center to fill two vacancies. We are excited to have Kayla and Chase as part of the VPD team!

Recreation Center Wellness Bash: The VRC Wellness Bash was held on January 31st and had a great turnout with 262 participants. The event included the climbing wall, classes, vendors, and much more. This event was a great opportunity for the community to see what wellness programs we have available and promote health and wellness. Thanks to all the VRC staff who worked to make this event a success!



Commercial Motor Vehicle Enforcement: On January 30th, Captain Walker, Captain Sucher, and I met with representatives from the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio regarding enhanced commercial vehicle enforcement and education. We look forward to partnering with PUCO and OSP's Commercial Vehicle Enforcement units this year to keep our roadways safe for all motorists through our CVE activity. Over the past four weeks, VPD officers made nine traffic stops on commercial motor vehicles, resulting in one traffic citation and eight written warnings.

Bikeway Connector Project: Brumbaugh Construction began installing the temporary sheeting for the mechanically stabilized earth (MSE) walls next to the Taylorsville Dam as they continue working on the bike path extension from the Great Miami River Bikeway along U.S. Route 40 up to South Brown School Road. We are excited to see this project continue to progress and look forward to its completion later this year, providing cyclists, walkers, and joggers another way to connect the bike path to the city.

Municipality Software Implementation: Development & Engineering Services staff are in the process of transitioning to Municipality M5 Connect, the public portal for our main application, permit, and inspection software. Over the next several months, DES is encouraging applicants to utilize the online platform to submit applications for permits and inspections, which provides reliable tracking and documentation.

New Public Works Facility: WDC Group is working on detailed design for the facility from the programmatic layout. Loggers are finishing up their work at 810 Northwoods Boulevard. Elevated Ground Solutions will begin clearing and mulching up the remaining tree material in the area needed for construction.

Water Main Breaks: During the past two weeks, Public Works crews repaired two water main breaks, one on Bennert Drive and one on Allanhurst Avenue. Thus far, we have had 16 water main breaks this season and our crews have worked hard to get them repaired in a timely manner.

Tri-Cities Board Meeting: Last Wednesday, I attended the monthly TCA Board meeting to review the facility operations and upcoming projects. The selection committee reviewed three proposals for the plant improvement project and selected Ulliman Schutte Construction for the Construction Manager At-Risk (CMAR). Significant time and effort was put into reviewing the in-depth proposals and selecting the CMAR for this large-scale project.

Please contact me directly with comments and questions.

Very Respectfully,

Kurt E. Althouse
Interim City Manager



CC:

Board and Commission Members
All City Employees

Attachments:

1. Information Update - ACM Cron – February 7, 2025;
2. Information Update - Director Leiter – February 7, 2025;
3. Information Update - Chief Follick – February 7, 2025;
4. Information Update - HR Manager Hanf – February 7, 2025;
5. Information Update – Director Clark – February 7, 2025;
6. Information Update – Operations Captain Walker - February 7, 2025;
7. Information Update - Director Borton – February 7, 2025;





To: Kurt Althouse, Interim City Manager
From: Rob Cron, Assistant City Manager
Date: February 6, 2025
Re: Information Update for January 25 – February 7, 2025

Congratulations to Josh Woss for being chosen for this month's Employee Spotlight.

Employee Spotlight February, 2025



Josh Woss
Public Works
Supervisor

Josh Woss is a busy man these days.

As a Public Works Supervisor, a typical day can be anything from plowing a roadway to repairing a broken water main. And as a supervisor, Josh has one eye on the task at hand and one eye on the bigger picture.

"Whatever we're doing, I try to make sure the project is going smoothly and that our guys are safe," he said.

Josh has been with the Vandalia Public Works for six years. He says he enjoys the hectic pace of his job.

"I really like the variety of tasks we get to do," he said. "Everyday is different, it's not the same day over and over."

Josh also enjoys working with his crew.

"We have a good mix of guys here who work very hard to do the job right."



The clearing work continues on the site for our new Public Works Facility. The clearing work is to be completed by the end of March.

Work has also resumed on the Bikeway Connector project. There were some details required, and confirmations made by the design team to satisfy the Miami Conservancy District on the sheet piling work that is to take place near the Taylorsville Dam.

You, Mark and I attended the Dayton Development Coalition's Annual meeting on Wednesday February 5th at the Dayton Convention Center. Over 600 regional leaders attended this year's event and Governor DeWine was the guest speaker. It was exciting to hear about all of the great things going on and planned for the Dayton region.



I attended the February Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission's Board of Directors Meeting on Thursday February 6 .

You and I attended the Tri Cities Wastewater Authority's January Board meeting. General Manager, Danny Knife, gave an update on the plant improvement, equalization tanks and sewer line projects. The board has given approval for Mr. Knife to move forward with the negotiations with the recommended contractor in the CMAR selection process.

Mike Hammes and Ben Graham attended the American Planning Association Ohio Chapter Quarterly meeting on February 6th.

The Board of Zoning Appeals has two applications that will be reviewed at their meeting on February 26th.

1. A variance to consider allowing the raising of chickens on a residential lot less than two acres at 995 Forest View court.
2. A variance to exceed the maximum sign area at 780 Northwoods Boulevard. (Kroger)

We have three new appointments to boards and committees during this period.

1. Steve Stefanidis was appointed to the Board of Zoning appeals.
2. Steve Ponscheck and Amos Knipp were appointed to the Community Reinvestment Area Housing Council.

Darren Davey and the IT staff have completed the specifications for our new phone system. They have published the specifications and are currently accepting proposals for the bid.

We have noticed some increase in the usage of our Electric Vehicle Charging units as people become more aware of our locations. All of the units are showing up on various mobile apps as well at the Blink app and website. I plan to give a more detailed update at a future City Council Study Session once we have enough data to analyze.

Rich Hopkins has the next Focus Vandalia taping scheduled for next week. Topics that will be covered this month are our HyperReach mass notification system, the new Municipity Permit software public portal for applying and obtaining building permits online, an update on the Bikeway Connector project, the Police Officer and Civilian of the Year in the Police Department and the golf course irrigation system project.

Rich has also begun work on the State of the City video which will be first shown at the Chamber of Commerce Annual meeting in March.

Rich will also be submitting the content next week for our Spring/Summer issue of the MyVandalia magazine.

Memo



To: Kurt Althouse, Interim City Manager

From: Bridgette Leiter, Director of Finance

Date: February 5, 2025

Re: Information Update – Period Ending February 7, 2025

1. I attended a council study session and meeting.
2. The annual taxpayer letters explaining the procedures to electronically file the 2024 City Income Tax Return were mailed to residents. We encourage taxpayers to file all tax returns electronically through the Online Filing Tool but will continue to provide paper forms for those who do not have access to a computer. The due date for the 2024 City Income Tax Return is April 15, 2025.
3. The 2024 audit and compilation of the Annual Finance Comprehensive Report has begun and representatives from Plattenburg and Associates are requesting documents and information; therefore, staff are busy gathering the appropriate information to email to the audit team.
4. The Income Tax Division opened E-filing for 2024.



DIVISION OF FIRE INFORMATION UPDATE

TO: KURT ALTHOUSE, CITY MANAGER
FROM: CHAD FOLLICK, FIRE CHIEF
DATE: 2/6/2025
SUBJECT: INFORMATION UPDATE – PERIOD ENDING FEBRUARY 7, 2025

1. Last Friday, students from Morton Middle School came to Station One. Students participated in a walk thru of the station and received a first-hand look at our apparatus. CRRC Morrett talked with the students about Fire and EMS Safety and while leading the students through the firehouse, they discussed the day-to-day happenings at the firehouse.
2. Training this reporting period continued with Ice Rescue, Pump Operations. Crews made use of the beautiful weather and did some hands-on pump training outside. Lastly, crews had a chance to walk through the Paragon Medical Building on Little York Road. The Prevention Bureau has multiple locations for crews to walk through this year. This will help crews to become more familiar with different facilities in the city.
3. With the recent transition of three part-time employees to full-time status there are additional vacancies in the Division of Fire part-time staff. Capt. Milliken is currently reviewing applications and conducting interviews to fill the part-time vacancies within the Division of Fire.
4. This week, the Division of Fire is holding first round interviews for the position of Captain. The position is currently vacant due to the recent retirement of Capt. Garver.



DIVISION OF FIRE INFORMATION UPDATE

5. A Command Staff Meeting was held on February 3. Items discussed were but not limited to, budget, hiring update, goals, etc.

Memo



To: Kurt E. Althouse, Interim City Manager

From: Leann Hanf, Human Resources Manager

Date: February 6, 2025

Re: Information Update – Period Ending February 7, 2025

1. **More New Hires!** This week I onboarded two more new hires! This time, welcoming them to our Police Department as Public Safety Specialists:
 - Kayla Still
 - Chose Solberg
2. **Cold and Flu Season Has Officially Arrived!** As doctors' visits begin to ramp up, don't forget to review your Summary of Benefits for your medical plan to stay well informed on what is covered, and what you may be responsible for. All of our Summary of Benefits for every line of coverage we offer can be found on our [Xplore](#) site!
3. **Quit For Life.** Did you know that our insurance provider, United Healthcare, offers a tobacco cessation program? Quit For Life combines physical, psychological, and behavioral strategies designed to help employees overcome their tobacco addiction, including electronic nicotine delivery systems (e-cigarettes). This program is provided at no additional cost to eligible United Healthcare members enrolled in our medical plan. Learn more [here](#).
4. **Real Appeal.** This evidence-based virtual weight management program is available at no additional cost to eligible United Healthcare plan members. It is a yearlong healthy lifestyle program designed to help you start on the path to learning healthy habits that actually stick using a science backed methodology. Learn more [here](#).



To: Kurt E. Althouse, Interim City Manager

From: Steve Clark, Director of Parks & Recreation

Date: 2/6/2025

Re: Information Update – Period ending February 6, 2025

RECREATION CENTER

- The VRC Wellness Bash event was held on Friday Jan. 31 from 10-1 p.m. and had a great turnout with 262 participants. The event included the climbing wall, classes, vendors, and more. This event was a great opportunity for the community to see what wellness programs we have available.
- Recreation Facility Manager Aaron Messenger, along with Recreation Coordinators Sara Moyer and Maecie Burkhardt attended the Annual Ohio Parks and Recreation Association Conference this week in Sandusky. The OPRA Conference is a great opportunity for continuing education as well as the chance to network with industry professionals from around the state of Ohio.
- Stitched in Love Paint Night w/ Miss Bec: This program was held on February 4 at the VRC and sold out with 15 participants. During this class, young artists painted the lovable Disney character Stitch on a canvas while enjoying the evening together!
- Kids Night Out: This program will be held on Friday, February 7 and currently has 18 participants registered out of a maximum of 25. During their night out at the VRC, kids will have the chance to participate in rock climbing, swimming, gym games, crafts, and more! Pizza and snacks will be provided.
- Our department's social media presence continues to grow as we recently reached 1,000 followers on Instagram. It is our goal to connect with as many people as possible to inform the community of the benefits of parks and recreation.
- The camera replacement and installation project at the VRC is now complete. We replaced the outdoor Ricky's Childcare camera, Luther's Jungle camera, and custodial hallway camera and added a new camera in the Special Events Room. The rest of the cameras will be planned for a 2026 capital project.
- The installation of the new safety surface for the climbing wall at the VRC is complete (picture included at end of report). The original poured in place rubber surface (24 years old) was replaced with a playground turf surface. This product is much like the playground surface at our new playgrounds at Helke Park and the Sports Complex.
- IT performed a RecTrac update on January 29, installing the most up-to-date version of the system. Aaron Messenger has been working on website updates to our park pages, adding information edits to various park pages. The goal is to make these pages more informative.

RECREATION / ATHLETICS DIVISION / SPECIAL EVENTS

- The VPRD is partnering with Skyhawk Sport Camps to offers various mini sports camps for children 5-14 years. Sport Camps planned for this summer include Pickleball, Tennis, Beginning Golf and more.
- Recreation Superintendent Alicia McCracken has finalized the dates for 2025 season at Cassel Hills Pool with SwimSafe Pool Management. The season will kick off over Memorial Day Weekend (Saturday, May 24) and operate daily through August 10. CHP will be open on weekends only, August 16-17, 23-24, 30-31 with the last day being Labor Day, September 1. Marketing efforts will begin in the coming weeks to promote membership opportunities.

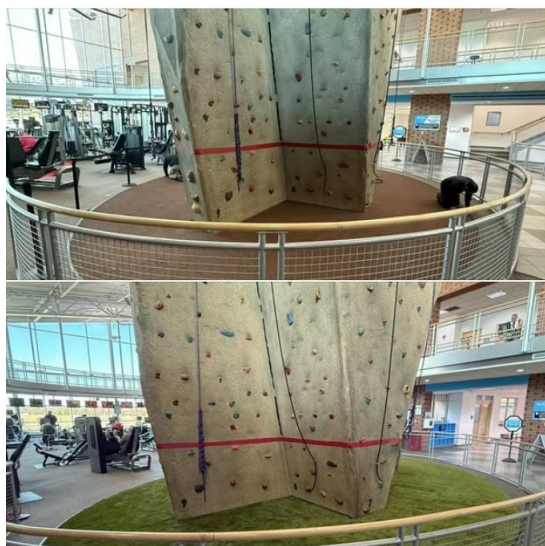
FACILITY MAINTENANCE DIVISION

- The Little Free Library outside the VRC received a make-over thanks to our Park Maintenance staff (picture included at end of report).
- First round interviews for the vacant Maintenance Technician position were held last week with second round interviews scheduled for this Friday.
- We will be meeting with Geograph Industries to look at options for wayfinding signage in the Sports Complex. Our current signage along the main drive and parking lots is original to the park and we are looking to replace these signs with signage that matches our new park signage theme.
- Maintenance staff are performing landscape bed clean up at all parks and facilities. This includes cutting back grasses, roses, and perennials, as well as the trimming of plant material.

SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER

- Twenty-six new members joined the Senior Center in January 2025. Only two months surpassed this number in 2024. Senior Coordinator Toni Williams will remove those who have not renewed from the newsletter list in February and March. This will sometimes be a subtle reminder to members to renew.
- On Thursday, January 30, Toni and Alicia went to the Huber Heights Senior Center to tour their newly remodeled facilities that are connected to the YMCA at the corner of Brandt Pike and Shull Rd.

Climbing Wall New Safety Surface



Little Free Library Refurbished



Information Update



To: Kurt E. Althouse
Interim City Manager

From: Ben Walker
Operations Captain

Date: February 6, 2025

Subject: Information Update Ending February 7, 2025

1. During the past four weeks, VPD officers made nine traffic stops on commercial motor vehicles for traffic violations. These stops resulted in one traffic citation and eight written warnings while working eight additional enforcement hours. Patrol officers also made one stop on a passenger vehicle, issuing a written warning.
2. On January 30, Chief Althouse, Captain Walker, and Captain Sucher met with representatives from PUCO regarding enhanced commercial motor vehicle enforcement and education. Both agencies will be partnering on commercial motor vehicle enforcement details in the future.
3. On January 30, Captain Sucher participated in a debrief on the statewide "Operation Santa's Sleigh" program. Representatives from across the state shared successes and challenges with the program to improve future events.
4. Captain Walker sat through a web demonstration by DroneSense on February 3. DroneSense is a software company that provides public safety and emergency management agency solutions for tracking/logging their drone flights, mapping, live streaming drone footage, and other lifesaving technology options for drone programs.
5. The youth program (formerly known as the Explorers) is now the PILOT program. PSS Mary Beth Dyke and PSS Grace Borders created this new idea with PILOT standing for *Police Inspiring Leaders Of Tomorrow*. They also wanted this new program to include the idea of VBHS Aviators since it is predominantly a high school student program to increase interest in policing career opportunities.
6. On February 4, Captain Walker attended the Ohio First Responder Wellness Coordinators' virtual meeting. This group, coordinated through the Ohio Department of Public Safety, is a network of first responder representatives, as well as mental health professionals, that collaborates and shares information on first responder wellness initiatives. Some of the topics this month included the Ohio Law Enforcement Recruitment Program, Updates to the First Responder Wellness Website, and a guest speaker presentation from the Oklahoma First Responder Wellness Division.

7. Detectives charged a 40-year-old Dayton female and a 36-year-old Dayton female with Advertising of Massage Services with the promise of sexual activity. The advertisements were posted on a website known for prostitution solicitation. The women were arrested at a local motel independent of one another and in different rooms.
8. On February 5, two new Public Safety Specialists joined the Police Division to fill two vacancies. Chase Solberg and Kayla Still began their initial orientation with SSM Wright and will move to the beginning phases of dispatch training.
9. On February 6, Officer Sommer gave a bank robbery response presentation to Monroe Federal Savings & Loan employees.
10. On February 6, Captain Walker participated in the monthly Miami Valley Crime Stoppers Board meeting in downtown Dayton. The Crime Stoppers Program has been instrumental over the years in airing stories and requesting the public's assistance in locating wanted suspects who have committed serious crimes.
11. On February 6, Captain Sucher participated in an interview panel for a fire captain promotional process.
12. This Friday, Chief Althouse attended the Ohio State Highway Patrol's annual Leadership Awards Ceremony in Westerville as the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police president. The Leadership Awards are held to recognize the Division's major award recipients for 2024.
13. Detectives charged a 25-year-old Fairborn man with Grand Theft Motor Vehicle and Unauthorized Use of a Vehicle. The male suspect did not return the vehicle back to Enterprise Rent A Car.
14. Captain Walker and Sergeant Nagel met with physical trainers from Kettering Health Network Sports Medicine at the Justice Center on February 6. Beginning this year, VPD is utilizing KHN Sports Medicine for physical trainer services as part of our employee wellness program. KHN Sports medicine will provide, among other services, monthly physical trainer visits to the Justice Center for consultation, injury evaluation, and expedited orthopedic referrals for injuries.
15. On February 6, Captain Walker attended a webinar through Lexipol, "5 New Skills Every Public Safety Leader Needs to Succeed Today."
16. Captain Walker attended the Vandalia-Butler Chamber of Commerce First Friday Coffee on February 7, at the Vandalia Public Library.
17. In 2024, VPD was the recipient of a portion of the Bureau of Justice Assistance Byrne Discretionary Community Project Funding awarded to Stand with Parkland. Stand with Parkland has contracted with CERA Software to develop technology that improves school and community safety during special events and critical incidents. Captains Walker and Sucher met with CERA software representatives on Friday, February 7, to begin the implementation of their software.

Public Service Information Update

To: Kurt Althouse, Interim City Manager
From: Ben Borton, Director of Public Service
Date: February 6, 2025
Subject: **Information Update for January 25 – February 7, 2025**

Development & Engineering Services (DES)

Dog Leg Water and Sanitary Extension Phase 2 project: No update; still waiting on the milbank electric meter pedestal for the lift station power from the supplier, now expected to arrive at site in late February with plans to commission the lift station in March.

Bikeway Connector project: Brumbaugh Construction received delivery of a vibratory hammer for their crane and started driving the temporary sheeting for the mechanically stabilized earth (MSE) walls next to the Taylorsville Dam. Brumbaugh also continued their off-road bikeway path work from where they stopped along US-40 to the west side of the CSX railroad tracks.



2025 Curb/Sidewalk project: Coate Construction plans to start saw cutting in late February and begin concrete removal & replacement in March. DES staff are preparing notices to go out to tenants and property owners before this work begins. This project coincides with the 2025 Street Resurfacing project, working on curb/sidewalk replacements on streets we will be asphalt resurfacing this year. Precision Concrete Sawcutting will be starting sidewalk grinding of trip hazards ¾" to 2" in height on February 12th or sooner. Notices were sent out to property owners where sidewalks will be worked on. This is separate from the 2025 curb/sidewalk project but allows us to extend taxpayers dollars to repair more sidewalk sections instead of replacing all sidewalk panels causing issues. Just like the 2025 curb/sidewalk project, this does not cost anything to property owners due to the passage of the **Safe and Stable levy** several years ago.

Kenneth Avenue Watermain Replacement & Resurfacing project: Sturm Construction currently plans to start work on this project in April. As we get closer, the City will send out notices to the affected property owners.

A certificate of occupancy (CO) was issued to Goodwill at 732 W National Rd and the store opened February 3rd.

DES staff are in the process of moving completely over to Muncity M5 Connect, the public portal for our main application/permit/inspection software. The division has been using this Muncity M5 software for the past couple of years but has been taking the paper/email submissions and creating the applications in the system. During this “soft open”, we are encouraging people to use the online platform that creates the applications directly into the system as we iron out the kinks and our new processes.

DES staff have seen an increase in applications coming into the division. We are up to seven new houses under review for Foxfire Section 9, which has a total of 29 lots.

Ritter Plumbing has started their second Centerpoint Energy project replacing the gas main and service lines along the south side of National Rd from Dixie Dr to Beau Townsend Nissan, as they finish the Tionda/Kenbrook Dr areas.

Public Works Superintendent Hayslett and I attended the NAWA Kyle Park Outfall Channel project meeting for the plant’s new outfall to the Miami River and NAWA technical committee meeting.

DES staff held a friendly 2nd Annual Chili Cook-Off on January 30th, opening it up to other departments in the Municipal Building. There were five chilis competing this year from DES, CMO, Finance, and Tri-Cities Authority (TCA). Danny Knife (TCA) walked away as the back-to-back winner by popular voting.

Public Works (PW)

New Public Works Facility: WDC Group is working on detailed design for the facility from the programmatic layout. Loggers are finishing up their work at 810 Northwoods Blvd. Elevated Ground Solutions will begin clearing and mulching up the remaining tree material in the area needed for construction.

Crews repaired two separate water main breaks during this period. Both were able to be repaired without needing to issue a boil advisory and bringing us to **16 breaks so far for this winter**:

1. On January 28th, a crew repaired the break near 528 Bennert Dr in the middle of the street.
2. On January 31st, a crew repaired the break in the driveway approach for 207 Allanhurst Ave.

Crews placed asphalt in recent main break holes.

Crews were called in to salt the roadways in the evening of February 5th.

Crews continued installing new water meters inside residences/businesses.

Crews resumed inspecting sanitary sewer main using the SL-RAT tool via sound waves and cleaning sewer spans identified by the SL-RAT with poor scores (higher potential of existing blockages). Crews

also walked sanitary sewer lines in remote areas throughout the City inspecting manholes (MHs) and assuring flow is moving.

Crews also resumed turning (closing/opening) watermain valves to confirm operational status throughout the City.

Crews performed training on the water main tapping machine on Poplar Creek Rd (west end) to facilitate the installation of an automatic flusher for the main. Crews have been flushing the fire hydrant at the end of this dead-end line once a week to keep chlorine levels up to OEPA minimum limits. This automatic flusher will ensure fresh water is drawn into this main without needed manpower to flow the fire hydrant. This location is the farthest point from the NAWA water plant.

Crews performed 42 utility locates this period for Ohio 811

Crews performed one burial at Poplar Hill cemetery during this period.

The mechanics repaired the wiring circuit for one-ton dump truck #18's light bar, crane on the sign/lift truck #34, and hydraulics on one-ton dump truck #19.

The mechanics also replaced the starter on a Fire Division's Captain vehicle and the front tires on Ladder 3.

Public Works Superintendent Hayslett attended the session 2 of advanced leadership training through Miami Valley Communications Council (MVCC) on February 6th.