

2005 State of the City Address

Highland Heights, Ohio

Dear Residents:

The following information is intended to be an overview of the operations of the city as well as an analysis of our financial condition and current budget projections. The information contained in this State of The City Report is intended to give you the background necessary for you to better understand what happens at City Hall. In my eyes, you are all shareholders of this community and I feel it is imperative that you have this information.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The mission statement of our Police Department is to create an atmosphere to preserve the safety and security of the community by providing quality police service in a fair and impartial manner. Their goal is to accomplish this by a pro-active police agency with the ability to interact and respond to community needs, emphasizing integrity and professionalism. The Police Department is headed by Chief Jim Cook and is composed of the Operations Bureau and the Support Services Bureau.

The Operations Bureau is the core of the department and has the greatest contact with the community on a daily basis. There are currently 29 employees in the Operations Bureau. The Operations Bureau is responsible for the protection of life and property, the prevention of crime and the apprehension of offenders. To facilitate these responsibilities, the Operations Bureau is divided into a Patrol Unit, Investigation Unit, Traffic Unit and a Court Liaison Unit.

The Support Services Bureau, currently staffed with 17 professionals, is responsible for the supplementary police services of the department. To carry out the necessary functions of this group, the bureau is divided into five units, the Communications Unit, Jail Facility, Records Unit, Training Unit, Data Systems Unit and Auxiliary Police Officers.

In 2004, the Highland Heights police department received 11,630 requests for service which is an increase of nearly 1,400 calls in 2000. Examples of types of service requests include traffic law violations, criminal offenses and various community services.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Chief Ed Bencin's mission statement for his department is to "Protect the lives and property of all residents, businesses and general public within the city limits. The department will also deliver assistance to all cities and villages to which our city relies on for like assistance. The delivery of all services will be consistent with the highest

quality at the lowest cost to residents.” The fire department operates on a 24/48 hour basis with a minimum manning of four people per shift. This is accomplished by a 53 hour work week. There are three shifts each having four fire fighters and one lieutenant per shift.

In 2004 the fire department responded to 163 fire calls, 679 ambulance calls and 819 miscellaneous incident calls. Of the 163 fire calls, the estimated fire loss to residential and commercial structures and property was under \$36,000. In addition, through our mutual aid agreement, the department responded to 67 calls and received assistance from surrounding communities on 57 occasions. Some of the other duties the department is responsible for include routine station maintenance and repairs, hydrant maintenance and repair and all preventative maintenance and repairs of department emergency vehicles. The department conducted 126 Public Education /Service activities during the year. These include CPR assistance, Child Safety Seat installation, fire prevention presentations, blood pressure monitoring for senior citizens and presentations to civic groups.

In 2004, the department received grants which assisted in the purchase of an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) as well as other medical equipment. The department also did some much needed upgrading to the fire station living quarters and office area. Some goals that were not achieved due to funding constraints include the purchase of a thermal imaging camera, building renovations and the installation of an air evacuation system in the garage bay area.

SERVICE DEPARTMENT

The Highland Heights Service Department is run by Service Director, Thom Evans, and is responsible for the maintenance and improvement of public works and facilities which include roadways, drainage systems, streams and watercourses and public lands. Department personnel are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, to respond to emergency needs of the community. Our goal is to have a response time for emergency services in less than one hour. The Department, comprised of a staff of 10 full time laborers, seasonal employees, a part time secretary, and the director, serves a growing community of more than 8,000 residents, 3,100 homes and 200 businesses. The department’s delivery of services continues to be challenged by a 30% growth in population and roadway lanes miles in recent years.

In 2004, in addition to programmed activities such as road patching, crack sealing, street sweeping, catch basin cleaning, leaf collection, snow plowing etc., the department responded to hundreds of miscellaneous requests for service in many areas. Resident service programs include Curbside Rubbish & Recycling Collection, Household Hazardous Waste & Computer Drop-off Collection, Brush Collection, and Curbside Leaf Collection.

2004 PROJECTS

RUBBISH - In 2004, the city awarded a new residential rubbish collection program to J & J Refuse Company of Dover Ohio. The current program serves an estimated 3,177 homes at a monthly per unit cost of \$7.76 for solid waste and \$1.93 for recyclables, for an estimated annual cost of approximately \$369,400. This represents a savings of approximately \$36,000 annually over the previous contract.

BRUSH COLLECTION - Service department personnel conducted the spring brush collection program from mid April through the end of May. Program participation continues to grow each year. In 2004, the department responded to 235 calls for brush collection, up 32% from the previous year. To date in 2005 more than 425 calls brush collections were made. ROADS - The service department is responsible for the maintenance and repair of approximately 91 lane miles of roadway. In the past fifteen years the city's roads have grown by some 29 lane miles, which is an increase of more than 30%. Duties of department personnel include street-by-street patching, crack sealing, catch basin cleaning and repair, installation and maintenance of traffic signs, street trees, street sweeping, and snow and ice control.

SNOW & ICE CONTROL - Snow plowing and de-icing operations are two of the service department's most vital winter functions. The department maintains an on-call staff available around the clock to handle plowing and de-icing and any other storm related emergencies which may arise. During non business hours the department relies on the police department to inform us of the need for service. Operations are prioritized by need and conditions. Main and secondary roadways are addressed first, followed by side streets, and then the clearing of walks around schools and assisting seniors with apron clearing. De-icing on most side streets is usually limited to intersections, curves and hills at night and during extended storm periods. Once a storm has passed the side streets are salted more thoroughly as needed. In the winter of 2004-2005, the department applied approximately 4500 tons of road salt for de-icing. The cost of material alone exceeded \$140,000.

EQUIPMENT - New equipment arrivals in 2004 included:

- JDSO trailer mounted, mini jetter
- 200 Ford F350, 4X4 1 Ton Dump w/plow/spreader
- 25 Yard self contained vacuum leaf trailer

BUILDING DEPARTMENT

The Building Department, headed by Building Commissioner, Tom Jamieson, has the responsibility of issuing building permits for new homes and businesses as well as additions or changes to existing structures. Most importantly, this department is

responsible for the community's adherence to our current codes and regulations. This is all done with a very limited staff. In addition to the building commissioner, we have one full time building inspector and one administrative assistant. In 2004, the building department issued 776 permits for residential and non-residential improvements. In addition, there were 53 new single family home permits issued with an estimated valuation of \$17,257,000 or an average of \$325,000 per home.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

We began the year with a General Fund Balance of \$2.93m and ended with a balance of \$2.56m. While we still maintain a healthy General Fund Balance as compared to other cities our size, we are continuing to trend this balance down. As a point of reference, the balance for 2003 was \$3.11m. Total General Fund revenues in 2004 were \$7.58m which is compared to \$7.77m in 2003. This is mainly attributable to a slight decrease in municipal income tax withholding and Net Profits tax collected from our corporate citizens. Expenditures were held in check. The city spent about the same amount in both 2004 and 2003, roughly \$7.95m. Personnel expenditures continue to be our largest expense. Wages and benefits account for nearly three quarters of our entire budget. This should be no surprise since Highland Heights, like all municipalities are a service oriented organization.

2005 BUDGET OVERVIEW

Due to the anticipated further decline of revenues from our income tax, the State of Ohio's slashing of funds to municipalities and the rising cost of health insurance and other employee benefits and insurance, we have budgeted a General Fund deficit of just under \$700k. The budgeting process included a conservative estimate of revenues coupled with a worst case scenario of expenses. As a result of projected budget shortfall, we have included no capital improvements for the 2005 calendar year. This projected shortfall did not, however, include revenue estimates for some of the recent economic developments mentioned previously.

Sincerely,

Scott E. Coleman, Mayor