



Administrator's Update 10/5/07

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2008 Budget The County Board is in the final stages of budget approval for the 2008 budget. The County budget is on a calendar year. The budget for 2008 shows a 3.8% increase. In summary, the budget shows a decrease in revenue related to economic conditions with significant reductions in activity in Building Codes, Environmental Health (sewer & water permits), Register of Deeds, and Drain Commissioner activities. The slow down in the economy that is reflected in County department revenues is being seen in other parts of the County as well. For this reason, the County Board determined that it was most appropriate to approve a maintenance budget for the County with minimal changes or budget increases. Primary increases come in the areas of health insurance and retirement as well as supplementing state appropriations that have been cut. The County Board will consider the final budget on October 31 for final adoption.

Courthouse Remodeling Work on the Robert P. Griffin Hall of Justice continues, while remodeling has begun on the historic courthouse. We are in the final stages of completing work on the Robert P. Griffin Hall of Justice. The change order list is about 75% complete. There are still a number of issues that need to be rectified and are being worked on by Hallmark Construction and our architect. The historic courthouse is going to receive a facelift. Some offices will be moving to other locations in the building. This was enabled by the move of District Court from the historic courthouse to the new Robert P. Griffin Hall of Justice. The County will also be bringing State Probation offices back from the State Office Building into the historic courthouse. Some remodeling of the bottom three floors of the courthouse will take place. In addition, all the windows in the historic courthouse will be replaced. Some foundation work will be done on the side of the courthouse walkway and stairs. Bids have been received on replacing the windows and fixing the foundation on the east side of the building. The County Board will be considering those in the next few weeks. This part of the project was separated from the rest of the project in order to get the work done before weather sets in this winter. Bids on the rest of the construction will be going out soon. During the construction, the Friend of the Court offices will be moving to the third floor of the County Governmental Center for approximately 3 to 4 months while construction takes place in the historic courthouse. This remodeling will be accomplished without any tax increase as was the case with the Griffin Hall of Justice, the jail expansion, and the new joint Law Enforcement Center.

Dams The Boardman River Dams Feasibility Study continues to move forward. The biggest challenge at this point is finding approximately \$700,000 more to complete the feasibility study. A large number of grants have been applied for and we are waiting to

hear answers to those requests. The engineering project has been phased so that work could begin and has been ongoing for the last several months. In terms of the draw down, the dam has been drawn down 14.5 feet. We were required under the Consent Agreement to draw the dam down 17 feet. It appears that the current level is as far as we can draw the dam down under the physical conditions that exist at the dam. We expect to hear from the Department of Environmental Quality that the draw down will be sufficient. Many changes have taken place as a result of the draw down. On the east end, the river is repositioning itself. A new area of river has developed with some white water and what appears to be excellent habitat for future fish populations. It's important to remember this is a temporary draw down and no final decisions on the dams will be made until the feasibility study is complete. We have been working with property owners in this very public process to minimize the impacts. You may recall that the County has been required to take these steps because the Board of Light & Power has determined that they will no longer generate electricity at these dams. The dams are now the responsibility of the County and have significant maintenance issues that need to be addressed. The feasibility study will make recommendations on whether or not the dams should be kept and repaired, or removed, or perhaps some third alternative that we have not thought of at this time.



Septage Treatment Plant As we move into our third year of operation of the Septage Treatment Plant, we are still not up to anticipated volumes to fund the operation. Actually, we've only operated for approximately 2 months at full function of the plant. This was caused by the collapse during the construction of the plant. The townships and the County still have not taken final ownership of the plant; it is still the responsibility of the builders. At this point, the process seems to be working well and the plant is functioning as anticipated. A loan will be necessary in order to get us through 2007. The townships are currently discussing with the County how that will be handled - probably either through a loan from the County of \$400,000 for approximately one year, or by the five townships - Garfield, Acme, East Bay, Peninsula, and Elmwood - contributing toward the shortfall. The townships are also talking with the County on hiring a firm to do a full business plan. This will enable us to look at the plant's financial capabilities and anticipated revenues in order to perhaps consider restructuring bonds, or look at other ways to eliminate the need for short-term borrowings. I feel it is important to keep in mind, as with the start of any new business, that no business comes up to full revenue capacity in its first or second year. In this case, we've only been fully operating for 2 months. I know in my work with the Economic Development Corporation, often times new start ups come in requesting long-term loans for start up money until the business gets fully developed. While the paper has been extremely critical of this process (which has been driven primarily by the townships) I don't think this is that unusual, and I am very confident that in the next several years this plant will turn out to be self-sufficient. Having said that, I think it is also important to note that since its inception, over 20,000,000 gallons of waste that would have been disposed of in some other manner (primarily by land applying) have been processed through this plant and through the City Wastewater Treatment Plant to a level of tertiary treatment making it very clean for our environment and our bays.



Commission Chambers The County continues to work with the City to modernize the City/County Commission Chambers to allow for improved public access to City and County meetings. The County has remodeled the room to make it more accommodating and added some extra seating. The City, with cable franchise money, is purchasing a camera system so that all meetings in that room can be videotaped or presented live on public TV. New furnishings for the public are being purchased and the City and County are looking at purchasing new audiovisual equipment to provide greater access and improve visual lines of communication for attendees at meetings. Finally, the County is looking at the possibility of a computer system that will allow all our meetings to be streamed live through our web site and archived so they can be watched at later dates by citizens of the County. We think these changes will improve access and are pleased that the majority of the work was done through cable franchise money as opposed to local tax dollars.