



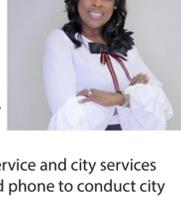
THE CITY OF YPSILANTI NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2021

FROM THE DESK OF THE CITY MANAGER

Happy New Year everyone,

I can't believe that it has been almost one year since COVID-19 arrived. Amidst the pandemic, the City of Ypsilanti has remained focused on maintaining essential services and keeping the community safe. Currently, the Clerk's office at city hall is open from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm daily to accept payments. For your safety and the safety of employees, other departments are available by appointment only. To enter city hall you must wear a mask and observe the 6 ft. social distancing requirement. It is our endeavor to reopen other departments as more of the COVID vaccination is administered throughout the County. The city will update you through our website of any changes relating to customer service and city services as they occur. I encourage you in the meantime to utilize our website, email and phone to conduct city business.



As the weather gets colder, it is imperative that we address homelessness. The city is working to establish a day warming center downtown. We ask for patience, as with COVID, there are many health and safety issues that must be addressed.

In spite of the health crisis, it is an exciting time for the city to be working with Kaufman-Jacobs on the development of the Water Street property. Thank you to all city residents and stakeholders who attended the virtual town hall meetings to discuss the project. While we are aware that affordable housing is an important issue that arose in discussions, it is our mission to compromise and negotiate for a project that is fair and equitable, and that will bring value to our downtown. We are excited that there are other properties in the city that are available for the development of affordable housing and we plan to explore them as well.

One of my goals for 2021 is to continue to work on developing a diverse workforce and to lead the charge in ensuring that racial discrimination is eradicated in our city. Given the recent events at our nation's capitol, it is more important than ever that I send a message that democracy is inclusive, that racism will not be tolerated, and that racial equity is a priority and must be pursued at all levels. The city of Ypsilanti has been a proponent of fairness and will continue to fight for liberty and justice for all.

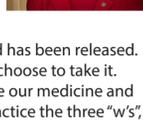
As we continue to manage the challenges we face on many fronts, I humbly ask that each resident, stakeholder and student accept the challenge to make Ypsilanti an attractive and safe place to live, grow and raise a family. Commit to promote pride, diversity, and heritage. I encourage you to become more involved in your city. Attend a council meeting, join a board or commission, become a volunteer to keep our parks clean. There are multitude of things we can do together to bring unity. Won't you join me in preserving our great City? It is time to move forward!

Staying Connected,
Frances

FROM THE DESK OF MAYOR LOIS ALLEN RICHARDSON

Greetings,

We want to take a moment to wish you and your family a Happy New Year, and I wanted to personally thank each of you for standing strong during the unsettled and sometimes turbulent year we have just gone through. There is no question that 2020 was a year we are all glad to see gone. It was a year we all had to make great changes in our lives and it required hard work but we made it. It was exciting to see the hands of the clock turning to bring in 2021. It brought new hope and new vision.



We are at the dawn of a new day, but one thing about dawn is that it is still dark. It is not completely day yet, but we know the sun is rising and will shine bright. We can relate that to getting through this pandemic. The vaccine has been approved and has been released. It is being administered here in the county, soon it will be available for all those who choose to take it. As more of us receive it the brighter the sun is going to shine. We are choosing to take our medicine and hope you will as well. As with the day there is not immediate light, we still have to practice the three "w's", wash our hands, watch our distance and wear our masks. We just have to hang in there.

We are on the brink of a new day for the city as well. We have been and continue to be in conversation with developers regarding Water Street. This is a time we all must stand together for the good of us all. The development plans might not give us all we want but they will certainly give us what we need. It will provide jobs and bring an end to a long overdue unfinished project. We are asking you to keep a positive attitude and give us your support. Remember we are only at the dawn of the day.

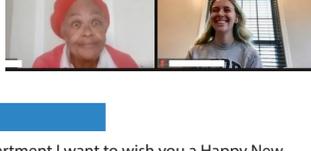
Our wish for you and your family is for a day and year brighter than you could ever imagine. The words of one of our most favorite songs come to mind "I can see clearly now the rain is gone, gonna be a bright, sunshiny day." That is our hope and prayer for us all. Happy New Year!!

LOVE is the answer,
Mayor Lois

YPSILANTI SENIOR CENTER FUNDRAISER

The Ypsilanti Senior Center is raising money via a gofundme fundraiser to support senior services for residents, including meals, virtual programs, wellness checks and more.

To help keep the seniors connected and active throughout the Winter, take a look at details of the fundraiser at the link [HERE](#).



FROM THE DESK OF CHIEF DEGIUSTI

On behalf of the women and men of the Ypsilanti Police Department I want to wish you a Happy New Year. 2020 was extremely trying and it is our hope that all the sacrifices that have been made and the distribution of the COVID Vaccine will return us to as close to normal as we can get. In the meantime, please wear your masks, wash your hands, and maintain your social distancing. We will get past this and how long that takes depends on all of us doing our part.

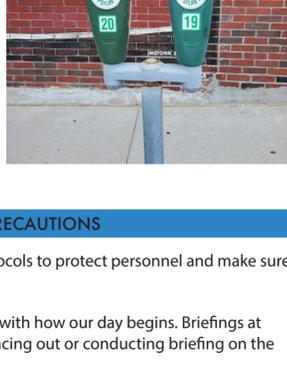


As we embark on the New Year, we are taking steps towards our goal of implementing our Community Policing Model. As explained before this is a step by step process and we have taken an additional step in that direction. We have gone through the process of selecting two officers to be assigned to the Detective Bureau. This assignment will be effective towards the end of this month. These officers will be doing on the job training with our current Detectives and also attending formal advanced training in evidence processing and retrieval. It is important to ensure that these officers are fully capable and functional in their new roles before we can take the next step. This first step will help to eliminate some of the caseload that the Patrol Officers currently deal with and allow them more time to work out in the community.

This process is not something that can be rushed, but we are confident that when this model is fully implemented the YPD will be in a better position to be responsive to the needs of our community. As always, we encourage people to get in touch with us and share their thoughts and ideas about what your expectations are for the department. I have said many times that a well informed and engaged community is our best partner. We continue to stand by that and look forward to whatever input we receive.

PARKING AMNESTY PROGRAM

The City is offering a late fine amnesty for parking tickets issued on or before 12/31/2018. Only parking tickets payable to the City of Ypsilanti are eligible for this program, and late fines will be reinstated after January 31, 2021. Tickets may be paid online, via mail, or in-person. Letters regarding the amnesty were sent out on 12/17/20; if you have not received a letter and want to check on the eligibility or status of a ticket or have other questions, please email parkingticketappeals@cityofypsilanti.com with the ticket number or license plate of the vehicle in question.



The City Council approved this amnesty program at their November 17th meeting, noting that the amnesty program both allows people with outstanding tickets the chance to settle up without worrying about fines or collections, and also helps the City generate revenue to maintain services in this challenging time. This program helps the City, its residents, and its visitors.

FROM THE DESK OF CHIEF HOBBS: UPDATE ON COVID PRECAUTIONS

During COVID the fire department has had to adopt stricter protocols to protect personnel and make sure they are available to provide fire and EMS services.

We have practiced social distancing in the station and this starts with how our day begins. Briefings at 0700 have been kept shorter and done with personnel either spacing out or conducting briefing on the apparatus floor.

The entire station and trucks are sanitized at the beginning of each shift. Items that are shared such as doorknobs, refrigerator and cabinet handles are disinfected or cleaned several times a day.

The fire department has a tradition of preparing and eating meals together, this had to be addressed, and it was decided for a time that we shouldn't prepare meals together or eat at the same table. Personnel were encouraged to bring food from home and eat at separate tables. As we learned more about COVID we have lessened these restrictions by allowing one person to prepare meals.

We spaced beds so personnel would not be sleeping in adjacent beds and established a separate sleeping area for Captains and Lieutenants so they would no longer have to share a room. When the weather allowed, windows and doors were left open to help with air flow throughout the building.

Hand washing has always been a priority in the Fire Department, but personnel were encouraged to wash them even more frequently. Staff are screened prior to each shift. All visitors are screened prior to entering the building.

Firefighters, if possible, are more diligent on scenes and are always required to wear some type of PPE. This could be anything from a Tyvek suit to a mask and gloves. The type of call and exposure determines the level of PPE required. Personnel are required to have 2 sets of footwear, 1 for inside the building and the other for responding to calls. Anything clothing exposed to a positive patient should be changed and washed upon returning to the station. In order to protect personnel's family's uniforms should be laundered at the station and contaminated uniforms should not be taken home.

The Fire Department has increased the amount of PPE on site and has received several regional resupplies from both the Federal and State governments. This allows us to not only provide PPE to fire personnel, but has also allowed us to fill requests for other city staff who at times were unable to secure these items. During this time the Fire Department has had to make a lot of little changes. This has allowed us to accomplish our main goal: Keeping our staff healthy, and available to respond to emergencies and requests for service.

Ken Hobbs,
Fire Chief

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CITY ATTORNEY

The office of the Ypsilanti City Attorney prosecutes City ordinance violations in the 14A2 District Court, the Juvenile Court, and the Administrative Hearings Bureau, including civil infractions (such as a speeding ticket), criminal misdemeanors (such as drunk driving), and blight violations (such as the EMU code and zoning violations). These cases originate when the Ypsilanti Police Department, the Building Department or City ordinance officials issue a ticket or request a warrant for alleged violations that occur within the City of Ypsilanti.

For many years the Ypsilanti City Attorney has recognized the American Bar Association standards for Prosecuting Attorneys including that: "The primary duty of the prosecutor is to seek justice within the bounds of the law..." That is why the Ypsilanti City attorney has never set a "Zero Tolerance" policy for select crimes or civil infractions. Instead, each case is determined on the merits of that particular case.

Each case is reviewed to determine an appropriate result for the facts presented keeping in mind the ABA guidelines that "The prosecutor is not merely a case-prosecutor but also a problem-solver responsible for considering broad goals of the criminal justice system."

Historically the criminal justice goals have been doing justice, controlling crime and preventing crime. The Ypsilanti City Attorney policy is to achieve these goals all the while treating everyone in the system equally and with fairness, empathy and respect.

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK, ANDREW HELLENGA - TREASURY

Taxes
City Hall is open for in person tax payments, however, it is recommended taxes be paid via the mail, or drop-box, to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Winter taxes must be received no later than 4 pm on February 14, 2021 to avoid interest or penalty. On February 15, 2021 a 3% penalty will be assessed plus .5% interest to any outstanding balance. An additional .5% will be assessed the 1st of each month until the full balance is paid. Anything outstanding as of March 1, 2021 will be sent to the Washtenaw County Treasurer's Office as delinquent.

If you prefer to make payment online please visit the [online payment center](#) or by phone call 833-440-8688. Please be advised a 3% convenience fee for those payment options will be assessed.

Clerk

The Ypsilanti Clerk's Department worked diligently during the 2020 Election cycle to ensure that all Ypsilanti voters were able to cast ballots safely. A special thanks to the Election Inspectors and temporary employees that worked in all three elections held this year. Especially those that worked through the pandemic to ensure their neighbors were able to either vote by absentee or at the polls. As a result of that hard work all ten precincts and the Absentee Voter Count Board were able to report results by 10:00 pm on November 3rd.



The City of Ypsilanti, and Clerk's Departments throughout the County, received letters of praise for the administration of the November General Election from both the County Clerk's Office and the County Board of Canvassers. I can attest that the voters of the City, and the County at large can feel safe that all ballots were counted regardless of party affiliation.

The voters of the State of Michigan approved ballot initiatives requiring audits be performed to prove the validity of the results. The State of Michigan created two types of audits, a general audit and a Risk Limiting Audit (RLA). Jurisdictions are selected at random for the General Audit, and Ypsilanti was selected following the November General. It is with great pride I report no errors were found in either the count of ballots, nor the overall administration of the Election. Again, special thanks to staff and inspectors that made this possible.

Ypsilanti took part in the Risk Limiting Audit pilot held in 2019 and now that tool will be used to verify there were no irregularities in election administration throughout the state. Jurisdictions will be selected on January 11th and Ypsilanti Clerk staff have already volunteered to assist, regardless of Ypsilanti being selected or not.

The Ypsilanti Clerk Department takes Election Security and Administration very seriously, and will work tirelessly to hold fair and secure elections for the citizens of this City.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT - COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

A COVID-19 vaccine will be critical in slowing the spread and helping communities recover from the pandemic. Stopping a pandemic will take ALL our tools: handwashing, masks, social distancing, and vaccines. Taken together, these tools offer the best chance of getting our communities, schools, and work sites back to normal sooner. Please remember we will need to continue using prevention strategies as a vaccine becomes available and for some time after.

Vaccine manufacturers will release a limited supply of COVID-19 vaccines during the first few months that they are available. The local health department is responsible for supporting emergency vaccine distribution and has plans in place to do so. These plans include determining appropriate sites centrally located and/or across the county.

Initial vaccine supplies are expected to be small. The first priorities include health care workers providing direct care, people who will be vaccinating others, and residents in long-term care settings. There will be no cost to individuals for the COVID-19 vaccination.

WCHD COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Status

The diagram shows a sequence of priorities: 1A (Priority 1), 1A (Priority 2), 1A (Priority 3), 1B, 1C, and 2. A box labeled 'WCHD as of 1/6' is positioned below the first three 1A priorities. The Washtenaw County Health Department logo is at the bottom right.

1. Phase 1A includes paid and unpaid persons serving in health care settings who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials and are unable to work from home, as well as residents of long-term care facilities.

2. Phase 1B includes people 75 years of age or older and frontline essential workers in critical infrastructure.

3. Phase 1C includes people 65 years of age or older, people 16 years of age or older at high risk of severe illness due to COVID-19 infection, and some other essential workers whose position impacts life, safety, and protection during the COVID-19 response.

4. Phase 2 is a mass vaccination campaign for all individuals 16 years and older.

To find out more information on how and when you can get your vaccination, contact your healthcare provider or the Washtenaw County Health Department at: 734-544-6700 or email: L-wchdcontact@washtenaw.org or visit: <https://www.washtenaw.org/3269/COVID-19-Vaccination>

Reading this offline? Here are some links referenced above.

Senior Center GoFundMe: <https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/bring-sunshine-to-seniors>

Online Payment Center:

<https://cityofypsilanti.com/563/online-payments>

Your story could be published here! Send your story to Jada Tillison-Love - jtillisonlove@cityofypsilanti.com