



## **Mayor - City of Cortland**

**400 North High Street, Cortland, Ohio 44410**

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### **Annual Report of the Mayor to Cortland City Council February 29, 2012**

#### **Introduction**

The primary purpose of this report is to document activities during Fiscal Year 2011 and the condition of the City of Cortland at the conclusion of 2011. I want to thank my staff for their support throughout the year and everyone else that contributed to making this year a successful one for the city.

The city completed the year with continued financial solvency. We did not experience the reduction in income that many communities saw during the past three years, primarily due to the fact that we do not collect an income tax. During 2011 our most visible accomplishment was completion of the City's new water tower. The new tower provides more reliable service to residents at significantly higher water pressure in most areas of the city.

#### **Comments on Collaboration**

Over the past several years and particularly in the last state budget cycle, governments have been encouraged to collaborate through both financial incentives and public pressure. The City of Cortland continues to participate in these efforts to find ways to save money and improve services through collaboration.

For many years before these activities began, Cortland had taken advantage of opportunities to save money through cooperation with other government entities. I feel that it is important to recognize these areas where the city has and continues to collaborate and save our residents tax dollars.

Cortland utilizes services of the county in a number of areas including the Health Department, Building Inspection, Emergency Management, 911 dispatching and GIS mapping services. We also have extensive mutual aid agreements in place so we do not need to duplicate costly safety services. I believe that these efforts result in more than half a million dollars a year in savings to the City.

## **Finance**

The city completed 2011 with a total unencumbered fund balance of \$2,321,000 which is a decrease of \$458,000 or 16.5% from the carryover 2010 balance. Total expenditures for 2011 were \$6,263,000, a decrease of \$161,000 from 2010 expenditures. Receipts for 2011 were \$5,696,300, a decrease of \$627,100 or 10% from 2010.

The most significant balance increases were \$195,000 in the Water fund, \$120,000 in the Parks and Recreation fund, and \$65,000 in the Fire Improvement fund.. The most significant balance decreases were \$282,000 in the General fund and \$469,000 in the Sewer fund. All other funds remained approximately the same as 2010 year end levels.

State audits for the years 2009 and 2010 were completed with no findings or citations for either year. The finance department introduced an automatic bank deduction for water and sewer bills during 2010 and many of our residents are taking advantage of this convenience.

## **Service Department**

The focus has not changed and continues to be the stabilization of city services through improved problem resolution and tracking, adherence to procedures, and documentation of procedures and processes. Our objective continues to be to maintain long range capital plans for all city infrastructures. This will allow the city to plan for financial needs well into the future and continue to maintain or improve current levels of city services.

## **Water**

The unencumbered water fund balance increased from \$276,300 to \$471,300 with expenditures of \$578,900 to support the water department. Total revenues from water billings were \$732,200, an increase of 3 percent from 2010. The increased water revenue will be necessary to pay for the significant investment in the water system made over the last three years. .

Water pressure problems in higher elevation areas of the city have been solved with implementation of the new water tower. During 2011 we completed the construction of the new elevated storage tank at Willow Park. Water level in the new tank is 50 feet above the level in the old tanks. The old tanks will be demolished at some time in the future. The pressure reducing valves to create a lower pressure zone west of High Street and south of City Hall and the north well field development on Bradley

Brownlee Road were completed. These projects along with the well field connector line from City Hall to Main Street complete the upgrades to our water system required to support the future needs of the city.

## **Sanitary Sewers**

The unencumbered Sanitary Sewer fund balances decreased by 84% to \$88,000 with total expenditures of \$1,208,500 in 2011. Revenues from sewer were \$739,400 which were 4% below revenues in 2010. This reduction was due to both the reduction in sewer rates and reductions in water usage. Sewer payments to the county for treatment were significantly higher in 2011 due to record rainfall and continued high rates.

Although expenses in 2011 were higher than normally expected, some increase in the sewer rates will be required to maintain a sufficient fund balance for contingencies and provide for improvements and maintenance of the system. .

## **Storm sewers**

The upgrade to the storm sewers in the Stahl Avenue development and the installation of new curbs was completed in 2011.

Work on this project for the upgrade to storm sewers on Heritage Lane and Emerson Circle has been delayed to start in early 2012.

Funding for Improvements along SR 305 near Southdale Avenue and to Cedar Street near Fowler Street has been obtained through Eastgate Regional Council of Governments. Design was started for these projects during 2011 with work scheduled for 2012.

## **Streets and Roads**

We continue to utilize the 10 year resurfacing cycle to determine paving plans for each year. This year the annual resurfacing project included over 295,000 square feet of resurfacing.

Streets included were Windsor Drive, Fairview Street, Second Street, Erie Street (from S. Mecca to W. Main) Pearl Street (from N. Mecca to Rail Road) Fox Run, Fox Trail, Hickory Trail, Hawthorne Trail (cul-de-sac), Elizabeth Court, Michaels Court, Adams Court, Monte Lane, Louis Blvd., Tami Court, Alyssa Court and Carl Street.

Approximately 74% of the streets have been resurfaced in the last 8 years with less than 8% being older than 12 years. This is a significant improvement

from the beginning of our resurfacing strategy in 2004 when 45% were more than 8 years old and 22% were more than 12 years old.

## **Police Department**

The unencumbered Police Levy fund balance decreased by 11% to \$140,900 with total expenditures of \$990,700 to support the Police department. Police levy expenses continue to slightly exceed receipts. The police department purchased a new cruiser and obtained mobile data terminals for use in each cruiser. The department also joined the OVI Task Force and represented the city in the Soap Box Derby which came to Cortland for the first time.

Lakeview schools agreed to provide \$12,500 toward continuing the School Resource Officer at their facilities for the 2011/12 school year.

## **Fire Department**

The unencumbered Fire Levy fund balance decreased by 9% to \$376,100 with total expenditures of \$1,291,700 to support the Fire department. We continued to add to the Fire Improvement Fund for a year-end balance of \$203,400. Receipts for the fire department were down slightly to \$1,253,300.

There was a continued increase in alarms during 2011 to a total of 1628. A state EMS grant for \$3,000 was received that was used for equipment and training. A \$76,9500 federal grant was received that was used to replace cardiac monitors in each of the ambulances.

## **Other Initiatives**

### **Appearance and Aesthetics of the City**

The Cortland Beautification Association selected two residential properties and one business for the Cortland Community Pride Award. First Place Bank continued as the 2011 sponsor for the award. Three residential awards and a business award are planned for 2012.

**Attracting People to the Community** - A welcome letter and useful business and city information in plastic Welcome to Cortland bags are being given to all new water customers and other identified new residents. Over 1005 packets have been distributed through the end of 2011.

**Parks and Recreation Facilities** - The City continued to improve the former Cortland Elementary property as open space for a new city park. Base and storm

sewers for a parking lot were completed.. In addition, planning continued for a county Metro Park on North Mecca Street. This property will be developed jointly by the City and County for recreation activities such as hiking trails and a sled hill.

Respectfully Submitted,

Curt Moll