

Village of Windham, Ohio

Mayor's Annual Report 2010

**By
Robert W. Donham II, Mayor**

2010 was another year of progress, investment, and rebuilding and the year posed many challenges and successes. 2010 stands as a year where the Village was able to continue to stabilize past financial mistakes and provide a foundation for lasting progress. The Village was able to take great steps toward improving Police protection, removing slum and blight, upgrading the quality of infrastructure, increasing financial stability, beautifying and upgrading parks and recreation areas, and providing more responsive and accountable government. 2010 should be considered a resounding accomplishment year, given the prior circumstances the Village faces, and present economy we operate in. 2011 continues to present much of the same hardships and opportunities as move through uncertain national economic conditions, however; your Mayor and Administration stand ready to react and adapt to ensure 2011 continues on the same upward trend we have seen over the past couple of years.

VILLAGE FINANCIAL REPORT:

In 2010 the Village experienced one of our largest investment years to date. Through good management, sacrifice and creativity on behalf of the departments, the Village was able build surplus revenue over the previous 2 years to achieve a **budget surplus**, of approximately **\$160,000 that could be used for infrastructure investments** in the General Fund, and maintain positive cash balances and stability in all Village Funds. This was done while paying down expenses and debt that are not likely to occur in the foreseeable future. In the Sewer Department alone the Village was able to pay off debt for **future savings of \$150,000 per year**. Two major investments that were made with this excess revenue were, the Main Street Resurfacing and Maple Grove redevelopment projects. The cost of the Main Street project was approximately **\$175,000 with the Village paying only \$35,000** and the Maple Grove project was approximately **\$325,000 with the Village paying about \$100,000 to remove 26 blighted project buildings**. Income tax collection for 2010 was at a low of **\$464,212** due to a faltering national economy, but the Village, due to good planning and policy decisions was still able to make these two large investments and many other smaller ones when the opportunity presented itself.

2010 will stand as a year where the Village was able to "turn the corner" financially and structurally and finally start making improvements before disaster strikes. The Village has been able to continually improve through our financial audits and the 2010 audit was our best to date. The Village officials acted proactively in 2010 to use reserve funds saved over the previous years to upgrade our Village, increase Safety and reduce annual costs. 2010 has proven that even in hard financial times that if you require greater accountability on spending, and put in to place policies and procedures that help to provide greater financial security, the Village will have greater opportunity for community investments and success for years to come. There is still a great deal of work left to do, however; the process has come together quickly and the Village is positioned to be Financially and Structurally successful for years into the future.

VILLAGE SAFETY REPORT:

Police Department:

During 2010 the Village Police Department continued its outstanding progression of excellence. The department budget was increased from **\$483,000** in 2006, to **\$565,500** in 2008 and was up over **\$600,000** in 2010. The Police force has been, and remains without exception the **#1 priority of the Village**. The Department continues to work tirelessly, to eliminate the criminal element from our town and the results have been outstanding. The Village has seen a near **65% drop in crime** reported since 2007 and this is a testament to our recommitment to eliminate crime in 2008, and this has been done while maintaining the **same or greater amount of arrests** as before. This means we are putting a much higher percentage of those that commit crimes in jail, and maintaining constant enforcement. This improvement is a direct result of shifting the Police philosophy from being a mostly reactive department to a mostly proactive department.

Fire Department:

After decades of fighting and wrangling over the department the Village settled our lawsuit with Windham Township over the handling of the Fire Department and the Village Tax monies involved. Protecting the continuity and integrity of the Fire Department remained the primary goal of the Village. We formed a Joint Fire District with Windham Township and instituted a Board that now runs all Fire and EMS in Windham. Past officials worked very hard building a department that we could all be proud of and I am pleased to know that the department will now be run jointly and with more security for generations to come.

VILLAGE UTILITIES / INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT:

Water and Sewer:

The most notable impact to the Water and Sewer Departments has been the developments with the Ohio National Guard and the Ravenna Arsenal. This project is underway and by the end of 2011 will be fully completed, as part of this agreement **we negotiated a "tap in fee" for one time upfront costs to connect to the Village systems** this fee was paid in 2011 and was nearly **\$900,000**, that money will be used for the upgrades we have planned for our plants. This agreement is monumental for the Village and is a win for everyone involved and provides for one of the biggest development opportunities in Portage County. This will allow the Village to benefit from the economy of scale, and sharing resources, providing the potential for rate stabilization, rate decreases and infrastructure expansion and upgrades in the near future. In addition to the Arsenal Developments the Village has been expedient in controlling costs and upgrading our systems and paying down debt, **by 2010 the Village has eliminated \$191,000 per year in annual debt obligations** and will be able to pass this savings on direct to Village Residents. We have secured grant funding to help with two major upgrades to our water system that will enable us to lower rates in the future. By the end of 2011 upgrades will be completed or in construction replacing all our meters with new "radio read" meters, reducing man hours, errors, and inconsistent spikes in our customers' bills. The plant will also get new filters, softeners, and upgraded processing equipment to eliminate the ongoing rust problem we have experienced and reduce operating expenses. These project amount to over **\$500,000 worth of upgrades**, most of which was secured **through grant monies**, and will produce **annual savings of over \$50,000 per year in operating costs, that should be passed directly to the customer through reduced rates.**

Streets and Sidewalks and Properties:

The Village has maintained committed to eliminating blight and promoting newer housing and more green space throughout the Village. During 2008 6 blighted housing project buildings were demolished 6 more in 2009, 26 in 2010, and about 12 more are scheduled for 2011. These demolitions will continue to be perused, staying consistent with the Villages overall goal of modernizing our buildings and infrastructure and promoting newer housing and upgrades throughout the Village.

During 2008 the Village also established a prioritized list for Village wide road resurfacing. This provides us with the ability to pursue grants to re-institute a program where every year we replace a portion of our most degraded roads. Our first grant was obtained in 2009 and we used that \$175,000 to resurface Main Street during 2010. Our remaining top 5 priority list consisted of Maple Grove Rd, Wilvern Dr., Spring St., Wolfe Rd., and School Street. We applied for additional funding starting in 2010, we were awarded nearly \$275,000 in 2011 and will resurface all 5 of our remaining top priorities during our next construction season

2010 was a very successful year for the Village investing and upgrading our assets to enhance the foundation on which we previously built. By creating and promoting a Village that provides top notch services and facilities the future growth and economic development opportunities have become much more hopeful. 2011 still poses many challenges in navigating uncertain financial conditions throughout the Country. However, the Village has been well prepared and has taken great strides in preparing for future success, toward continuing to emphasize Police protection, investing in our infrastructure, increasing financial assets, beautifying and upgrading parks and recreation areas, and providing more responsive and accountable government. As I have said previously, We must continue to build on our successes, and strive to always provide the residents of Windham a government of accomplishment and trust.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert W. Donham II, Mayor