

Village of Windham, Ohio

"In the heart of the Western Reserve"

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MAYOR'S YEAR 2005 ANNUAL REPORT

(Ohio Revised Code 733.41)

by

C. James Moore, Mayor
(March 15, 2006)

This Annual Report is being provided with the recognition of our late Mayor Jess E. Starkey who died on November 11, 2005, while serving as Mayor. C. James Moore, the reporter, served as Council President (10 1/2 months and as mayor 1 1/2 months of 2005).

MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS CHANGES IN 2005

Former Council Member Stacy Brown and Cheryl Pyles resigned in January. New Council Members Jodi Minotti and Robert Donham were appointed by Council to replace those two vacancies.

The November 2005 election added two (2) new Council Members; i.e., Rachel Barrett and Jason DeBolt, who were to take office on January 1, 2006. Scott Garrett and Jodi Minotti were re-elected while Francis Ballard was not re-elected.

Due to the unfortunate death of Jess E. Starkey on November 11, 2005, an opening occurred on Council. Under the Ohio Revised Code, the Council President assumes the unexpired term of the mayor. Council President Jim Moore became the Mayor and Rachel Barrett was sworn in to fill Moore's open Council seat which expired on December 31, 2005. Robert Donham II was then elected Council president for the balance of 2005.

OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATION CHANGES IN 2005

The changes in the office and administration have provided many improvements during 2005. Unlike prior replacement for these positions, the Council's Personnel Committee and Mayor screens and interviews candidates for these positions. The Council Personnel Committee was established in mid-2004 by the Council president. The Council also passed a hiring policy ordinance in January 2005 that has improved our hiring procedure.

Shelley Craine, a Ravenna Township. resident, was hired as the Fiscal Officer. She has inherited and tackled many fiscal and administrative obstacles in 2005.

Lloyd Billman, a Windham Township resident, was hired as the Income Tax Administrator. He, too, has tackled many problems inherited with the Village Income Tax collections.

Kevin Knight, a Windham Township resident, in addition to being hired as the Streets Superintendent accepted the appointment of part-time Village Administrator.

Carol Wilson, from Freedom Township, was hired as the Village Utilities Clerk. Carol, also, comes to this position facing many problems and has done a very good job working with the Fiscal Officer and the Village Administrator to correct the problems and make improvements.

WATER, WASTE WATER, STREETS INFRASTRUCTURE AND PARKS

- 1) **THE NEW SEWER MAIN GRANTS AND LOANS** were secured in 2005 and construction began in February 2006. By October, we should see the benefits of this E.P.A. mandated project by lower costs at the Waste Water Treatment Plant and prevention of severe back-ups in our sewer system during heavy rains and flooding. The total cost is \$1,617,000.00 of which \$912,000.00 is free grant money and a \$705,000.00 USDA loan that must be paid from the sewer fund over many years.
- 2) **EMPLOYEE PERSONNEL CHANGES:** John Owen Hebb, resigned and Village resident Bill Pennington was hired as a Water Plant Operator in training. Kevin Knight was hired as the Streets Superintendent replacing John Maurie Hebb who retired in December, 2004. Former Village Administrator Mike Iwanyckyj resigned in January, 2005. Kevin Knight was appointed to the part-time Village Administrator -- a 24-hour daily on-call position to handle water and sewer issues. By having Kevin employed daily as the Streets Superintendent and his willingness to take on the Village Administrator position for only \$4,500.00 a year, it has provided the Village with one person always available and not responsible to another employer. Past administrators had to be primarily responsible to their full-time jobs elsewhere. In 2005, Kevin Knight, with Council's approval, has made many improved changes as the Administrator over the Village utilities, streets and parks.
- 3) **STREETS:** We could not apply for an available state grant for repaving any of our streets. We needed over \$30,000.00 to match a grant that would have provided over \$75,000.00 free money. Obviously, we did not have money in the General Fund in 2005 for streets repaving and will not have it in 2006.

- 4) **THE COMMUNITY DISTRESS GRANTS** sponsored by the Portage County Commissioners and Neighborhood Development Services (NDS) is a \$500,000.00 project that was revised in 2005 and should begin this year. The grant will provide a new sewer main, new sidewalks and parking areas and four (4) new hydrants on community road from Maple Grove Road to Green Meadow Road.
- 5) **A NEW 2006 F-350 DUMP TRUCK WITH SNOW PLOW WAS PURCHASED** to replace the old 1985 Chevy white dump truck. The new truck is being paid for from the Street fund and State Highway fund.
- 6) **PARKS:** Several park improvements were made, such as two (2) new baseball dugouts, six (6) new on deck enclosed circles, new drainage tile, six (6) older dugouts were re-shingled, concession booths and bathrooms were painted, and 200 AMP electric service hook up was added. These improvements were accomplished with the leadership of Kevin Knight and much help from the Village utilities employees and the Hot Stove baseball/softball members, managers and coaches.

We hosted our first girls state softball tournament at the park which was a big success and raised nice proceeds for the Hot Stove teams. Hot Stove plans to use the proceeds for a new back stop for a girls' field and to purchase new equipment.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

We had a reduction of one full-time officer from five (5) full-time to four (4) full-time. Officer Mark McComas resigned in October, 2005 for police employment elsewhere and the canine had to go with McComas. One full-time officer works out of the Village with the Portage County Drug Task Force. Only three (3) full-time actually work in the Village.

We had five (5) part-time officers in 2005. The three (3) full-time and five (5) part-time officers working in the Village are providing 24 hour a day police coverage. Future coverage will depend on the 2006 budget to be adopted by Council in March. So far it appears that there will be \$50,000.00 less in the budget for the Police Department.

The age, mileage and repairs on our police cruisers continue to be a concern due to lack of General Funds revenue.

The police calls in 2005 continued to be high. When comparing our population with other municipalities, we have the highest calls and least police officers to handle the calls. Police, fire and rescue service dispatcher's call reports can be seen on our Village website at www.windhamvillage.com.

FIRE DEPARTMENT AND FIRE DISTRICT

Year 2005 was the second consecutive year that the Village Council and Township Trustees did not have an operating agreement. The disputed differences reached a point of the Village Council proposing to the Trustees to form a joint Fire District. Village Council passed a resolution in June of 2005 to form a joint Fire District. The Trustees voted against it at their meeting.

Thereafter, proposals between both sides were exchanged on an operating agreement and on an exploratory committee to investigate a joint Fire District. The November elections caused the parties to discontinue the bargaining until after the election.

As of this writing, the Village Council is prepared to submit another counter-proposal to the Trustees on these issues.

VILLAGE FINANCIAL CONDITION

The serious financial conditions of the Village's General Fund continued in 2005. A serious lack of revenue continues to erode our services and the general emergency health and welfare of our Village.

Village Council passed an ordinance to place a .5% (1/2 %) income tax increase on the election ballot during the February, May, August, and November 2005 elections which were all turned down by those who voted. The passage would have provided an additional, much needed, \$100,000.00 a year to the General Fund to maintain and hopefully improve services.

Year 2005 started off with some unexpected costs from year 2004; that is, costs we found to be still owed. The State Workers Compensation Fund was owed \$109,000.00 and we were behind on our Cortland Bank loan by three (3) payments totaling approximately \$36,000.00. We also paid \$7,982.00 in unemployment benefits due to a claim filed by a former employee who resigned in December 2004.

Four (4) unexpected lawsuits in 2005 have seriously increased our costs which have not yet been totaled for report.

In order for Mayor and Council to address our ongoing financial issues and these unexpected costs, many important financial decisions had to be made to cut costs and/or raise revenue. Some of these decisions were as follows:

- 1) We sold the Timber on the Village property on Route 303 (East Center Street) which raised \$45,000.00.

- 2) Our new Income Tax Administrator brought in an additional \$59,243.56 in 2005 than in 2004 and caught up the tax record files that were behind for previous years.
- 3) We wiped out the Permanent Improvement Enhancement Fund by using those funds to pay three (3) bank loan payments amounting to \$36,000.00 that were not paid in 2004.
- 4) Village Solicitor Mark Manlove offered to lower his service contract amounts which will save the Village \$5,000.00 a year to use for other costs.
- 5) Council members waived their Council pay for four (4) special meetings held in 2005. Approximately \$2,400.00 to use for other expenditures.
- 6) Arrangements were made with the State Bureau of Workers Compensation to establish an employees' safety and health program that will reduce future costs and provide a payment schedule on the back bills owed.
- 7) When Police Officer Mark McComas resigned in October it was decided not to replace him or the canine due to the poor financial condition of the General Fund. This reduced our full time officers to four (4) and no canine for drug enforcement in the Village. Only three (3) of the four (4) full time officers will be available to work in the Village since one (1) officer will be working elsewhere in the County with the Portage County Drug Task Force.
- 8) The contract with Action Ambulance from Warren, Ohio, for EMS calls was cancelled. EMS calls not taken by the Fire Department are answered by Mutual Aid from Hiram, Community Ambulance of Braceville. Canceling the Action Ambulance contract saved the Village approximately \$6,500.00 a year to be used for other Village costs.
- 9) The salaries of the Fiscal Officer Income Tax Administrator and Street Superintendent were lowered before these new employees were hired. The Fiscal Officer's position was lowered from \$30,000.00 to \$27,000.00 annually; the Income Tax Administrator was lowered from \$25,500.00 to \$22,000.00; and the Streets Superintendent was lowered from \$30,451.00 to \$29,000.00 annually in 2005. Total savings for these three (3) positions of \$7,951.00.
- 10) **DONATIONS.** It is important that the donations to the Village be recognized. Laverne Beldon's donation of \$5,000.00 for the Police Department was used to purchase two (2) Taser guns. Chloe Small and Susan Malmesur \$300.00 donation for the cost of electricity to operate the water fountain in front of the Community Center. The Windham Township

Trustees' donation of a used John Deere tractor with a small snow blower for our sidewalks.

HOUSING, PLANNING AND ZONING.

Eleven (11) new single family homes were built in the Village in 2005; that is, seven (7) in the apartment area and five (5) in the east side single family homes area. These new homes were made possible by Neighborhood Development Services (NDS).

All total so far, there have been thirty-seven (37) of these homes built since the year 2000. Twenty-eight (28) were built in the apartments area and nine (9) were built in the east side homes development.

The next phase of single family homes will be in the spring of 2007 with four (4) new homes and possibly more.

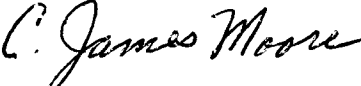
Cortland Banks is in the process of purchasing real estate lots from NDS to build a new bank in the Village. The property is located across from the Citgo Gas Station on the corner. This location is where five (5) eyesore apartment buildings used to stand. Those buildings were torn down by the Village Council and NDS several years ago. The Zoning in that area was changed from multi-family apartments to commercial, business Zoning in May 2004.

Hopefully, the purchase of that real estate will soon be completed and we may have a new bank in our Village.

The new Zoning map is on the Village website under Planning and Zoning.

NEW VILLAGE WEB SITE

The new Village website was established by Village Council in 2005. We are in the process of building this website. By computerizing our records and putting them on the website, it brings our Village government a big step closer to our residents with Village records conveniently available. Visit our website at www.windhamvillage.com.


C. James Moore
Mayor