INCOME TAX BALLOT ISSUE

#1 in a Series - How did we get here?

By Council President Pam Park-Curry
and Councilman-Elect John Michels

When looking at the Village’s finances, one can see that a variety of factors brought Minerva Park to its current financial situation. The State of Ohio made funding changes directed toward smaller government entities, the recession impacted the economy, and the Village Council made decisions to maintain unrealistic service levels in a period of declining revenues.

The State of Ohio has been reducing subsidies to local governments for several years. “Money from the local government fund has been cut in half since 2011, changes in personal property tax laws have eliminated hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue, and the elimination of the estate tax has ended a sporadic, but sometimes needed, revenue source for communities” [Source: Marion Star, October 20, 2013].

The Village of Minerva Park has experienced the negative impact of these lost revenues. During 2008-2012, MP General Fund revenues decreased nearly 11 percent, real estate property taxes were down approximately 14.5%, State Local Government Fund (LGF) subsidies were down approximately 52.6%, and inheritance taxes are no longer a potential source of revenue.

During the same period, MP General Fund expenditures held relatively stable because the Village Council chose to spend down its cash reserves to maintain the service levels that Village residents had come to expect. But that could not go on forever. In 2013, with depleted cash reserves, to maintain a balanced budget, the Village Council had no alternative but to reduce expenses and increase revenue. That meant eliminating leaf and trash collection and rescinding the 50% income tax credit.

The Village is getting through the 2013 budget, but what long-term options does Minerva Park have moving forward?

As Minerva Park looks to the future, we know that external forces will continue to have an impact on our revenue projections. According to the Ohio Office of Budget and Management, Local Government Fund subsidies are unlikely to return, based on the belief that local governments have the ability to raise revenue through other means (i.e., income or sales taxes). The State of Ohio has signaled its intention to push the cost of local services onto taxpayers, with the idea that voters will have more influence on how their dollars are spent [Source: “Local Democracy in Ohio,” Ohio Township Association, July 2012].

Recognizing that Minerva Park must increase revenue, Village Council passed legislation that puts an Income Tax issue on the February 4, 2014 ballot. If passed, it would change MP’s current 1% income tax rate to 2%. Minerva Park’s current income tax rate of 1% is lower than at least 20 other communities in and around Franklin County in 2013 [Sources: Regional Income Tax Agency; Ohio Department of Taxation]. A 2% income tax rate will bring MP’s tax rate in line with other area communities.

The money raised would be used to offset lost revenues, rebuild the cash reserves, and address major infrastructure and capital expenses:

1. remediate the earthen dam, mandated by order of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the Emergency Management Agency.
2. ensure storm and sanitary sewers comply with mandates from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
3. dredge the North Lake.
4. purchase police and EMS vehicles.

Watch for additional information to help you, as a voter, become informed about the Income Tax Issue that will be on the February 4, 2014 ballot. Additionally, materials will be posted at minervapark.org.

DECEMBER DATES

6 (5p) ..........Carriage Rides Deadline
7 (8a) ..........Council Work Session
9 (7p) ............Council Meeting
11 (8a) ............Mayors Court
11 (7:30p) ............MPCA Meeting
14 (10a-noon) ........Christmas Party
15 (5:30p-8:30p) ....Carriage Rides
16-22 ............Festival of Lights
18 (5p) ............Villager Deadline
Festival of Lights
December 16-22
If you are looking for creativity and artistic expression during the holidays, now is your opportunity to decorate your property and celebrate this beautiful community by making it a winter wonderland. If you won a first place in last year’s contest, you are not eligible to win this year, but your talents as judges would be greatly appreciated.
If you are interested in judging, contact Bob Gale at 560-0452.
Decorating categories are:
• Best Outdoor tree
• Best Entranceway
• Best Religious Theme
• Best Whimsical Display
• Best Outline Effect.
Judging will take place December 16-22. The judges look for well placed, well thought-out decorations and enjoy having the decorations complement the property. Be imaginative, creative, and have fun! Winners who are MPCA members will receive gift certificates from a local hardware store or nursery. Non-MPCA winners will be offered a free membership to the MP Community Association for the 2013-2014 membership year.

Children’s Christmas Party
Saturday, December 14 • 10a to noon • Community Building
MP’s children are invited to the annual Children’s Christmas Party. We are making a group craft to give to a child in need, a Christmas ornament craft to take home, and something sweet. The toddlers and preschool age children will have a few activities just for them to play with their parents. We will play a couple of fun games and have a special visit from Santa! Parents, bring your cameras for that special Christmas photo.
Bakers are needed for some yummy treats, but non-sweet snacks also will be provided. If you would like to help, please call Glenda Morris at 882-2359.

Four Seasons Garden Award - Fall
During the second week of October, judges viewed a list of Minerva Park gardens to select the Four Season Garden Award winner for fall 2013, sponsored by the MinervaFlora Committee. The winner of that award is Annina Agriesti of 2588 Jordan Road. The judges were particularly impressed with this well maintained property, the curb appeal, and the large and colorful display of flowers and the pumpkins. Annina will receive a certificate of recognition and have her name engraved on the plaque in the Community Building. Runner-up was Kellie Carmichael of 2631 Wildwood Rd. Again the judges were impressed with the curb appeal of the property, the abundance of color, the window boxes, and picket fence.
Our thanks to the gardeners and the judges for all of their hard work.
agreements, and the proposed entrances and exits to the development. This work session was in preparation for the Council’s vote on Resolution 2013-37 (please see below under Legislation) at the Regular Council meeting held November 11. The Council did pass Resolution 2013-37.

What happens now? The Fischer Group will have filed this Pre-Annexation Agreement with the County Commissioners for their consideration and approval. While the Commissioners deliberate, the Village and the Fischer Group will begin meetings to negotiate the zoning and development text that will define the future of this property. Issues to be discussed include what is mentioned above plus any changes in the layout of the plan, trees, sidewalks, density, etc. An informal presentation by Fischer to the P&Z Commission and the Village Council will be held December 18 at 7 p.m., and January 9, at 7 p.m.

An Open House has been scheduled for the public to comment on the plans January 14, 2014, from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Community Building. The Fischer Homes representatives will be available to discuss these plans with you, and the plans will be available for you to view.

Other tentative Work Session and Special Council meeting dates to discuss this project are January 21 at 7 p.m. and February 5 at 7:00 p.m. – all to be held at the Community Building. These dates may change as we progress through the negotiations. Please watch the Village website and Villager articles for any updates.

Earthen Dam: You may have noticed a Flowline truck parked along the walking path several weeks ago. The main drain pipe that runs adjacent to the spillway was blocked at the top of the bridge where the trash rack is located. To access the pipe, the crew had to remove the grate and, to our surprise, we found a second, very old and mangled grate that I am sure has been there for decades. The problem was a huge amount of tree roots that had become entangled in the grate, allowing debris, branches, and leaves to become “hung up” on these and blocking the flow of water. We will need to televise the entire pipe to make sure there isn’t any further blockage or damage to the pipe.

We are still waiting for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) to approve our EAP and OM&I drafts (please see last month’s Villager).

All Council Members were present at the Regular Council meeting held November 11.

EMS/Fire: Chief Rick Hoechstetter reported that all of the fire hydrants have been winterized. Upon inspection, he found that there are four hydrants that may be leaking. He will continue to monitor them throughout the winter.

Police: Chief Kim Nuesse reported that all cruisers are back in service. She is gathering quotes for replacing old radios and is working with the Franklin County Sheriff’s Department to continue the mutual aid relationship for investigations and back-up patrolling.

Minerva Park Community Association: In addition to thanking Lisa Craddock Thitoff...
Names & Ages of Minerva Park Community Association
Member Household & Limited Guests

Preferred Times (not guaranteed)

Phone #

Email address for confirmation

Christmas Carriage Rides - Sunday, December 15, 5:30p - 8:30p
Reservation deadline December 6, 5 p.m.
Email your reservations to mayor@minervapark.org (preferred) or deliver to Lynn Eisentrou (882-5743), 2829 Minerva Lake Rd.

for her years as Community Association president, they welcomed their new president, Dani Wolf, who with her husband is working on a dedicated Community Association website. The Children’s Christmas party would be held December 14. They reported one light out on the end of the walking path near Maplewood and Lakewood. The Mayor will call AEP and generate a work ticket for the repair.

Northland Community Council: The Alum Creek bike path is progressing nicely.

The following committee reports were made:

Community: Councilman Dave Way is still working on the Veterans Memorial.

Finance: Council President Pamela Park-Curry received approval from the Council for the expenditures totaling $68,885.66 and for the October financials. A Finance Committee meeting was scheduled for November 12.

Legislation: Councilman Roberto Segovia asked the Council to consider the following legislation (minervapark.org/legislation):

Resolution 2013-26 - Authorizing the Mayor and the Fiscal Officer to enter into contract for the services of a Director of Law. Third reading accepted. Votes for passage: Ayes - Park-Curry, Legg, Pauken, Walter, Way. Nays - Segovia.

Resolution 2013-28 - Authorizing the Mayor and the Fiscal Officer to enter into contract with the District Advisory Council of the Franklin County General Health District to provide for plumbing inspections. Third reading accepted; passage.

Resolution 2013-29 - Authorizing the Mayor and the Fiscal Officer to enter into contract for professional services for a Mayor’s Court Magistrate. Third reading accepted; passage.

Resolution 2013-30 - Authorizing the Mayor and the Fiscal Officer to enter into contract for the services of a Village Engineer. Third reading accepted; passage.

Resolution 2013-31 - Authorizing the Mayor and the Fiscal Officer to enter into contract with the Franklin County Public Defender’s Office for legal services. Third reading accepted; passage.


Resolution 2013-37 - Authorizing the Village to enter into a pre-annexation agreement with the golf course owners (Groezingers) and potential developers (Grand Communities Ltd.). Motion to suspend the rules and waive the second and third readings; passage: Ayes - Park-Curry, Legg, Pauken, Walter, Way. Nays - Segovia.

Resolution 2013-38 - To approve the amended MORPC Commission Articles of Agreement. Motion to suspend the rules and waive the three readings: Ayes - Park-Curry, Legg, Pauken, Walter, Way. Nays - Segovia. Abstains - Segovia.

Ordinance 10-2013 - Amending

How Minerva Park Voted

Here are the certified results of the November 2013 election for MP Council members, with 424 individual voters.

Anthony Benedetti .................. 193
Ed Detwiler ......................... 298
John Michels ......................... 315
Pam Park-Curry ...................... 245
Jennifer Pauken ..................... 260
Roberto Segovia .................... 149

December 2013
ORDINANCE 2-2003 regarding the pay of Council members. First reading accepted. EXPLANATION - What prompted this ordinance is that “beginning January 1, 2014, the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System of Ohio (OPERS) is requiring every employer to submit a Report of Retirement Contributions no less frequently than monthly, regardless of how the employer pays the employee.” The Village Council is currently being paid quarterly, which does not coordinate the actual payment of the Council Members with the OPERS’ reporting requirement. Therefore, the express purpose of this ordinance is to change the payment of Council from a quarterly payment to a monthly payment. There is no change to the salary amount that the Council members receive.

Safety: Councilman Todd Walter had nothing to add to the police report.

Service: Councilwoman Jennifer Pauken reported that work continues on the Director’s Findings and Orders.

Streets: Councilman Charles Legg reported that street repairs had still not been completed as of November 11. As I write my report to you, they have been.

Please support our Police Dept. by donating new & gently used toys for children of all ages. Donations will go to families in Minerva Park and surrounding areas. Donations accepted Mon - Fri, 9a to noon, Community Building. Deadline - December 13. If you have any questions, contact Lt. Rex Waldenmyer or Lt. Matt Fenstermaker.

Thank you!

Merry Christmas
Cops for Kids

Merry Christmas
Cops for Kids

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Thank you!

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Ongoing yoga classes will continue on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9 a.m., Community Building. Contact Terri, 734-308-3884, for information.
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6342 Bellmeadow Drive

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Children’s Halloween Party
By Glenda Morris, Chair, MPCA Children’s Committee

The Community Building was wall to wall with more than 40 costumed children for this year’s Halloween Party. The judges had a difficult time giving the costume prizes because all the kids looked great. Zachary won as a fireman for “Person that makes us feel safe,” Chevy the little penguin won “Cutest,” Ryan who was “all the Avengers” won “Best Original,” Tommy as the golden eagle won “Highest Flying,” Fiona as a witch won the “Traditional” category, and Dominic as the gingerbread man won “Sweetest” costume.

The shrinky dink craft was a favorite, and the children made origami bats, monsters, mummies, cats, and their own creations. A pool noodle was recycled for our pumpkin printing craft, and handmade paper cards were decorated. We enjoyed the sunny afternoon and were able to have our “fill the pumpkin” game outside. The kids used mechanical reachers to pick up toys to put in a bucket. Congratulations to all the winners!

Our little party goers had balls, a squishy bag, and pipe cleaner craft just for them in our toddler/preschooler area. For a group demonstration, a carved pumpkin was filled with ingredients from the kitchen, and it bubbled out the mouth as green goop. It was great fun to see and hear the children’s reactions.

Many thanks again this year for all the help, baked items, and donations from Anne Blair, Denise Braun, Linda Frazier, Linda Natali, Joya Ferguson, Jillian Frazier, Debra Walsh, Erin Walsh, Sydni Johnson & friend Kiara, Donna Madland, Bonnie Townsend, Andy Morris, Marie Takacs, Dani & Brian Wolf, and others whose names I did not get!

Underwritten by your $20 MPCA dues

October - MP Police made 1 misdemeanor arrest.
10-3 ...6:21a, 2800 blk Lakewood, unruly juvenile
10-3 ....2:43p, Gordon Food Service, 5400 Cleveland Ave., fall injury
10-14 ..8:19a, Cleveland & Woodley, suicidal female
10-14 ..4:38p, Gordon Food Service, theft
10-28 ..4:45p, 5001 Farview, hit-skip

October 2013
Medic 119 made 11 runs - 1 run into Blendon Township (exclusive of MP) and none into Minerva Park, with 11 patients transported to local hospitals. 11 members volunteered a total of 197.5 hours for the month, bringing the year-to-date total to 3,129.3 hours. Leading volunteers for the month were Todd Monroe (26.5 hours), Cory Hutchison (24 hours), Anthony Marrazzi (24 hours), and Richard Schwartz (24 hours).
This periodic personal-interest feature aims to deepen our sense of community by helping us know our neighbors. This month we send our best wishes and say “Welcome!” to ...

Danielle (Dani) Wolf, the new MP Community Association President

1. How long have you lived in MP? What are your occupation and your most interesting job?
“Brian and I and our two children moved to MP in February 2013 ... yes, in 2013. We moved from a condo on the other side of Rt. 161 and that is why we knew of the Village. We used to come here for the garage sales, which we like a lot.”

Dani, in the banking business for 22 years, is a business analyst for Chase Bank, Polaris office. In Michigan, she worked for National City. She met her husband Brian when he worked for National City in Cleveland. The romance grew while they commuted for 2½ years. Dani finds her present job the most interesting. Her team supports Chase branches with process changes, written procedures, communications, and training.

2. What do you like and dislike about living in MP?
“We love it here, and we like the people we’ve met so far. We hang out at the playground because it’s so near our house. Our 5-year-old Tommy and 3-year-old Alana love the playground. I like the mature trees in our Village. I have not had a chance to dislike anything yet.”

3. What is interesting about you that your neighbors may want to know? What are your hobbies?
“My kids are the most interesting to me. They are fascinating. In addition to learning from them, I love to cook and garden. I look forward to spring when I can start doing much more gardening than I was able to do this year.”

Dani’s friends may not realize that she has an implanted spinal cord stimulator, with a battery the size of a playing card and electrical leads that provide stimulation and block pain. It controls the pain in her left hand and arm that she injured more than ten years ago. In September, when the battery died, she knew it instantly because the pain returned with a vengeance.

4. If you had all the time in the world, what would you want to do?
“If I did not have to go to Chase every day, I’d do fun things with my children all the time.”

5. Why did you become president of MPCA? What would you like to accomplish?
Being new to MP, Dani wanted a chance to be involved and get to know her new neighborhood and neighbors. She knew of the many children’s activities in the Village and liked what she heard about the sense of community.

“In addition to the MPCA newsletter, the Villager, we want to provide residents a new means for learning about Community Association events and volunteer opportunities.”

A first project is creating a website for the Community Association with the help of her husband. It will be user friendly and will offer volunteer opportunities and information about MPCA events. It also will have updated materials used by the Welcoming Committee. Watch for it in the near future.

6. Is there anything you’d like to add?
Dani’s friends might want to know that Brian’s mother Maria lives with them. She was an executive administrator in Denver CO and moved in after she retired last year. She provides daycare for their two young children. The author of this article had the pleasure of meeting Maria who is a highly educated, interesting, and charming woman. She lost her husband four years ago.

Dani’s husband also works for Chase Bank (mortgage banking) but in the Easton office. Since moving to Minerva Park, Brian has been interested and involved in the potential golf course annexation, partly because the golf course is directly behind the playground where their children love to play … and they all love the view!

If you wish to be featured in “Getting to Know You” or want to nominate a neighbor, please send an e-mail to rose_hart@hotmail.com. •
Join me in congratulating MP Police Officer Shawn Hensley, who will be receiving an award of Excellence from Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD) for his work in detecting and arresting impaired drivers for 2012-2013. NBC 4 news did a special story on Officer Hensley on Tuesday, November 19.

MP Police Officer Anna Tomaro was the award recipient from our agency last year. These awards reflect the commitment by our police officers to keep impaired drivers off the streets in the Village, helping to prevent serious injury or fatal crashes. Our continued appreciation for their service to the Village.

If you have not “friended” the MP Police Department Facebook page, you are missing out on up-to-date crime and traffic prevention, education, and enforcement information in the Village. We are making it more interactive and helpful, so be sure to check us out at facebook.com/minervapark.pd.

Minerva Park Police have made arrangements to use an online investigation tool to solve property crimes. LeadsOnline, the nation’s largest online investigative tool, helps police instantly track and recover stolen property, no matter where it is stolen or sold. Minerva Park Police are encouraging all residents to use a FREE online system that will help keep track of valuable personal property. Reportit is a free, secure online service, allowing citizens to record serial numbers and upload images for phones, electronics, and other valuables. If those items are stolen, having the information will go a long way in accurately and quickly identifying your property. You can store serial numbers, item descriptions, pictures, and scans of receipts so items may be more easily identified. This record also may come in handy when filing claims with insurance providers. Residents who want to participate in Reportit can register for the free service at leadsonline.com, Reportit, and begin building their personal property inventory list.

The MP Police Department is sponsoring the “Cops for Kids” toys and clothing drive this year for local families in need, foster children, teens, and those living at a shelter for domestic violence victims. We need your donations of toys and other age-appropriate gifts for children ages infant through 17 years old, girls and boys. Donations of new hats, gloves, scarves, and coats also would be greatly appreciated. A donation box is located inside the Community Building. If you are a business owner or manager who would like to volunteer to have a donation box placed in your business, please contact Lt. Matt Fenstermaker at 882-1408.

If you have questions about the information provided here, please call the Fiscal Officer at 882-5743.

October 2013
Beg balance general fund...........$218,657
Receipts.............................................$39,934
Disbursements..........................($68,790)
Ending balance.........................$189,800
Advertise in the Villager ... 899-3755
Ads start at $15 - discount on 6-month contracts

Sharon Bierman - Design & Advertising
sbierman@columbus.rr.com  899-3755
MPCA President Dani Wolf............................... 948-2372

The Villager is mailed to all MP homes for delivery by the 1st Monday of each month. Residents are invited to submit articles & other items of interest. Use the drop box inside the front door at the Community Building. The Villager reserves the right to refuse publication of any item submitted. All items presented for publication must include the contributor’s signature and phone number. The Villager is online at minervapark.org/villager.

Next deadline: Wednesday, December 18, 5p

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