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May 2015

Newsletter

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mayor Donald B. Lockhart
815.568.6559

Ward I
Nicole DeBoer
815.568.0911

Ward II
Michael Smith
815.568.1246

Ward III
Todd Hall
815.568.7273

Ward IV
Dennis Hammortree
815.568.5577

James Regelin
815.823.3007

Steve Mortensen
815.735.0766

Matt Keenum
815.404.4585

Brett Martin
815.568.1223

City Clerk Constance Boxleitner
815.568.6937



Standing: D. Hammortree, S. Mortensen, C. Boxleitner, N. DeBoer, M. Keenum
Seated: J. Regelin, B. Martin, D. Lockhart, M. Smith, T. Hall

CITY DEPARTMENTS

Mayor's Office
815.568.7112

**Public Works &
Building Department**
815.568.2669

Administration
815.568.7112

Utility Billing
815.568.7112

Police Department
815.568.7231

FEATURED INSIDE:

- FY 2015/16 Budget
- Water Rate Increase
- Police/Fire Happenings

K-9 Korner

Written by: Sergeant Rodney Riley

My name is Sgt. Rodney Riley and I have been working as a police officer in Marengo since April 27, 1987. When I started there were no stop lights, only one gas station which stayed open 24 hours and NO McDonalds. I have worked almost all of the different positions the M.P.D. has to offer with the exception of the Chief of Police. I don't know about that one, we'll have to wait and see what the future brings.

In October 2011, the position of K-9 handler became vacant and at the time no officers were able to commit to this job. This is when I approached Chief Hallman for me to take K-9 Shadow and begin training at the K-9 Academy. With both the blessing of the Chief and my family, I began what has been the most challenging training of my career. For 5 weeks my new partner Shadow (who was 3 1/2 at the time) and I began an extensive training regimen. We worked on narcotics detection, tracking, bite work and handler protection.

Since November 13, 2011, Shadow and I have been on the streets together. Shadow is currently 7 years old (his birthday is March 17th). Shadow is a born and bred Marengo dog. He came from Bill Kulla Dogs on S. Rt. 23. Bill continues to offer his services to the department by conducting Shadow's training- sand keeping him sharp. Additionally, I train on a regular basis with a group of K-9 handlers from Belvidere P.D., Boone County Sheriff's Office, Loves Park P.D., IL State Police and Rochelle P.D. We meet in the Belvidere-Boone County area almost weekly and assist each other with any issues we may

be having.

Shadow and I assist several area departments with vehicle searches, fleeing criminals and lost children. We conduct searches at the local schools as well as help assist other school districts. We assist at accident scenes when it is not clear if there may be other injured passengers who wandered or left the scene. We have also assisted an Illinois Parole Officer take a violator into custody.

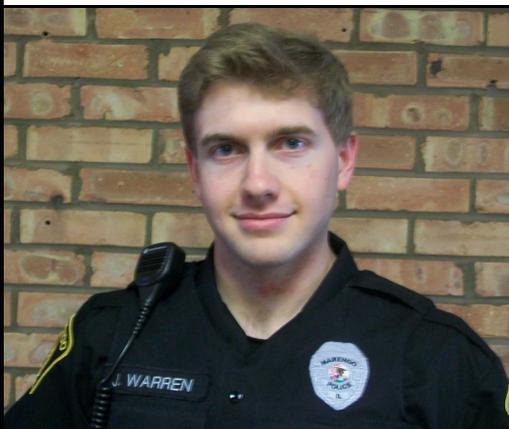
At home Shadow is in relax mode. He stays home with my wife and plays countless hours of ball with my kids in our back yard.

Their friends come over and can't believe he is a police dog as they play and visit, Shadow just watches them sometimes looking for affection or a treat. At home he is truly off duty in every sense of the word.

Please look for Shadow and I on the street. If you are interested in learning more about our K-9 program, please contact me at 815-568-7231 and I will schedule a demo for you to see him in action. Please also note that the K-9 program is always accepting donations to cover cost of dog food.



MPD Welcomes Police Officer John Warren



The Marengo Police Department is pleased to announce the addition of our newest hire, Police Officer John Warren. Officer Warren is the first officer hired in 2 1/2 years. Officer Warren took the oath of office in late December of 2014 and immediately reported to the Suburban Law Enforcement Academy in January of 2015 to undergo his intensive twelve-week basic police training curriculum.

While at the police academy, Officer Warren received the highest academic overall scores and was recognized for this honor at

the graduation ceremony. Out of the class of seventy-five cadets, this was an outstanding achievement. Officer Warren began his field training component upon graduation from the academy in March and continues in this capacity until released by his field training officer. Prior to becoming a police officer with Marengo, Officer Warren completed a Baccalaureate Degree (Cum Laude) in Psychology from the University of Tampa, Florida.

Please welcome Officer Warren to our community if you have the chance.

Council Approves FY 2015/16 Budgets

- *Small Revenue Increases and Restrained Expenditures*
- *City taking a “wait and see” approach regarding State Revenue Allocations*

The good news is that the \$3,892,603 FY 2015-16 General Fund is balanced without dramatic increases in revenues. The budget also shows a \$198,667 increase in the FY 2014-15 end-of-year fund balance, due to additional revenues (\$121,203) coming primarily from the formulaic state redistribution of the state portion income taxes, the state use tax and the municipal portion of the state sales taxes; and from under spending budgeted amounts (\$77,464) primarily in Administration and Police. As a result, Marengo starts this fiscal year with 90.9 days of its operating costs in reserve.

For the third year running, there are no staffing increases; the full-time workforce remains a 32, with half of this total located in the Police Department. Of the 16 employees not in the Police Department 7.2 FTE are assigned to the Water/Sewer Enterprise fund. (See the article about the Water/Sewer budget on Page 4.) The other 8.8 FTE are paid out of the General Fund and include Street Division employees, the Property and Building Inspection function, and portions of the administrative staff.

Normally, consideration would be given to spending some of this reserve on one-time costing capital improvements (such as street

reconstruction). But given the climate of the state government’s decision-making toward resolving its financial crisis, concerns have been raised about losing some of the city’s state-sourced revenue. The city is taking a “wait and see” approach about making expenditures from the General Fund reserve balance in anticipation that some of the reserve may be needed to cushion (at least short-term) a reduction to the city’s revenue portfolio from the state controlled sources.

Municipal Property Taxes

As was the case last year, property taxes increased by the maximum amount allowable by state statute for non-home rule municipalities – just \$39,721. The amount of property taxes collected for all municipal purposes totals \$1,574,946. Almost two-thirds of this year’s increase (\$25,666) is targeted toward the Police Pension Fund. In just the past five years, the annual property tax allocation for Police Pension has increased by \$104,944 or 65 percent. Of the total of \$1,574,946 collected in for municipal property taxes, \$266,867 (16.9%) will go to the Police Pension Fund. During the same period police pension funding has continuously hovered between 45 and 50 percent of the total actuarial

liability. Police Pension payouts, actuarial determinations, and investment protocols are strictly regulated by state statute.

Special Funds /Sinking Funds

The annual City Council budget approval process actually requires the approval of several “budgets”, many of which whose funds are segregated due to legal requirements (such the Police Pension, Motor Fuel Tax, Audit, Cemetery, Debt Service, Tax Increment Financing, and of course the Water/Sanitary Sewage Treatment enterprise fund) or by sound financial practices (such as the sinking funds for longer term but still reoccurring expenditures like the 27th Payroll, Police vehicles, Public Works vehicles and equipment, and Capital Development). Almost without deviation, the revenue coming into these funds are specifically ear-marked toward a specific expenditure. As example of how these sinking funds work, this fiscal year there will be a withdrawal from the 27th Payroll Fund. One tenth of an “extra payroll” inclusive of associated benefits is set aside every year because once every 11 years, due to the way the calendar breaks, there is a 27th biweekly payroll that needs to be made. Without this set aside, the FY 2015-16 budgets would have had a \$94,000 “hole” to fill.

Street Reconstruction Financing

This year’s expenditure plan continues pending \$125,000 toward major street repair. Some of this amount will be spent upon resurfacing Willow Road in connection with the water main replacement project which just started this month. Other streets to be done will be identified later. In FY 14/15 half of the funding for this program came from the set asides in the Capital Improvements Fund. Transfers from the General Fund have been the major source of this revenue for the Capital Improvements Fund. Again, with the city holding tight on expenditures pending upon what happens with the state’s financial crisis, and with building permit / impact fee revenue at low levels, all of the funding for this year’s street program is coming from the Motor Fuel Tax receipts collected by the state.

The MFT funding source is not going to be a long-term solution to pay for fixing the residential streets in Marengo. With the exception of a one-time extra payment in FY 2014/15,

(Continued on Page 4)

**City of Marengo
Percentage Change
General Fund Expenditures
vs.
Consumer Price Index
Fiscal Year 2005/06 to Fiscal Year 2014/15**



This graph shows that Marengo’s General Fund has grown less than the cost of living during the past 10 years. Revenues, and correspondingly expenditures in the annual balanced budgets reflect the City’s inability to gather significant dollars for improvement. This graph also reflects a reduction in services provided due to prior staffing cuts necessary to keep the General Fund balanced.

Second Water/Sewer Rate Increase Authorized for August

- *Move Needed to Balance Water/Sewer Operating Budget*
- *Larger WWTP Debt Service Rate Increase also being Implement in August*

In the face of a 12.5 percent decline in water usage over the past two years, the City council voted 6-1 last month to raise the water/sewer rates by \$10.05 per quarter beginning this August. This increase is necessary to offset a \$169,153 deficit that was projected in the FY 2015-16 Water/Sewer Fund. It will be the first time in over four years that the rates have been increased to pay for the *operation* of the city's water and sanitary sewage treatment functions.

Council reviewed options to reduce if not eliminate the operating cost increase. Personnel cuts were considered but not implemented, since water/sewer Public Works staff had been previously cut to the minimum. The \$34,000 of equipment expenditures in the \$2.6 million Water/Sewer Fund were shifted to come out of a small capital reserve fund. Maintenance projects were deferred, and within reason, some operating costs were shifted to other funds. The Water/Sewer Fund Balance is also being drawn down by \$51,565, in part because the August rate increase accounts of only nine months of activity in this new May 1 fiscal year.

There is no one cause for the decline in water usage. An increased number of vacant residential units, increased housing foreclosures, reduced business activity, improved meter readings caused by the recently completed city-wide transponder replacement program, and last year's mild summer are all thought to be contributing factors. In the two fiscal years prior to the current two-year decline, usage increased 2.4 percent and 2.8 percent in respectively.

The operating cost flat fee increase will come on-line with the previously authorized increase of \$1.00 per 1,000 gallons of water metered to offset the semi-annual debt service payments for the state-mandated \$12 million Wastewater Treatment Plant update and expansion project. Charges to offset this WWTP debt service will total \$4.00 per thousand gallons of usage, and will account for 30.3% of the water/sewer charges when the typical Marengo quarterly bill of \$224.30 is issued in August.

A recent water/sewer rate survey of 22 cities in north central Illinois conducted annually by the City of Genoa shows that **without the debt service payments for the state mandated treatment plant improvement project, Marengo's water/sewer charges would be just slightly less than average.**



Work began this month on the \$850,000 water main replacement project on Willow Road, Sunset Drive and W. Van Buren Street. This project is being paid for by proceeds from a bond issue placed last June. This \$3.2 million bond issue refinanced and extended the existing debt service for water system improvements including the forthcoming Well 9 construction project. This bond issue did not raise water rates and after 2020 will slowly reduce debt repayment for water system capital development.

2015/16 General Fund

(continued from Page 3)

this revenue source has not shown any consistent growth. In fact in FY 2015/16 it is anticipated that there will be a 15 percent decline from what was *budgeted* in FY 2014/15. MFT revenue for FY 2015/16 is budgeted at \$197,261. With future MFT dollars committed to paying off debt service for the Prospect Street Intersections project, and for buying road salt/brine, there isn't much left over from street reconstruction projects.

It must be noted that the \$125,000 for residential street reconstruction which has been committed annually for the past four years doesn't significantly address the need. Generally speaking, about \$3.0 million to \$5.0 million is needed to significantly make an impact upon upgrading the city streets and roads. The only way to get this kind of funding is to have the city's voters voluntarily agree to street funding via approval of a bond issue referendum. A referendum of this sort has not been contemplated by the elected authority, nor is there any expectation for a referendum proposal to come forward.

Vehicle Sticker Design Winner Announced



The City of Marengo is pleased to announce the FY 15/16 vehicle sticker design contest winner as Brittani Oliver. Brittani is a freshman at the Marengo Community High School. She did a fantastic job on designing this year's sticker. Brittani was presented with a certificate and \$100 check from the City.

Marengo Fire and Rescue District At a Glance

Written by: Marengo Fire and Rescue Employees

During the month of May, Fire and Rescue District personnel are devoting numerous hours of time to training. Each day department personnel decide a topic that they feel is important to study and train on. The duty crew will set a measurable goal, and work to achieve the highest level of training possible on the topic that they choose. By doing this, department members are striving to perfect their skills, and further their knowledge to provide the community with the highest level of care possible. Fire and Rescue District members value the opportunity to train. Fire and Rescue training is held to a high standard to insure that the residents of our community are receiving the best service possible from our department. You may see department personnel out in the community working to achieve their training goals by utilizing Fire and Rescue district apparatus.

The 2015 Marengo Firefighter Academy is well underway. The recruits participating in the Academy have been required to undergo extensive classroom, and hands on practical training. During the month of May, the recruits will be participating in live fire training scenarios. During this training the recruits will learn various skills and fire ground tactics to safely and efficiently work in emergency situations. This training and experience will provide the recruits with the knowledge and skill required to serve our community as firefighters. During the academy recruits are required to ride along with Fire and Rescue District personnel to gain real life hands on experience, and develop the skills necessary to provide the highest level of care to our community. Once candidates have successfully completed their training they will have the opportunity to apply to become probationary members of the Fire and Rescue districts. We want to wish them the best as they continue to work towards their goal at becoming Firefighter/Paramedics.

Controlled Burn season has begun, and The Marengo Fire and Rescue District would like to encourage the community to be safe while conducting a controlled burn. The district would like to take a moment to remind the community that it is important to follow a

few guidelines to ensure safety during a controlled burn. **Conducting a controlled burn within the city limits is strictly prohibited.** Burning of manure, garbage, construction debris, and trash is prohibited on any property. Burning of landscape waste is allowed outside City limits as long as it is at least 100 feet away from a habitable structure such as a residence, school, church, etc. Burning of landscape waste is also acceptable if the burning will take place at least 50 feet away from a non-habitable structure such as a detached garage, or barn. Whenever a controlled burn takes place, it must be supervised by an adult at least 18 year of age. It is important that a fire extinguisher or water source such as a garden hose be available at the burning site. The Marengo Fire and Rescue Districts encourage residents to call the Fire Department at (815) 568-7221 to inform personnel of the controlled burn. Please feel free to call the Fire Department with any questions or concerns, and remember to be safe while conducting your controlled burn.

The Marengo Fire and Rescue District is proud to announce the appointment of Battalion Chief Scott Small to Assistant Chief of the Rescue District. Assistant Chief Small is accompanied with a wealth of knowledge and will be using his expertise in overseeing the Rescue operations of the District. Assistant Chief Small comes to our department after retiring from a 32 year career with the Des Plaines Fire Department. Assistant Chief Small will be a valuable asset to the District in the role of Assistant Chief. Please join the Fire and Rescue districts in congratulating Assistant Chief Scott Small.

As always, our doors are open for you to stop by for a visit or with any questions you may have for either the Fire or Rescue Districts. You can always contact us via telephone at 815-568-7221 or 815-568-6316.

On behalf of the Marengo Fire and Rescue Districts we would like to thank you for the continued support and wish you a safe and happy summer.



Regalia, Reminders and other References

E-Pay

As part of our ongoing commitment to improve service to our residents, we are offering the following electronic payment options at www.cityofmarengo.com:

- Water/Sewer Payments
- Vehicle Sticker Payments
- Parking/Bond Ordinance violations

Payments can be made by Mastercard, American Express, Discover or E-Check. The convenience fee charged for using credit services is not charged or collected by the City of Marengo.

Email Updates

Want to stay connected with City happenings? Have Marengo City Council agendas, news releases, calendar's of monthly meetings and general updates delivered right to your inbox. To register, go to www.cityofmarengo.com and enter your email address in the "subscribe to email updates" box or stop by City Hall.

Travel Trailers & Recreational Vehicles

Parking of travel trailers, utility trailers or other recreational vehicles shall only be permitted behind the front property line between the dates of April 15 and October 15. After October 15 and prior to April 15, the parking of travel trailers, utility trailers and / or other recreational vehicles shall only be permitted behind the setback line. Please call City Hall with any questions.

Garage Sales

A \$5.00 garage sale permit application can be printed at www.cityofmarengo.com or picked up at City Hall. The ordinance allows an address to hold two garage sales



City employees will be conducting a city-wide hydrant flushing starting May 27th - June 5th. During this week period, you might see some discoloration or low water pressure. If so, please run water at a high rate of speed until your system is clear. You should avoid doing laundry during this time.

yearly up to six consecutive days with the ability to split the six days into two consecutive weeks. Only three signs are allowed to advertise the sale. They are to be displayed during the dates of the sale and are to be removed 24 hours after the sale. Signs must have their own support and are to be posted in the ground. Attachment of signs to telephone poles, trees, traffic signals or any city, state or federal signage is not allowed.

2015-2016 Vehicle Stickers

The 2015-16 vehicle stickers will be available for purchase beginning in June.

The cost is \$20 per vehicle or \$5 per vehicle for those aged 65 and over. Fees double after August 1, 2015.

Overnight Street Parking

Parking is not allowed on any residential streets between the hours of 12:00 A.M. and 6:00 A.M. Central Business District parking is not allowed between the hour of 2:00 A.M. and 6:00 A.M. Violators are subject to a \$25 ordinance violation fine. If you have any questions, please contact the MPD non emergency number at 815-568-7231.

Approved Resolutions and Ordinances February, March and April 2015

February

15-2-1 Ordinance Amending Chapter 43 of the City of Marengo Municipal Code

March

none

April

15-4-1 Ordinance Authorizing the Sale of Certain Personal Property Owned by the City of Marengo

15-4-2 Ordinance Authorizing Execution of a First Amendment to an Annexation Agreement by and between the City of Marengo and Brackmann Development Group for Property commonly known as Plat No. 3 Brookside Meadows

15-4-3 Ordinance Rezoning Plat No. 3 Brookside Meadows Comprising of 78.203 Acres from R-1 to Planned Development with underlying R-5 Zoning Classification

15-4-4 Ordinance Providing for a Supplemental Appropriation for the FY 2014/15

The *May 2015* has been produced by the following staff members: *Article contributors:* Gary Boden, Chief Hallman, Sgt. Rodney Riley, Megan Lopez and Fire Department Personnel. *Desktop publisher:* Megan Lopez