

Mayor's State of the Municipality Report



June 2021



Municipality of Murrysville
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June 30, 2021

Dear Residents,

It is with great honor that I present to you the Mayor's 6-month report. The first six months have had their challenges with the echoing COVID obstacles that followed us into the beginning of 2021. Through the efforts of your elected Council and staff, I am proud to say that the continued high quality of services to the community remains successful.

In the following outline you will find the year-to-date accomplishments by each department. The Municipal staff takes great pride in the Murrysville community and works persistently to meet your high expectations. Please feel free to contact me at any time throughout the year. We are here to serve you and welcome the open communication. I can be reached by phone at 724-327-2100 ext. 107, or email at: rsynan@murrysville.com.

Regis J. Synan

Mayor

| | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Mayor | Council | |
| Regis J. Synan | President – Dayne Dice | Jamie Lee Kornis |
| Chief Administrator | Vice President – Loren Kase | Tony Spadaro |
| James Morrison | Toni Brockway | Carl Stepanovich |
| | Mac McKenna | |

Police Department

Thomas Seefeld, Chief of Police

Department Recognition

The Murrysville Police Department (MPD) received re-accreditation through the PA Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission as a result of the on-site assessment on February 4 & 5, 2021. Because of the MPD's successful re-accreditation every three years over the past 15 years, the MPD has attained the prestigious achievement of being designated a "Premier Law Enforcement Agency". The department received the award in Harrisburg on March 18, 2021. There are only 15 law enforcement agencies attaining this honor out of nearly 1,200 agencies in PA.

General Initiatives

- Police advertisement and testing process was completed to establish a new Police Officer Eligibility List.
- Majority of the police staff members received both doses of the COVID vaccine.
- Department staff participated in the Emergency Management Drill exercise.
- Command Staff meeting was held to discuss department operations and related matters.
- MPD Motorcycle patrols came to an end due to increased concern for officer safety and the retiring of two motorcycle officers. Motorcycles are going to be sold.
- Department was able to obtain a vehicle for drug-related investigations from the PA State Attorney General's Office.
- Two new police vehicles were received.

Traffic Initiatives

- Drug Interdiction details were conducted on Route 22.
- DUI Roving Patrol was conducted throughout Murrysville.
- DUI Checkpoint was conducted on Route 22.
- Department participated in Buckle Up PA, Aggressive Driving and Traffic Safety Interdiction traffic enforcement details.
- UTV patrols were conducted on the Heritage Trail

Officer Training

- Officers received mandatory update training as required by the Municipal Police Officer Education and Training Commission on Special Needs, Juvenile Act, Human Trafficking and Legal Updates
- Officers received training on "Crime Victim's Rights".
- Officers received training on "Search and Seizure".

- Officers received re-certification training on Use of Force, Defensive Tactics – chemical spray, baton, and taser.
- Officers received training on “Changing Perceptions: A Fair and Impartial Policing Approach”.
- Officers received training on “Duty to Intervene”.
- Officer Fearon attended “Identifying Criminal Vehicles and Occupants” training.
- Several officers received “ARIDE” (Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement) DUI training.
- Sergeant Kettren, Officer MacIntosh and Dulkis attended the Municipal Police Officer Training Program sponsored through IUP. This is an advanced training that will complement the department's basic Field Training Program that is used to train newly hired officers. These three officers are the department's training officers.
- Officer Malik received training on “Warrantless Searches”.
- SWAT officers attended monthly team training.
- SWAT officers Coleman and Auvil attended “Advanced SWAT Training”.
- SWAT Chief of Police Board conducted quarterly meetings.
- Officers received training on SWAT protocol on incident response and operations.

Community Events

- Officers participated in the “Law Enforcement Torch Run” for Special Olympics.
- Officers attended the police tribute “Strengthening the Thin Blue Line”.
 - Chief Seefeld was the keynote speaker.

Department of Public Works and Parks

Bill Paiano, Director of Public Works

Mike Jakub, Public Works Foreman

General Initiatives

Of all the municipal departments impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Public Works Department was the hardest hit. The department recorded over 200 hours of COVID related sick time. Equipment replacement was delayed due to supply issues and a reduction in revenues received by the Municipality during pandemic period. Employee hiring, necessary due to retirements and a resignation, were slowed. Nevertheless, the Department persevered. Two (2) new employees have been hired. A new ton dump truck and a ¾ ton pickup truck have been ordered and the Toolcat utility work machine and a wheeled skid steer have been delivered.

Road Work

- The Haymaker Run stream bank at Sardis and Mamont Road, where a gabion wall had failed, was reinforced with rip rap to prevent future impact to Sardis Road.
- Winter brushing and tree clearing occurred along Steele Road, Wiestertown Road, Farm Road, Evans Road and Bollinger Road.
- Mamont Road was cracked sealed. This was completed to prepare the road for a single seal fiber mat treatment later this summer.
- In anticipation of the 2021 street paving program:
 - 82 inlets were replaced or repaired;
 - 130' of 15" pipe was replaced;
 - 60' of 24" pipe was replaced on Hills Church Road; and
 - Road base repair was completed on Wingate, Kilmer and Woodland Drives.

Projects

The Murrysville Clubhouse

- The Clubhouse is a manufactured home donated to the Municipality and placed at the Murrysville Community Park. The Clubhouse will be rented as a community classroom and activities center for the residents of the community. Public Works placed the structure on a foundation at its current location across from the Brooks Dog Park. Utilities are currently being run to the structure. A new roof has been installed and interior improvements are being completed by Public Works personnel. We anticipate opening the facility to the public later this summer.

Murrysville Amphitheater

- Public Works has begun preliminary site work to accommodate the construction of the proposed Murrysville Amphitheater. Sixty-five (65) feet of 36" pipe has been installed to provide access to the site. The proposed utility runs have been cleared and minor earthwork has been completed for the access road and detention pond.

Parks Work

The following work was completed for general park maintenance:

- Fifty-Five (55) picnic tables were sanded and stained.
- Trash cans were repainted.
- Information kiosks were installed at various parks along with a number of benches.
- All baseball infields were prepped, and professional infield mix was installed.
- Low spots on the soccer fields were filled and seeded.
- Townsend and Chambers dugout roofs were replaced.
- Removed an old house and cleaned up the area at the Skena Reserve.

- All Parks were prepped for opening on April 1st.
- New safety cushion was installed on all playgrounds; and
- Veterans and Beckwith Fields were overseeded and fertilized.

Winter Maintenance

Public Works was called out thirty-three (33) times this winter; twenty-two (22) of the callouts were in January and February. There was over 40” of snow and two freezing rain events. The crew used only 3,532 tons of salt and 11,120 gallons of Magnesium Chloride blend.

This winter, the road pre-wetting program, which is a process of preparing roads prior to an anticipated heavy snow or ice event, changed from using a brine solution to a blend of corn bi-products and 32% magnesium. With our snow totals in the 40+ inch mark, traditionally our salt usage should have been more. As a result, the use of the corn blend solution has been deemed a success in saving overtime hours and salt usage.

Department of Finance and Taxation

Diane Heming, Director

Jacie Milchak, Assistant Director

General Initiatives

- The audit fieldwork for the 2020 Financial Audit was completed with no findings or comments.
- Municipal assets such as land, buildings, properties and equipment were re-appraised in early 2021 for insurance purposes. The updated appraisal report was received and submitted to the insurance provider for the Municipality’s 2021-2022 insurance coverage.
- The insurance policy for property, casualty, and automobile, umbrella and professional liability was renewed April 1, 2021. All coverage remained intact.
- Assisted staff with paperwork for new hires, retirements, pension issues, benefits and income tax questions.
- Year-end processes, 1099s, W-2s, pension reports, Liquid Fuels year-end reports. Various reports were completed to maintain compliance with the Affordable Care Act.
- Fixed asset records were updated to include all purchases and disposals in 2020 in excess of \$10,000. These records were then remitted to the municipal auditing firm to calculate the necessary depreciation for auditing purposes.
- Training has been ongoing with the Assistant Finance Director in preparation for the current Director of Finance’s retirement.

Projects

- The Riparian Buffer project was completed with local funds and DCNR grant funds. This project was closed out and the reimbursement from the State grant was received. The Riparian Buffer Project objective was to create a riparian buffer to protect the Steele's Run water stream. This was accomplished by adding native trees, shrubs, and grasses alongside the stream to help maintain soil placement. The added foliage provides shade to keep the water cool for fish and to help sediments from runoff before entering the stream. It also assists with improving atmosphere for the wildlife. In addition to helping with the stream health, seating areas and walking paths were set up to provide educational opportunities to the school district and public.
- The custodial services were transferred to S&T Bank in early January and the retiree pension payments are now being provided by DeBlasio and DeBlasio, CPA. This transition was successful in reducing the pension plan's maintenance fees and improving the administration of both plans.
- Record maintenance continues with emphasis on Administration and Planning.
- Three bank accounts were opened with Pennsylvania League of Government Investment Trust (PLGIT) to support the Special Purpose funds of: Medic One, Emergency Equipment and the Library.
- Staff is working now to prepare both the 2022 – 2026 Capital budget and the General Fund budget.
- The Covid-19 public health crisis resulted in an economic crisis that put local municipalities under strain. In response, the United States established the American Rescue Plan, which directed the U.S. Treasury to distribute Coronavirus Relief Fund to local governments. An application was submitted for Murrysville to the state. Staff is currently working collectively to formulate specific applications of these funds to ensure they are used in accordance with the guidelines dictated by the American Rescue Plan.

Engineering Department

Emily Mallisee, Engineering Technician

General Initiatives

- Upgraded the AutoCad and HydroCAD software.
- Worked with Community Development to upgrade GeoPlan to better utilize PA One Call information as well as Road Occupancy permit information.
- Continue to video log roads for upcoming overlay projects.

Permits

- The Engineering Department has issued thirty-two (32) Road Occupancy Permits to date this year.

- A total of eight (8) minor subdivision plans, and six (6) site plans have been reviewed so far in 2021.
- The Municipality worked with KU Resources to receive a General Permit from DEP for utility installation in Murrysville Community Park.

Projects

- The 2021 Paving Contract was awarded to the Derry Construction Company in the amount of \$1,349,951.70. This year's project included the following streets: Andrews Drive, Carson Avenue, a portion of Hills Church Road, a portion of Meadowbrook Road, the remaining portion of Old William Penn, Simmons Circle, Windgate Drive, Woodland Drive, and Kilmer Court. A portion of Old William Penn was repaired using PetroMat. Other repairs on the roads consisted of pavement replacement, milling of old asphalt and adjustment of the existing inlets.
- The Engineering department worked with Public Works to place a building donated to Murrysville at Murrysville Community Park. The utilities were engineered with the help of KU Resources. A stream crossing permit was submitted and approved for the sanitary sewer line connection.
- Murrysville continues to update and improve its MS4 program. MS4 stands for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System and Murrysville is required by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to obtain a permit for this system. The permit requires Murrysville to maintain records of its entire storm system including inlets, pipes, storm water detention basins, ditches and swales. All storm water outfalls have to be located and inspected on a regular basis. Murrysville has located and inspected 25% of the recorded outfalls this year. All outfalls are required to be inspected in the 5 year permit term. Compilation of this data, mapping of the infrastructure, and maintenance of records is a formidable task that the staff is working on almost daily.
- Murrysville has awarded the road treatment alternatives to Russell Standard. Mamont Road is to be treated with a fiber mat and fog seal. This will help with any cracking that is existing, as well as prolong the life of the road. This is part of the new yearly process the Municipality has adopted to extend the life of well-traveled roads.
- The award for the Old William Penn Highway crosswalks in Town Square was given to Laurel Asphalt. The existing crosswalks consisted of Duratherm material and will be replaced in a similar pattern with the same material.
- Murrysville is working with KU Resources to continue maintenance and retrofitting on existing detention basins. Retrofitting the basins increases the capacity and helps to retain stormwater runoff during rain events. Cleaning and maintenance also helps to minimize sediment deposition into streams and assists in receiving MS4 credits.
- The Engineering department is continuously working with multiple developers on sites such as Barrington Estates and Hillstone Village. The department continues to work with the Community Development department to oversee land development, erosion and sediment controls, and utility work.

Department of Community Development

Jim Morrison, Chief Administrator

Approved Developments

The Planning Commission reviewed, and Council approved, the following developments:

- Regan Villas – an eighteen townhouse development at the corner of Wilson and Manor Road.
- A rezoning of property at the corner of Buena Vista Drive and Rt-22 to be used as a dentist office.
- A site plan approval of property at 4373 Old William Penn Highway. The building will be used for various commercial purposes.
- A site plan approval of property at 6337 and 6339 Old William Penn Highway. The building will be converted into a warehouse and showroom.
- A site plan approval of property at 4062 Norbatrol Avenue for the construction of six outdoor tennis courts.
- Villa Ciano – a twenty-three lot planned residential development on Cline Hollow.

There were eight subdivisions and six site plans approved.

Building Activities

- There were eighteen commercial building permits issued.
- There were eighty-eight residential permits issued, of which eighteen were for new home construction.

Enforcement Actions

The Municipality issued twenty violation notices with the majority being for high grass, junk vehicles and disorderly properties.

Department of Recreation

Carly Greene, Director

Amy Wengrzyn, Special Events and Recreation Program Coordinator

Emerging from the COVID protocols and program closures of 2020, Recreation Department staff have been elated to visit with guests at programs and events once again this year.

Parks

Murrysville's parks, reserves, and trails are still busier than ever, due to new work and school schedules for so many in the area. Park guests should notice that new bulletin boards and

welcome signs were installed, replacing those that had been in the parks for more than twenty years.

Programs

Delivered to homes at the end of March, the annual spring and summer program guide detailed a variety of programs and events.

More than 400 people participated in the Murrysville Parks 12 for 12 Challenge held from January -March, challenging everyone to walk, bike, hike, or ride at least 12 miles in the parks within 90 days. During that time, staff offered Hot Chocolate Hikes for the community, as well, to introduce lesser-known trails such as the Valley Trail and Bear Hollow Trail.

COVID restrictions bloomed some virtual programming, as well, so staff were able to offer a “Speaker Series” in the spring featuring “Air Force One”, “General Ulysses S. Grant”, and “Amelia Earhart”, each told from experts in these topics.

In order to provide more outdoor programming for everyone, two new trail races were launched in the parks this year. The “Small Fry Scramble” was held for ages 12 and under and the “Pipeline Purge” were both held at Townsend Park. Since both races were so well-received, staff plans to offer them again in 2022.

Yoga in the parks by Breathe Yoga began in May at Sardis Park. Participants have found this to be a wonderful resource for serenity and calm during this unprecedented time.

Special Events

With some COVID precautions still in place early in the year, new events were launched for the community bred solely out of creative programming. Staff are hopeful these new events are here to stay.

Egg My Yard

“Egg My Yard” allowed residents to have Easter egg hunts in their yards at home, to avoid gathering at a large community-sized egg hunt. Staff filled prize eggs with donations from local businesses and swiftly snuck into front yards to surprise kids of all ages with at-home Easter egg hunts! Because of so many generous donations from those who registered for this event, staff were able to provide a free “Easter Drive Thru” for the community, in conjunction with the Murrysville Library. Free gift bags were handed out to more than 200 families who drove through the municipal complex, visited the Easter Bunny, and took pictures at this first-time event.

Murrysville Farmers’ Market

The eighth annual Farmers’ Market began June 3 and operates every Thursday from 3:00-7:00 p.m. through September 23. Products at the Market include fresh and organic produce, baked goods, plants, flowers, maple syrup, honey, olive oils, jams, wines and spirits, shaved ice, kettle

corn and lemonade, weekly food trucks and wood fired pizza. Live entertainment tops it off and makes it a wonderful way to visit with friends and family on a beautiful summer afternoon.

Farmhouse Kids' Club at the Murrysville Farmers' Market

The Farmhouse Kids' Club runs weekly by excellent student volunteers who are dedicating their time to ensure this program is successful. After completing weekly activities, members receive a \$2.00 wooden token with which they can shop at the Market. This introduces the children to new activities, provides a fun space for them while at the Market, increases revenue for the vendors and teaches the very beginning of money management. Funds from the Farmers' Market reimburse the vendors for coins spent with them.

Tuesdays at Townsend

June 8 launched the live music summer series at Townsend Park. Bi-weekly concerts feature live music, and a food and beverage vendor. Guests bring chairs and blankets to relax under the shade trees of the park, while enjoying some fantastic music and time with family and friends.

Projects

Park rehabilitation projects, as part of the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP), have resumed. The amphitheater grant project at Murrysville Community Park is underway, and the Clubhouse will soon be completed and for rent for small gatherings and meetings.

The Murrysville Parks and Recreation Foundation

Formed in 2019, the Parks and Recreation Foundation supports the programs and facilities of the Murrysville Parks and Recreation Departments. To do this, the Foundation solicits funds through grants, gifts, and donations to enhance existing facilities and to develop new parks and recreation programs, services, facilities, and technology.

This year the Foundation identified several small projects for the parks. Trail stencils are planned for the walking trail at Murrysville Community Park. Permanent concrete cornhole boards will be installed at Townsend Park and, hopefully, Murrysville Community Park in the near future, and a donation tower was recently installed at Murrysville Community Park to allow guests to contribute cash donations to ensure maintenance and improvement of park facilities.

Several memorial benches and trees were donated to the parks this year, and generous donations from residents and businesses have also been received. Thank you is not enough for everyone's support.