



CITY OF FLINT
OFFICE OF THE EMERGENCY MANAGER



Gerald Ambrose
Emergency Manager

TO: Josh Freeman, President, Flint City Council
From: Jerry Ambrose, Emergency Manager
Cc: Flint City Council
Mayor Dayne Walling
Natasha L. Henderson, City Administrator
DATE: April 13, 2014
RE: Update and Transition Progress

Thank you for your consideration of my request for authorization to apply for the \$7 million loan from the State's Emergency Loan Board. This loan, if approved, will be used to eliminate the City's General Fund deficit ahead of the schedule in our current Deficit Elimination/Reserve Accumulation Plan. This will enable the City to move forward with building adequate reserves necessary to foster financial stability. This, along with the commitments established in ordinance to develop and maintain a multi-year budget based on a strategic plan and to address the funding of long term liabilities, Flint's financial solvency can be sustainable.

Thank you also for your consideration of the proposed consolidation of the 68th and 67th District Court, an action which has been long in the making. Recommended by the State Court Administrators Office and authorized by state law, the consolidation is planned to become effective January 2, 2016. The Memorandum of Understanding, approved today by the Genesee County Board of Commissioners, details the advantages the consolidation will have for the City of Flint. The city will see a reduction in costs of more than \$8.4 million over the first 10 years, providing some much needed funds to support police services. Additionally the new court division is assured of at least 2 probation officers, something which the Court has not had for several years. And, as provided in both law and the agreement, judges will continue to be elected from within the City.

As you know, my focus over the past few months has been and continues to be transitioning the City from oversight by an Emergency Manager to home rule under the guidance of a Receivership Transition Advisory Board.

Much progress has been made in preparing for the transition, including action by the City Council to complete the following:

- Final adoption of the Capital Improvements Plan
- Final adoption of ordinances regarding planning, budgeting, funds balance, and deficit elimination
- Update of the Strategic Plan's Vision, Mission, and Goals
- Adoption of budget priorities to guide development of the FY16/FY17 budget

Additionally, our new City Administrator Natasha Henderson is on board and is assuming duties as the experienced and professionally trained chief administrative officer for the City.

There are several issues which we are continuing to address, including:

- Water safety, quality, and affordability continues to be a top priority. The City's water supply today is safe, as measured by the same MDEQ standards that have been in place for years, and steps are being taken to improve treatment and distribution processes in order to address issues of discoloration and odor, and to assure continued safety. Reviews of our pricing structure are also underway to assure that customers are treated equitably while generating sufficient revenue to operate the system.

Public safety continues to be an area of critical concern. The independent study of our police and fire organization provided a number of recommendations focused on how to best deploy the resources we have, and also confirmed that the staffing levels afforded by our limited resources are extremely low in comparison to comparable municipalities. This emphasizes the critical continuing importance of renewing the two voter-approved public safety millages and working to assure continuing state support through the assignment of state troopers and through financial support of the City lock-up. Loss of any of this support would be a disaster for the City.

- Achieving and then maintaining financial stability will continue to require constant attention. Approval of the ordinances regarding financial stability and the anticipated approval of the \$7 million loan provide additional tools with which to work. Attention will need to be paid to not only developing and adopting budgets for FY16 and FY17 but doing so in the context of understanding the impact of those budgetary decisions into the following three years. Essential to this is making the budget decisions which truly address achievement of the stated vision, mission and goals for the City as adopted by the City Council. Unfortunately, the challenges in doing so will be great, as the City will continue to be faced with the reality of a structural deficit, where for the foreseeable future current expenditure patterns exceed revenue streams – a difficult position, given the City's already low level of services. Complicating this further is the potential impact of the retiree health care lawsuit, once the final outcome is decided.