



August 6, 2018

Dear Residents:

I believe that in most Villages, the Department of Public Works (DPW) is often the most important and visible element of the local governmental unit. When we look around our beautiful Village, much of what we see - and may even occasionally take for granted - has been greatly impacted by the efforts of our DPW. That being said, it is with mixed emotions that I announce the retirement of our DPW Supervisor, Jim Bierstetel. Although our DPW remains in very competent hands, there is simply no way to replace the experience, historical knowledge and overall expertise Jim possesses.

Jim's willingness to do what is best for the Village has always been exemplary and his efforts speak for themselves. He has been a tremendous asset to myself and our current Village Council, just as he has been for so many past Presidents and Councils during his 41-plus years with the Village. Although Jim is the epitome of modesty, I think we all owe him a huge "thank you" for his many years of dedicated service to the Village. Please join me in wishing Jim a long and happy retirement.

As I mentioned in a previous message, the Village has been selected for a Stormwater, Asset Management and Wastewater (SAW) grant sponsored by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. The grant pays 90% of the cost of cleaning, GIS mapping, evaluating the condition/capacity of current water and sewer systems, and preparing related reports. It also covers the development of capital improvement plans to address any recommended short and/or long-term maintenance that might be required in order to maximize the life of the system. This will allow the Village to better prepare for future sewer expenditures. The Village has contracted with Fleis & Vandenbrink Engineering to do the work covered by the grant. The project began in the spring and will be completed over the next three years. Again, many thanks to our DPW for their help in the grant application process.

The Downtown Improvement Project on West Main Street is in full swing and moving along on schedule. The gas line "mains" have been replaced and relocated. Old utility poles have been removed and a couple of new ones installed. Asphalt, curbing and sidewalks are being removed and conduit installed to move the secondary electrical, telephone and cable lines underground. Some may question why the large primary utility poles, primary lines and ground lines (these are poles/lines that remain on the north side of the street) are not being buried as part of this project. The estimated cost for burying these lines ran in the \$1,000/foot range, which made burying them financially not feasible. However, all overhead lines running back and forth across the first block of West Main Street will be removed from sight. Once completed, the new decorative lighting, sidewalks, curbing and asphalt will provide both great infrastructure and cosmetic improvements to our downtown area. Again, we apologize to our residents and local businesses for the inconvenience caused during the construction phase of the project and we thank everyone for their continued patience as we work to complete the project as quickly as possible.

Summer is winding down, so be sure to get out and enjoy the warm weather as our beautiful fall season soon arrives.

Sincerely,

Dean Kohagen, President
Village of Westphalia