

STATE OF THE VILLAGE SPEECH 6/8/2016

Welcome to the 6th Annual State of the Village Address and Dinner. Tonight's event marks the 6th of its kind which is just another reminder of how time goes by more quickly as we age. I stand here before you tonight more excited than ever about the positive things happening in our community. We have a great group of people serving as your elected officials. I look forward to working with them and our exceptional staff moving our community forward with some exciting opportunities that I will share with you tonight.

Before we start tonight's presentation, I would like to thank the Johnsburg Area Business Association for sponsoring this event and extend a special thanks to their President Richard Bierman and the organizing committee consisting of Josh Hagen, Debbie Adams and John Huemann for their efforts in coordinating all of the arrangements. I would also like to thank Maravela's for preparing our dinner tonight, the Pistakee Yacht Club, and both Sheryl and Joe Toomey for their efforts. Let's please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

We are spending this evening at the historic Pistakee Yacht Club which has been a part of our community for nearly 120 years. The Club was first incorporated in 1897 to develop and encourage an interest in yachting and boating and to provide wholesome amusement and recreation for Club members.

Today the Club provides sailing lessons for all ages throughout the summer and competitive racing on weekends. Until recently, the Club was also the proud sponsor of the Blue Chip Regatta. The Pistakee Yacht Club is open for social events from Memorial Day through Labor Day. We hope you will enjoy your time this evening at the Yacht Club.

I would like to take a moment to recognize the Johnsburg Board of Trustees this evening. First I would like to introduce our Board of Trustees in attendance - John Huemann, Kevin McEvoy, Greg Klemstein and Tom Curry. Unfortunately, Trustees Mary Lou Hutchinson and Kyle Frost had other commitments and are unable to join us tonight.

This year has been a very successful year for the Village and I am excited to report tonight on the accomplishments we've made.

Looking back, we were successful in accomplishing many of our goals in several areas of the Village's operations. Many of our successes were related to financial and operational improvements. By pursuing direct billing for residential refuse and recycling services along with the passage of the Sales Tax Referendum we were able to establish revenue sources for underfunded capital items. We also pursued proposals for auditing services and purchased new software to manage the Village's financial and building related activities.

Planning and engineering efforts continued on our downtown plan and the Church Street Road Improvement project. Additionally, the Village pursued funding for our land reclamation efforts in the Dutch Creek Bay area.

We partnered with the McHenry Township Fire Protection District and shared in the cost of a new emergency warning signal and pursued an aggressive patching program.

Vehicles and equipment were pursued through the Capital Plan and the Village benefitted from local donations as well as acquisitions through government surplus programs.

The March 15, 2016 primary election included a referendum question asking residents of the Village whether or not they support raising local sales tax by ½ percent on goods purchased in the Village. The result of the votes cast indicated 1,241 voters were in favor of and 941 voters were opposed to the sales tax increase. As a result, the Johnsburg Board of Trustees passed an ordinance raising the local sales tax rate from 7.0% to 7.5%. This increase will take effect July 1, 2016.

At last night's board meeting, the Village Board discussed the structured distribution of these additional funds towards specific underfunded capital projects. Efforts were made to insure that the dollars would be utilized to address a broad range of the community's needs.

In response to a survey conducted in 2014, the Village Board agreed to reduce real estate tax bills by the amount assessed for garbage and recycling services and have Waste Management bill residents directly for the service beginning November 1, 2015. Previously, the Village collected \$210,000 annually through real estate taxes to pay for the service however the annual cost was more than \$382,000, causing the Village to utilize general fund dollars to make up the difference. The Village continues to contract for the service to insure that the best possible rates are obtained but by directly billing residents for the service, the Village is able to redirect nearly \$175,000 towards capital purchases and help build reserves. In December, the Village Board held its tax levy flat and then reduced it by the amount levied for garbage and recycling services. The impact from the removal of the tax was just experienced on tax bills received last month.

In an ongoing effort to reduce costs and improve services, the Village pursued proposals for auditing services and website design. A contract was awarded for auditing services to Lauterbach and Amen, an auditing firm with the specific knowledge and expertise necessary to audit government related activities.

With today's fast paced lifestyles it is crucial that we seek opportunities to improve our social media outlets. To that end, we also sought proposals for the redesign of the Village's website. This fiscal year, we will be awarding a contract to redevelop the site in an effort to improve the way we communicate and conduct business.

Last year the Village experienced a significant change in personnel as a result of several retirements that took place. In some cases, positions were replaced but in the case of our building department, the Village outsourced its building related activities to HR Green. This partnership provided the Village with well trained and certified personnel to handle plan review and inspection services. Additionally their knowledgeable staff has been providing the Village guidance as we create a good foundation for the operations of a building department in the future. They are also currently working with our staff and the Ordinance Committee to review and update building related codes.

This past year the Village hired its first full time Community Service Officer or CSO. Randy Schmitt has been working as one of the Village's CSO's in a part time capacity for the past three years. This last year we were fortunate to have him come on board in a full time capacity. Randy comes to the Village with 14 years of experience.

We all know that having the right tools for the job is crucial and in the case of our administration department, that means having reliable and versatile software programs to help us manage the financial, code enforcement and building related activities of the Village. This past year, the Village made an investment in replacing our software and training our staff on the latest and greatest in municipal software. In doing so, we can operate more effectively and access our data with greater ease.

Trustee John Huemann and the Economic Development Committee made great strides this past year in wrapping up efforts toward developing a Downtown Sub-Planning Addendum to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. In this fourth and final phase, public hearings were held to review planning exhibits, answer questions and obtain more public feedback before finalizing the plan.

The result of these efforts will enable the Village to be prepared for future development in our downtown area and insure a balance between business, residential and recreational activities.

The final public hearing prior to adoption of the plan is expected this month before the Planning and Zoning Commission at the Village Hall. At that time, the public will be able to ask questions and provide feedback on the Sub-Planning Area addendum. We encourage you to attend the hearing.

One of our most exciting projects is the Church Street Road Improvement Project which after more than 20 years in the making is finally becoming a reality. Up until a couple of years ago, much of the surfaced area on Church Street around the Johnsburg Community Club and St. John the Baptist Catholic Church and School were privately owned by those entities. Many people believed the area to be a Village roadway and we would often hear from residents regarding the condition of the road. Without having the property under the Village's ownership, the Village could do little to assist.

Over the past 20 years, Village officials have been working closely with stakeholders to acquire the right of way and eventually purchased the lot at the northwest corner of Church Street and St. Johns Avenue. Once all of the land acquisition was complete, the Village sought funding to help make the project more affordable. The Village has successfully secured a \$1.5 million grant to help fund this very important project.

Efforts in furthering the Church Street Road Improvement project continued this past year. We have been busy working on both Phases I and II Engineering and anticipate a November 2016 bid letting with construction to begin in the spring of 2017.

As I reported at the last State of the Village, we have been working with the Fox Waterway Agency on channel dredging and land reclamation projects. This past year we submitted an application to the Army Corps of Engineers in an effort to obtain funding assistance for this project. The funding program

provides for up to \$100,000 in planning assistance and \$10,000,000 in funding for reclamation efforts. By partnering with the Fox Waterway Agency and Army Corps of Engineers we plan to pursue land reclamation activities in the Dutch Creek Bay area, the river front and adjacent channels which will provide new recreational activities and will greatly benefit our community

Over the years, the Village has formed many alliances and entered into several mutual aid and intergovernmental agreements in an effort to more cost effectively provide services. This past year, the Village worked with the McHenry Township Fire Protection District and shared in the cost of replacing the emergency warning signal at Station 2 on Johnsburg Road. Additional warning signals will be pursued in the near future which we will continue to help fund to insure the safety of our residents by providing improved coverage throughout our community.

We constantly challenge our employees to find new and innovative ways to improve our operations. Our management staff consistently evaluates operational activities to determine how they can best be accomplished. In doing so, they weigh the benefits of performing the work utilizing in house staff versus outsourcing the work through contracted services.

By outsourcing the mowing of Village properties, our Public Works employees were freed up to direct more efforts on projects that will help sustain and improve our infrastructure. This past year they took on an aggressive infrastructure maintenance program that included increased road patching, ditching, culvert replacement, tree trimming and sidewalk repair. You may have also noticed that many faded regulatory signs throughout the Village are being replaced with new reflective signage which is easier to see, making travel safer throughout the Village. By proactively maintaining our infrastructure we can extend its life and reduce long term maintenance costs.

Our committed staff also seeks cost effective ways to acquire the equipment necessary to operate and maintain our infrastructure. They regularly look to the availability of equipment through government surplus opportunities. Over the last few years, we have been able to acquire much needed equipment at nearly no cost to the Village. Some examples of our acquisitions include generators, a street sweeper, a mobile command center, patrol rifles, utility vehicles, and portable lights. The Village acquired this equipment estimated to be valued at greater than \$1,000,000. Our cost was to ship or transport some of the equipment from its location which cost approximately \$5,000 in total.

Over time, vehicles and equipment age and need replacing regardless of how well they have been maintained. For those items that we cannot acquire through government surplus opportunities, we plan for their replacement in our Capital Plan. Many of these items can be quite costly if dollars are not set aside regularly for their replacement. This past year the Village purchased a five yard truck and tractor/loader for the Public Works Department, a Police SUV and a truck for our Community Service/Code Enforcement Officer. These four items totaled more than \$250,000 but fortunately funds had been set aside annually to prepare for these capital purchases which enabled the Village to pursue them without negatively impacting our budget.

Several Community Events took place again this past year encouraging family and friends to gather and enjoy all that our great community has to offer.

Last August we held the 1st Dancing Under the Stars event in Rescue Squad Memorial Park which was a huge success. The Community Affairs Committee is wrapping up plans for this year's event scheduled for Friday, June 24th. See Tom Curry or Jill McEvoy for tickets if you are interested in attending.

In October, the community came together again for the annual Celebration in the Park event and in December, the Community Affairs Committee hosted the well attended Holiday Magic. The 2nd Family Skate Night was held in January followed by the 3rd Annual Easter Egg Hunt held this past March in Sunnyside Memorial Park. This event has been a hit since its inception in 2014. Hundreds of children came out to collect Easter Eggs in the park and get an opportunity to meet the Easter Bunny.

Last week we once again participated in the Johnsbury VFW's annual Memorial Day Event to honor the many men and women who served our country. This year's event started along the river at the newly opened Wave Restaurant and was perhaps the best one yet.

It takes many dedicated men and women in our community to make these events possible. To each of them we are truly grateful.

Another way in which the Village acquires assets is through the generous donations we receive from local individuals and organizations. This past year, the Rescue Squad Retired generously donated the old Rescue Squad to the Village along with the balance of their funds totaling \$22,700 to install pedestrian lighting in Rescue Squad Memorial Park. We are very grateful for all of the generous donations made by this great organization over the years.

Additionally, the Village received a land donation consisting of ten lots in Lake Dawnwood Subdivision. By acquiring these lots, the Village can maintain open space and pursue future recreational opportunities.

This year the Village continues its focus on Economic Development. As we take steps to finalize our Downtown Planning efforts, Village representatives are reaching out and developing important contacts to help bring new business development to our community.

This past year, the Wave Bar and Grill opened their doors along with Stucky's Bar and Grille, both of which provide for great new dining opportunities in the Village. Red Pump Garage opened up in the old J & M Transmission facility. We also welcomed the opening of Mathnasium and Sticker Dude in our Route 31 corridor.

We closely analyze our business corridors for marketing opportunities which will increase our sales tax base, create new jobs and bring about desired businesses to the area which will complement our existing business base. We were very fortunate this past year to experience a 7.7% increase in sales tax revenues.

In order for any organization to be a success, it is important that a clear direction and purpose is established and understood by all. With that in mind, I believe it is important to take a moment to reflect on the Village's mission statement.....

“The Village of Johnsburg will provide responsible governance and services to all residents, property owners and stakeholders through comprehensive planning and effective resource management while maintaining a positive community environment that reflects resident input and concern.”

Building upon the Mission Statement, we developed the following Vision Statement.....

“Johnsburg is a village where history, hospitality and natural beauty come together to create a community that is proud of its past and excited about its future. Our prosperity depends upon engaging our residents and businesses to be integral participants in Johnsburg’s unique community while protecting our assets and preserving our natural resources”.

I have said it many times; you will not find a community with more generosity and volunteerism than Johnsburg. Volunteerism is a vital part of our red, white and blue community.

Each year, I take a moment to recognize the many organizations that contribute much of their time and efforts to make Johnsburg the community we are proud to call home.

This past year the Johnsburg Rescue Squad Retired officially dissolved and donated the old Rescue squad and the remainder of their funds to the Village. Despite their dissolution, their hard work and dedication will not be forgotten.

The Johnsburg Lion’s Club contributes greatly to the community through their monthly meat raffles - the proceeds of which are donated to many local organizations. Over the past 15 years, the Lion’s Club raised more than \$60,000 for the Johnsburg Shop with a Cop program. They sponsor the annual Banjo Beer night during Saufen und Spiel weekend and also continue to sponsor free hearing and eye screenings.

The dedicated members of the Johnsburg VFW do an incredible job honoring our fallen veterans through the Memorial Day festivities they organize each year. We are very grateful to those who have served to protect the freedoms we enjoy today and we greatly appreciate all that the Johnsburg VFW does to honor our veterans.

This year I would like to give special recognition to the Johnsburg Community Club and Johnsburg Community Men’s Club who was the voice of our community before the 1991 annexation. For years many people thought the area commonly known as Johnsburg was a Village prior to the annexation but it was actually a very well represented unincorporated area thanks to the hard work and efforts of the members of the Johnsburg Community Club.

Over the years, the Club was responsible for achieving much for our community. It was through their efforts that Johnsburg got the attention of our State legislators and obtained funding to rebuild the bridge. Today they continue to stay involved and give back whenever possible. In addition to sponsoring the annual Saufen und Spiel activities they have assisted the Village by cooking and serving food at our annual Celebration in the Park event. The Johnsburg Community Men’s Club also sponsors two annual scholarships for Johnsburg High School students and the Johnsburg Community Club is the sponsor of a

local Boy Scout Troop along with sponsoring many youth sport organizations in the community. Would the members of the Johnsburg Community Club please come forward.

I would like to introduce Police Chief Keith VonAllmen - Chief VonAllmen is well respected by his officers and the community. You will oftentimes hear me refer to him as the “most popular guy” in Johnsburg. He has done much to broaden and enhance the department’s role in our community. Along with directing the safety of our community, Keith has also implemented several events to educate and inform the community such the Citizen’s Police Academy which just completed its 6th year. Thanks to Keith’s efforts, the department has raised nearly \$20,000 over the past 5 years for Special Olympics. The department also holds regular CPR training classes for employees and the public. If you are interested in learning more about these classes, contact the police department.

I am pleased to introduce our Public Work’s Foreman, Dave Walsh. Dave has been with the Village’s Public Works Department since 2009 and was promoted last year to the position of Public Work’s Foreman. Dave is an exceptional equipment operator and is a truly knowledgeable and effective individual. We are fortunate to have Mr. Walsh leading our public works department.

We are also very fortunate to continue to have Village Engineer Tim Hartnett on our team. Tim’s years of experience both in his profession and the Johnsburg community make him uniquely qualified for his role with the Village. In addition to serving as the Village’s engineer, Tim is an active member of the Johnsburg community serving as a lector at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church and a member of the Johnsburg Community Men’s Club.

Our dedicated administrative support staff, Debbie Swetz and Timothy Haynes are fundamental in carrying out the Village’s goals and objectives. Debbie will be celebrating her fifth year anniversary with the Village this August and Timothy joined the Village this past fall as our newest administrative support staff.

We have also been very fortunate to have Kim Giovanni serve as our first full time Village Accountant. Kim is about to celebrate her one year anniversary with the Village in July. Her knowledge and experience has already been a true asset to the Village.

These individuals form a small but dedicated group that are the “face” of the Village and the conduit through which everything flows. We rely upon them greatly.

In wrapping up our presentation tonight, I want to take a few moments to share with you some of the exciting opportunities in our future.

Looking ahead we are:

Diligently working on new business development and land acquisition opportunities that will help strengthen the future of our community. In addition to further development in our Route 31 corridor, the Economic Development Committee will be focusing its efforts on development of our North Town Business District.

Major infrastructure improvement projects are on the horizon as is the completion of our Downtown Planning efforts. We will also continue to work to overcome the challenges we face in trying to fund infrastructure improvements and maintenance such as the extension of our sewer system and road resurfacing. Park expansions and enhancements to serve the needs of our community are also a high priority in the coming year.

As I previously reported, we are wrapping up Phase I and II Engineering for the Church Street Road Improvement project and anticipate a November 2016 bid letting with construction to begin in the spring of 2017. The entire project is broken up in to four phases that will be completed over time. This exhibit identifies the improvements that will be pursued as part of the first phase of the project. In conjunction with the project, the Village has submitted a grant application to pursue the same street scape enhancements completed along Johnsborg Road. It's amazing for me to finally see this project come to fruition after more than 20 years in the making.

For the past several years, members of the Village's sewer group have been working with representatives from several neighborhoods throughout the sewer service area in an effort to find affordable ways to extend the wastewater treatment collection system to the many areas in desperate need of the service. This past year, residents on Sunnyside Beach Drive brought forth a petition requesting that a Special Service Area be established to help fund the extension of sewers on their street. Following public notice, the required hearing and the 60 day objection period, the Village Board unanimously approved an ordinance establishing the SSA at the May 3, 2016 board meeting. Village staff is busy working to finalize bonding, engineering and permitting for the project which will serve 33 homes in the 1900-2000 block of Sunnyside Beach Drive. This will bring the total number of homes connected on the west side of the river to 93. Construction is expected to begin late this summer.

The Sunnyside Beach Drive project will cost each property owner \$21,000 if paid up front. Alternatively residents can finance the amount on their property tax bills over a twenty year period through the SSA. Each year that goes by, the cost to extend the system into neighborhoods continues to grow.

One of our biggest challenges is trying to find new funding sources and creative ways to keep these projects affordable.

Representatives of local sports organizations have been working with the Community Affairs Committee over the past few years to identify both current and long term field needs for their organizations. In turn, the Village has worked closely with the School District and McHenry Township to obtain a full inventory of available fields for the organizations. This next year, the Village plans to take steps to identify voids and work to develop new fields where necessary so that all of our local organizations are equally served.

The Village Board has also been looking to establish more uniform street name signage that is unique to our community, yet affordable. The Board has selected the displayed blue sign with white lettering which incorporates the Village's logo at the top center. An inventory of intersections is being performed and a replacement program is being established. Signage along major arteries such as Johnsborg Road and Chapel Hill Road will be placed on decorative black powder coated posts while signage in interior

subdivisions will be incorporated onto existing galvanized steel posts provided they are still in good condition.

The Village's boat launch on Riverview Drive is in need of maintenance repairs. The Village has submitted a permit application to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and other applicable agencies to replace the existing launch and install new piers. Future phases of the project will include parking and shoreline improvements. The launch is a benefit to our community which we want to make certain is functional and safe for our residents to utilize.

The Village puts forth much effort in reporting our financial activities and making them available to our residents. Each year, we have expanded our Comprehensive Annual Financial Report in an effort to provide more information to the public. This year, we will be submitting our Comprehensive Annual Financial Report to the Government Finance Officers Association in an effort to receive their Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting. In order to do so, more financial and statistical information is being gathered to meet their submission requirements.

The Village Board, the Finance Committee and staff take their responsibilities in managing the public's funds seriously. We continue to seek new opportunities to provide the information to our constituents.

Despite all of our accomplishments, we cannot lose sight of what we need to improve upon. We have been working diligently to make wastewater treatment available to our residents, however the cost to expand infrastructure into neighborhoods is out of reach for most. We are working to find ways to help fund the expansion of our sewer system making it more affordable for residents to connect. Additionally, we continue to seek alternative revenue sources to help fund much needed road resurfacing to insure the integrity of our roadways.

The Village of Johnsburg continues moving toward a bright and successful future. Sound planning and decision making over the past 20+ years have insured the Village's future. Continued investments in infrastructure and sound fiscal planning are key to our future successes.

I thank the Johnsburg Area Business Association for the opportunity to present this presentation to you tonight and for our residents who have given me the honor of representing you as your Village President.

Thank you for sharing your time with us.