



2020 River Grove

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Marjorie A. Manchen Clerk
Lynn Bjorkvik Trustee
Michele M. Obaya Trustee
Roger V. Sewell Trustee
Bob Thomas Trustee
Katie A. Muellner Trustee
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Dear Friendly Neighbors,

It has been two-and-a-half years since I was sworn in as your village president, and I feel like the luckiest person on earth. What a wonderful opportunity the residents of River Grove have given me to represent and serve them. While we have accomplished a lot so far, there is still much work to be done. My team and I will continue to work tirelessly and with great excitement to meet and exceed the expectations of the 10,000-plus friendly neighbors that make up this great village. I work hard seven days a week to uphold my campaign promises and remain committed to making River Grove even better place to live for the next two-and-a-half years and beyond.

Two areas I have prioritized since coming into office are fiscal responsibility and transparency, as you will see outlined in this report. I am proud of the strong relationships I have built on a local, county and state level as a result. Investing in our staff is number one. Unlike most municipalities, we are unique in the fact we do not have a costly village manager to coordinate staff, which saves taxpayers money and makes my department heads directly accountable to me. That is why I have surrounded myself with knowledgeable and experienced professionals who genuinely care about our town and the people of River Grove. Our residents deserve the best!

As you read this second-annual report, please remember I am not just a humble public servant; I am also a neighbor, a business owner, a husband, a son and my most important job – a father.

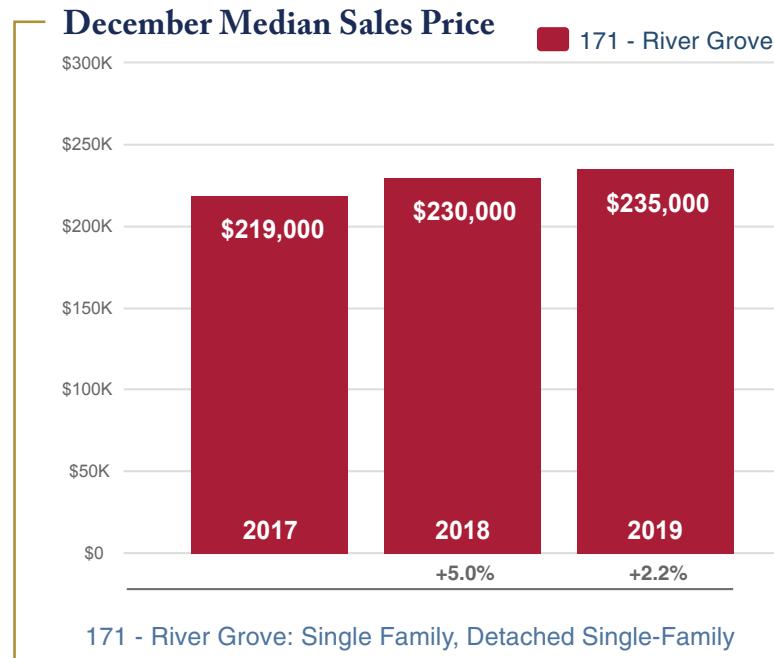
River Grove is in prime position to be a premier neighborhood. We are in a great location between two major highways, we have numerous access points to the city by rail, bus or bike, and our close proximity to O'Hare airport all work together to make our village a desirable place to call home. This is even further reflected in our median home sales price. In 2019, that number was \$235,000, which represents a 2.2% increase from the prior year and a 7.2% increase over the past 2 years.

This past year, through hard work with our legislators, we were able to obtain funding for capital improvement projects. The Grand Avenue Bridge Project received a grant of \$979,000, and the Des Plaines River Road Resurfacing Project received \$3,018,000. Finances received from grants relieve the burden on our residents and keep our money local. A couple highlights from 2019 included a \$200,000 grant from the River Grove Lions Club and a \$50,000 grant from Elanar Construction to replace and upgrade the kid's portion of River Front Park. We started construction this past fall by installing new-and-inclusive equipment. This project will be completed this year and will feature amenities like a braille trail, which highlights the mission of our Lions Club.

It is important to make sure the communication channels in our village are strong. Through my communications director, we work to educate our residents on important information regarding our town. We use social media outlets, such as Facebook, and our website, www.rivegroveil.gov, to disseminate pertinent news and updates. We also rely on our monthly newsletter and our reverse 911 system to make sure our village has the most up-to-date information available.

We encourage all our residents to visit our website, where they can find more information on: upcoming events; online payments; recreation programs; links to a number of local services and community, township, civic, state and local organizations; and more. Also, our website allows you to sign up for various alerts – emergency, recreation, public works and more. You can customize the alert to the information you find most important and want to receive.

Lastly, we have purchased and installed a new electronic sign in front of the village hall. This sign is another way to communicate important events and happenings in our town.



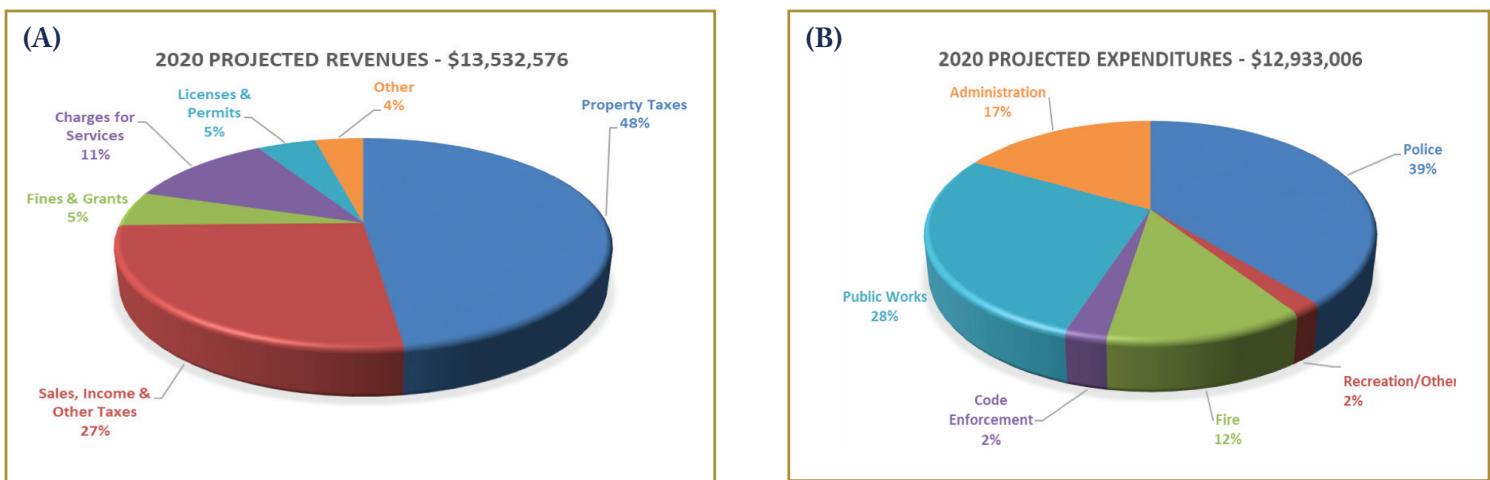
Each data point is 12 months of activity. Data is from January 18, 2020.

Community gatherings and events are so important to me and the fabric of our village. I appreciate the rich history of our town and the traditions that come with it.

Please know as your mayor, I cannot stress the importance of strong, transparent financial management. I am committed to this philosophy. Having positive finances allow us to improve the village's aging infrastructure. As River Grove moves into 2020, I am happy to report our village continues to improve its finances. A major benchmark of a healthy-and-vibrant community is its ability to maintain adequate financial resources to provide the services residents expect from its government in a cost-efficient manner.

In 2019, we continued to strive toward in the following ways:

- In our budget, the Village Board authorized additional professional full- and part-time finance staff. This necessary move provided timely-and-accurate financial information to us, the elected officials, as well as support to our operating departments as they continue to deliver River Grove residents and businesses the excellent service they expect.
- The Village authorized a contract for grant-writing services with a well-known Illinois firm that continually monitors state and federal grant opportunities. Over the last two years, the Village has been the recipient of over \$750,000 in grants that have provided funding for the construction of green alleys and street improvements as well as overtime offset costs and equipment for public safety and code enforcement functions. These are dollars from elsewhere that allow the Village to expand its resources.
- An upgrade to the Village's METRA parking along Arnold Street will be coming in February 2020 to allow for the daily parking fee payment to be made by either credit card or on one's mobile device via an easily-installable parking app. Be alert for information at the parking lot when the system changes over!
- In a similar tone, the Village's website will be modified in the coming months to allow for better ease in paying village bills and fees. It will also allow for direct access to the Village's utility billing system for residents to monitor their water/sewer/re-fuse account.
- Continuing our trend since 2016, the Village's operating budgets – comprised of its general operating, water and development funds – continue to improve. **The following chart (A)** illustrates the projected general corporate fund revenues, by category, for the upcoming fiscal year that began January 1, 2020. Overall, revenues are anticipated to increase by over \$895,000 from projected 2019 receipts. Major sources for this increase are from the property taxes and intergovernmental receipts from the State of Illinois in sales and income taxes.
- **The following chart (B)** illustrates the estimated general fund expenditures, by function, for the 2020 budget that ends on December 31, 2020. General operating fund expenditures are expected to be approximately \$740,000 greater than 2019. A majority of the increase is designated for additional capital purchases, such as police vehicles and street and alley construction.



Economic development has trended positively in River Grove, too. The Village has recently demolished one residential structure on Marwood Street and one business structure on Grand and Erie Street. These properties have been abandoned for many years, and we are working on reintroducing them as potential green space or new development. Bringing once-blighted properties back into current use with fresh improvements will add to our community tax base and enhance property values in these areas.

Last year saw a rush of redevelopment in our community. The former River Grove Bowl property and the former Mobil Station were transformed, bringing the community 48 luxury-unit, transit-oriented properties and a Starbucks retail coffee shop, which opened in September. We also saw GO2 Logistics become fully operational. All these new developments are starting to hit our tax rolls, which is a positive for the village.



✓ We as a Village completed the following Capital Projects in 2019:

2019 Green Alley Program – Reconstruction of three sections of alleys between Wood and Oak Street south of Roosevelt Lane. The Village was fortunate to receive a matching grant for the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago for the construction of these alleys for 50% of the incurred cost, which was \$385,000. The project was completed toward the end of the year.

Fullerton Avenue Improvements – Phase I of the project is complete, which consisted of replacing the water main. The existing 6-inch cast iron water main pipe that was constructed in the 1920s had 14 breaks occur on this section of pipe over the last 10 years – with the latest one occurring a few days before the construction started on its replacement. The Village is ramping up its efforts to replace water mains that have experienced significant water breaks in the last 5 to 10-year period, or as identified in the semi-annual leak detection program it completes on the project. The overall goal is to reduce the “water loss” in the system.

2019 Alley & Parking Improvements – The Village completed the installation of additional parking stalls on Tarpey Ln to help reduce parking issues the residents north of Grand Ave and west of Thatcher have been experiencing due to the apartments along Grand Ave. These parking stalls will be permitted spaces to ensure availability for residents living in this area. Additionally, the Village replaced one of its worst commercial alleys: the north Grand Ave alley from Marwood St to Budd St.

2019 Door Access Program – The Village completed a comprehensive review of access to all its owned structures and has installed ADA-compliant doors at the River Grove Village Hall, Community Center and Recreation Department. Additionally, the Village replaced the deteriorated employee access doors at the River Grove Village Hall, Police Department and Fire Station, as well as the doors in the police station hold cell area.

2019 Sidewalk Replacement Program / 2019 Pavement Patching Program – The Village has set aside funds annually to address deteriorated sidewalks and sections of pavement throughout the Village. The Village included \$125,000 toward these efforts in 2019, and it will expand the project based on the success it experienced last year.

✓ The village applied for and received funding for:

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago awarded the Village \$318,000 in a Green Infrastructure, which is 50% of the cost of construction for the 2020 Green Alleys. This is the second year in a row the Village was successful in the application, with a core focus to address the amount of runoff entering the Village combined sewer system. This system helps mitigate basement flooding and reduces the volume of water that needs to be treated at the district's sewage treatment plant.

Cook County awarded the Village a Community Development Block Grant in the amounts of \$150,000 to use toward funding improvements of Hessing St and Budd St north of Grand Ave.

Looking at Capital Planning for the future of River Grove:

The Village will complete significant capital this summer. The projects vary from water, sewer, roadway and alley work. Additionally, the Village has been successful with its continued lobbying to IDOT to address the roadway that passes through the village.

Here are the 2020 Capital Projects list:

- **2020 Sidewalk Replacement Program** is back. The Village has budgeted additional funds toward the replacement of sidewalk in the village. Please contact the River Grove Public Works Department concerning sidewalks in front of your or other resident's property you would like added to the list.
- **2020 Green Alley Program** – Design work is underway on the plans for the replacement of three sections of alleys between Spruce and Rhodes from Herrick to Grand Ave. The Village was fortunate to be selected in the highly-competitive grants process for the second year in a row. The Village will receive a grant for 50% of the costs of constructing these green alleys which will have a storing capacity of 129,000 gallons for runoff in large storm events. This will help mitigate and reduce flooding associated with sewer backup.
- **2020 CDBG Roadway Improvements** – Design is underway on Budd and Hessing St roadway improvements that will occur north of Grand Ave. The improvements are being partially funded with a \$150,000 grant the Village received from Cook County through its community development block grant program. The improvements will place a new layer of asphalt on the roadway, replace deteriorated sections of curb and sidewalk, sewer repairs as needed, patching of the existing base and the addition of diagonal parking on Hessing St near Grand Ave to help address parking issues.
- **2020 Cherry Street Improvements** – The Village worked with its legislative representatives to have the \$200,000 in grant funding restored as part of the State of Illinois' new capital program. The funds were on hold for the last several years, and now that they have been restored, the Village will move forward with addressing the pavement of Cherry St from Elm St to Des Plaines River Road. The project is similar to Hessing St, with improvements consisting of laying new asphalt surface on the roadway, replacing deteriorated sections of curb and sidewalk, repairing sewers and landscape restoration as needed.
- **Fullerton Avenue Improvements** – The Village has completed the water main utility work, and ComEd is scheduled to relocate its power lines in early spring. The roadway construction will start in late April with the completion scheduled by the end of June 2020. The project is partially funded with \$265,000 the Village received from Cook County.
- **Finley Street Improvements** – The Village will be replacing the water main along Finley St south of Fullerton Ave. The section of system has had numerous breaks, and based on the last leak survey, it has several small leaks currently active. The roadway and sidewalk will be improved as part of the restoration.
- **Sanitary List Station No. 1 Replacement** – The Village's Sanitary Lift Station No. 1, which was installed in 1965, is in need of replacement. This project is a critical component in effectively disposing the waste for the 2,300 residents located north of Elmwood Cemetery and the Thatcher Woods Shopping Center to the sanitary district's sewer main at Belmont and the Des Plaines River.

The State of Illinois will be addressing two projects in the Village starting March 2020. The Illinois Department of Transportation will have the Grand Ave Bridge repaired. The surface of the deck will be resurfaced with a new skid-resistant surface, new handrails, repairs to the sidewalk and wing walls as well as traffic signal replacement and sidewalk improvements at the Grand and Des Plaines River Road intersection. The bridge will be open to one way of each direction for the duration of the project.

Additionally, the state will have Des Plaines River Road resurfaced from the 1st Ave cut off to Foster Ave. The project will address the deteriorated pavements and restore the shoulders. The project's size will have the road under construction from about mid-May through the end of September 2020. These improvements are greatly needed and are an important investment in the infrastructure of the Village.

In 2019, the Village and Veterans Park District entered into an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) in which a long vacant and unbuildable parcel of land on Elm St off of Palmer St was developed into Veterans Memorial Park. The park was dedicated to all veterans and adds beauty to the neighborhood. There are park benches, a flag pole, plantings and a prominent granite memorial that reads, "Veterans Memorial Park: Dedicated to the Brave Veterans of the United States Armed Forces." This area is now a beautiful green space and a tribute to our nation's heroes.



The last 4 pages have just summed up the village finances, economic development and capital projects. Due to space limitations, we will address the remaining departments in next months' newsletter. I appreciate and value the confidence you have entrusted to me. I don't take it lightly, and I ask you to continue to hold me accountable for the decisions that are made for our community. I have a great love for River Grove and its residents. Together, we will continue to make our village prosper. Thank you for taking the time to read this, and remember I am always available. Feel free to reach out to myself or anyone of my directors to address any questions or concerns that you may have.