



2023 River Grove

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Lynn M. Bjorvik Trustee
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Michele M. Obaya Trustee
Christopher J. Lilly Trustee
Lora M. Lantgen Trustee
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Dear Friendly Neighbors,

Thank you for taking the time to read the State of The Village. The fact that you are reading this tells me you are engaged and care about the community. I am so grateful you have given me the opportunity to represent you since 2017. Being your Village President is one of the most fulfilling and rewarding experiences I have ever had. I am very fortunate to work with my talented board and department heads on a daily basis. We are constantly enhancing our services, updating infrastructure and ultimately improving the quality of life for our residents, business owners and other stakeholders in the village.

Before you review this document, I would like to thank all of our employees who work hard day after day to keep our village running. Many of our employees sacrifice time away from their family on holidays and weekends, to keep us safe, maintain our infrastructure or provide recreation throughout the year. Here in River Grove we pride ourselves on operating a lean government and accomplishing more with less.

I would also be remiss if I did not recognize the strong relationships with our local, county, state and federal representatives that we have forged throughout the years. These friendships have grown stronger throughout my administration, assisting the village in obtaining millions of dollars in grant money, stretching our resident's tax dollars and ultimately making River Grove a better place to live. Please keep reading and find out why River Grove continues to be one of the most desirable villages to live in the northwest suburbs.

The year 2022 saw another increase in River Grove home values. The average median sale price of a single-family home rose to \$294,950 which equates to a 33% increase since we started tracking this data in 2017. Our building department issued 443 (building) permits last year. This just confirms that people in town take pride in home ownership and are here to stay. This trend ultimately increases all of our home values.

Finance

2022 was an eventful one for the Village and this discussion on the condition of the Village's finances directly relates to that. After grappling with the effects of the global pandemic over the last several years, River Grove managed to finish 2022 with all of its funds in healthy fiscal condition. This, in turn, will allow the Village to continue to provide the highest level of services to our residents and businesses in 2023. Going into 2022, the Village passed a balanced budget that provided for increased expenditures for capital improvements and for the Village's fleet. In addition, the Village continued to receive financial assistance through the American Rescue Plan (ARPA) and saw a continued improvement throughout 2022 in the Village's economically sensitive revenues like sales and income taxes.

December Median Sales Price



171 - River Grove: Single Family, Detached Single-Family

Each data point is 12 months of activity. Data is from January 15, 2023.

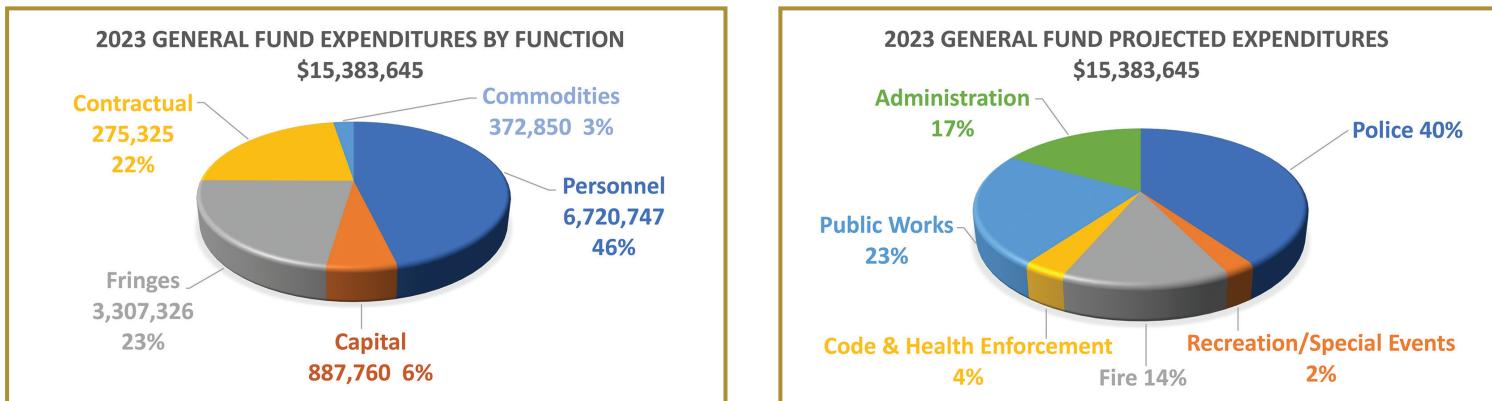
This resulted in an over \$2.6 increase for the estimated ending operating fund balance for December 31, 2022 bringing it to approximately \$11 million dollars. For comparison purposes, the Village's fund balance on December 31, 2017 was \$4,814,392.

Projected 2023 revenues for the Village for all funds are approximately \$1,821,000 greater than budgeted in 2022 with the General Fund projected to receive \$1,673,000 more than budgeted.



The 2023 expenditure budget for all funds totals \$37,231,139 with the General Operating Fund totaling \$15,383,645, a \$1,571,796 increase over 2022's budgeted expenditures. The majority of the increase in 2023 spending is dedicated to capital improvements including the completion of the two-year alley reconstruction program and the expenditure of \$3 million in state grant funding for road projects. Other budgeted improvements include additional improvements to the Village fleet, enhanced technology for the police and public works department and much needed improvements to the Village's Fire Station, formerly the Village's first village hall.

The positive annual trend of the Village in maintaining its percentage of expenditures to the general fund's fund balance has continued. The current projections are that the December 31, 2022 percentage will be 85% and the projected December 31, 2023 percentage will be 72%. Rating agencies recommend that general-purpose governments maintain at least 20% or greater. The Village has minimally maintained that measurement to no less than 40.3% for the past five (5) fiscal years.



Continuing our trend since 2016, the Village's operating fund balances that are comprised of its general operating and development funds have improved. Additionally, while costs have increased due to personnel and material costs, the Village continues to maintain a lower than average tax rate per \$100 of assessed value as compared to other communities in Leyden Township, thus continuing to maintain a lower property tax burden on residents and businesses compared to our peers.

2021 Tax Rate Comparisons - Leyden Township Municipalities			
Municipality	2021 Municipal Tax Rate	Levy Per Capita	
Rosemont	3.097	\$	4,859.46
Hillside	5.134	\$	1,498.85
Maywood	10.726	\$	1,148.68
Bellwood	6.944	\$	935.71
Franklin Park	2.069	\$	932.72
Schiller Park	2.631	\$	828.67
River Grove	3.654	\$	739.37
Melrose Park	2.597	\$	732.75
Elmwood Park	3.756	\$	732.24
Stone Park	6.211	\$	709.22

Levy per Capita is based on a ratio of the government's extended tax levy divided by the official population of the municipality. Communities with a higher percentage of industrial properties generally have a lower tax rate due to their higher assessed valuation.

✓ We as a Village completed the following Capital Projects in 2022:

2022 was a challenging year for construction as a six week long aggregate strike reduced the availability of materials used to make concrete and asphalt. After the strike, the amount of work that could be completed with the available aggregate was reduced across the region. The Village reduced and postponed projects where they could, in order to not have projects partially completed over the winter. Nevertheless, the Village did complete a significant amount of work in 2022. The following is a list of major capital work completed by the Village.

2022 Alley Improvements - The Village replaced the first 29 of the 46 original asphalt alleys with two projects. We completed the commercial alleys along the north and south side of Grand Avenue between Thatcher Avenue and Webster Street; replacing alleys that were constructed prior to 1988. The residential “green alleys” were completed along with the alleys between Fullerton Avenue and Grand Avenue on both sides of the river. These green alleys collectively removed 285,000 gallons of stormwater runoff from the sewer system, which helps reduce instances of sewer back-up and street flooding. We appreciate all the cooperation and patience of the residents involved in this year’s program. This project was funded with the 2021 Bond funds issued for the purpose of addressing the condition of all non-concrete public alleys in the Village.

2022 Ditka Drive & Alley Improvements - A stamped concrete pavement and new parking spaces were added to support the festivals and playground at River Front Park. The parking spaces were created due to the popularity of the new sensory playground, constructed with help of the Lions Club in 2021. These spaces will help alleviate parking on Julian Terrace and Carey Avenue. The adjacent two alleys between Ditka Drive and Julian Terrace were also replaced, and just in time for the Village fall festivals to take place!

2022 Parking Lot Improvements - The Village completed the construction of a parking lot on 2730 Marwood Street. The parking lot will help offset the impacts to the residents on of Budd Street and Marwood Street while providing additional commercial parking for the newly constructed commercial space on the first floor of 2801 Thatcher Avenue. This parking lot was constructed with existing funds with the Grand/Thatcher TIF area.

The 2022 Sidewalk Replacement Program - The Village completed the sidewalk replacement of 2400 through 2600 blocks of Elm, West, Spruce, Rhodes, Hessing and Davisson. The village took advantage of the low unit prices to expand the projects up to the amount of MFT funds budgeted for the project.

✓ Looking at Capital Planning for the future of River Grove 2023:

2023 Alley Improvements - The Village will be entering the second and final year of alley replacements, with two projects. The first project is a “green partnership” the Village is entering into with the MWRD; through their Green Infrastructure program the MWRD will contribute 45% of the cost for these alleys. The 4 alleys included are bounded by Palmer Street, Leyden Avenue, Belden Avenue and Fifth Avenue and will remove 168,000 gallons of runoff from the sewer system. The second project will complete the remaining alleys in the Village which are all located on the west side of town. At the completion of this year’s work the Village will have replaced the last 9 miles of asphalt alleys in town over the two years of work.

2023 Palmer & West Street Water Main and Roadway Improvements - The work on this project was delayed last year due to the water main on West Street having numerous breaks. The Village has designed its replacement and will bid this work in spring. The Village will receive \$325,000 from Cook County to improve the 2100 block of West Street from the railroad tracks to Palmer Street and from West Street to Leyden on Palmer Street, replace the West Street water main, complete a structural resurfacing of the roadway and install traffic calming islands at both West and Palmer Street to keep semitrucks out of the residential areas.

2023 Parking Lot Improvements - The Village will be constructing a parking lot on Thatcher Avenue across from the Village Hall on the long vacant “Marmor Auto Repair” property, which will be used by Village staff, police, and fire department personal. Additionally, the Village will be constructing two parking lots on Marwood Street just south of Grand Avenue to support business demand. These alleys are being contracted with existing funds with the Grand/Thatcher TIF area.

Grand Avenue and Erie Street Sitting Park and additional Parking - This project will clean up the southwest corner of Grand Avenue and Erie Street by adding a green space to sit and read a book as well as add six additional parking spaces for our growing businesses.

The 2023 Sidewalk Replacement Program - The Village has budgeted additional funds toward the replacement of our village’s liable trip spots around town. Please contact the Public Works Department to let them know about any sidewalk squares you may be concerned about.

Belmont/Thatcher Entrance - The Village is in the process of securing the property at the southeast corner of Belmont and Thatcher Avenue so it can install an entry sign and landscaping. These improvements will give the north entrance into the Village more of a presence. It will highlight that area as a cornerstone of our community and highlight our commercial presence in that area.

Grand Avenue East Entry - The Village will be completing the streetscape work between Webster and Davisson. The work includes the placement of brick sidewalks, concrete parkways, placement of landscape planters and pedestrian lights. The Village is leveraging the work being completed by IDOT (curb and gutter replacement and resurfacing) reducing the overall Village cost of the project to complete the east entry into the Village.

Grand Avenue Resurfacing - The Illinois Department of Transportation will be resurfacing Grand Avenue from Harlem Avenue to Elm Street. The work was contracted last year, but the start was postponed due to a strike at the Illinois quarries limiting the amount of aggregates available in 2022. The work is anticipated to start in March and to run through August.

Public Works and Water

The men and women of our Public Works Department are continually working to ensure that River Grove is a clean and safe community to live and work in. Our Public Works and Water Department have received new additions to its fleet in 2022 including a new Pelican sweeper, an arborist bucket truck, and a water department vehicle. Keeping our equipment safe, updated, maintained and environmentally friendly are goals we are working to achieve.

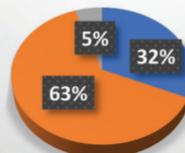


In the past three years River Grove has upgraded and installed new playgrounds throughout the Village. Lions Park (2020), Spruce Street Park (2021), and River Grove's newest park, Thatcher Woods Playground, that opened in 2022, providing an exciting new park area for River Grove families and children to play. The village is proud of our partnership with Veterans Park District and are fortunate to have access to the Veterans Park District facilities in River Grove. Four years ago, a sitting park was put in place at Elm and Palmer; it is dedicated to all who have served. In the last year Veterans Park has invested approximately \$1.2 million dollars for the entire rebuild of Trumbull Park. The renovations there are schedule to be completed this spring.



In 2022 River Grove had 15 water main break repairs, 11 service replacements, 3 hydrant replacements, and 3 valve replacements. In an effort to control costs, our Water Department along with our Public Works Department have handled 63% of the water and sewer repairs throughout the Village. This work used to be contracted out 100% but in the past three years the Village has gone from subcontracting 100% of its water repairs to now only using subcontractors for high traffic locations.

Water and Sewer Repair



Police Department

This administration is committed to growing and maintaining our well-trained team of police and to continue to keep River Grove one of the safest municipalities in northwest Illinois. Public safety in River Grove remains a top priority. In 2022, River Grove officers responded to over 11,000 police calls for service which is a 19% increase when compared to calls for service received in 2021. A breakdown of incoming service calls shows that most calls come in between 4 and 5 P.M.

Here is a breakdown of traffic enforcement in 2022 in our town.

- Speeding citations issued increased by nearly 60% compared to 2021.
- Truck enforcement citations in the residential areas that back up to commercial areas, were up 17.5% over 2021 with 355 citations issued. Police administrators and officers work collaboratively to seek out and apply for law enforcement-related grant funding. In 2022, the River Grove Police Department was awarded Illinois Department of Transportation traffic grants totaling \$190,800.00 (one of the largest awards in our area). Additionally, the police department was awarded a \$50,000.00 state grant for dispatch consolidation (which occurred in 2016), and a Cook County camera grant for just over \$22,000.00. The Cook County grant was allocated to help RGPD offset the cost of in-car video camera systems for all of the police vehicles which will be installed in 2023.

In 2022, the Frontline online management system was introduced to our community. The Frontline system allows residents to self-request residential vacation watches and overnight parking permission. Moreover, residents have the ability to register their pet(s) and bicycles with the village online. This year, we will be installing in-car video camera systems in all our marked police vehicles. That camera system will be equipped with license plate reader technology which will help officers locate wanted persons and wanted vehicles. The in-car camera system will also provide the platform needed to implement the body-worn camera program which will be initiated in the police department in 2024.

Fire Department

The River Grove Fire Department responded to 2487 calls in 2022; this is up 14.2% from 2021. Of these calls, 857 were fire related and 1630 were EMS related. The RGFD responded to 6 structure fires in River Grove and 25 in other communities. Here are some interesting facts about our Fire Prevention totals: Total Inspections broken down by type: 187 fire inspections/pre-incident plans, 26 smoke detectors installed, 6 school/daycare facility inspections, 41 fire drills, 2 firework display inspections (Oak Park Country Club), 4 festival safety inspections.

The RGFD was also out doing community service in 2022. They gave 2 tours of the fire house for Cub Scout Wolf Den Park 4690, they held CPR classes for the village staff and they did Fire Prevention Week visits for Rhodes and Picket Fences. However, it is their annual Santa Stop that seems to be the favorite of all the residents. This past December the RGFD and Santa made 69 stops around town, collecting food for the River Grove Food Pantry and delighting the children with a visit from Santa.

This past fall the River Grove Fire Department paid tribute to fallen RGFD firefighter/paramedic Robert David Reisinger by erecting a statue in his honor. FF/PM Reisinger lost his life to Covid in 2020.



Recreation Department

Now that Covid mandates have been lifted, we have been able to bring back many of our recreation programs. Events such as dances, senior programs, crafts, movies and more have begun and there will be many more to come. We look forward to spring as our Baseball program and Girls Softball Rocket programs begin and we are happy to report they are flourishing. Our 11U/12U hybrid team which was piloted last year, is back for its second season. This program offers our girls exposure to a higher level of competition than they saw in their recreational league without the demands of a full-time travel program.

With the creation of the River Grove River Hawks division of our recreation program we have a new, exciting extension of the Recreation for the Village of River Grove. Our goal is to provide a safe, fun, inclusive and positive learning environment that fosters growth and serves as a vehicle for young athletes by providing seasonal activities for the community. The River Hawks program is staffed with youth sports professionals from local youth sports organizations. All staff members have been background checked/finger-printed, trained, and experienced in running these seasonal programs. We hope to get as many River Grove young residents involved with the River Hawks and look forward to seeing you on the court or field soon.

Thank you for taking time to read the 2023 State of the Village, I hope you found it informative. I am very proud of the accomplishments of 2022 and excited for what is to come in 2023. As your public servant I continue to keep my commitment of transparency through this SOV. I am humbled by the confidence you have in me as your Village President. I take this role seriously and will forge ahead to continue to make our town a great place to live. I am held accountable to the residents of River Grove, and that responsibility is extremely important to me. I have assembled a diverse team of talent to help me create the best quality of life for you and your families. There is always room for improvement and I am here to listen. Please know that I do like hearing from our residents and I am always available by email (mayor@rivergroveil.gov) or phone (708-453-8000 ext. 310).

Dave Guerin Village President