

From the Desk of the Mayor – December 17, 2020

I wanted to give updates on the City departments and operations since the last From the Desk letter.

POLICE: Our Police Department recently hired a new police officer, Mr. Brian Bechtel. Officer Bechtel has been working for Carterville PD in a part-time capacity but starts full-time this week. Welcome to the Carterville work family, Officer Bechtel.

The Carterville Police Department and the City of Carterville thanks The Bank of Herrin for their donation of \$2000 for updating office furniture. Chief Flaningam and the officers greatly appreciate the assistance.

FIRE: The Carterville Fire Department sincerely thanks the Fred G. Harrison Foundation for providing a donation to purchase a firefighting gear washer, 12 SCBA breathing air tanks, and a set of rescue air bags. These items will provide an additional level of safety for our staff and the residents of Carterville.

The Carterville Fire Department responded to 147 calls for service in the month of November, 119 ambulance calls and 28 fire calls. This is the highest amount of calls in a month since records have been kept at the FD. The call volume can be partially attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Fire Department asks that our community follow the masking, distancing, and hand washing guidelines. The increased positivity rates in our area not only place a burden on our local hospitals, but our local EMS agencies and personnel as well.

I also want to thank the Fire Department staff for assisting with the downtown Christmas decorations, especially wrapping the red and white lights around the lamp posts. Looks good!

PARKS: Because of the Governor Pritzker's Tier 3 COVID-19 mitigations, the City is not scheduling reservations for the Community Center, Gazebo, or the Pavilion.

The City thanks the Carterville Area Rotary Club for their donation of trees and the labor of planting them at the Carterville Bark Park dog park.

The restrooms at both James Street Park and Cannon Park have been closed and winterized for the season. They will be reopened in the spring, when the temperatures stay above freezing through the nights and mornings.

STREETS: The Street Department has completed street repairs from previous water leaks throughout town. Other repairs not related to utility work are continuing, as weather permits.

I want to thank the Street Department staff for repainting the arrows and stripes downtown and painting new crosswalks at the intersection of West Grand and Greenbriar Road.

Because of technical difficulties, installation of the Christmas decorations that go on the utility poles outside of the downtown were delayed. They have now been installed and some electrical work will be completed Friday to make them all functional. Thanks to the Street Department employees for their work on the decorations!

WATER: The Water Department continues to work with the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development program to install two new water towers, a new ground storage tank, and new water main on Division Street from Howerton Street north to Anderson Street. This project will nearly triple the City's water storage capacity. I recently signed the documents that locked in the nearly \$4.5M to fund the project with a USDA loan for a 40 year term at 1.5% interest. We hope the process will allow for bid letting on the projects in the next three months.

SEWER: The Sewer Department has hired Adam Decker as our full-time wastewater treatment plant operator and Sewer Superintendent. We also welcome Leonard Haiman (licensed plant operator) and David Miller (maintenance/laborer). Adam, Leonard, and David joined in with our existing staff of Mark Grant and Logan Halstead. Our sewer department employees work very hard to keep our existing wastewater plant in operation and maintain EPA compliance while we move towards building a new facility.

We continue to move towards securing a long term \$18M loan to build a new wastewater treatment plant. Our existing plant is nearing 35 years old and our community has grown significantly in those years, outgrowing our current plant capacity. We have a preliminary plan, the location chosen, and core samples are being taken from the site now. The new plant location will be on a 40 acre tract owned by the City on Hafer Road, north east of Peach Street.

WATER AND SEWER OFFICE: The Carterville Water and Sewer Office is closed to the public during the Governor's Tier 3 mitigations. The public may access the office by appointment only. We encourage water and sewer business be handled by phone, online at www.visitcarterville.com, or using the drop box located near the entrance. Please contact the Water and Sewer Office with any questions.

Due to the Tier 3 mitigations and the holidays, the Carterville Water and Sewer Board voted to suspend water service disconnections until further notice. The subject will be reviewed after the Tier 3 mitigations are lifted. We encourage anyone with a delinquent balance to contact the Water and Sewer Office to make a payment arrangement to avoid future disconnection.

CITY HALL: The Carterville City Hall is closed to the public during the Governor's Tier 3 mitigations. The public may access the office by appointment only. We encourage business for City Hall be handled by phone, online at www.visitcarterville.com, or using the drop box located near the entrance of the Water and Sewer Office. Please contact City Hall with any questions.

Myself and the City Council want to encourage all residents to support our local businesses during this difficult time. Whether it is gas, groceries, carry out meals, dog grooming, jewelry shopping, tech repairs, HVAC, and on and on the list goes...please support our Carterville businesses. This has been an unusually difficult year and I hope to see all our local businesses survive and come out the other side of this pandemic.

There are changes in the works for downtown Carterville. The City Council recently approved the sale of 111 South Division, the empty lot between Steve and Rich's Barber Styling and Create A Smile Thrift Store. 111 South Division will soon be the home of a new building that will house an ice cream shop. The City Council also approved the purchase of 115 South Division, the Create A Smile Thrift Store building. The City's plan is to demolish the building to use for future commercial development.

I want to thank the City employees, Carterville Unit 5 staff, volunteers, and shoppers who facilitated another successful Paws for a Cause Christmas tree tag project. The Carterville Unit 5 teachers and counselors identify families and children in need within the school district and they all work to create tags and provide a Christmas for those children. Not a single tag was left this year. What a great example of the good that exists in Carterville. Thanks to all that participated!

I have witnessed countless acts of kindness during this holiday season. From continued donations to the giving table behind City Hall, individuals donating to pay delinquent water bills, donations towards the Paws for a Cause Christmas present drive, the volunteers that made the Community Thanksgiving Dinner a success, work from the Carterville Area Rotary on picking up trash along the roadways and planting trees at the Bark Park, and many others that have shown great generosity towards their fellow man in numerous ways. It really restores my faith in others, my confidence that we will survive and thrive after this pandemic, and it solidifies my immeasurable pride in Carterville.

With the COVID-19 vaccine arriving in Southern Illinois, I want to encourage Carterville residents to seek advice from their primary care physician/healthcare provider about taking the vaccine as it becomes available. While considering the vaccine with your healthcare provider, please continue to wear a mask in public, maintain social distancing, and maintain those hand hygiene practices. As the tiers of healthcare providers, high risk populations, essential workers, and others are being vaccinated, the safety measures will continue to be important while levels of immunity are built within our community. Let's continue the generosity witnessed in this holiday season and maintain our safety practices to protect our neighbors and fellow citizens.

Lastly, I want to thank the City employees. Without you, it just couldn't work. Thanks for your hard work, for answering the phone whether you're on call or not, for cooperating with the safety measures and changes in operations throughout the pandemic, for being more than just employees...thanks for being dedicated caretakers of the City of Carterville.

If anyone has any questions for me, feel free to call the Mayor's Office at 618-985-2700 or send an email to brobinson@visitcarterville.com.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bradley Robinson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.