

Community Ward Meeting for **Wards 3 & 6** was held at Bedford City Hall on Monday, March 30, 2015. Mayor Koci called the meeting to order at 7:04 P.M.

Present: Council Members: Mayor Stan Koci, Vice-Mayor Marilyn Zolata, Don Saunders, Walter Genutis. Absent: Sandy Spinks, Paula Mizsak, Greg Pozar. Also Present: Clerk of Council Pro-Tem Michelle Hollo. Administration: City Manager Michael Mallis, Deputy Police Chief Martin Stemple, Building Commissioner Calvin Beverly, Fire Chief Dave Nagy, Superintendent Shawn Frances, Assistant Recreation Director Jeff Fiala, Finance Director Frank Gambosi.

Mayor Koci and City Manager Mallis welcomed all residents. Mayor Koci said the most important thing this evening was to hear from the residents. He introduced those Council members who were present, spoke about the 2014 challenges regarding former Law Director Schuman and former Judge Jacobs investigations, Ben Venue closing and causing a loss of 20% of the operating budget, City Manager Hank Angelo retired and the three changes on Council. He thanked Judge Melling and Clerk of Courts Day for their professionalism, the hiring of Law Director Montello, and the hiring of City Manager Mallis. He welcomed West Ward Pharmaceutical, 2014 had no cut of services or layoffs, \$9+ million carryover in the General Fund, he commended/thanked the employees for their much appreciated efforts, he thanked Council members for their efforts, the loss of State funds, and the loss of \$2+ million from the closing of Ben Venue.

**Councilwoman Zolata reported the following for Ward 3:**

- listed several ways to get information/news regarding the City
- thanked the Service Department: snow removal, water and sewer services, water line breaks
- thanked the Safety Forces for their excellent and professional services
- urged everyone to recycle, pick up their litter
- was pleased residents kept their sidewalks clear from snow for the mailman
- pointed out the new rubbish containers which would cut down on the blowing trash
- spoke of the \$60,000 grant for the new senior van
- urged everyone to be civil
- urged everyone to get involved with the Arts & Cultural Board events
- spoke of the efforts the employees do on a daily basis
- supported the Cleveland Indians and the summer/seasonal events
- urged everyone to ask questions and voice their concerns.

**Councilman Saunders reported the following for Ward 6:**

- previously lived in Ward 3
- spoke of the past winter weather regarding the snow plowing, parking issues and clearing of the sidewalks
- was seeking reelection in 2015 to assist in the budget issues
- Ward 6 had a lot of empty homes
- the Building Department was addressing housing maintenance issues in a more timely manner
- maintaining the quality of life in Bedford as expected
- spoke about how the City was going to focus on the budget in the upcoming years

- urged the residents to keep track of the State legislatures concerning budget cuts, issues and specifics
- informed the residents of the many years of experience the Council members had to offer
- he listed all the areas in which he worked
- thanked everyone in attendance, urged them to stay informed through the various media formats and to utilize the Cuyahoga County Southeast Library
- AT&T U-Verse services/network was available and updated

Mayor Koci urged everyone to take the information provided this evening: Parties in the Park flyers, the Code Red registration sheet and the General Information List created by the Clerk of Council.

City Manager Michael Mallis introduced the Department Heads that were present this evening. He noted all the departments work together as a team to ensure quality services. He was proud to be working with the group of employees the City currently had on staff. He started the PowerPoint presentation highlighting all City Departments (see attached).

He added points of interest throughout the PowerPoint presentation as listed:

- 2014 Year End – \$3.6 million general fund cash balance, additional State revenue cuts, \$5.8 million reserve still intact and the closing of Ben Venue
- Regionalization - The Regional Dispatch Center opened March 19, 2015 with a combination of Maple Heights, Bedford Heights, Garfield Heights and Bedford
- 2015 News and Initiatives: the Egbert Road Bridge deck resurfacing, Broadway/Mitchell property, Art of Beauty, Taylor/Willis Property with bike and multi-purpose trail, Sister of Charity property/Convent, 314 Union Street Group Home, Columbus Road Bridge update with no cost to the City, Tinkers Creek Watershed partnership, West Ward status, trash collection opportunity, ODNR regarding deer population, adjustment of sewer and chipper services, 2015 Street Program including East Monroe
- Maintaining Neighborhoods – enforcing property maintenance, pursue home demolitions, concerns of the 315 vacant homes, focusing on problem houses on John, Henry and William Street
- Community Outreach – inform residents/businesses about using utility bill inserts, Facebook, Twitter and E-News blasts, newly designed Resident Guide, Code Red
- General Fund Cash Balance – see attached graph for a decline if the City does not take steps to avoid losses prior to 2019
- Administrative Challenges – minimal levels while continuing quality services, change how services were delivered, union negotiations, healthcare changes, wellness program for the staff
- Potential buyer for the Chanel property, acquisition of the 10+ acre Rysar Properties for development, Metroparks bike path into Bedford, highlight park attractions
- 2015 & Beyond – work with Hikma representatives, efforts to market Bedford as a whole, develop Taylor/Willis property, collaborate with developers of Meadowbrook Market Square and Hemisphere to market Tinkers Creek Commerce Park
- Importance of relationships - In 2009, the City lost its K-9 unit. The K-9 unit will be returning in the near future with full cost absorbed by the Automile.

Mr. Mallis and Mr. Gambosi explained:

- a \$1.4 million cut by the State of Ohio annually
- loss of the Tangible Personal Property tax which was as high as \$463,000 annually
- loss of the Inheritance Tax which was as high as \$512,000 annually
- the Local Government Tax reduced from \$778,000 to \$336,000 annually. (Example: if the Automobile sold 1,000 cars a year at \$25,000 each the sales tax sent to the State would give \$66 million to the state and the City would only get \$336,000)
- the loss of \$2 million in taxes from the closing of Ben Venue
- the loss of water and sewer consumption from the closing of Ben Venue reduced revenues in water/sewer fund
- the current \$9.5 million in the General Fund was because the City saved for a rainy day
- the loss/effect of the \$400,000 decrease in value of real estate
- every single revenue source was decreased to the City except revenue sources the City controls
- it was very difficult to continue City services and keep the adequate number of employees
- 1999, 2001 2004 and 2006 were the last high points of revenue sources
- negative effects of HB 5
- the City's financial ratings were downgraded to a lower rating
- 2009 was the last increase in taxes in Bedford
- urged residents to understand the substantial cuts and losses the City was experiencing and facing

City Manager Mallis and Mayor Koci opened the floor to the citizens.

A resident asked why group homes were not brought to the residents for a vote; she felt it should not be Council's decision. It was explained that group homes were not solely a decision of the City even though the City had a list of certain restrictions; the State also had a say in the matter. Also the Fair Housing laws must be followed. It was discussed and clarified that Ben Venue's income tax was never delinquent regardless of what the newspaper previously stated. She spoke about the many bird nests located in the overhang at 58 William Street and the poor condition of this home in the past year. It was determined the City and the Court both were addressing the issues regarding this home. Discussion was held that Bedford was the cheapest area to live so this was why Council recently addressed the way rentals were handled. Mayor Koci explained it sometimes took years to address these problems/issues.

A resident was getting a lot of mail regarding Social Security and wondered if some of this information could be a scam. Mayor Koci urged everyone if they got something in the mail or a phone call that just did not seem right to call City Hall or the Police Department.

A resident inquired about what was happening with the Chanel property. The City was not at liberty to release information at this time, but this business would be good for the City.

A resident questioned what was going into the old YMCA. Mr. Mallis explained there was another interested party that wanted to move into the building providing a similar service but the building had many violations. The sale went through without the required point of sale and escrow account.

A resident inquired about the new city guide and stressed the importance of having written literature. She inquired if this is a general city guide or would be distributed quarterly or bi-annually. Working in the field of recreation and community education, she stated national statistics support that registrations are driven by brochures or written copy. She is an advocate of putting dates in the resident guide and suggested planning the events and recreation programming in advance. She offered her assistance. Mr. Mallis explained this is a general guide that will be distributed to every household this summer. The previous guide was 20 years old and only went to new residents. Many of our residents do not know what services the various city departments offer.

Discussion was held regarding the empty business spots downtown and the empty Medic building. Mr. Mallis explained the City was proactively working on filling all the locations and also working with the business owners offering free classes educating them on branding, marketing, and attracting traffic. The City was paying and offering free classes for the business owners paid by City funds. The Medic building had many violations but it was being addressed.

The foreclosed homes were also being addressed proactively through the Building Department on a daily basis. Letters had already been mailed to the landowners/banks of the vacant properties with zero water usage so the grass cutting could be managed and addressed in a timely manner. The City was currently reviewing the current Codified Ordinances to see if they should be amended. It was a never ending battle for the City.

A resident asked if the City still had an Economic Development Department. She had contacted the City, left a message and had not received a call back. She was interested in starting a new business.

Resident asked if those asking questions this evening made an attempt to contact their Ward representative prior to this evening. This resident commended the Service Department in their snow removal efforts this winter season. He appreciated Mr. Gambosi's empathy regarding his personal issues and the timeliness of the Building Department's response concerning his complaint. He could not understand why residents could not shovel their sidewalks. He was tired of the children walking in the streets and something needed to be done. Apparently the efforts the ministers were making was not working; however, the schools had their hands full with these children. He wanted to know what he could do in this situation. Mr. Mallis said to call the Police Department. The resident was shocked to learn the loud music he was hearing was over a block away.

This same resident said the Meadowbrook empty shopping complex had been an issue for over 6 years. The City was in the process of working with the property owner and their new real estate agent. The property owner's focus was a quality/major store, not just any store. On a couple of the empty store fronts, the property owner had been receiving his monthly rent because the contract had not expired. The resident felt there were other reasons Meadowbrook's store fronts were not occupied. The neighboring Southgate shopping area was offering very low rent options to the businesses which was another problem. Mr. Mallis and Mayor Koci explained it was a complicated situation plus the economy was a hurting factor.

The same resident voiced his concern on how the grass cutting had been handled in the past. He felt the Council members should be more proactive regarding issues in their specific wards. Mr. Saunders informed the resident the homes were empty, owned by the bank and the City was aware of the problem. Mr. Mallis reiterated the grass cutting process was redesigned and the City was proactive in addressing this specific issue. The landowners/banks had already been contacted prior to the grass cutting season in

hopes to reduce the number of violators. The City sent 300+ letters recently warning them that their property was on a list to be watched. Plus the City recently increased the fines to encourage them to cut their grass.

The resident also complained about the snow on the Northfield Bridge sidewalks. Mr. Mallis explained this was previously addressed by the County but the County was not responsible anymore. It had become the responsibility of the City; another task to do with less people.

The resident heard/understood from the news that minorities did not feel comfortable communicating with the Police Departments. He being a minority had somewhat of a problem with the Police Dispatchers because he felt when he called, he was being interrogated. There were some kids playing loud music and when he called to complain the Dispatcher asked if the children were black or white. His thought was when the Officer showed he would witness the race of the children; he did not think the color made a difference. Deputy Chief Stemple offered an explanation. When a call was received it was the duty/job of the Dispatcher to get as much information for the Officers so when they responded they knew the specifics. Sometimes the children/people start running when they see the police car; the information obtained was to assist the Officers so they knew who they were looking for as described. Deputy Chief Stemple made it clear, it did not make a difference of the race or color but the Officer needed specific information. This was the actual training of a Dispatcher to ask many and specific questions for a good description. The Dispatcher and the Officer had no idea if the complaint was going to escalate into a fight or a possible shooting. The resident said his concern was for the Officer to respond to the problem he was witnessing. If he was not comfortable in making a call, then he was not going to call in a complaint. Deputy Chief Stemple encouraged him to call, the caller could remain anonymous but the reason the Dispatcher asked for volunteer information or certain information was in case they needed to call for more information or follow up with the caller.

Deputy Chief Stemple also informed the resident the school had a SRO who made several announcements to the entire student body of the things they should or should not do. The Auxiliary Police Officers also assisted in various problems. There was a zero tolerance for those children who walk in the street. The parents were informed of their children's behavior and could even get a \$250 fine. The resident felt the residents should be more active with the Ward Councilperson and the Councilpersons should hold their own meetings to inform their Ward residents. Mr. Mallis explained Councilpersons do make an effort to pass on any concerns or problems to the Administration.

It was explained the new rubbish containers would be assigned to each occupied home at no cost to the resident. If the resident had additional rubbish, it could be placed beside the container; the rubbish pickup was unlimited.

A resident questioned the poor condition of the streets after the winter season. It was explained the streets were being addressed by the Service Department.

One of the residents explained that if a new resident moved in and was violating something, he politely informed them of the laws/rules in place. Mayor Koci stressed everyone needed to be neighborly again and be civil.

A resident mentioned the City used to clean the sidewalks and the senior driveways 30 years ago. Mayor Koci explained the City was not going to start cleaning senior drives or all the residents' sidewalks. It was impossible to make everyone happy.

In closing, Mrs. Zolata thought it was a good meeting and she apologized for not being able to personally deliver her Ward newsletter. She urged her Ward residents to call her regarding any concerns or questions.

Mr. Saunders stated things cannot be fixed always overnight and residents needed to understand the process. He stated everyone had rights whether you liked it or not. The City was addressing issues in a timelier manner as they can be by following the laws, regulations, codes and guidelines. The Municipal Court would have a new Judge this election and a lot of the issues that came before the Judges depended on the length of time certain things were addressed. If the Judge was lenient then the problem took longer to address.

Mayor Koci introduced Michelle Paris who was in the audience this evening. Mrs. Paris understood the residents' frustrations and concerns. She was very creative in finding solutions as the Court can make things happen. She urged everyone to visit her website and to vote. She had absentee ballot applications for those who were interested.

It was reiterated to the residents to call City Hall or the non-emergency number at the Police Department if they saw something strange, had a concern or a suspicion of something. The City staff could not address issues if they were not aware there was a problem in the first place.

Meeting adjourned at 9:23 P.M.



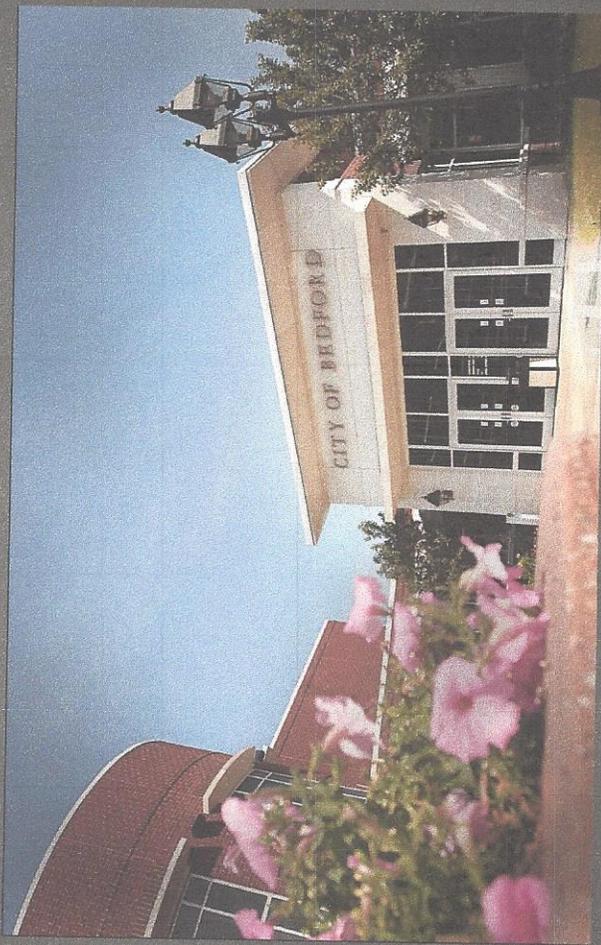
Clerk of Council Pro-Tem



Mayor Stanley C. Koci

# COMMUNITY MEETING WARDS 3 & 6

COUNCILWOMAN / VICE MAYOR MARILYN ZOLATA  
COUNCILMAN DON SAUNDERS

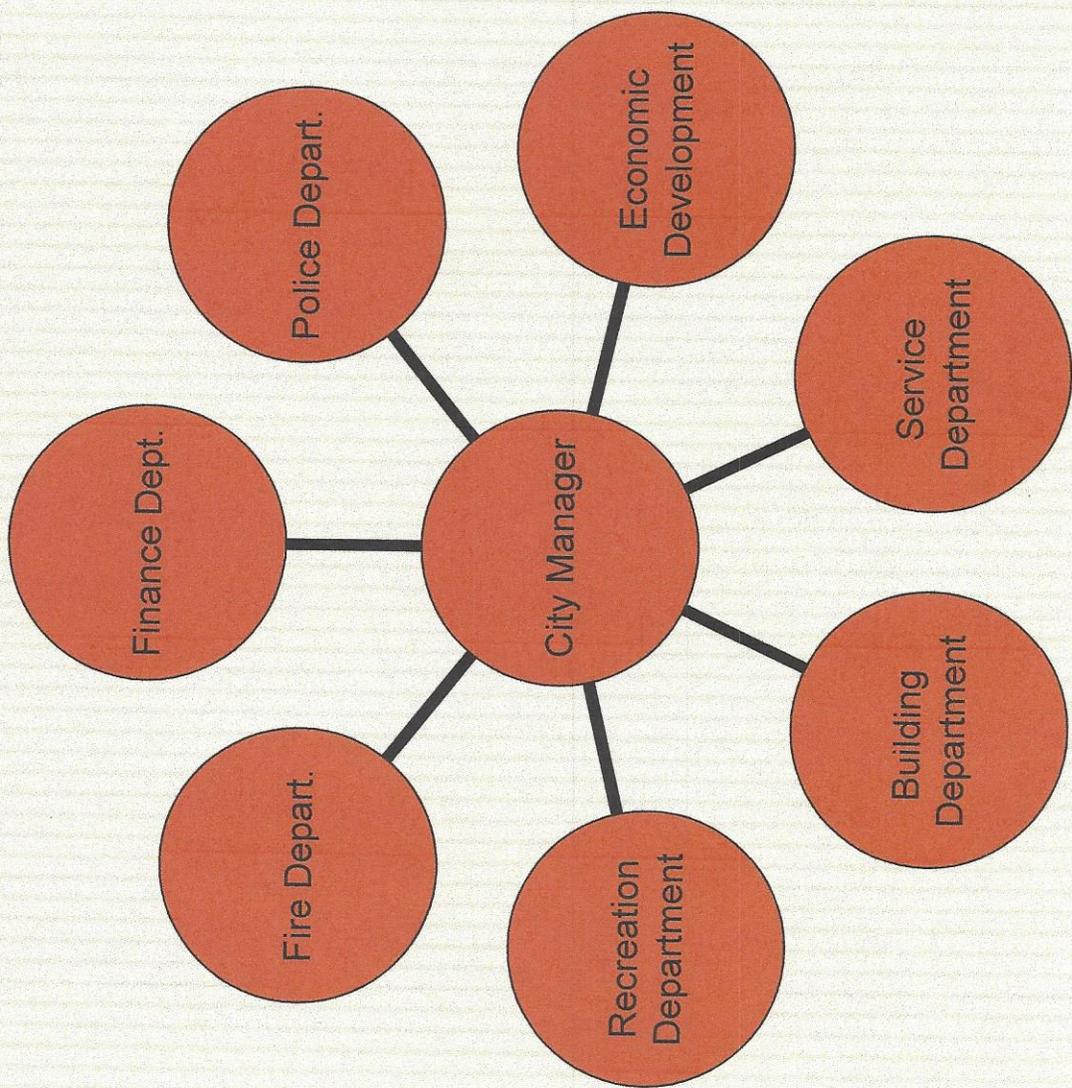


MARCH 30,  
2015

PRESENTED BY: MAYOR STAN KOCCI &  
CITY MANAGER MIKE MALLIS



# MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENTS



## 2014 YEAR END



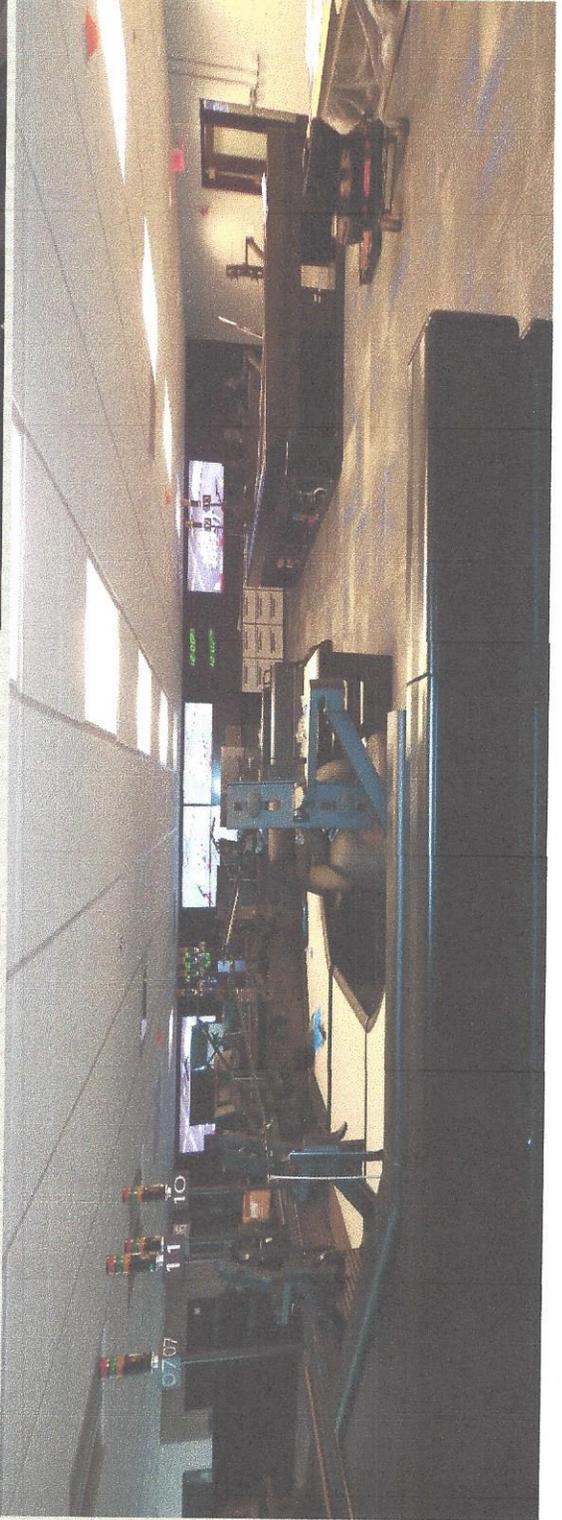
- ❑ City concluded 2014 with a \$3.6 million general fund cash balance.
- ❑ These funds were a result of city income tax collections and savings from unspent budgets from all departments.
- ❑ We have experienced additional State revenue cuts and real estate tax collections over the last 3 years totaling \$1.9 annually!
- ❑ \$5.8 million reserve still intact
- ❑ Legislation exists requiring a 15% reserve be maintained
- ❑ We are preparing to face the full affect of the Ben Venue closure in 2015



# REGIONALIZATION



## Southeast Emergency Communications Center



# 2015 NEWS AND INITIATIVES



- ▣ Egbert Road Bridge update
  - ▣ Deck resurfacing
- ▣ Columbus Road Bridge
  - ▣ Partnership with TCWS
- ▣ Broadway / Mitchell Property
- ▣ Art of Beauty
- ▣ West Ward status
- ▣ Taylor / Willis Property
  - ▣ Bike and multi purpose trail
- ▣ Sisters of Charity Property / Convent

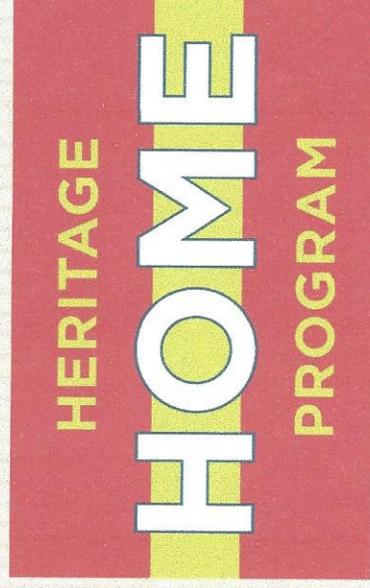
- ▣ Participated in meetings with the ODNR & the Mayors and Managers Assoc. regarding the deer population.
  - ▣ Adjustment in services:
    - ▣ Sewer & Chipper
  - ▣ 2015 Street Program
    - ▣ To include E. Monroe
  - ▣ 214 Union Group Home
  - ▣ Trash collection opportunity

# CITY OF BEDFORD



## Maintaining our Neighborhoods

- The City will continue enforcing our property maintenance program
  - Pursue demolition when possible
- There are roughly 315 vacant homes to date, which includes bank owned, government owned and estate owned
- Partnership with the Cleveland Restoration Society
  - Tremendous resource for home improvements

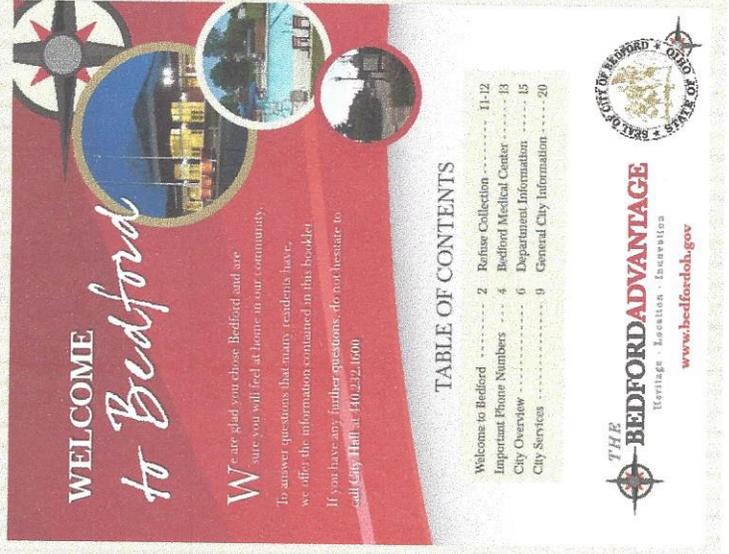


# CITY OF BEDFORD



## Community Outreach

- Our goal has been to inform our residents and businesses of as much information as possible
  - Monthly utility bill inserts, Facebook, Twitter and E-News digital notifications
  - Researching the idea of a community app
  - Newly designed Resident Guide will be distributed in 2015
  - Code Red sign-up form available

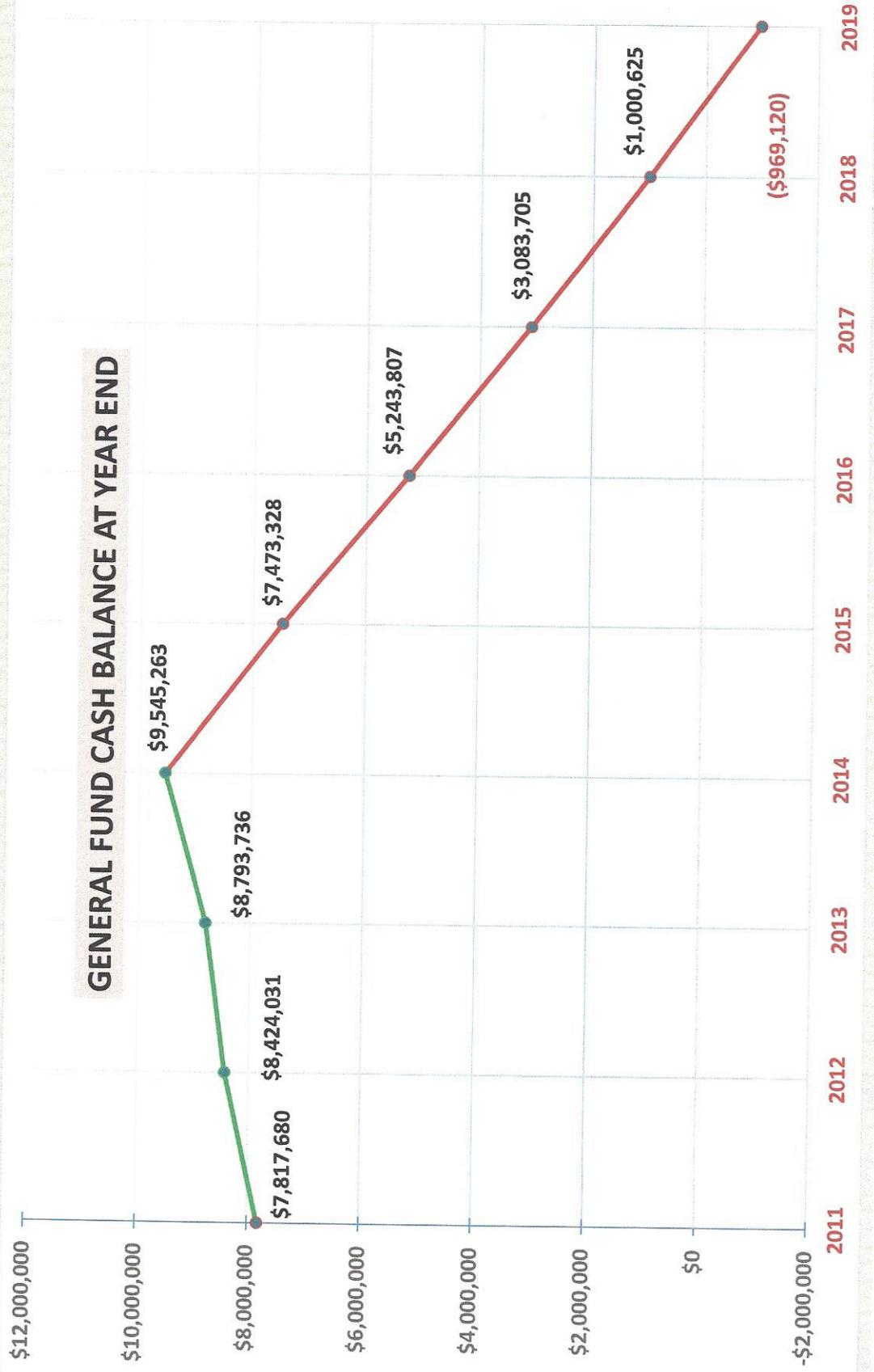


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# GENERAL FUND CASH BALANCE..... DECLINING



# CITY OF BEDFORD



## Administrative Challenges

- ❑ Operating at minimal levels City-wide while continuing to provide quality services
- ❑ Changes as to how services are delivered
- ❑ Ongoing contract negotiations with multiple unions
- ❑ Significant healthcare changes
- ❑ Implementation of a City-wide wellness program embraced by the staff

# CITY OF BEDFORD



- City has been engaged with a buyer for the Chanel property
  - 200 + jobs should it be finalized
- Finalized the acquisition of the Rysar Properties vacant land adjacent to Viaduct Park
  - 10+ acres ready for development
  - City is working to both establish and extend the Metroparks bike paths throughout the City
  - The goal is to highlight parks attractions throughout the City



# CITY OF BEDFORD



## *2015 & Beyond*

- Continue to work with Hikma Representatives
- Continue to market the City of Bedford as a whole....housing, businesses, service and overall quality of life
- Development of the Taylor / Willis property and the City trail-way.
- Collaborate with the developers of Meadowbrook Market Square to enhance retail in complex
- Collaborate with Hemisphere to market Tinkers Creek Commerce Park





# QUESTIONS / COMMENTS

