

Mayor's Minute- March 13

As the weather starts to warm up, we at the City Office are looking forward to enjoying all of the annual events that we sponsor or provide supporting services for. These events include a significant donation to the efforts of the Beautification Committee, the Fourth of July Parade, helping out the Fireman's Fish Fry, a large contribution to the Fireman's Picnic Fireworks, and various other City Sponsored meetings throughout the year.

Other exciting news is that Alluvial expects to put out bids to begin construction of the water wells, build the water plant, and install Phase 1 of the water lines for the seven entities that make up the co-op within the next two months! The Illinois Alluvial Region Water Company (IARWC) has been working for over ten years to get to this point. This is a unique effort within the entire country of a cooperative water purification and delivery system being created by a locally owned organization. We are part of a significant shift in making clean water available to our members. We will no longer be at the mercy of a corporate giant like Illinois American! The Alluvial Board has a representative from Bunker Hill who will have a say in any rate change decisions. Bunker Hill has been involved in this project since its beginning to fight for control of our water rates.

Another way that we at the City Hall have been fighting to lower utility costs for the City is with the completed installation of the solar panels for three of the largest energy consuming sites in the City. Over the next year, we expect to see significant reduction in energy costs which enable us to keep from increasing the sewer rate at this time.

We are finally in the beginning stages of replacing and supplementing the water lines throughout the City to reduce the staggering costs of repairing frequent water main breaks provide updated and improved service. We are currently applying to USDA Rural Development for funds in excess of \$4M to complete this project.

IDOT is scheduled to begin renovation of the section of RT 159 that runs through town by, improving the highway, installing culverts, backfilling the ditches alongside the highway, and reinstalling sidewalks through the length of town all the way out to Mae Whitaker Park. Not only will this improve the "curb appeal" of the City, we will be increasing the safety of the families and children as they walk or ride bikes through town.

We will also be signing a contract with The Stone River Group in March which is another co-op group that has negotiated lower power rates than Ameren provides. This service will provide hundreds of dollars of savings annually for every resident in the city limits. When you get your notices in the mail from Stone River, you do not need to do anything to receive these rates. If you would like to opt out and buy Ameren's rates, follow the instructions in the opt out letter. You will, however, not be able to return to the co-op until the next contract is made available.

We are also aggressively pursuing economic development strategies and numerous grant funding opportunities for local businesses. The University of Illinois Extension has prepared a webinar on community development. It is an overall look at how small, rural communities can begin to think about ways to increase economic and community development. Please look for the blue and yellow flyers advertising the free airing of U of I's webinar on Tuesday, March 24, 2025 at the City Hall. You can also request a link for the webinar through the city website or through contacting the City Clerk. Come Grow With Us!

You have a say in how our community grows. Please make sure to come out and vote for the candidate of your choice to reflect your commitment to making Bunker Hill a wonderful place to live, raise a family, and make a difference.

See you next time,
John Chapman, Mayor