



**CITY OF WILLIAMSTON
Downtown Development Authority**

Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Regular Meeting Agenda

To be held in the City Hall Council Chambers
161 E. Grand River Ave. Williamston, MI 48895
(517) 655-2774; www.williamston-mi.us

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
4. Approval of Agenda
5. Public Response
6. DDA Regular Meeting Minutes of February 18, 2025
7. Accounts Payable
8. Downtown Development Director Report
9. Treasurer- Budget Printout
10. Action Items
 - a.
 - b.
11. Discussion Items
 - a. DDA budget Process
 - b. 2025-2026 Draft Budget
 - i. Projects
 - ii. Signs & Banners
 - iii. Promotions
 - c. Lit Foot Path Through McCormick
 - d. Pricing on Planter by Ellie's
 - e. East Lansing Fiber2Fashion Fest seeking new home- (Carrie Ballou)
 - f. Farmers Market Marketing Request
12. Correspondence Received/Information Only
 - a.
13. Outstanding Issues- **No Action or Discussion**
 - a.
14. Public Response
15. DDA Member Comments
16. Adjournment

Individuals with disabilities requiring special assistance who are planning to attend the meeting should contact the Office of the City Clerk for accommodations. This request must be made two (2) business days in advance of the meeting.

**The next regular meeting of the Williamston DDA will be held on
April 15, 2025 in the city hall council chambers.**

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**CITY OF WILLIAMSTON
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
FEBRUARY 18, 2025
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

1. Call To Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Williamston City Hall Council Chambers by Chair Brooke Donnelly-Grzelak and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Roll Call:

Chair Brooke Donnelly-Grzelak, Vice Chair Narda Murphy, Authority Members Sharon LaPointe, Leigh Baumgras, Tammy Gilroy, and Wendy Carr. Absent: Carrie Ballou and Kyle Walch.

Also Present: City Manager/DDA Director John Hanifan and City Clerk Holly Thompson.

Motion by **Gilroy**, second by **LaPointe**, to excuse Ballou and Walch. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

4. Approval of Agenda:

Motion by **Gilroy**, second by **LaPointe**, to approve the DDA agenda as presented. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

5. Public Response:

Chair Donnelly-Grzelak called for public comments at this time and there were none.

6. DDA Regular Meeting Minutes of January 21, 2025:

Motion by **Gilroy**, second by **Ballou**, to approve the DDA regular meeting minutes of January 21, 2025 as presented. **Motion passed by voice vote.**

7. Accounts Payable:

None.

8. Downtown Development Director Report:

Director/Manager Hanifan stated the City Council has a Visioning Session on February 27th at 6pm in the Middle School if anyone is interested in attending.

9. Treasurer- Budget Printout:

A budget printout was provided for DDA review.

11. Discussion Items

11a. Signs, Parking Lots, Banners, etc.:

There is money in the budget available to work on parking signage and banners around the downtown area. He will get quotes on signs like the one in Old Mill Park and also basic parking indicator signs. He will have quotes and mockups at the next meeting for banners.

11b. Events Update:

1. St. Patrick's Day Pub Crawl: The Pub Crawl is set to take place the evening of March 14th. The Rotary has a raffle on March 15th along with hiding a leprechaun in businesses.
2. Brand New Spring Festival (May 17): Planning is underway for the Brand New Spring Festival to take place over the weekend of May 17th. It will be themed on the newness of Spring and will feature a pampering tent. They are bringing in a woman that organizes vendors.
3. River Days (Sept 2025): This is run by another group but it would be good to support the event.

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4. Website/Social Media Development: Still working on cohesive branding on events and building the audience base on the social media platforms.

11c. Preliminary Budget Discussion for 2025/2026 Fiscal Year:

Manager Hanifan reported they will be discussing and prioritizing projects for the upcoming fiscal year to build into the budget. He would like to focus on parking lots, banners, and events/promotions. This will be on the next agenda for further discussion.

14. Public Response:

Chair Donnelly-Grzelak called for public comments at this time and there were none.

15. DDA Member Comments:

No comments.

16. Adjournment:

Chair Donnelly-Grzelak adjourned the meeting at 6:36 p.m.

***Meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted by: _____
Holly M. Thompson, City Clerk

Date Approved: _____

02/11/2025 12:25 PM
User: TOM
DB: Williamston

COMPARATIVE BALANCE SHEET FOR CITY OF WILLIAMSTON

Page:

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Fund 248 Downtown Development Authority

GL Number	Description	PERIOD ENDED 01/31/2024	PERIOD ENDED 01/31/2025
*** Assets ***			
248-000-001.00	Common Checking	120,024.85	215,515.20
248-000-017.01	Investments - MI Class	219,776.08	240,700.10
248-000-120.07	2004 DDA River Refunding	8,122.63	8,520.70
248-000-136.00	Buildings, Additions And Improvements	2,841,505.08	2,853,102.59
248-000-137.00	Accum Depreciation - Bldg & Improvement	(986,273.03)	(1,074,746.25)
Total Assets		2,203,155.61	2,243,092.34
*** Liabilities ***			
248-000-202.00	Accounts Payable	0.00	339.99
248-000-214.00	Due To General Fund	84,757.92	0.00
248-000-214.08	Due To Equipment Fund	17,077.85	0.00
248-000-314.00	Long Term Advance From General	125,000.00	100,000.00
Total Liabilities		226,835.77	100,339.99
*** Fund Balance ***			
248-000-390.00	Fund Balance	1,675,250.99	1,900,165.68
Total Fund Balance		1,675,250.99	1,900,165.68
Beginning Fund Balance		1,675,250.99	1,900,165.68
Net of Revenues VS Expenditures		301,068.85	242,586.67
Ending Fund Balance		1,976,319.84	2,142,752.35
Total Liabilities And Fund Balance		2,203,155.61	2,243,092.34

User: TOM

DB: Williamston

PERIOD ENDING 01/31/2025

% Fiscal Year Completed: 58.90

END BALANCE YTD BALANCE

06/30/2024 01/31/2025

NORM (ABNORM) NORM (ABNORM)

2024-25 AVAILABLE
ORIGINAL BALANCE
BUDGET (ABNORM) USED

GL NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	END BALANCE 06/30/2024 NORM (ABNORM)	YTD BALANCE 01/31/2025 NORM (ABNORM)	2024-25 ORIGINAL BUDGET	AVAILABLE BALANCE NORM (ABNORM)	% BDGT USED
Fund 248 - Downtown Development Authority						
Revenues						
Dept 000 - General Revenues		423,279.99	357,585.49	310,000.00	(10,451.88)	103.37
248-000-401.01	Current Property Taxes	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-000-401.03	Delinquent Property Taxes	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-000-510.01	Federal Aid-Surface Transport Program	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-000-539.09	Double Up Food Bucks Grant	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-000-551.01	State Aid	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-000-566.00	MEDC Grant	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-000-573.00	Local Community Stabilization	10,392.90	10,392.90	4,500.00	(5,558.90)	223.53
248-000-580.00	Contributions/Grants From Local Units	3,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-000-581.00	Ingham County Parks & Trail Grant	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-000-665.01	Interest Income	9,757.73	4,425.38	2,500.00	(3,845.13)	253.81
248-000-675.01	Donations	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-000-675.06	Donations - Farmers Market Sponsors	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-000-687.01	Misc Refunds - Ins, Workers Comp, etc	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-000-699.12	Transfer From Water Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Dept 000 - General Revenues		446,430.62	375,403.77	317,000.00	(19,855.91)	106.26
TOTAL REVENUES						
		446,430.62	375,403.77	317,000.00	(19,855.91)	106.26
Expenditures						
Dept 728 - Comm. & Econ. Dev. Administration		22,493.15	12,753.82	27,500.00	13,611.48	50.50
248-728-702.00	Salaries & Wages	2,365.94	1,815.19	2,500.00	1,289.59	48.42
248-728-704.00	FICA	1,891.92	1,109.19	2,250.00	1,098.67	51.17
248-728-709.00	Unemployment	28.65	6.82	10.00	6.30	37.00
248-728-710.00	Payment In Lieu Of Insurance	0.00	0.00	200.00	200.00	0.00
248-728-714.00	Fringe Benefits	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-728-718.00	Insurance Premiums	2,201.51	1,367.25	2,600.00	792.40	69.52
248-728-718.01	HSA Contribution	474.69	514.50	500.00	(14.50)	102.90
248-728-724.00	Disability Premiums	93.13	42.12	100.00	57.18	42.82
248-728-725.00	Retirement	3,406.10	1,895.23	4,800.00	2,407.05	49.85
248-728-726.00	Workers Compensation	484.19	0.00	400.00	400.00	0.00
248-728-727.00	Office Supplies	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-728-801.01	Legal Services	0.00	0.00	2,500.00	2,500.00	0.00
248-728-802.00	Contractual Services	11,194.80	7,838.00	12,500.00	12,500.00	0.00
248-728-803.00	Contract - Audit	2,060.87	1,638.87	1,830.00	(47.22)	102.58
248-728-803.01	Fund Administration	21,000.00	0.00	21,000.00	21,000.00	0.00
248-728-803.04	Ingham EDC Contract	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-728-803.06	Niesa - Contract	10,000.00	0.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	0.00
248-728-860.00	Travel & Education	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-728-880.00	Community Promotion	5,500.32	5,055.00	30,000.00	14,065.64	53.11
248-728-880.01	Holiday Decorations/maint.	0.00	0.00	12,500.00	(1,450.00)	111.60
248-728-921.00	Utilities	33,123.13	16,040.71	35,000.00	18,011.63	48.54
248-728-930.02	Maintenance	1,542.00	1,542.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	0.00
248-728-940.00	Equipment Rental	10,305.67	6,357.24	20,000.00	11,295.81	43.52
248-728-955.00	Miscellaneous	152.14	76.78	20,000.00	4,196.73	79.02
248-728-964.00	Private/commercial Rehab.	2,250.00	2,250.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	0.00
248-728-968.01	Depreciation - Current	88,473.22	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-728-996.01	Bond Issue Cost	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Dept 728 - Comm. & Econ. Dev. Administration		219,041.43	60,262.91	236,190.00	141,920.76	39.91
Dept 901 - Capital Outlay						

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REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE REPORT FOR CITY OF WILLIAMSTON
PERIOD ENDING 01/31/2025
& Fiscal Year Completed: 58.90

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GL NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	END BALANCE 06/30/2024 NORM (ABNORM)	YTD BALANCE 01/31/2024 NORM (ABNORM)	YTD BALANCE 01/31/2025 NORM (ABNORM)	2024-25 ORIGINAL BUDGET	AVAILABLE BALANCE NORM (ABNORM)	% BDGT USED
Fund 248 - Downtown Development Authority							
Expenditures							
248-901-970.04	Middle St. Parking Lot	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-901-970.08	Boat Launch & Parking Lot	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-901-970.09	Boardwalk Replacement	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-901-970.21	Old Mill Parking Lot - 2022	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-901-970.30	Comm. & Econ. Development	0.00	11,597.51	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Dept 901 - Capital Outlay		0.00	11,597.51	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Dept 906 - Debt Service							
248-906-991.06	1999 Refunding Bond Principal	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-906-991.11	2004 DDA Refunding Bonds	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-906-993.00	Agent Fees	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-906-994.06	1999 Refunding Bond Interest	1,849.50	1,849.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-906-994.11	2004 DDA Refunding Interest	625.00	625.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Dept 906 - Debt Service		2,474.50	2,474.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Dept 990 - Transfers							
248-990-964.00	Private/commercial Rehab.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
248-990-995.00	Transfer To General Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	25,000.00	25,000.00	0.00
248-990-995.02	Transfer To Major Street	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Dept 990 - Transfers		0.00	0.00	0.00	25,000.00	25,000.00	0.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		221,515.93	74,334.92	94,269.24	261,190.00	166,920.76	36.09
Fund 248 - Downtown Development Authority:							
TOTAL REVENUES		446,430.62	375,403.77	336,855.91	317,000.00	(19,855.91)	106.26
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		221,515.93	74,334.92	94,269.24	261,190.00	166,920.76	36.09
NET OF REVENUES & EXPENDITURES		224,914.69	301,068.85	242,586.67	55,810.00	(186,776.67)	434.67

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		2024-25 DEPT.		
GL Number	Description	APPR.	2025-26 draft jh	
--- Estimated Revenue ---				
248-000-401.01	Current Property Taxes	310,000.00	336,000.00	
248-000-401.03	Delinquent Property Taxes	0.00		
248-000-510.01	Federal Aid-Surface	0.00		
248-000-539.09	Double Up Food Bucks Grant	0.00		
248-000-551.01	State Aid	0.00		
248-000-566.00	MEDC Grant	0.00		
248-000-573.00	Local Community Stabilization	0.00		
248-000-580.00	Contributions/Grants From Local L	0.00		
248-000-581.00	Ingham County Parks & Trail Grant	0.00		
248-000-665.01	Interest Income	0.00		
248-000-675.01	Donations	0.00		
248-000-675.06	Donations - Farmers Market	0.00		
248-000-687.01	Misc Refunds - Ins, Workers Comp.	0.00		
248-000-699.12	Transfer From Water Fund	0.00		
Total Estimated Revenue:		310,000.00	336,000.00	
--- Appropriations ---				
248-728-702.00	Salaries & Wages	27,500.00	27,500.00	
248-728-704.00	Wages-Part Time	2,500.00	8,000.00	
248-728-709.00	FICA	2,250.00	2,250.00	
248-728-710.00	Unemployment	10.00	10.00	
248-728-712.00	Payment In Lieu Of Insurance	200.00	200.00	
248-728-714.00	Fringe Benefits	0.00	0.00	
248-728-718.00	Insurance Premiums	2,600.00	2,600.00	
248-728-718.01	HSA Contribution	500.00	500.00	
248-728-724.00	Disability Premiums	100.00	100.00	
248-728-725.00	Retirement	4,800.00	4,800.00	
248-728-726.00	Workers Compensation	400.00	400.00	
248-728-727.00	Office Supplies	0.00	0.00	
248-728-801.01	Legal Services	2,500.00	2,500.00	
248-728-802.00	Contractual Services	12,500.00	12,500.00	
248-728-803.00	Contract - Audit	1,830.00	1,830.00	
248-728-803.01	Fund Administration	21,000.00	21,000.00	
248-728-803.06	Niesa - Contract	10,000.00	10,000.00	
248-728-860.00	Travel & Education	0.00	0.00	
248-728-880.00	Community Promotion	35,000.00	40,000.00	(commercial+, Theatre, Brand, events)
248-728-880.01	Holiday Decorations/maint.	15,000.00	20,000.00	Downtown + McCormick
248-728-921.00	Utilities	35,000.00	35,000.00	
248-728-940.00	Equipment Rental	15,000.00	15,000.00	
248-728-955.00	Miscellaneous	20,000.00	25,000.00	Parking SIGNS, Banners, planters
248-728-964.00	Private/commercial Rehab.	15,000.00	15,000.00	
248-728-968.01	Depreciation - Current	0.00	0.00	
248-728-999	Maintenance	20,000.00	90,000.00	(depot 30, PD 40, 20 continge)
248-990-964.00	Private/commercial Rehab.	0.00	0.00	
248-990-995.00	Transfer To General Fund	25,000.00	0.00	Finish - Interfund transfer
248-990-995.02	Transfer To Major Street	0.00	0.00	
Total Appropriations:		268,690.00	334,190.00	
Net of Revenues & Appropriati		41,310.00	1,810.00	

March 13, 2025

Williamston Downtown Development Authority- Attn: John Hanifan

CC: Holly Thompson; Brooke Donelly-Grzelak

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It is my pleasure to write to you today as a board representative of Sowing Growth, the 501(c)(3) organization that oversees that Eastern Ingham Farmers Market (now the Williamston Farm and Artisan Market) right here in downtown Williamston. I write to you hoping to be added to the agenda of the Williamston DDA March meeting (I believe it is on the 18th) to present a proposal for financial support for the market to enhance community promotional efforts. Williamston Farm and Artisan Market is a space dedicated to creating connections between the farmers and artisans in our community. We focus on providing access to fresh, local, healthy, and seasonal food to the Williamston community. We also provide access to artisan handicrafts and works of art, and foster a fun, safe, and healthy community market atmosphere that promotes education, volunteerism, and sustainability. I am writing to you to request \$5,000 in community promotions support to fund market promotions efforts and the operations of the efforts. The purpose of the support is to increase community engagement during a critical period of the market season. We kick off our market in Mid-May and we are in need of support to promote the new season of the market.

Last year we welcomed 12,232 shoppers and 73 local vendors to the market. Our food assistance programs totaled over \$1,900 that were spent at the market, a number that we hope to drastically increase in the coming year. Our recorded estimated sales were \$93,720, providing an approximate total economic impact to the Williamston area of \$140,580 due to the tendency of farmers market shoppers to spend additional money in communities on market days. Additional details can be found in our annual report, which I have included as an attachment.

This coming year is key in the growth of our market. We are changing the name of our market to the *Williamston Farm and Artisan Market* to tie our market more closely with the Williamston community. We have a new market manager, Perry Youngs, and are poised to build upon our previous successes by improving our community reach/engagement, food assistance sales, and product availability to better serve our community. Farmers markets have documented social, civic engagement, health, and educational benefits to their communities beyond the inclusive economic endowments offered to vendors and local business owners ^{1,2}. However, as a recent nation-wide study identified, a top barrier for farmers market shoppers to attend is forgetting about the times and dates of the markets ³. This is what our market is struggling with, we need funds to help support our promotion and rebranding efforts ahead of the new season. Please take our request under consideration and I would appreciate the opportunity to present this to the Williamston DDA board. Please do not hesitate to contact with me with any questions or feedback. I hope to see you at market!

Best regards,

Christian Kelly Scott, PhD

Board Member- Sowing Growth

517-290-5532

Christian@sowinggrowth.org; christiankscott@gmail.com

References:

1. Sadler, R. C., Clark, M. A. R. & Gilliland, J. A. An economic impact comparative analysis of farmers' markets in Michigan and Ontario Old East Village Business Improvement Association. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development* 3, 61–81 (2013).
2. Warsaw, P., Archambault, S., He, A. & Miller, S. The economic, social, and environmental impacts of farmers markets: Recent evidence from the US. *Sustainability* 13, 1–18 (2021).
3. Witzling, L., Shaw, B. R. & Wolnik, D. U.S. farmers market attendance and experiences: Descriptive results from a national survey. *J Agric Food Systems, and Community Development* 14, 1–23 (2024).

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Sowing Growth is a 501(c)(3) organization that operates the Eastern Ingham Farmers Market (EIFM) as part of its commitment to meet the community's need for healthy fresh food and "food for the soul".



PREPARED BY
**SOWING GROWTH BOARD OF
DIRECTORS**



(517) 231-2124



info@sowinggrowth.org



www.EasternInghamFarmersMarket.org

WHAT IS SOWING GROWTH?

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Sowing Growth is a nonprofit corporation with the specific purpose of operating the Eastern Ingham Farmers Market in Williamston, MI. The Eastern Ingham Farmers Market:

- Provides access to fresh, local, healthy, and seasonal food to a broader community.
- Provides access to artisans' handcrafted products, creations, and works of art.
- Creates a fun, safe, and healthy market community environment that supports and promotes educational opportunities about local food, local farms, sustainable/healthy growing practices, and artisan skills, techniques, and creative processes.



The Market is held in Williamston's McCORMICK PARK parking lot

Sundays 10:00 am to 2:00 pm MID-MAY TO MID-OCTOBER

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 534, Williamston, MI 48895

www.EasternInghamFarmersMarket.org

Market e-mail: Info@sowinggrowth.org

Find us on Facebook

Market Manager's Phone: 517-618-1630

The Market

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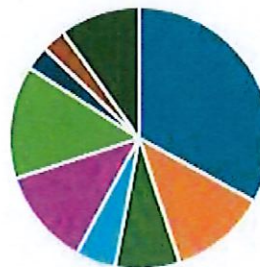
Vendors at the Market

In 2024, we welcomed 73 vendors who were either farmers, producers of food items, artisans, or service providers. Seventeen of the vendors were new to the Market. The average number of vendors per Market reached a new high of 28. Vendors sold fruits, vegetables, meat, cheese, plants, baked goods, prepared foods, services, and much more.

Crafts and Services	33
Produce	12
Value-added Products	8
Plants and Flowers	5
Prepared Foods	12
Baked Goods/Confections	14
Meat	3
Eggs and Dairy	3
Other	10

The figures represent the percentage of each product type offered at the 2024 Market.

Market Products



Food Assistance Programs

Sowing Growth and many of our vendors participate in these state and federal food assistance programs. Sowing Growth, state, and federal food assistance programs totaled \$1,913 in 2024.

- The Sowing Growth's Power of Produce Club (POP) issued \$136 in Market produce tokens and its companion POP Plus (Senior Program) issued \$810 in Market produce coupons.
- Total customer use of state and federal food assistance programs was at \$1,026. This reflects:
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) \$747 (\$671 in 2023).
 - WIC Project Fresh - \$0 (\$110 in 2023) NOTE: no longer processed by the Market as 2024
 - Double Up Food Bucks (DUFB) **\$1,026/600?** (\$452 in 2023); and
 - Senior Project Fresh - \$120 (\$170 in 2023).



2024 ECONOMIC IMPACT – NEARLY \$141,000

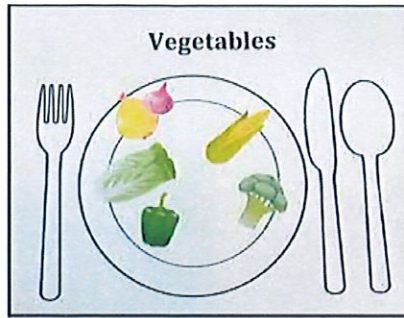
Based on 46% of vendors reporting sales data, EIFM vendor sales reached an estimated \$93,720 (includes Holiday Market), up 1.2% down from 2023. Research by other farmers markets across the country indicates that market customers typically spend additional money in the community on market days, known as the 1.5x community economic multiplier. In the case of the EIFM, this equates to an approximate total economic impact to the Williamston area of \$140,580.

One reason for the 1.2% decline in vendor reported income was because of the change in Market Managers and part of the season was not recorded.

Sowing Growth Supports the Market with:

- Musicians (entertainment just for fun)
- Creation Station - Art with Scott (local artisan provides firsthand art experiences to Market visitors of all ages)
- Market Customer Loyalty Club Card
- Returnable Bottle and Can collection at each regular season Market and twice monthly in the off-season
- Power of Produce (POP) Club 4 weeks in August for children ages 3-8
- Senior Power of Produce (POP Plus) nutrition awareness program for adults aged 60 and above.
- Seedlings and Sprouts (craft activities for all children)
- Nature Discovery provides monthly exhibits of Michigan-native reptiles and amphibians.
- Pollination Station (area non-profit organizations share information on public interest topics)





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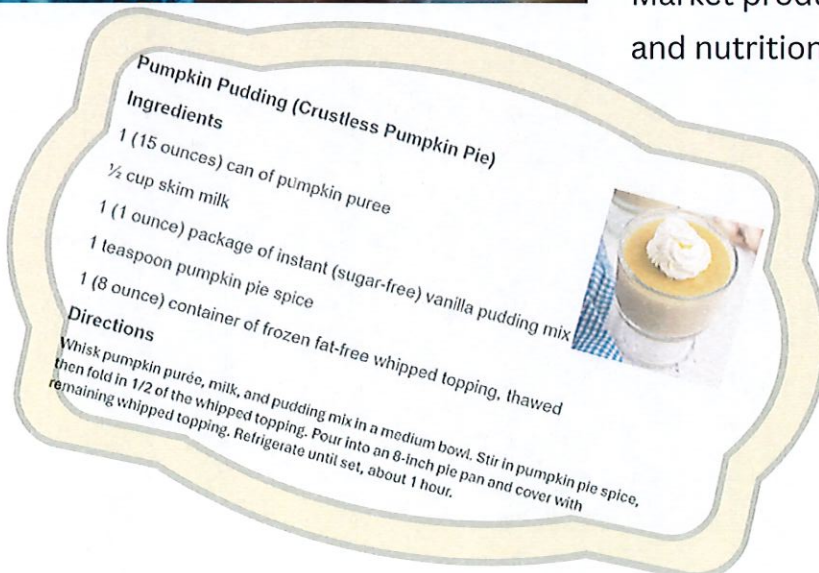
The Power of Produce-POP Club enrolled 48 children ages 3-8 in 2024. Each Market Sunday in August, children enrolled in the POP Club received \$2 to help them purchase fresh produce vendors have brought to the Market. Children studied:

- What is Produce?
- What it takes to grow and harvest foods and when fruits and vegetables are ready to come to Market
- The variety of local produce that can be found in the Market.
- How to prepare and store Market produce.



Following up on the success with POP Club for children, Sowing Growth initiated a "POP Plus" targeting area senior citizens 60 years and older visiting the Market in September. In 2023, 60 seniors registered for this program. In 2024, 81 individuals joined the POP Plus Club.

POP Plus participants were issued \$10 coupon books to spend on fresh produce. Participants also received a food sampling of something made from Market produce, recipe card for the food sample, and nutrition and safe food handling information.





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Successes

2024 Achievements

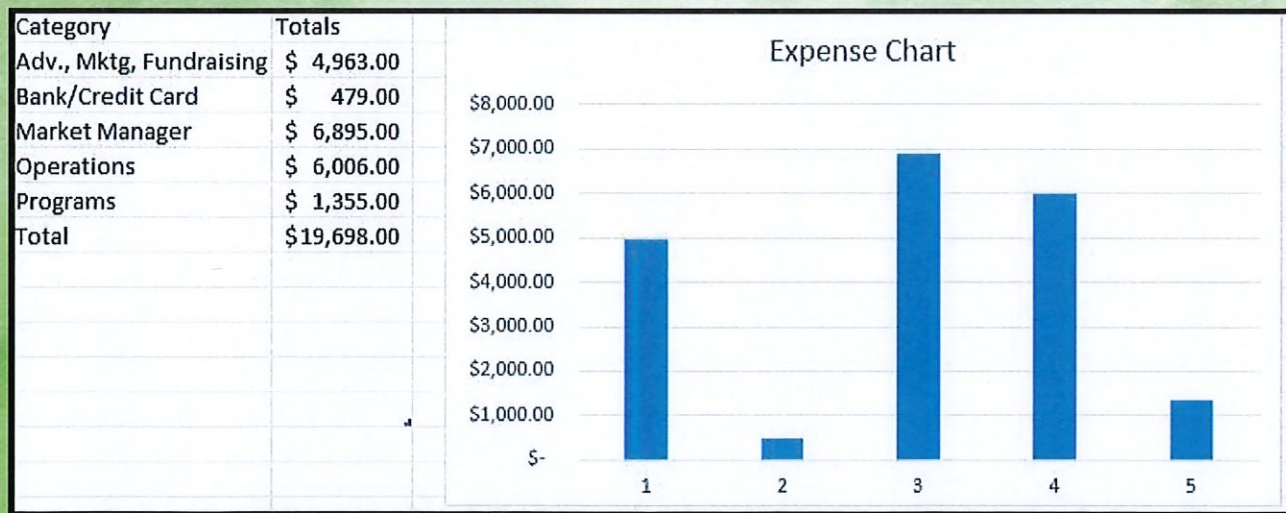
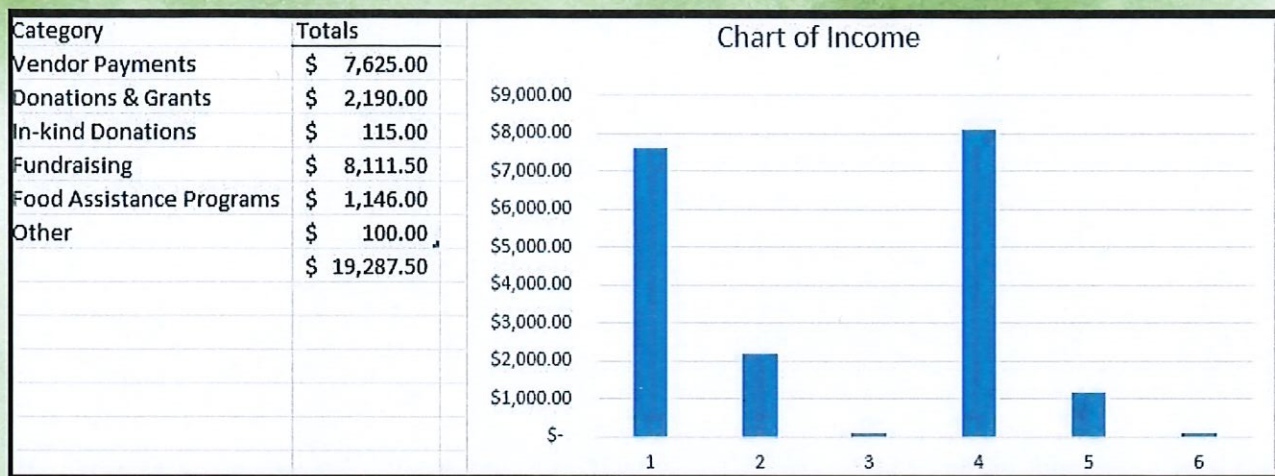
- Conducted a search and hired a new Market Manager.
- Increased the average daily Market vendor count to 28 vendors per Market.
- Provided more prepared foods and added more diverse beverage offerings.
- Continued Market information display on the community digital message board.
- Produced 3 Market videos for local advertisement at Sun Theater and Admiral Gas Station.
- Introduced cell phone accessible market information.
- Increased the number of Sunday Market Supporters, successfully covering theme costs for 18 of 23 Markets.
- Increased the number of regular season Market visitors to a new high of 12,232.
- Increased participation in the Senior Power of Produce (POP Plus) program for seniors.
- Increased EIFM gleaning donations to the Williamston Area Senior Center from 700 lbs. in 2023 to 1000 lbs. of food in 2024 (July to October)
- Broadened community outreach by linking local service organization activities to Sunday Market themes and increasing non-profit participation in the Pollination Station.
- Partially achieved Sowing Growth bottle and can collection at 76% of goal.

Goals



- Collaborate with the Williamston Area Senior Center to glean and distribute 1500 lbs. of unsold food and produce donated by vendors after each Market.
- Explore the viability of offering off-season Markets at an indoor venue.
- Increase the number of visitors to the Market who participate in the state and federal food assistance programs.
- Conduct a survey to assess community Market awareness and utilization.
- Synchronize Sowing Growth communications and social media postings.
- Expand grant and other funding sources.

Financial Snapshot



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WHO WE ARE

Sowing Growth is a 501(c) 3 organization that operates the Eastern Ingham Farmers Market (EIFM) as part of its commitment to meet the community's needs for healthy fresh food and "food" for the soul.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

The Board of Directors of Sowing Growth takes great pride in presenting its 2024 Annual Report, which summarizes our seventh year operating the Eastern Ingham Farmers Market.

This past year, the Board found itself looking for a market manager midseason. Thankfully, we found a great new manager in Perry Youngs, who was hired in August. We ended up having a very successful season. Together with Perry, the Board is already at work preparing for the 2025 season.

As always, we thank the City of Williamston, vendors, customers and everyone who donated time, money, and/or in-kind support. All were key to our success, and we applaud their efforts.

Please take a moment to peruse the Sowing Growth 2024 Annual Report and share pride in our accomplishments. If you are not already part of the Sowing Growth family, consider becoming a volunteer, vendor, supporter, or sponsor as we begin our eighth year of operating the Market that serves the greater Williamston area.

Thank you so much for your part in our accomplishments!

Sincerely,

Ryan, Michelle, Sharon, Jane, Scott, Carol, Wendy, Malinda, Christian, and Tammy

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