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## CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

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### **LENGTHY LIST OF CITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN PAST YEAR**

*Despite near record weather events, resourceful City staff continues to achieve*

**MUSCATINE, Iowa** – The past year was dominated by near historic weather events that taxed the resources of all City of Muscatine departments. It would be appropriate, then, if the citizens of Muscatine offered forgiveness if the list of accomplishments for each department and division during the past year was shorter than in previous years.

However, forgiveness was not needed. Thanks to the leadership from the top echelons of City administration, the knowledge and experience of professional staff, and the tireless effort and dedication by all staff members, the City was able to meet or exceed many of the 2019 goals adopted by the Muscatine City Council in December 2018.

The list of departmental accomplishments was compiled over the past month as department heads and supervisors meet to review past goals and establish new goals for the upcoming year. The list was sent to the members of the Muscatine City Council on November 4 along with a grant and contribution summary for Fiscal Year 2018-2019.

“It is pretty amazing when you actually read the entire document and read what has occurred in the city this past year along with all the successfully awarded grants,” Jerry Ewers, Muscatine Fire Chief, said.

With one of the snowiest and coldest winters on record followed almost immediately by the start of 99 consecutive days of the Mississippi River being above flood stage, not to mention the abnormally large crop of pot holes that were revealed this spring and the massive post-flood cleanup and restoration efforts, 2019 was one for the record books. And we still have two months to go.

“A lot of credit for these accomplishments has to be given to our city administrator as well as to the department heads and their staff,” Nancy Lueck, Finance Director, said. “Gregg (City Administrator Gregg Mandsager) really fosters and encourages the collaboration between departments and the coordinated efforts needed for many of these accomplishments as well as facilitating the discussion on how to overcome any obstacles and developing financing plans for the projects.”

The hard work, long hours, and pride in Muscatine that Mandsager demonstrates is not lost on those that work for the City.

"We all take great pride in the accomplishments in each of our departments," Lueck said. "Some of that comes from the inspiration he gives us."

One of the highest accomplishments during the past year was increasing the General Fund balance, which continued a 10-year trend in the growth of the fund balance after expenditures. Those reserves provide the City with enough capital to withstand changes in state appropriations or large scale emergencies for at least two months' worth of expenditures.

The City ended the 2009-10 Fiscal Year with \$1.7 million in the General Fund balance or 11.4 percent of expenditures. The fund has increased to \$4.8 million or 24.1 percent of expenditures at the end of Fiscal Year 2018-19. The steady growth of the fund balance over the last 10 years resulted from solid fiscal planning and a leadership dedicated to fiscal responsibility while still improving the quality of life for Muscatine residents.

The City's Finance Department recently received the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the 35th consecutive year and the GFOA

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Certificate of Achievement for Comprehensive Financial reporting for the 28th consecutive year. The awards recognize not only the dedication of the Finance Department staff to the overall success of Muscatine but also their work with the City Administrator and directors from each City department in laying out the short term and long term financial strategies for Muscatine.

Among those financial strategies are financial plans for capital projects, plans for the 2020 City Bond Issue, the economic development incentive program (TIF and Tax Abatement), CAT grant oversight, and the financial plan to eliminate the \$2.5 million landfill debt that existed at the end of Fiscal Year 2009-10. The department also oversees work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on recovery from the 2019 flood event, and works with the Information Technology (IT) Department that continues to enhance internet security along with other IT projects.

Mandsager has been instrumental in the negotiations of TIF agreements that have positively affected the economic development of Muscatine. Along with key members from Finance and Community Development, Mandsager led the development of financial plans for capital projects that took advantage of available grants and private contributions to reduce the burden on taxpayers' money and allow the City to keep the property tax rate unchanged for the past eight years, a key goal for Mandsager. The City has also not had a property tax rate increase in the past 10 years, and that is a credit to the fiscal responsibility and vision of City of Muscatine department heads and the administrator.

One of the departments hardest hit by the weather in 2019 was the Department of Public Works with seemingly endless hours of snow removal followed by seemingly endless hours of monitoring the level of the flooding Mississippi River. Still the department made significant progress in its annual battle with pot holes along with a second year of full depth patching to repair streets and prevent future pot holes, and alley resurfacing projects.

Plans for the Grandview Avenue Corridor Revitalization Project are near completion as is the Park Avenue 4 to 3 Lane Conversion project. The West Side Trail project will start construction on Nov. 11 and the roundabout at Mulberry and 2nd Street is on schedule to begin in January 2020.

The divisions within Public Works also had a solid year and are highlighted in the report.

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Other highlights from the 2019 City of Muscatine Accomplishments report:

- A little over \$5 million in grants and contributions were received by the City of Muscatine during Fiscal Year 2018-2019 led by \$2.5 million for the Special Revenue Funds and \$1.2 million for Capital Projects.
- The Department of Community Development worked with the developer to facilitate the first new, single-family residential subdivision in more than a decade (Arbor Commons), and supported work to address needs identified in the Housing Demand Study through TIF investment in Oak Park, Arbor Commons, and the Hershey Building.
- The Housing Department provided 180 families with affordable rental housing, had 28 participants in the Family Self-Sufficiency Program, and awarded 31 families with Certificates of Completion of Homebuyer Education Course.
- The Water Resource and Recovery Facility began construction of the High Strength Waste Receiving Project and began three studies, one a wetlands study for two areas at the Pollinator Park, one for nutrient reduction from urban runoff, and one on the flooding issues in Iowa Field.
- The Muscatine Fire Department continued to see an increase in run volume while also continuing annual public education classes, and increasing department training.
- Several new programs were established by the Muscatine Police Department while continuing to promote community-policing efforts such as park and walk, bike patrol, and being visible to the public.
- The Department of Parks and Recreation, another one of the departments hardest hit by this spring's Mississippi River flooding event, still had a long list of achievements highlighted by another successful College Search Kickoff soccer event and the development of the Houser Street Athletic and Parking addition.
- The Muscatine Art Center is creating a more aggressive exhibition schedule, secured several grants to provide additional funding, and served 15,654 individuals, their highest number in the last five years.
- The Musser Public Library opened in a new home and has seen a large increase in the number of individuals visiting the facility.

[2019 CITY OF MUSCATINE ACCOMPLISHMENTS](#)



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FY 18-19 GRANT AND CONTRIBUTION SUMMARY