

**City of West
Branch
Office of the
City
Administrator**

To: City Council

From: Matt Muckler, City Administrator

Date: May 3, 2013

Weekly Council Update

- **Police Department Update:** The Police Department has had a busy week. The Prescription Drug Disposal Event on April 27th brought in approximately forty pounds of unused and unwanted prescription drugs. Officer Alex Koch is currently completing his training by patrolling alongside Sergeant Hanna. Chief Horihan will make the determination as to when Officer Koch will be assigned to the patrol schedule on his own. Also this week, Chief Horihan attended training for recertification as a car seat safety inspector.

- **Park & Rec Summer Programs:** The Tree Planting Event took place on Monday April 29th at the Cemetery. Over 340 volunteers assisted the staff in planting 120 trees. The volunteer response from West Branch Schools was incredible. With such a successful event, staff is considering applying for another Trees Forever Grant. The next grant deadline is June 1st.

This is the last week for the Girls on the Run Program in West Branch. The season will end with the completion of the Ronald McDonald 5K in Iowa City on Sunday May 5th. Girls and their running buddies would welcome community member's support along the race route.

- **Comp Plan Printing:** The finishing touches are being made on the Comp Plan. The document will be sent out for printing next week and copies will be provided to council members, board and commission members, staff, our community partners and interested community members.

- **US 6 Bridge Replacement:** The Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) is planning to close the US 6 bridge over the W. Wapsinonoc Creek 3.8 miles east of the Johnson County Line. This closure will require IDOT to utilize both Cedar and Muscatine County roads as a detour route. The Iowa DOT was able to include the bridge project in their May letting. The detour will use Baker Avenue into West Branch. The work is currently scheduled to start in June 2013 and is scheduled to be completed by the end of the 2013 construction season. Representatives from IDOT have provided an IDOT Agreement for Use of Local Agency Roads as Detours for Council consideration. This agreement will be included as an item on the May 20, 2013 Council Meeting Agenda.

- **Iowa League of Cities Property Tax Reform Update:** A conference committee for SF295, the property tax reform bill, met three times this week. The first two meetings on Tuesday included selection of committee chairs and review of the “guiding principles” each chamber would adhere to during negotiations on the property tax bill.

The Democratic committee members suggested the discussion should be narrowed to where there is general agreement about the property tax problem—commercial property tax reform. The Democratic committee members stressed four principles:

1. Every business gets a tax cut.
2. Small commercial property tax payers should receive the most help.
3. They want tax relief that will protect residential tax payers from a shift.
4. Schools and local governments would not see their services diminished.

The Republican committee members said that they are interested in much broader relief, not just relief for commercial taxpayers. The Republican committee members said they were focused on:

1. Looking at property taxes from the lens of the property tax payer.
2. The need for both relief and reform—not one without the other.
3. Reform across all classes of property.
4. Property taxes should not be a discouragement to businesses to locate or expand in Iowa.
5. They want to reduce taxes for residential payers to encourage property ownership.
6. Property taxes should not shift from one class to another—if the legislature does nothing, there will be a shift to the residential property tax payer.

The full committee met again Wednesday. The Senate conferees outlined their commercial property tax credit plan and potential areas for flexibility within the plan. The House conferees laid out their plan and provided estimates on the state budget impact of the proposed property tax reform. Although there were a few questions from each side, the meeting ended with no further meeting scheduled.

The League of Iowa Cities has estimated that the House version of the bill would reduce property tax revenue available to the City of West Branch by over \$100,000 annually by fiscal year 2016 and by over \$400,000 annually by fiscal year 2021.

- **Upcoming Events:**

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| ▪ Saturday May 4 th from 7:00-11:00 a.m. | City Wide Clean Up – Water St. Parking Lot |
| ▪ Monday May 6 th at 7:00 p.m. | City Council Meeting |
| ▪ Tuesday May 7 th at 7:00 p.m. | Park & Recreation Commission Meeting |
| ▪ Thursday May 9 th , 6:30 p.m. | Library Board of Trustees Meeting |
| ▪ Tuesday May 14 th at 6:30 p.m. | Animal Control Commission Meeting |
| ▪ Monday May 20 th at 7:00 p.m. | City Council Meeting |
| ▪ Thursday May 23rd at 6:30 p.m. | Preservation Commission Meeting |
| ▪ Tuesday May 28th at 6:30 p.m. | Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting |

The information provided is one-way communication and should not be discussed among you as this would be a violation of the open meeting law.