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Vol. 49, Issue 27  
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Photo by Marney Simon

**BATTERED AND BEATEN** for the past several years, Water Street in downtown Wilmington looks to finally get a makeover this month. Mayor Ben Dietz announced last week that the city was able to add the much needed repairs to this year's list of Motor Fuel Tax projects.

## Long awaited road projects coming to Wilmington, Will County

STAFF REPORT

Plans to address much needed road work not just locally but across the state have finally started to take shape.

On July 5, Wilmington Mayor Ben Dietz told members of the City Council that he hoped to have information on local road repairs by the end of the week.

True to his word, Dietz announced plans to address more roads than expected within the city limits.

Last month, the council approved this year's Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) projects at a cost of \$975,000, to include resurfacing of Daniels Street as well as Kahler Road between Water Street and Wildcat Court. Work will also include rehabilitation of Kahler Road between Butcher Lane and Barr Road.

MFT funds come from the state and are taxes on what the state calls "the privilege" of operating motor vehicles upon public highways, as well as the operation of recreational watercraft on waterways within the state, based on the consumption of motor fuel.

The taxes are charged at the pump and held by the state, then later delivered to municipalities and road districts for use on roadway projects. Projects must meet specific criteria and must be approved by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

On Friday, Dietz announced to his Facebook page that the planned projects came in under cost and that extra cash combined with funds available from the High-Speed Rail project mean more projects will soon be underway.

"I am beyond excited to share that Water Street will be included in this year's road resurfacing program," Dietz posted. "This will repave Water Street from Baltimore Street north to Chicago Street. We will also be repaving portions of roads that connect to Water. Those will include Mill Street, Van Buren Street, and Jackson Street. Along with repaving, Water Street will also be getting a full restriping of lanes, crosswalks, and parking. This will also expand the amount of on-street parking that is available."

Dietz said the work on Water Street

should kick off on Monday, July 31, weather permitting, and should last roughly three days. The project will include daytime closure of North Water Street from 7 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. during construction.

Meanwhile, IDOT also unveiled a plan late last week to spend nearly \$41 billion in federal, state and local funds over the next six years to repair and upgrade roads, bridges, airports, rail lines and other infrastructure throughout the state.

Those plans will also have local impact, including a handful of projects slated for the 2024 fiscal year, which began on July 1.

One project that will bring relief to local drivers is the overlay of Coal City Road from I-55 to Route 53, covering 2.72 miles of road. The intersection at Coal City Road and Route 129 has already been completed, with a new stoplight that went live this spring.

Local projects anticipated to take

SEE ROADS, PAGE 2

## Wilmington City Council works on annual budget

Projections show deficit for current fiscal year

BY MARNEY SIMON  
EDITOR

The new fiscal year is already more than two months old. But the members of the Wilmington City Council continue to chip away at revenue and expenditure needs, hoping to soon pass an appropriations ordinance outlining spending from May 1, 2023 through April 30, 2024 (FY24).

The mayor and aldermen held a third special meeting of the finance committee on July 5 to work on the budget.

City officials said that while the budget is normally approved much earlier than this year's appropriations ordinance, this year's effort is taking longer as the city works on reorganization of its financial statements, cleaning up of the books, and through a change in leadership in the finance department.

What is available, however, is a draft of anticipated revenues and expenditures.

The draft currently shows overall expenditures for FY24 at \$21.6 million, with revenues projected at \$19.2 million, leaving the city with a deficit budget for the fiscal year of \$2.3 million.

Deficit spending means

the city would have to dip into its fund balances to cover the difference.

"Right now, the way it looks and the way everyone has worked hard to figure this out, we are at a 30% fund balance," finance director Nancy Gross said.

Gross said the fund balance is what the city has in the bank across all accounts, which is money used to run the city minus any new revenues.

"Even though the [individual] fund balance numbers, we're not confident in that, we know as a whole they are very good. We're just not confident in the line items that we have," Gross said.

Confidence in this case does not mean the city might be short of funds, but rather, that the projected fund balances are preliminary in nature, and still require final numbers from the fiscal year that just closed in order to paint a more clear picture of the city's financial state.

While the city has not been more specific about the budget goes outside of these committee meetings, issues on financial reporting were brought to light after Gross took over the position last fall. Gross has said previously that the finance department is working to untangle issues like commingled accounts and some missing reporting as the

SEE BUDGET, PAGE 3

## City Council approves agreement for police training

BY MARNEY SIMON  
EDITOR

Delayed a day due to the 4th of July holiday, the members of the Wilmington City Council held a quick meeting on July 5, taking care of just a few items on the city's to-do list.

On that list was unanimous approval of an intergovernmental agreement with Mobile Training Region #16 (MTU 16).

MTU 16, also known as the Tri-River Police Training Region, Inc., is a not-for-profit corporation chartered in the state that serves law enforcement agencies in Will, Grundy, and Kankakee counties. MTU 16 is a member of the Illinois Statewide System for In-Service Training (ASSIST) for continuous in-service training for current law enforcement officers.

ASSIST exists under the Intergovernmental Law Enforcement In-Service Training Act.

According to MTU 16, the organization exists to "encourage local and state law enforcement officers to upgrade their knowledge and

skills in techniques pertinent to the law enforcement profession; to provide law enforcement officers with training opportunities within their own locality, and on flexible schedules; and, to provide quality training on topics of instruction centered on specific local needs."

Instruction for participating agencies include training courses provided by John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Northwestern University Traffic Institute, Southern Police Training Institute, the University of Illinois Police Training Institute, and the Institute of Police Technology and Management, as well as courses from the FBI, DEA, and other federal and state agencies.

MTU 16 currently has more than 65 member departments, serving more than 2,000 law enforcement officers.

The IGA approved last

SEE COUNCIL, PAGE 3

## Council approves public works projects

STAFF REPORT

The Wilmington City Council has approved thousands of dollars in maintenance projects for this summer, looking at upgrades and improvements for the city's public works needs.

In June, the council approved three measures regarding that work, the first of which was the development of a Source Water Protection Plan.

The Illinois EPA has mandated that all communities that provide water to its resi-

dents create a Source Water Protection Plan (SWPP). This plan is required to include: SWPP vision, characterization of source water and the source water protection area, source water protection goals, source water protection action plan, and program implementation.

The city is also required to revisit and update the plan every five years.

The SWPP is due to the state on July 26.

That plan will be prepared by Chamlin and Associates in the amount not to exceed \$10,000.

The second measure was the approval of plans to rebuild the Stewart Street Lift Station Pump from Xylem of Mokena in the amount of \$5,714.75

That lift station needed to be repaired following a pump failure.

The final approval was for a service agreement to inspect and service five emergency generators in the city.

Those generators, which service the water and sewer departments, were due for servicing and inspections as part of an annual occurring maintenance agreement.

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