

WASHINGTON *TODAY*

Vol. 19 No. 2

Official Newsletter for the City of Washington, Illinois

Winter 2019

From the desk of Mayor Gary W. Manier



We are now several months into the 2019-2020 school year and everyone is busy with many activities. We must remember to be safe and watch out for children at bus stops and walking to and from school.

On Halloween we experienced our first snowfall and once again our Public Works crews responded to the first of what may be many events. We are proud of the commitment our snow fighters have towards keeping our streets safe and are ready 24/7. If you see any of our road crews out, please let them know how thankful you are for the job they do.

Our 9-11 Ceremony once again was very well attended. Thank you to Tom Berlett and his committee for their work is helping us to never forget this tragic day in our history. Thank you to Illinois State Representative Ryan Spain for speaking and to Washington Community High School for their support.

Thank you to the Washington Chamber of Commerce and featured guest speaker Dr. Elizabeth Stewart, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, for making this year's 25th annual Mayor's Prayer Breakfast a wonderful success.

The City Council held a half day planning session to help set priorities for the next few years. This was a great opportunity for all the elected officials to work together outside of a regular meeting and to provide staff direction to help continue to move our City forward. The top four goals are: 1) complete a new Comprehensive Plan; 2) consider a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan; 3) adopt a Capital Improvement Plan; and 4) create a Master Development Plan for our W223 property. Quarterly updates will be given by City Administrator Ray Forsythe at future Council meetings.

I hope everyone has had a chance to drive around our City Square at night to see this year's decorations. Thank you to Kristie Howell and her TEAM at Create a Scene for what they've created, which has some folks saying it looks like a Norman Rockwell painting.

Also, we need to be thankful for our Police Officers, Fire Fighters, EMT's and many others whose jobs unfortunately require them to be away from home. Please consider giving to your favorite charity this holiday season to help those in need as well.

We are only as good as those that came before us, let us remember those that have lost loved ones this past year and keep families in your thoughts and prayers. Please be safe during the holidays and if you're staying home, Washington is the best place to celebrate with family and friends.

Lada and I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Together we can...together we will!

GOD BLESS WASHINGTON,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gary W. Manier". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gary W. Manier, Mayor



WASHINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

As the holiday season descends upon us, we would like to remind everyone of several things to remember.



Be sure when you are exiting a store, heading back to your vehicle with packages, that you feel safe. Try leaving at the same time others are leaving and look ahead to be sure no one is around your vehicle.

Have your keys in hand as you walk toward your vehicle allowing you a quicker entry into your vehicle as well as a quicker trunk opening.

Lock packages, shopping bags, and gifts in your trunk if possible and don't leave them in open view on your seats. If placing them on your seats is your only option, be sure to keep them out of sight by covering them with a blanket or something similar.

Be aware of your surroundings when you arrive at your destination, look to be sure that no one is near your driveway or garage and if you park in the garage...stay in your vehicle until your garage door closes.

Telephone scams accelerate during this time of year. Realize that no police agency will ask for money over the phone. You will not be asked for money because you did not show up for court or have failed to pay a ticket. Also, the IRS will never call about money owed. If you receive this type of call politely hang up and do not engage in conversation and report the call to us.

Remember! We want to everyone to feel safe this season so if for any reason you do not feel safe as you shop or travel...call us and we will gladly come and assist you!

WASHINGTON CENSUS 2020 — YOUR RESPONSE MATTERS

In order to accurately assess the number and location of the people living within the nation's borders, the U.S. Constitution mandates a census of the population every 10 years. Everyone living in the 50 states, District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories is required by law to be counted in the 2020 Census. The census population totals determine which states gain or lose representation in Congress. It also determines the amount of state and federal funding communities receive over the course of the decade.

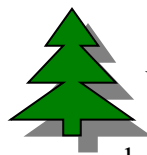


Municipalities in Illinois receive funds for income, use, and motor fuel taxes on a per capita basis. This makes it imperative that all residents are counted in order maximize the accurate amount of State funds to help the City continue to provide essential services and improve the quality of life in Washington. The facts about the nation's population gathered in the census will directly shape decisions and funding for schools, roads, hospitals, child-care and senior citizen centers, and more.

All Washington residents will receive a mailed invitation to respond to a short questionnaire—online, by phone, or by mail—starting in March 2020. Citizens will even be able to respond on mobile devices. In May, the Census Bureau will begin following up in person with households that have not responded to the census. The 2020 Census asks less than ten questions and does not ask for Social Security numbers, donations, political party preference, or bank or credit card account numbers. It only takes about ten minutes to complete the questions.

Responses are protected by law (Title 13, U.S. Code, Section 9). Only summary information is published; detailed identify data and individual responses are held strictly confidential. Every Census Bureau worker takes a lifelong pledge to protect the confidentiality of census responses. By law, the Census Bureau cannot share an individual's answers with anyone, including welfare and immigration agencies, the FBI, IRS, CIA, or any other governmental agency.

CHRISTMAS TREE DROP-OFF SITE



The Tazewell County Health Department will offer a Christmas tree drop-off site at the Washington Park building located at 815 Lincoln Street (near the baseball diamonds) for this season's mulching program. Please remove all lights, ornaments, tinsel and plastic bags before drop-off. **Trees can be dropped off between December 26th and January 11th.**

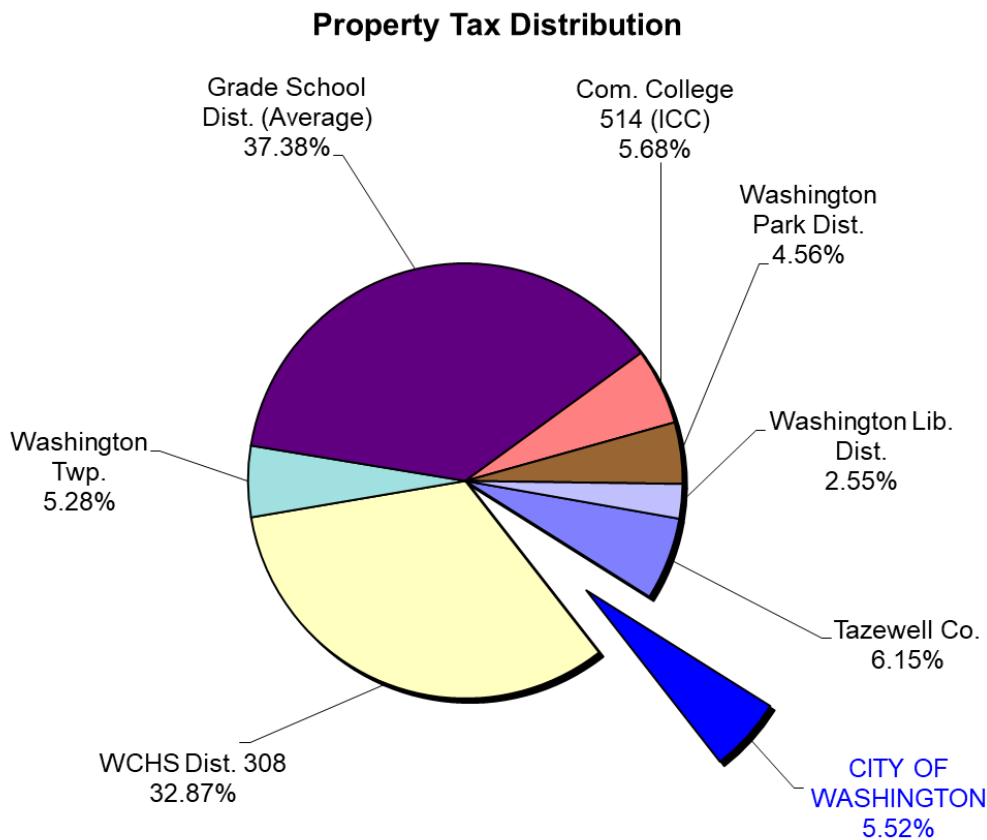


CITY HOLDS THE LINE ON PROPERTY TAXES

In addition to all the hustle and bustle of the holidays, December also means it is time to adopt the annual tax levy. Property taxes are one revenue source the City uses to fund pensions and other special funds such as for civil defense. A portion of the levy is also used to help fund the fire and ambulance contract.

The proposed levy of \$1,647,741 represents **NO INCREASE** over the prior year levy amount. In order to accomplish a no increase property tax levy and due to increases in required pension contributions, funds available to help pay the fire and ambulance contract with the Washington Fire Department and Rescue Squad were decreased by \$75,486. The contract totals \$735,636 of which \$260,599 will be funded through the property tax levy and the remaining \$475,037 will be funded through other General Fund revenue sources such as sales taxes.

The City's portion of property tax represents about 5.5% of the total tax bill (based on prior year rates). Other taxing bodies included on your bill depending on where you live are grade school, high school and community college as well as the county, township, library and park district. **The City levies only for the taxes indicated by Washington-Fire and Ambulance and has no control over the taxes levied by the other taxing bodies. Consequently, even though the City has not increased the taxes levied (for Fire and Ambulance as compared to General-Corp in prior year) – your bill may or may not increase depending on what the other taxing bodies do.**



Property taxes were decreased in 1997 in response to achieving Home Rule status. At that time, the property tax rate was \$.8020 although the rate had been as high as \$1.2619 in 1989. The estimated rate for the 2019 levy for taxes payable in 2020 is \$.47281 based on a projected Equalized Assessed Valuation of \$348,500,000 as provided by Tazewell County.

Property taxes are a small, but important part of revenue sources used to fund City operations, comprising 5.6% of all budgeted revenue for the 2019-20 fiscal year. Other revenue sources include sales tax, income tax, telecommunication tax, motor fuel tax, water and sewer fees, loans, grants and surplus balances. Property taxes remain a critically important source of revenue in order to continue to provide the services our community has come to enjoy.

2019 GOAL SETTING/STRATEGIC PLANNING WORK SESSION

On Saturday, November 2, 2019, the City of Washington's leadership met for a strategic planning and goal setting work session. The work session was held at Five Points Washington and facilitated by Elizabeth Hansen, President of Midwest Municipal Consulting, LLC of Windsor Heights, IA.



The purpose of the work session was to review previous successes and current progress, discuss current issues and opportunities, and develop preliminary action plans for the City's new goals and initiatives. A survey requesting the public's feedback on thirty-five proposed new initiatives was made available for 14 days. The City received 836 responses, which were narrowed to the top ten results. After the survey was reviewed and discussed, the participants voted and the following items were approved by the City Council at the November 18, 2019 City Council meeting.

2020-2023 CITY COUNCIL GOALS

- ◆ Complete a new Comprehensive Plan to include economic development to improve chances at attracting private, commercial and industrial development.
- ◆ Consider a comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan that includes Route 24, Route 8, the Square, Nofsinger Rd, Freedom Parkway, Lakeshore Drive and the W223 property.
- ◆ Adopt a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for the city and fire department with a focus on a 20-year reconstruction plan to include maintenance, repair, timely implementation and budgeting consideration.
- ◆ Create a Master Development Plan for the W223 property.
- ◆ Visit the roles and responsibilities of the Mayor, Council, staff and citizens and consider a code of conduct/standard operating procedure to include this information, expectations, limitations, voting and how to get items on an agenda. Revise the Committee/Committee of the Whole structure as well as the Council agenda for meetings. Have the City Administrator create an administrative policy on proper follow-up and feedback to citizen inquiries.
- ◆ Evaluate the City's budget to maximize funding towards Capital Improvement Projects.

City Administrator, Ray Forsythe, will be working with the City's Management Team to put together work plans for each goal and begin implementation.

PARKING BAN—JUST A REMINDER. . .

A parking ban automatically goes into effect on all City streets, with the exception of Washington Square and Main St. from Washington Square to Burton on the south and to Zinser Place on the north, when there has been an accumulation of snow and/or ice of two (2) inches or more. Parking bans as well as the lifting of the bans are publicly announced through news and social media. Police and Public Works work together to clear all streets in a timely manner so as not to cause hardship for our residents any longer than necessary.



Reach us by phone at 444-3196 - Website at www.ci.washington.il.us



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Mayor

Gary Manier

Aldermen

Mike Brownfield, *Ward I* Dave Dingledine, *Ward III*
Lilija Stevens, *Ward I* Brian Butler, *Ward III*
Brett Adams, *Ward II* Daniel Cobb, *Ward IV*
Todd Yoder, *Ward II* Randall Black, *Ward IV*

City Officials

Ray Forsythe, *City Administrator*
Pat Brown, *City Clerk*
Ellen Dingledine, *City Treasurer*

City of Washington

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