

State of the City

February 2022

When I delivered the State of the City address in 2021, I began by mentioning that in 2019 we survived a historic flood, in 2020, the globe was struck with a devastating pandemic, the pandemic raged into 2021 and we are still dealing with the pandemic and the devastation it has left not only in our communities but throughout the world. Our prayers remain with the families who have forever been changed by the loss of loved ones due to this virus especially those in our own community.

Through all of these struggles, Ozark remains. We have continued to survive. The hard work and determination of our citizens, our business owners and those who strive to see the Ozark community move forward have made and will continue to make Ozark a beautiful and great place to live.

Even while many have had to deal with the ongoing pandemic, I am proud to say, our city employees have made many great strides in completing numerous projects.

Each department supervisor was asked to update the city with what they had been working on throughout the year:

Beginning with the Ozark Water & Sewer Department, Department Head Tonya Talkington reported the following:

We've replace computers at the billing office, updated smart meter reading system, and requested qualification for engineering a Water System Master plan of which Hawkins-Weir was selected and preliminary work has begun. We were also able to sale unusable vehicles on the gov.deals website bringing in over \$14,000 in additional revenue.

At the water treatment plant were replaced a 5-ton heat pump, replaced the sign at the entrance after being damaged by a storm, updated

computers and software, installed an additional alarm system and updated the surveillance camera system.

For updates of the water distribution system we were able to install a new 12" valve on W. Commercial, update smart read system, replaces over 50 meter and endpoints, completed repairs at the East Tank and completed an installation of a valve vault at the West Tank.

At the Wastewater Treatment and Collection Center we were able to install a monitoring system at the lift stations and wastewater treatment plant. We were also able to install a chopper pump at the North I-40 lift station to reduce stoppages.

Fire Chief Nick Trotter reported:

The Ozark Fire Department ended the year with 737 total calls. Five members were replaced on the department. Two other members retired. The fire department ended the year with a total of 19 qualified volunteer members.

Michael Brasseaux was appointed as Assistant Chief.

All vehicle maintenance has been brought up to current status. All annual safety inspections have been completed on the required equipment.

We now own enough oxygen bottles that we were able to cancel a costly contract to refill tanks on an "as needed" basis. We now can refill those tanks locally at a savings of around \$1,200 per year.

The new fire station on North 18th Street has been completed and has been placed into service.

Police Chief Devin Bramlett reported that:

To fill vacancies in the police department, 5 officers and 2 office personnel were hired last year.

The Ozark Police Department hosted a total of 30 training events in 2021. These training events were utilized by 11 different agencies. The average class size for all of the training events was 35. This translates to around 1,050 officers from all over the country as well as surrounding areas who attended these classes. These officers stayed in our local hotels, ate at our local restaurants and purchased gas and other items while here helping to stimulate the economy of our area.

Our police department, to better serve our communities and enhance their abilities, have joined with other agencies to develop a regional Special Response Team (SRT). Each participating agency has committed certified officers, equipment, and resources to the team.

The police department applied for and received 2 mini grants totally \$3,500. We also applied for and was awarded over \$100,000 worth of military surplus equipment through the military's 1033 program. This equipment was picked up in Kansas, Colorado, and Texas. Through this program we were able to obtain needed items and save the city money.

The Ozark Police Department raised \$10,000 for the shop-with-a-cop program. We were able to take 80 local kids Christmas shopping during the holiday season.

Chief Bramlett also reported the following statistics:

There were 890 reports, 167 accidents, 567 tickets, 1,604 warnings, 124 subpoenas served, 364 physical arrests, and 583 warrant arrests.

One statistic I wanted to point out: there were 261 ordinance warnings given. Of those warnings only 67 were served with ordinance tickets. That means 194 warnings were resolved without tickets. I, the council, and citizens of the city appreciate all the work you've done in cleaning up your properties. This has not gone unnoticed.

There have been several calls to the office, and to me personally, letting us know they've noticed what a difference there has been in the appearance of our city. We need to continue to strive to make this happen. Many of you say "we want our city to grow", "Why can't we get something new"? This is how it starts. We have to show potential

new citizens, business owners, and investors we care about where we live. How we “look” is a big part of how we care. It’s important! It matters! You’ve made a difference!

For the Ozark Street Department, Michael Brasseaux reported the following:

2021 began with freezing temperatures and frozen roads. They worked diligently to try to get the city streets clear and safe for our citizens. It went from, what seemed like, frozen roads one week, straight into mowing season the next week and the mowing never stopped. There is over 100 acres each week to mow within the city wide area.

The year ended with getting part of Helburg Lane repaved as well as the majority of 12th Street.

The street department was able to secure grant money and was able to purchase new benches and additional playground equipment for our parks.

Brooke Rosson, for the Ozark Community Center reported the:

New walking track resurfacing project was completed with the donations from local businesses including Black Hills Energy and Mercy-Ozark.

New pool furniture was provided by donations from Bank OZK.

A+ Insurance purchased a lobby computer for the community center and a new large Connect Four Game was provided by Ozark Inn & Suites.

There were several successful events held at the community center including the Back-to-school bash giving away more than 20 prizes, Veteran’s day and Christmas specials.

The center also exceeded their revenue goal of \$140,000 by reaching an actual amount of \$154,000.

We also created the Ozark Pride and Beautification Committee. This committee works alongside the Ozark Area Chamber of Commerce and

Main Street. This committee has made great things happen in our downtown area and has plans for more clean ups and improvements this year.

These activities are what your city employees are doing on a daily basis. I am very proud of what has been completed this last year. We have worked closely together to get all these things accomplished.

As we enter this new year, there are several projects already underway. There is a new paving project near the fire station on North 18th being completed and a new protected-turn signal at 7th and Commercial has just been installed.

There are exciting things happening here! We must keep it going! We need to continue working together to move forward. We all want Ozark to move forward in a positive way. With growth comes change. Changes aren't always accepted well. But to grow is to change. We all want to see Ozark and our surrounding communities move forward but we also need to hold on to our small-town values. We value our people above all. You make Ozark, Ozark.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our office. The staff or I will be happy to answer any and all questions you have about the city to the best we can.

Ozark is still here! We are still strong! Together we can keep it that way!