



TOWN OF CARTHAGE 2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT

MARCH 2024

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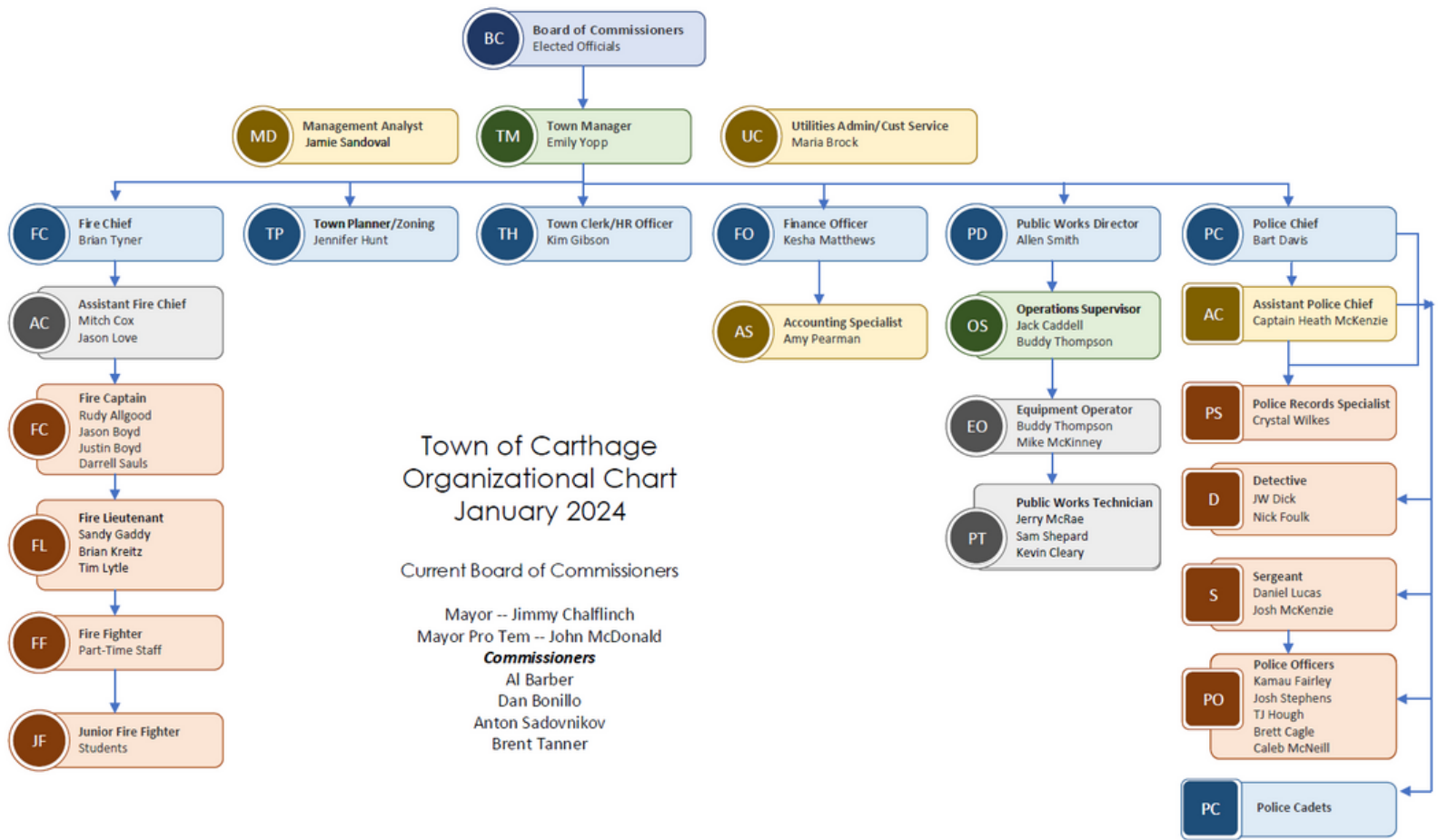
SUMMARY

This Annual Report has been created to present what the Town of Carthage Staff has accomplished within the 2023-2024 year, to show each departments highlights and, what was achieved internally. The purpose of this annual report is to give a comprehensive report on the Town Staff's activities during the preceding year, 2023-2024. The annual report will provide readers with information about current operations, financial performance, and recommendations for the upcoming years. This report analyzes the following departments: Administration, Fire Department, Police Department, and Public Works Department. The report also explains the Board of Commissioners' Strategic Goals and where those goals currently stand. The Annual Report examines the General Fund Expenditures and the General Fund Revenues as well as any other funds that were received, such as grants for upcoming projects/infrastructure.

THE TOWN OF CARTHAGE HAS CREATED THE FOLLOWING ANNUAL REPORT TO PRESENT THE 2023-2024 FISCAL YEAR AND WHAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED.



TOWN OF CARTHAGE ORGANIZATION



ADMINISTRATION REPORT

Administration is comprised of multiple departments. Below are the following department highlights.

Planning and Zoning

The Town of Carthage hired a new full-time Planner to perform the daily tasks of reviewing plats, subdivision developments, and other upcoming projects. Within the year 2023, all commercial development was reviewed by the Town Planner and all residential development and permitting was reviewed by the Management Analyst.

Some ongoing projects within the Planning and Zoning Department include:

- Needmore Community Gateway Sign
- Needmore Community Park
- Downtown Revitalization Plan
- Parking Corridor Study
- Unified Development Ordinance Update

The Town Planner would like to focus on training, personnel development courses and conferences this year. Ongoing conferences are needed to maintain the status of Certified Zoning Official and occur twice a year, once in February and once in the Summer. The Town Planner also wants to consider taking Geographic Information Systems (GIS) classes to provide the Town with GIS data for the Future Land Use Map and other data. The GIS Certificate program at UNC Chapel Hill is a total of 18 units and is either full or part-time.

Future projects for the Planning and Zoning Department include:

- Parks Master Plan
- Create the Greenway Trails Connectivity

Some recommendations with the Planning and Zoning Department are within the next 2-5 years hiring a Planning and Permitting Technician, in-house Building Inspector, and future planners as they become necessary for Carthage.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT

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Code Enforcement

Recently, the Board of Commissioners brought code enforcement back in-house to allow for clearer schedules, cases, and hearings for violations. Currently, there are two employees that make up Code Enforcement which are the Town Manager and Management Analyst.

From June 2023 to December 2023, the Town of Carthage opened approximately 26 cases. Of those 26 cases, a total of 20 cases were abated, either fully or partially. There were several complex cases that code enforcement had managed within the 2023-24 year. These cases were included:

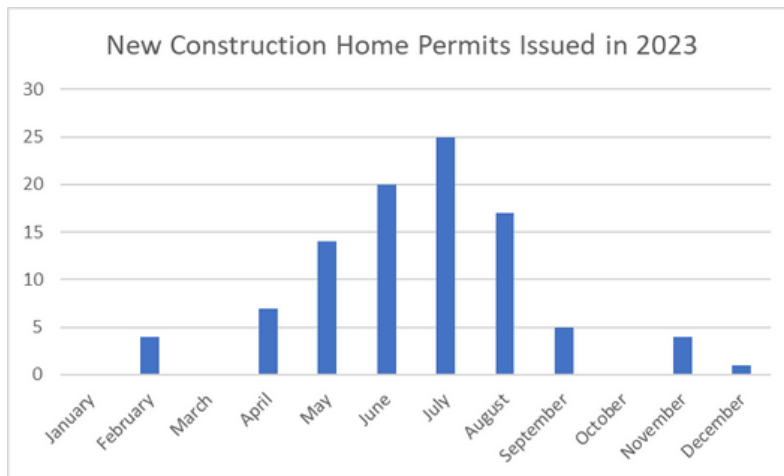
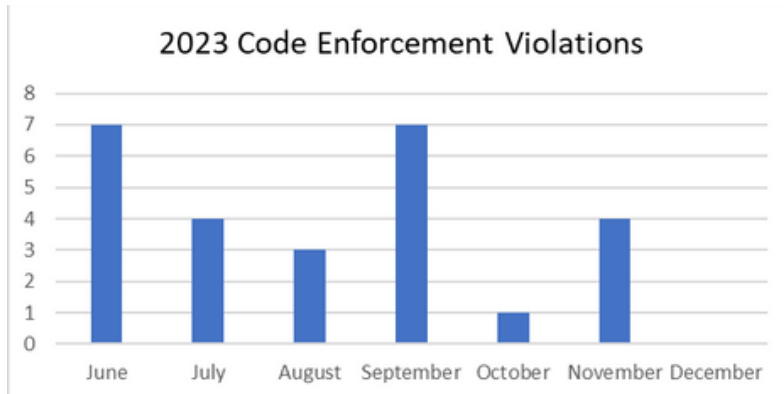
- Tractor Trailer (used as storage) Enforcement
- Minimum Housing Case at 202 W. Barrett Street
- Stop Work Orders
- Junk Yard on Kester Road
- Commercial Garage Maintenance in Residential Neighborhood
- Sign Ordinance Enforcement

One major project that Code Enforcement staff is working on is the filing system of all violations. Since there was no in-house code enforcement, staff is working to create better management on how to operate Open and Closed cases. Code Enforcement must keep a copy of all documentation that is given to property owners and/or posted on the property. Staff also keeps records of all communications between the property owner and staff as well as any documents given to staff from the attorneys.

It is recommended the Board of Commissioners determine how many Minimum Housing cases the Town of Carthage is willing to take on per year. Once prioritization is identified, it is recommended that the Board of Commissioners consider hiring a dedicated Code Enforcement / Building Inspector, or simply a part-time Code Enforcement Officer, in the near future to allow other employees to focus on their respective job responsibilities.

QUICK DATA CHARTS

The following charts show the data of the Planning and Zoning Department and the Code Enforcement Department. A more in depth explanation is included within the departments' individual 23-24 Annual report.



ADMINISTRATION REPORT

Administration is comprised of multiple departments. Below are the following department highlights.

Human Resources

The Human Resources Department has become a more prominent role and more policies and procedures are being created for internal organization. Recently, Town Clerk has taken over the role of Human Resource Officer to relieve some of the roles from the Finance Manager.

Some projects that were established included listening sessions for all Town of Carthage employees. All staff were invited to speak openly and anonymously with the Human Resource Officer to discuss their issues, concerns, or ideas. There was nearly 100% participation from all departments and management staff gained important insight from their team members.

Within the 2023 year, a formal process for onboarding of new employees was created. The Human Resource Officer is also looking into training and continuing education programs through a video library called NeoGov.

Some future goals include:

- Policy Research and Development
- Recruitment Strategies
- Staff Only Intranet
- Retention Strategies

Some recommendations include:

- The role of the Town Clerk and the Human Resources Officer should be separated in the near future.
- Updated pay study
- Explore incentive programs and perks for each department.
- Implement performance evaluations for both retention and recruitment.
- Create of a line item budget for Human Resources Department.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT

Administration is comprised of multiple departments. Below are the following department highlights.

Finance

The Finance Department was selected to be a part of the NCLM Municipal Accounting Services Program, which will include Black Mountain Software.

The Finance Department also hired on a new position of Accounting Specialist, to assist the Finance Officer in daily roles such as payroll and invoices. The Finance Officer also passed along the role of Human Resources to the Town Clerk, and designated HR Officer. These events have helped tremendously.

Some recommendations include to delegate or reassign the duties of the department, now that we have the Accounting Specialist position. In addition, there needs to be policy rewrites for financial policies and procedures to fit the reassignment of duties. This will help to eliminate the Separation of Duties audit finding that we have consistently received in the past. It is recommended that this redistribution take place as early as possible in the 2024-25 fiscal year. It is also recommended that a succession plan be crafted sooner rather than later as the current Finance Officer is nearing retirement eligibility. The Town Manager will work with the department to plan and implement these changes.

Town Clerk

The Town Clerk role has been a consistent role at the Town of Carthage. Within recent years, the role of the Town Clerk has been tasked with other roles such as the Development Administrator and the Human Resources Officer in order to provided the necessary services for Administration.

Some ongoing projects that the Town Clerk has been tasked with includes:

- Digital Filing Systems - Provide consistency within departments and allows easy access to all that may be required to find forms on the network server.
- Document Ownership - A system to determine the ownership of each file to be placed with those that regularly use the files.
- Retention Schedule Procedure - Determining what records need to be disposed and a timeline for disposal as well as the process for disposal.

One recommendation from the Town Clerk is for the Board of Commissioners to consider hiring a part-time team member to assist with the retention process and scanning of documents.

FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Carthage Fire and Rescue employees a team of 35 fire fighters; comprised (2) volunteers, (30) part-time, and four (4) full-time staff. The department operates three 24-hour shifts that respond to all emergencies 24/7/365. Each shift is staffed by (1) full-time Captain and several Part-Time Firefighters.

During 2023, the Carthage Fire and Rescue responded to 1,135 emergency calls that resulted in 1,862 manhours on scene. They are continuing to maintain our long-range goals by providing quick response times that benefit our citizens and visitors traveling through Carthage.

Carthage Fire and Rescue strives to improve community safety. We engage with our citizens and the surrounding communities we serve in various ways:

- Install free smoke detectors.
- Certified child car seat technicians on duty.
- Install and inspect an average of 25 car seats a year free of charge.
- Promote and provide Preplans for our local businesses and churches. Preplans allow us to meet with business owners and gather information about the building layout and keyholder information. This information is vital in the event of a fire/emergency at their location.
- Interact with the public during numerous special events, such as the Buggy Festival, parades, and the Food Truck Rodeo. Every day during lunch we interact with the public, often by showing kids the fire trucks and passing out fire prevention information.

One critical area needing attention is our staffing level. We reapplied for the Safer Grant to fund (3) Full-Time Firefighters, but were unsuccessful. We are requesting the addition of three (3) Full-Time Firefighters to our current staff. Our justification for this expense is due to the following:

- Overlapping Calls:
 - An overlapping call is when we are dispatched to one call, and then we are dispatched to another call (or calls) while committed to the initial call. From January 2023 until December 2023, Carthage Fire and Rescue was dispatched to 1,135 calls for service. Out of the 1,135 calls 252 or 22.2% were overlapping calls. With the increase in population in Carthage and surrounding areas, we will continue to see our call volume increase as will the likelihood of overlapping calls.
- Salaries:
 - The Fire Chief recommends that the Fire Captains current salary be evaluated for market value. The current salaries do not seem to be competitive compared to other Fire Departments. The Fire Chief feels that Fire Captains are in line for a pay increase that meets current standards.

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT

The Police Department was accepted into the North Carolina Accreditation Program (NCLEA). This program allows the Police Department to maintain the highest level of professionalism and excellence in operations as they meet standards of the law enforcement community. The Town and its communities will benefit when its law enforcement personnel are following standardized policies and procedures that provide efficient, effective and fair policing.

The Police Department also successfully implemented the Records of Arrest and Prosecution Background (RapBack) Program in accordance with NCGS § 143B-972.1. This program aims to ensure that all criminal justice officers in the state are proficient and ethical in carrying out their responsibilities. Its purpose is to maintain a comprehensive and up-to-date record of any criminal activity involving these officers.

The Department was awarded for a Community Police Officer position under the Community Oriented Police Services (COPS) Grant. The position will play a crucial role in enhancing communication and trust between the Police Department and our community. While the department has been successful in building positive community relations already, this additional position will enable us to launch several community programs that were previously unfeasible due to staffing constraints.

Finally, the Department has received and installed cutting-edge body cameras and in-car systems via AXON. The Police Department's policies have been updated to incorporate the latest technology and procedures.

The Town of Carthage Police Department recommends beginning the process of planning and funding well-designed police facilities in order for staff to perform their duties efficiently, effectively, and securely. As a facility ages, the Carthage Police Department no longer meets the needs of the evolving department, thus, negatively affecting morale, efficiency, safety, and overall delivery of police services. When these conditions occur, agencies search for alternatives. Typical remedies include expanding or renovating the existing facility, adaptively repurposing an existing non-police facility, or building an entirely new facility.

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT CONT.

Based on the growth and expansion of the Carthage Police Department, staff suggests initiating a planning phase to address the inadequacies of the current facility. This would entail the provision of additional space for office use, conference room, general and equipment storage, as well as a dedicated area for evidence processing and secure evidence storage.

The steady increase in local population over the years, coupled with the Town of Carthage being the county seat, has resulted in a significant surge in visitors to the town during daytime hours. This has led to a considerable rise in overall calls for service, traffic violations, and automobile accidents which has had a significant impact on the Police Department.

In order to align with the evolving needs of the Town of Carthage, it is imperative that the Police Department's staffing levels are increased over the next 2 to 5 years. This will ensure that the department remains in sync with the community's expectations, service philosophy, crime trends, calls for service, population density, and demand for citizen-police engagement. By doing so, the department will be able to bolster its capabilities and effectively cater to the safety requirements of the community.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

The Public Works Department is responsible for a large variety of duties to include street repair and maintenance, special event support, utility operations, park maintenance and overall care throughout the town.

For sewer, the Town completed Phase 1 of the sewer project that was funded from prior year grants. Additionally, leftover grant money was used to purchase necessary equipment for the town (\$150k). Public Works secured \$10 million in infrastructure grants for sewer and water. Currently, the Public Works Department is working with LKC Engineering on planning upgrades to the water plant. The department coordinated a project with LKC Engineering to digitize the maps for both sewer and water. With growth beginning in the town, Public Works is responsible for increasing oversight for all water and sewer infrastructure and street inspections for new developments.

For water, The Town of Carthage received its fourth straight Area Wide Optimization Program (AWOP) award for water quality. This speaks to the level of partnership between the Public Works, Veolia team, and LKC Engineering. There was a total of three catastrophic water main failures in town within a two-month period. The department was able to identify that the pumps at the water plant were not ramping up and down properly as well as a failing altitude valve, causing a water hammer effect. After identifying these problems, adjustments were immediately made on all necessary equipment at the water plant. To date, Public Works has not experienced any similar isolated events. Recently, the department implemented a program to manage backflow prevention compliance for water.

Public Works faced staffing shortages this year, leading to heavier workloads. The team worked longer hours, as needed, to ensure coverage for the town. Despite the difficulty to staff an open position, Public Works was able to promote three employees within the department. Two were promoted to Operations Supervisors and one was promoted to an Equipment Operator.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT CONT.

Public Work's future recommended projects are essential to prepare for the growth that the Town of Carthage is experiencing. Some projects include:

- Water Plant Upgrades
- Phase 2 Sewer Upgrades
- Needmore Area Water Upgrades
- Town Rental Building Remodels
- Sewer and Water Master Plan
- 10-Year Plan for Streets and Sidewalks.

Some recommendations that Public Works would like to implement are performance reviews. Performance reviews will encourage good performance, identify areas for improvement and discuss employee growth. Monthly appreciation lunches, not funded by the Town, are intended to boost and maintain employee moral. Other recommendations include:

- Progressive step plan for training and certification schools
- Pay classification study to stay competitive with the market rates
- Hire two new employees to begin departmentalization and better delegation of tasks.

2023-2024 ADVISOR BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Board of Commissioners

Jimmy Chaflinch, Mayor
John McDonald, Mayor Pro Tem
Dan Bonillo, Commissioner
Al Barber, Commissioner
Anton Sadovnikov, Commissioner
Brent Tanner, Commissioner

Appearance Committee

Erin Rembert, Chair
Jennifer Donovan, Member
Malcom Hall, Member
Ashley Coats, Member
Tom Prim, Member
Becky Prim, Member

Planning Board

Elizabeth Futrell, Chair
Dena DeLucia, Member
Antoniette Kelly, Member
David Norris, Member
Victoria Riddle, Member
Bill Smyth, Member
Ian Lumgair, Member

Historical Committee

Joanna King, Chair
Antoniette Kelly, Member
Bert Patrick, Member
Carol Steed, Member
Connie Marion, Member
Dora Anne Maness, Member
Greg Hayes, Member
Lille Mae Barrett, Member
Khristy Cole, Member
Ashley Coats, Member
Suzanne Parker, Member



ACHEIVEMENTS AND GRANTS

Administration

The Town of Carthage Administrative Department received three grants. The Rural Transformation Grant in December 2022 in the amount of \$350,000, the Rural Capacity Implementation Grant in June 2023 in the amount of \$49,999, and The National Trust Hart Family Fund for Small Towns in August 2023 in the amount of \$5,000. The Town also received \$1,000,000 from North Carolina General Assembly earmarked for a new administrative building.

Fire Department

The Fire Department lowered their Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating for citizens. The score lowered from a six (6) to a five (5), which could be potential savings in insurance premiums for residential and commercial customers. Through diligent training and exemplary performance, Carthage Fire and Rescue continues to make improvements in preparation for the next scheduled rating.

Police Department

The department applied for two positions and was granted one through the COPS Grant for Community Police Officers. The position will play a crucial role in enhancing communication and trust between the Police Department and our community. While the department has been successful in building positive community relations, this additional position will enable us to launch several community programs that were previously unfeasible due to staffing constraints.

Public Works

Public Works received three new grants, has four active grants, in the 2023-2024 fiscal year. These grants include The Water Asset Inventory and Assessment (AIA) Grant that was awarded in March 2018 (closing in 2024) in the amount of \$200,000, The Sewer Asset Inventory and Assessment (AIA) Grant that was awarded in March 2023 in the amount of \$200,000, the Department of Environmental Quality Water Grant that was awarded in August 2022 in the amount of \$8,489,500, and the Department of Environmental Quality Phase I Sewer Grant awarded in May 2020 in the amount of \$4,605,000. Finally, Public Works received state funding in the amount of \$10,000,000 for water and sewer infrastructure.

GENERAL FUND REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

General Revenues and Expenditures are highly important for budget forecasting purposes. The Town of Carthage Finance Department keeps track of all revenues and expenditures for all departments. Below is an accurate estimation of the current revenues and expenditures from each account in which the Town of Carthage operates in.

General Revenues

The Town of Carthage operates with a line-item budgeting system. Therefore there are several funds in which the Town of Carthage operates with. These funds are acquired through local government taxes and any sales tax revenue from the fiscal year. The first revenue fund is the General Fund. Throughout the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the General Fund revenue has amounted to \$2,743,319.

The Town also has a Powell Bill Fund. The Powell Bill Fund is calculated based on a formula set by the N.C. General Statutes, with 75% of the funds based on population and 25% based on the number of municipality-maintained street miles. The Town's Powell Bill revenue for the fiscal year stands at \$105,299.

Since the Town of Carthage manages and operates their own water and sewer system, there are two separate funds to manage those revenues for the Town utilities. The revenues for both the Water and Sewer Fund are obtained from the water and sewer usage from residents on their utility bills. The revenues for the Water Fund for the 2023-2024 fiscal year is \$777,635 and the Sewer Fund for the fiscal year is \$698,298.

General Expenditures

With revenues, come expenditures of all of the above revenues. The General Fund is an account balance that pays for any operating costs, salaries, and supplies. The expenditures of the General Fund for the current fiscal year stands at \$2,621,348.

The Powell Bill expenditures currently stand at \$16,565. The Powell Bill Fund are used primarily to resurface existing municipal streets; however, they may be used to maintain, repair, construct, or widen streets. The Town can also use Powell Bill funds to plan, construct, and maintain bike paths, greenways, or sidewalks. This expenditure is reasonably low given that it is important for the account to build up revenue in order to provide an entire project with the amount of revenue created.

The Water and Sewer Fund expenditures are used to repair, maintain, and expand current utility operations within the Town to provide quality services for residents. The current expenditures from the Water Fund are \$697,128 and the expenditures from the Sewer Fund are \$478,821.

UPCOMING PROJECTS

Below is the future/upcoming projects that have been identified and planned to be started or completed within the next 3-5 years. Each department has identified their goals, projects, and programs that are in the top priority for the departments.

Administration

Management is looking into multiple training opportunities for administrative employees. Finance is preparing for transition to Black Mountain Software as part of the NCLM Municipal Accounting Services Program. Planning is working to complete the Downtown Revitalization Plan, the Parking and Corridor Study, and the updated Unified Development Ordinance. Code Enforcement is identifying Minimum Housing violations and prioritizing those cases with the Board of Commissioners. Human Resources plans to implement employee programs and work with other departments with filing systems.

Fire Department

Carthage Fire and Rescue are very mindful to be diligent in maintenance and the care of that equipment to prolong the life and usefulness for as long as possible. Unfortunately, there are some items that have a limited life span due to safety reasons. Some of the future replacements/purchases we have on our radar are as follows:

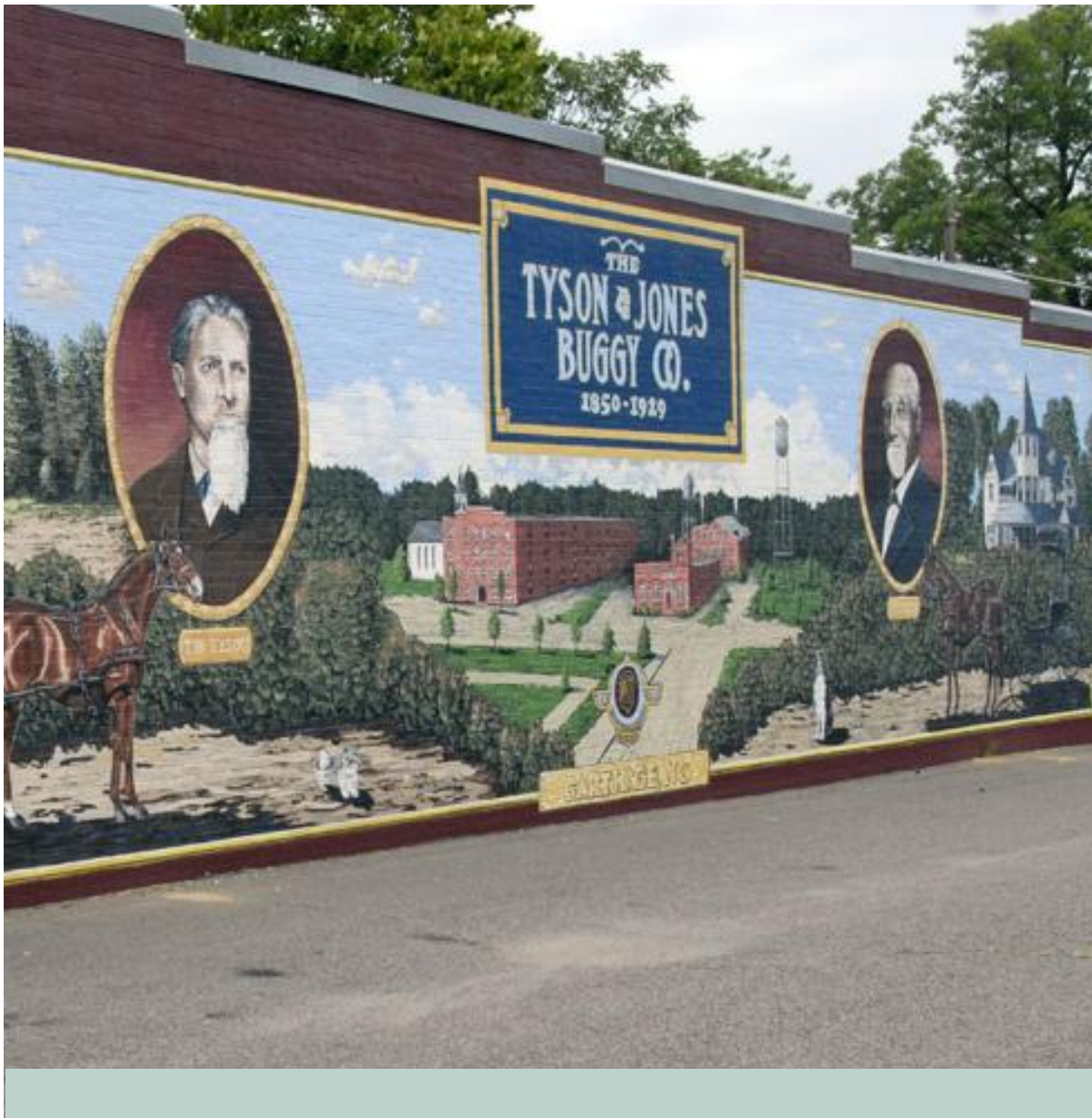
- Replace Brush Truck
- Replace Fire Engine
- Replace Ladder Truck
- Replace Rescue Truck in the upcoming budgets.
- Replace and upgrade firefighting and rescue equipment over each budget year.

Police Department

Upcoming projects include Community Outreach Programs such as City-wide and Community Neighborhood Watch meetings, Chat/Lunch with a Cop and Coffee with a Cop, training programs on Active Shooter Preparedness and Prevention, and Lunch with Kids at Carthage Elementary School. The Department plans to implement Special Needs Awareness Program (SNAP), a confidential database with crucial information about individuals with special need for responding public safety personnel. The Police Department plans to implement a Community Lockbox Program aimed towards senior citizens residing in the Town. The lockboxes would be designed to allow emergency access by the Police Department via a master key.

Public Works Department

Public Works is continuing their planning efforts with water plant upgrades as well as water line upgrades within the Needmore Community. Public Works is also focusing on Phase II sewer upgrades which will provide the majority of Town with additional sewer capacity for infill development. Remodeling of the Town rental buildings is in the future projects for buildings and grounds line item budget used with the funds from building rentals. The Public Works Department is also planning on creating plans which include a Water and Sewer Master Plan and a 10-year Streets and Sidewalks Plan.



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