



## State of the Village of Monee

March 25, 2015

Mayor

**Jay Farquhar**

Clerk

**Wayne Haser**

Trustees

**Heidi Gonzalez**

**Bill Gray**

**David Holston**

**Doug Horne**

**Jim Popp**

**Anthony Raczek**

P&Z Chair

**Ed Gross**

Treasurer

**Norbert Snow**

Administrator / EMA Director

**Ruben Bautista**

Police Chief

**John Cipkar**

Public Works Superintendent

**DJ Kruzal**

Finance Director

**Darryl Bulliner**

Resource & Recreation Dir

**Mary Jo Vincent**

### Village Hall

5130 W Court St

Monee, IL 60449

708-534-8301

708-534-6862 fax

### Police Department

5357 W Main St

Monee, IL 60449

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708-534-3321 fax

In less than 2 years, we have empowered village staff to more actively assess inefficiencies and other areas in need of improvement.

### Financial Responsibility:

- We have a properly balanced budget (expenses not exceeding revenues). Previously, expenses had been budgeted above revenue which would allowed casual spending of reserves without explicit board approval.
- We adopted administrative policies restricting spending practices. Additional policies are being reviewed that should help us maintain or improve our 'AA' Moody's rating.
- We identified over 3 million dollars so far that was lost due to incorrectly administered practices. Some of these issues date back over a decade. Most of that figure is unrecoverable but we were able to begin recovering about \$400,000 of that.
- We re-negotiated another development agreement which resulted in a \$350,000 addition to our general funds reserves.
- We implemented a mechanism to help subsidize our public safety initiatives and police pension while minimizing our potential demand on property taxes.
- We are projected to come in several thousand dollars below our budgeted expenses for the current year.

**Economic Development:** Everyone seems to want commercial/retail growth (especially a grocery store). It's easy to theorize about what our community deserves but, without the right return on investment, businesses in today's market simply refuse to take needless risks. In order to validate the desires of Monee consumers and aid our recruitment efforts, we did two separate market studies. The first analyzed the general market condition of Monee and the second focused specifically on the viability of a grocery store. We can't afford to sit back and wait for developers to stumble upon us.

Armed with this data and in cooperation with several other south suburban communities, we attended the national Retailers Conference (ICSC ReCon) in Nevada for the first time. Our most notable achievement was solidifying the recruitment efforts of Matanky Realty to bring Advanced Auto to Monee. This store in Lamels Plaza on Monee-Manhattan Road is under construction and will be opening soon.

We are taking steps to become business-ready but we have a long way to go before actively recruiting. No matter how wonderful the opportunities and conditions are in Monee, developers won't know much about us unless they are already here. We



have to have an effective outreach program and engage new parties if we are going to be recognized as anything other than a sleepy little town. Last fall, we began a radio ad campaign similar to what other growth-minded communities, like Bedford Park and New Lenox, have used successfully. You can hear our ads on WLS AM and FM.

The village has three Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts which generate funds with very limited acceptable uses. The uses include engineering, infrastructure, and marketing, but the funds can only be applied to projects and properties within the boundaries of the TIF district. The funds can't be used to finance the Village's general operating costs.

Sometimes people misunderstand the role of a TIF district. Every taxing body (school, library, fire, etc) continues to receive taxes on those properties based upon the assessed value at the time of the district's formation. Without the improvements or incentives offered through the district's creation, and consequent impact of such incentives, any increase in assessed value would likely be negligible. Proper administration of these districts is overseen by a joint review board, so we don't ignore our responsibility to establish healthy environment for commercial and industrial development. The end result will be more jobs and a stronger business property tax base that would eventually lower residential property tax demands.

**Parks and Recreation:** We have a goal of building on previous successes while improving and establishing even more opportunities.

- Transitioned the Fall Fest to be run directly by the village and experienced significant growth
- Established Kids Day as a mid-summer "holiday" celebration of our youth
- Helped bring together Monee Alliance of Churches (MAC) who are now working together and play an instrumental role in the growing success of our community programs
- Self-defense for women
- Karate and Tae-Kwon-Do for youth
- Craft classes for kids
- Senior trips
- Worked with local sports associations to increase safety standards including background checks
- Acquired additional land for Firemen's Park and began planning for improvements.

**Roads and Infrastructure:**

- Chicago Southland Fiber Network is connected to municipal buildings and is capable of providing multi-Gigabit internet to local businesses

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- Comprehensive assessment of road conditions is being done to determine priority and type of maintenance needed. Egyptian Trail project phase 1 engineering is complete and is on schedule to be completed by fall of 2016. Other municipal roads, depending on severity, are being placed on a 3-year schedule for repairs.
- The Cleveland/Hamilton (just east of I-57) realignment project was resurrected and we secured 3.8 million dollars in state and federal grant money.
- We are reviewing the extension of Cleveland Avenue south to Industrial Drive, thereby establishing a truck route through the industrial park, which would be eligible for federal funding.
- GIS database is being created to better manage and predictively maintain our infrastructure.
- Water Department just received a perfect compliance score from Illinois Department of Public Health

Public Safety:

- Replaced old squad cars
- Equipping all cars with ruggedized tablets to provide officers faster access to crucial information
- Upgraded radios as required by EastCom dispatch network
- Installed LiveScan digital fingerprinting/booking system
- Community Crime Prevention Alerts are being sent over the web/social media
- Began implementation of local Emergency Management Agency (EMA) and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
- Officers actively participating in Law Enforcement Torch Run, Polar Plunge and other initiatives to raise support and awareness of Special Olympics
- Establishing Police Explorer (cadet) program for youth 14-21

Communication:

- Web site was updated and social media was integrated in order to develop a closer connection with our residents
- We are in the process of implementing a periodic newsletter (perhaps quarterly)

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We have come a long way in a relatively short amount of time and have areas that we know are in need of further attention. However, all of this progress has been achieved without any overspending.

Sincerely

  
Jay Farquhar, Mayor