



2021 *River Grove*

David B. Guerin Mayor
Marjorie A. Manchen Clerk
Lynn Bjorvik Trustee
Michele M. Obaya Trustee
Roger V. Sewell Trustee
Katie A. Muellner Trustee
Bob Thomas Trustee
Christopher J. Lilly Trustee

Dear Friendly Neighbors,

It has truly been an honor to serve as the Mayor of the Village of River Grove these past 4 years. While I feel we as a village have come a long way in that time, we still have more to accomplish and I look forward to leading us there. I use the State of the Village address to give you an overview of where the Village stands in many areas. With that being said, WOW what a year 2020 has been; Covid 19, business closures, political unrest...it's easy to think the world is coming to an end, watching the negative news or being on social media all day, stuck in your home. However, what I saw was a different picture; I saw our police answering the call of service to protect our village during uneasy times, our firefighters and paramedics keeping up with an uptick of health and mental crisis due to the pandemic, the Easter bunny driving down our streets during the depth of the lockdown, our public works helping restaurants set up outdoor dining to battle the unfair closures of small businesses. I saw our Lions Club come together with the community and raise money for our food pantry to help residents in need. I saw a village of strength and resilience. Since 1888 River Grove has a strong tradition of coming together during tough times, and we must remember tough times don't last, tough (and kind) people do. The village board closely monitored the town's finances and made the appropriate moves, in these unusual times, to secure a balanced budget going into 2021 and to set us up for financial success in the future. We are happy to say that during these difficult times no essential services were cut and our village team continued to work hard to serve our residents and businesses.

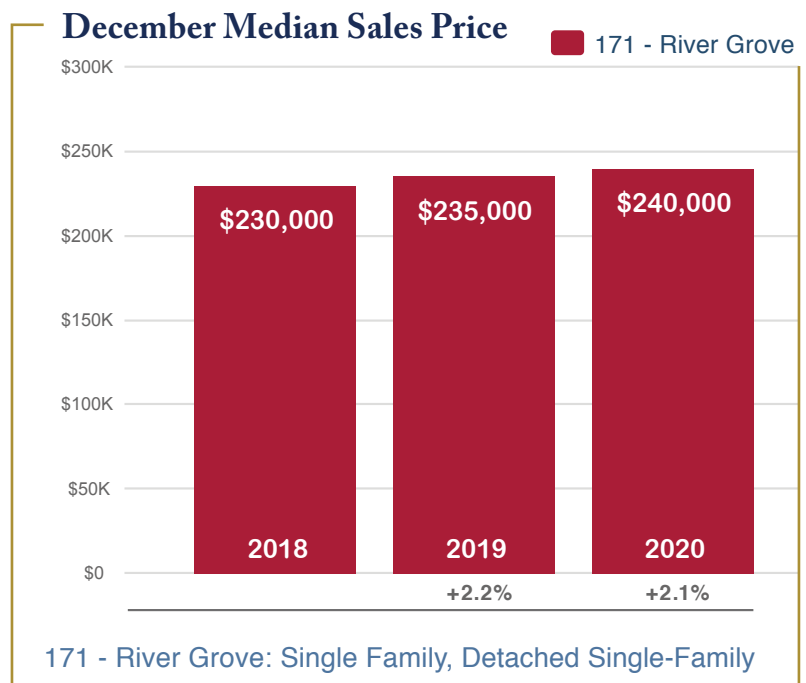
Our homes have experienced a significant rise in value of 8.1% over the past four years. The average median sale price of a single-family home in 2017 was \$221,896 and is now up to \$240,000 in 2020. I see many people making improvements to their home, adding to its value. In 2020 the building department issued 858 permits to residents. It is nice to see our residents taking pride in their homes, making improvements and increasing the value.

Finance

As the Village moves into 2021 I am happy to report that the Village's financial condition has continued to improve these past few years including the following highlights:

As we all know, 2020 was a challenging year. The beginning of 2020 began favorably with the Village Board approving a balanced operating and capital budget that provided for some additional staffing and replacement equipment and services but with more emphasis on capital projects.

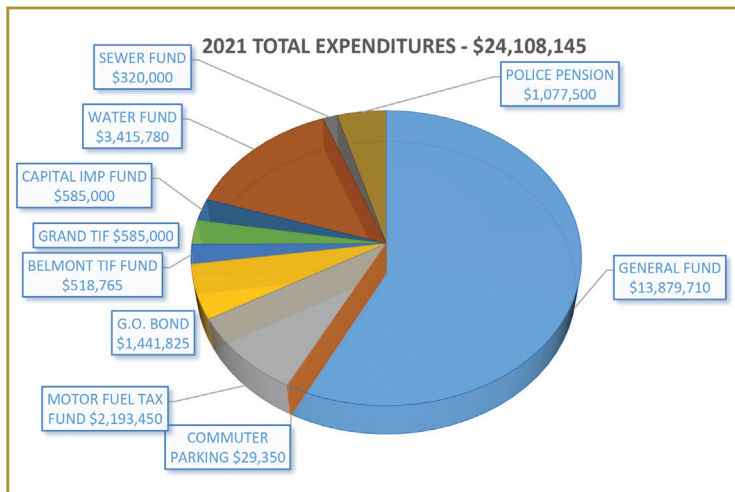
However, once Covid-19 became a reality in mid-March, the Village acted swiftly to curb non-essential services and purchases in anticipation of lowered revenues from sources such as state income and sales taxes. The Village never reduced essential services from our Police, Fire and Public Works Departments but were required to limit service, for a short time, from the other Village functions like code enforcement, finance and recreation.



Each data point is 12 months of activity. Data is from January 14, 2021.

During the remainder of 2020, the Village's finances experienced reductions in most of the categories that rely on economic activity such as building permit activity, commuter parking use and sales, motor fuel and income tax revenues shared with local governments from the State of Illinois. The Village did receive funds from the federal CARES Act related to the pandemic that did assist the Village to help pay our Police and Fire employees in 2020. However, with the systematic reductions that were imposed, the Village's main operating fund will end 2020 spending almost \$2 million dollars less than it budgeted. As we enter 2021, many of the budgeted purchases and capital projects that were deferred in 2020 have been re-programmed and included in the recently approved 2021 budget. Additionally, the Village will be the recipient of additional county, state and federal grants that will allow it to further its ambitious projects in its capital improvement plan.

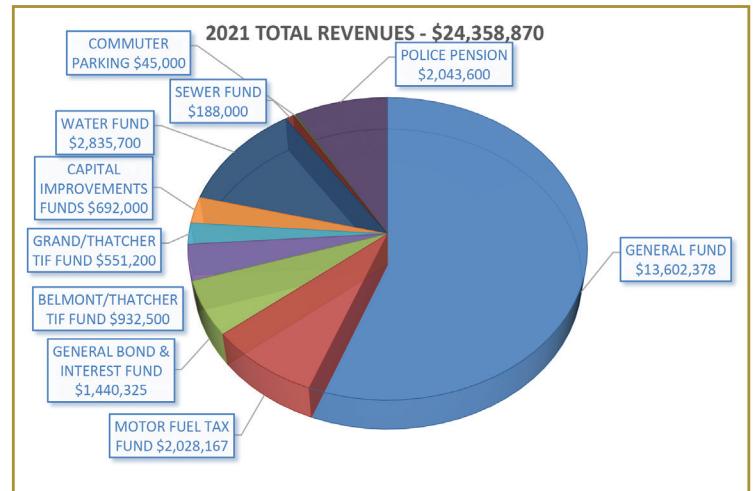
This pie chart presents the Village's estimated expenditures, by fund, in 2021:



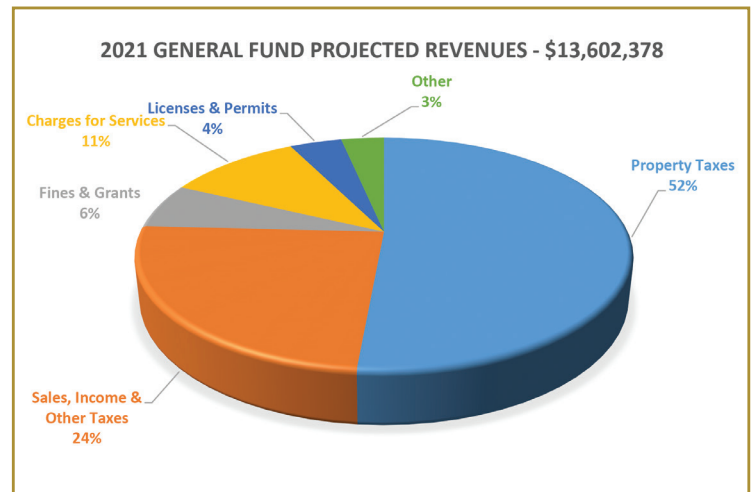
Continuing our trend since 2016, the Village's operating fund balances, that are comprised of its general operating and development funds, have improved. Additionally, while costs have increased due to personnel and material costs, the Village continues to maintain a lower than average tax rate per \$100 of assessed value, thus continuing to maintain a lower property tax burden on residents and businesses compared to our peers.

The following are charts that highlight the 2021 budget:

This pie chart presents the Village's estimated revenues for each Village fund in 2021:



This pie chart presents the Village's estimated revenues for the Village's General fund:



2019 Tax Rates/Levy Per Capita Comparisons - Leyden Township Municipalities

Municipality	2019 Tax Rate	Levy Per Capita	
Rosemont	2.299	\$	2,988.26
Hillside	5.532	\$	1,445.39
Maywood	12.712	\$	1,080.91
Bellwood	8.437	\$	921.56
Franklin Park	2.003	\$	905.15
Schiller Park	2.197	\$	751.62
Stone Park	6.952	\$	652.24
Melrose Park	2.593	\$	659.26
River Grove	2.828	\$	640.56
Elmwood Park	2.713	\$	569.78

Economic development continues to be a priority in River Grove. 2020 saw the start of the River Grove Station development at the old Quasthoff/Public Works property. That area had been blighted for over a decade. The Village worked with Noah Builders who developed 4 buildings with 80 luxury units, all of which will have high end finishes and are energy efficient. One of the buildings will have a roof top deck and work out room. There are plans for a restaurant with a drive through in the works. The Village also saw the development of a 6 unit apartment building at 8538 Grand Ave. and a 6 unit building with underground parking at 2725 Budd St. All this is adding new consumers to our downtown area, increasing tax revenue and attracting businesses.



✓ We as a Village completed the following Capital Projects in 2020:

2020 CDBG Roadway Improvements - The Village completed the improvements on Budd Street and Hessing Street roadways and off-street parking areas north of Grand Avenue. The project included grinding and laying new asphalt surface on the roadway, replacing damaged sections of curb and sidewalk, and repairing sewers and landscape as needed. This project was partially funded with a \$150,000 grant the Village received from Cook County through its Community Development Block Grant program.

2020 Cherry Street Improvements - The Village worked with its legislative representatives to obtain a \$200,000.00 grant to fund this project. The restoration of Cherry Street, from Elm Street to Des Plaines River Road, was part of the State of Illinois new capital program. The scope of this project was similar to the Budd Street and Hessing Street project with a complete grind and resurface including curb, gutter, and landscaping.

2020 Green Alley Program - Reconstruction of three sections of alleys between Rhodes Avenue and Spruce Street from Herrick to Grand Avenue. The Village was very fortunate to obtain this grant for the second year in a row, which provided funding for 50% of the cost of constructing the three green alleys. During heavy rainstorms these alleys will take in 129,000 gallons of water run-off before it hits our Village sewers. This will help reduce flooding associated with sewer backup.

Fullerton Avenue Improvements - The Village completed the reconstruction of Fullerton Avenue between Maple Street and First Avenue. The Village utilized a \$265,000 Invest In Cook grant which was awarded to complete the project.

2020 Sidewalk Replacement Program - The Village budgeted additional funds toward the replacement of damaged squares and liable trip spots on our Village sidewalks. In 2020 the focus was mainly on large sections of Village blocks instead of individual addresses. By doing this we were able to keep cost down and get more sidewalk squares for our money.

The Grand Avenue Bridge and River Road Improvements - In 2020 the Illinois Department of Transportation undertook a complete restoration of our Grand Avenue Bridge, repairing damaged sidewalks, resurfacing with a skid-resistant surface, new handrails where needed, as well as updating the traffic signals. The State of Illinois also resurfaced Des Plaines River Road from the 1st Avenue cut-off to Foster Avenue. This project repaired the roadway asphalt, damaged concrete curbs and sidewalks, as well as updating and extending the guardrail along the Des Plaines River.

✓ Looking at Capital Planning for the future of River Grove in 2021:

The 2021 Sidewalk Replacement Program - The Village has budgeted additional funds toward the replacement of our Village's liable trip spots around town. Please contact the Public Works Department to have your address considered for this program.

Finley Avenue Improvements - The Village will be replacing the water main along Finley Avenue south of Fullerton Avenue. Originally scheduled for 2020, this project will replace the section of water main that has had numerous breaks previously, and based on the last years leak survey, has several small leaks currently active. The roadway and sidewalk will be replaced as part of the restoration.

Invest in Cook Roadway Improvements - The Village was fortunate to be awarded a second Invest in Cook grant from Cook County in the amount of \$325,000 to improve the 2100 block of West Street from the railroad tracks to Palmer Street as well as Palmer Street from West Street to Leyden Avenue. The improvements will place a new layer of asphalt on the roadway, repairs to deteriorated sections of curb, sewer repairs as needed, patching of the existing base, and traffic calming at both West and Palmer Street to keep semi-trucks out of the residential areas.

Palmer Street Improvements - The Village is budgeting for the repairs to Palmer Street from Leyden to 5th Avenue. This project will be similar to the Invest in Cook County Roadway Improvements; replacing the asphalt and repairing concrete in the residential section of Palmer.

✓ **Looking at Capital Planning for the future of River Grove in 2021: cont.**

Spruce Street Park - The Village has set aside funds to update the kiddie park at Spruce Street and Wrightwood Avenue. This park was last updated in 1995 and is a great location for Grovers to bring their kids to enjoy the swings and burn off energy.

Grand Avenue and Erie Street Sitting Park and additional Parking - This project will clean up the southwest corner of Grand Avenue and Erie Street by adding a green space, seating and additional parking for our growing businesses.

The River Grove Police Department is continually working to ensure that River Grove is the safest community in the area. The U.S. Department of Justice awarded the police department a \$250,000.00 grant through the **Community Oriented Police Service (COPS)** which is specifically earmarked for the hiring of two new police officers, who were then promptly hired. The police department also received a Com-Ed Powering Safe Communities matching grant. That Com-Ed grant was earmarked for the purchase of three radar traffic signs. Two of the radar signs were permanently mounted near River Grove and Rhodes Schools. The third sign was mounted to a mobile trailer and will be moved around the village as needed. The police administration supports sensible police reform and transparency initiatives. Building on that concept, in late 2020 police administrators modified portions of the police department use of force policy which made the department compliant with an unfunded federal mandate. To fulfill the mandate requirement, a completed application, outlining the modifications, was submitted, accepted, and approved seven weeks ahead of the deadline. This compliance ensures that future federal grant consideration for the village will not be in jeopardy due to non-compliance of the mandate. As previously mentioned, the police department hired two new full-time patrol officers. Those full-time additions bring the number of full-time officers to one of the highest levels in the history of the police department. I along with the Chief remain committed to increasing the police staffing level which will add to a greater visible police presence, and a quicker response to calls for service throughout the village. Moreover, to enhance department efficiency, the village hired a new Deputy Chief of Police. The Deputy Chief will assist with handling administrative and day-to-day police operations, as well as leading forth coming initiatives which will be launched in 2021.



The River Grove Fire Department responded to 2228 calls in 2020, of which 888 were fire related and 1340 were EMS related. Covid-19 has brought many challenges to all of us but especially to our public safety officers on the front line of this pandemic. The fire department and the Village experienced a devastating loss. In the line of duty, firefighter/paramedic Robert David Reisinger was lost to Covid. He had been a part of the River Grove Fire Department for over 18 years. We must remember that every day is a gift.

In 2021 the Village will be purchasing a new Ford E450 Wheeled Coach Ambulance that will be equipped with a Stryker Power Stretcher that will assist in preventing back injuries to our employees and a state of the art Lifepak 15 Cardiac Monitor, allowing us to provide maximum cardiac care to our patients. The 2007 spare ambulance will be used as a trade-in, and our 2014 ambulance will become a secondary. We look forward to showcasing this new vehicle in future newsletters.

I am humbled by your continued confidence in me and the team I have put in place. Remember I am not only an elected official, but I am also your neighbor, a dad, a businessman and a friend. I have a great love for our community and would ask that you hold me accountable for the decisions I make for this community. We have come a long way in the past four years and I look forward to much more in the next four years. With your help and input we will make it happen. Please feel free to reach out to myself or anyone of my directors to address any questions or concerns.

Thank you for taking the time to read the State of the Village. We will continue to work hard for our residents and move our town forward.

Dave Guerin Village President mayor@rivergroveil.gov