

FROM THE DESK OF THE CITY MANAGER

Last month's column focused on the City Police Department addressing both challenges and goals that we have identified. Let me start with a clarification to last month's letter regarding the departmental staffing. The Department HAS been staffed at a total of fourteen (14) officers which included the position of the Chief of Police and the department's Detective. Currently, due to on-going staffing shortages, we are operating with eleven (11) full-time officers which also includes the Chief of Police and Detective. We believe the staffing numbers are what is needed for the City to provide a proactive, fully staffed police department that meets the needs of our community.

We believe our recruitment has not been successful, in part, due to the City not being competitive with local and area departments. The City has lost tenured officers to other local and regional departments due to our inability to compete with wages. As mentioned last month, to be successful we have to be able to recruit and retain officers.

The City does continue to provide first responder coverage along with Gallia EMS or Fire Departments. The ability to provide this important coverage is adversely impacted by staffing issues. Today's Police Departments are so much more than traffic patrol and we are proud and want to continue to offer and provide well-being checks, business checks, vacation checks and as mentioned first response. Our officers also conduct school walk throughs in the absence of a school resource officer.

The requested income tax increase will go directly to the operations of the Police Department. The passage of this initiative will allow the City to be more competitive with local and area departments by increasing starting positions and by raising veteran officers pay.

The income tax is applied ONLY to residents who have earned income. Social Security income, Pensions, Retirement income or other non-work incomes are NOT impacted. We estimate only a third (33%) of city residents pay income tax. Two thirds (66%) of the people who pay the tax live outside the City but earn their living in Gallipolis. Police and Fire are the major services a municipality must provide..... let's keep moving Gallipolis forward together!