



Mayor's Message
December 23, 2022

In this most joyous of seasons, I wanted to share with you the state of the City of Gluckstadt. The city was legally established in June 2021. It has been in existence for 18 months. During that period, through the hard work of numerous people, we have accomplished many things. Yet, we recognize that we have much to do before the city is self-reliant and independent.

The city has 19 full-time employees, of which 12 are police officers, and a part-time employee. Salaries account for \$1,000,000 of the city's annual budget. While this is certainly a significant sum, without these dedicated individuals the city would be unable to provide the services required by law and expected by our citizens.

General city administration, the first major department we developed, oversees the day-to-day operation of the city. It handles the city's finances, including budgeting, purchasing, permitting and payroll. We are in the process of implementing a municipal software system that will coordinate every department within the city and allow for the orderly administration of the city's finances and record keeping. This system will serve the city for many years.

Our planning/zoning and building department is fully functional. The city's building department is responsible for the issuance of building permits and commercial licenses. Numerous zoning ordinances have been adopted by the board of alderman and the city's planning and zoning officials are charged with the implementation and enforcement of those ordinances. These efforts will ensure the orderly development of the city. We are fortunate to have robust development in the city and the construction of new buildings is ongoing. Our building official is charged with inspecting these new buildings to ensure they meet building codes.

In the city's first 18 months, the development of our police department has been a priority. We have 12 full-time police officers, including a police chief and assistant chief. We purchased 10 new police vehicles and outfitted our officers with the equipment needed to do their jobs safely. It would be easy to assume that Gluckstadt has no crime at all, but such is not the case. Drug crimes comprise a large percentage of arrests made within the city. Our police officers are working diligently to stop the influx of drugs into the city. You have likely noticed our officers enforcing local traffic laws. These efforts are aimed at reducing the likelihood of serious accidents on our major thoroughfares. We consciously started this process by

first being more visible and then writing warning citations to ease into enforcement of the traffic laws. Please slow down and be patient. Your actions might prevent serious injury or death. Finally, you may have heard that the city has recently acquired land necessary to construct a police station and judicial complex. The legislature appropriated \$1,000,000 to help us start this project. We hope to begin construction in early spring.

We now have a fully functional municipal court complete with a court clerk and assistant clerk. Our city court judge brings many years of legal experience to the bench and his temperament is fitting to a small community such as Gluckstadt. I can assure you that every person who appears in our court will be treated with dignity and respect and their legal matter handled fairly in accordance with the law.

This year we began taking small steps to develop a public works department, something the city was not expected to do until its third year of existence. By no means is this department fully functional or capable of handling major public works projects. We purchased a small amount of heavy equipment which enables us to handle minor public works projects. Labor has been provided by off-duty fireman from the Gluckstadt Fire Department. Their willingness to help has allowed us to get an earlier start on public works than anticipated.

We have been extremely fortunate to accomplish all of this within the confines of our budget. The city is in a good cash position and it is my hope that by the end of 2023 we will have 1 year of necessary operating cash in reserve. The vigorous economic activity within our city has allowed us to make the necessary investments to develop the city without incurring debt. Our sales tax and ad valorem tax revenues continue to exceed expectations. In terms of economic development, our city is booming. The Gluckstadt Madison Business Alliance has facilitated 25 ribbon cuttings since May of this year welcoming new businesses to our community and building a sense of pride among new business owners.

We acknowledge that the transition from an unincorporated community to a city has not always been perfect. We know that developers wishing to invest in our community have faced new rules implemented by city government and that enforcement of those rules has not always gone as smoothly as possible. We will endeavor to do better. Additionally, I recognize that traffic congestion is a major problem. We have commissioned a study to determine what actions we can take as a city that might help alleviate this problem. Moreover, county projects such as the Reunion Parkway extension and the widening of I-55 will hopefully help as well.

The city's accomplishments have not been in a vacuum. Madison County has been a tremendous partner, helping with the transition from county-provided law enforcement to a city police force. Madison County has assisted in public works projects we simply are unable to complete on our own.

Lastly, I want to thank those I have the privilege of working with every day. Our board of alderman has given us every tool necessary to be successful. Their cooperation and civility even when they have disagreed with each other has been a breath of fresh air during these times. Each day when I walk into City Hall I see smiling faces. Our employees are happy to be a part of something new. They work hard. They are dedicated and deserve the gratitude of all of us. Please thank them when you see them.

I hope all of you have a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Walter C. Morrison IV
Mayor, City of Gluckstadt