**2018 STATE OF THE CITY REPORT**

2017 was another really good year for the City of Beech Grove. I was taken back when our financial advisor told the City Council during a budget presentation that our assessed valuation had increased by 5.5%. In 2016, the assessed value of our city only increased by 0.07%. I can’t begin to tell you how happy this makes me, not only as the Mayor but as a citizen as well. Your property is worth more, and it makes sense when real estate agents tell me that some homes in Beech Grove are selling very quickly when they are listed and even before they are up for sale.

In 2017, our city services performed as expected and maybe a little better than expected. I believe what sets us apart from other cities is the ability to provide basic essential services well. I’m very proud of the services provided by all of our departments. I want to start with our Senior Citizens Department. I’m very appreciative of our Senior Citizens Director, Stephanie Bramlett and her staff for everything they have done to help our aging population. In 2017, they transported 2,074 senior citizens and by dropping the required age to join to 55, their membership has increased. It’s such a vital service for our seniors which includes many healthcare and safety initiatives to help protect them.

In 2018, I suspect that more services may be offered to local seniors and we will look into furthering their transportation capabilities when the Fire Department introduces a Community Paramedicine program to area senior citizens.

It’s not a surprise to report that our Parks System is simply excellent. Everyone knows our Parks Director Tom Hannan and the great job that he does. Many of you can attest that Tom is the hardest working employee the city has, and we are very fortunate to have a person like Tom who truly cares about our parks system. It obviously makes a huge difference. We don’t have the big concert venues, vast trail networks, and aquatic centers, but what we do have are clean parks that are safe, presentable and have excellent programming. Park employees picked up over 1,200 gallons of trash, removed 22 dead trees, converted the lighting in the maintenance building at Sarah T. Bolton Park to LED lighting, installed edging around playground equipment in the playground areas of all three parks, and employees worked over 10,000 hours in 2017 with no lost time due to injuries. It says a lot when citizens line up on the second day of January to reserve a shelter for the summer and fall. On an earlier occasion, the City Council passed legislation to provide non-reverting funds from telephone tower proceeds for capital improvements in our parks system. Soon, the City Council will pass legislation to provide non-reverting funds to offset costs of programming in our parks system. In 2017, we continued to make investments in our park system by adding walkways at the Hilltop Shelter in Sarah T. Bolton Park and at Challis Park for ADA compliance. This allows citizens with disabilities access to the playground equipment. In 2017, we purchased yet another large Dixie Chopper to supplement our grass cutting requirements. Not only are our parks in excellent condition, but all of our necessary equipment is less than five years old and in excellent condition.

In 2018, we will continue to prepare for the construction of Phase 1 of the Greenway. This 2.2 mile trail will connect Sarah T. Bolton Park and Challis Park and this quality of life improvement will change the whole look of our city. From a parks management perspective, much work will need to be done over the next couple of years to secure the proper equipment and staffing to adequately maintain this important improvement.

The Hornet Park Community Center plays a significant role in our Park System. A couple of years ago the City Council created an “Event Coordinator” position to develop and initiate programs for citizens, especially children. The park system now offers more than 68 programs throughout the year, and the programs providing food to area children were much needed and it was very much appreciated. I want to thank Chartwell Food

Services in conjunction with Beech Grove City Schools, and local businesses for providing food and other donations to make this happen. The free meal program started out a couple years ago with a hand full of children and adults , and in December of 2017, the free meal night ended up with over 200 dinners served to local citizens including children. I would like to thank our Event Coordinator Angel McKenna for leading the way on this and all of the good work that has been done to help our citizens. In 2017, through the fitness program, shelter rentals, dog park fees, program fees, and room rentals, the park system collected over $75,000.00, which is quite good. All of the good programming that is going on in our Parks System and the idea of establishing a Parks

Foundation is the reason I hosted the first annual Mayor’s Dinner for the Parks Department, which will be presented again in October. One of the objectives that we needed to complete as a city was to clean up local neighborhoods and streets. We formalized a compliance division and began wading through clean up matters and blighted properties. Derek Blice was instrumental in the development of ordinances that addressed both public and environmental nuisances, and with the cooperation of our City Council, City Attorney Craig Wiley and our City Court, we began to make headway in addressing problem areas of our city. Derek has moved on but to his testament we established a couple of very good ordinances. The Compliance Division conducted over 1,000 inspections the first year, and they tagged over 150 vehicles, which indicated a serious problem throughout our city. Now in 2017, the Compliance Division conducted 350 inspections based on complaints and plain view inspections. The Compliance Division conducted 76 fire inspections along with tagging over 80 vehicles. These numbers indicate that progress is being made in cleaning up our city, but this needs to continue. In 2017, 510 permits were issued including licensing permits for motels and therapeutic massage therapy businesses. I want to thank our compliance inspectors Ed Bell and Mark Rihm for their work in these areas. I also want to thank Debbie Springer for her work in issuing licenses and permits along with special thanks to our Building Commissioner Paul Summers and our Electrical Inspector Michael Hughes for their work in inspecting properties where work is taking place to ensure quality work and safety.

In 2017, sidewalk work continued throughout our city. A couple years ago the Clerk Treasurer began inserting into the annual budget a category for sidewalk improvements, and the City Council approved the appropriation. As a result of this, much work has been done to locate and replace sidewalk panels and driveway approaches. In 2017, we added a new sidewalk on North 9th and as most have noticed, we added new sidewalks on Churchman Avenue, as a result of funding through INDOT and the I-MPO. In 2018, we plan on continuing to replace sidewalk panels and it is our intent to add new sidewalks on South 6th where they connect to the sidewalks on Ash Street. In 2018, an amendment change in our Code of Ordinances concerning local street and sidewalk repairs will be introduced.

In 2017, we made major headway in resolving several drainage and storm water matters throughout our city. In 2017, we collected over $430,000.00 in storm water fees and several major projects were completed in the areas of North 9th, North 3rd, Gilbert Street, Ticen Street, Smoke Tree Drive, Churchman Avenue, Butler Avenue, Ritter Avenue at Cincinnati Street and Ritter Avenue at Churchman Avenue. But, the most telling improvement was made in the area of North Bend and Redfern Drive. This drainage issue has been around for over 50 years and is now resolved, much to the pleasure of residents in this area. A gentleman sent me a little note stating that he couldn’t believe that his drainage problem is gone. In 2018, an amendment in the Code of Ordinances capping the ERU fees charged for storm water drainage will be introduced

In 2017, we continued with our schedule to fix our local roads and streets. This has been one of our highest priorities, and will continue to be. In 2017, we were very fortunate to receive $400,000.00 in funding from the State of Indiana through the Community Crossings matching grant program, and in 2018, we will receive an additional $396,000.00 in funding from the State of Indiana. In 2017, and in 2018, we will have spent approximately $1,600,000.00 in paving local roads and streets without issuing any new debt. In reviewing our asset management plan, I counted up the number of roads that we will have redone and after the 2018 paving is complete, we will have paved 51 streets since 2012. A couple years ago the city purchased a hot patch machine to fill potholes. This was a big improvement over using cold patch to fill potholes. I have shared my thoughts with our DPW director that the best judge of how our roads are shaping up is by the number of times the hot patch machine is placed in service. I’m pleased to report that we are spending less money in asphalt patch materials. In 2017,

DPW filled 114 pot holes and they are quietly going away plus we are redoing our roads to where they will last much longer. In 2018, it is our intent to reconstruct 21st Street from Cleveland to Southern, reconstruct 12th Street from Alton to Churchman, reconstruct 6th Avenue from Churchman to Ash, reconstruct Ash Street, reconstruct Adelaide Street and reconstruct the north entrances to South Grove Intermediate School.

In 2018, we will once again conduct a road asset inventory survey and grade our local roads. This is a program required by INDOT that we started in 2016. As roads have been redone, the survey has been updated. I want to thank our DPW Director Brad Meriwether for his excellent work in managing these programs and filing all of the

required documentation to INDOT and the I-MPO so that funding opportunities are met and we continue to receive adequate funding to continue to make improvements. Kudos go out to the Department of Public Works, the Board of Public Works and Safety, the City Council, and the Clerk’s office for working to make sure these major projects get funded, approved, completed and are paid for promptly upon completion.

In 2017, we continued the upgrade of our sanitary sewer lines. The sanitary sewer lines in the neighborhoods around 4th and Ash Street, Churchman Avenue from the roundabout to 18th Street, 19th Street from Churchman to Cleveland and on 20th Street from Churchman to Cleveland were completely relined. Those residents who live in these areas hopefully will see an improvement in the flow of wastewater and minimized back ups caused by tree roots. We have already begun the engineering process of making upgrades to our sanitary sewer system and we anticipate approving another sewer lining project sometime in the spring of 2018. In 2017, we once again continued with a preventative maintenance program to treat sewer lines and to destroy tree roots. We plan on continuing this program in 2018. In 2017, Citizens Energy treated 687,057,079 gallons of wastewater generated by our sanitary sewer system. Unfortunately, approximately 45% of the waste water treated was either ground or storm water that enters the sewer system.

On an administrative note, the City Council approved a new Chapter 50 of our Code of Ordinances concerning sanitary sewers. The Board of Public Works and Safety also 7 entered into a new agreement with Citizens Energy Group for the treatment of waste water which was approved by the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission. As a result of this new agreement, we will be relieved of an existing agreement entered into in 2011, which will save the rate payers of Beech Grove over 4 million dollars through 2035, but will result in increased treatment fees beginning in 2019 through 2024.

In 2017, our Department of Public Works functioned at a very high capacity and did some very good work. As you are aware, our trash pick up is second to none. In 2017, DPW workers collected 4,394 tons of trash that was taken to Covanta and the landfill and delivered 157 additional or new totes to local residents. It cost the rate payers over $141,186.00 to dispose of this waste. It’s unfortunate, but down the road, the City Council will have to consider adjusting trash pick up fees as both Covanta and the landfill adjust their rates annually. In 2017, we began charging $20.00 per mattress and box spring for pick up. DPW workers should not to be exposed to mattresses that could contain body fluids, drug waste and bed bugs. In 2017, Ray’s Trash Service picked up 354 mattresses at a charge to the city of $8,850.00.

In 2017, Ray’s Trash Service continued with the residential recycling program and collected 390 tons of recyclable material at a cost of approximately $56,500.00. This is 390 tons that we did not have to take to Covanta or the landfill and can be reused. Approximately 45% of all homes in our city now participate in recycling. This is an outstanding figure. In 2017, we conducted 3 FREE Shredding events behind city hall and shredded over 12,204 pounds of paper products along with offering FREE appliance drop off for area residents as part of 8 the CLEAN Community Challenge program through IDEM. This program has become extremely popular and we look forward to the first FREE Shredding program to be held in on April 7, 2018. In the late stages of 2017, both DPW buildings had overhead doors replaced and in the spring of 2018, it is our intent to purchase a new trash truck without this issuance of any debt.

In 2017, we continued to use Envirosweep to conduct street sweeping operations and Envirosweep collected over 393 tons of debris off local streets in a seven month period. As a result, we have not had to hire a CDL driver, purchase a new machine at a cost of approximately $205,000.00, weigh and document debris that has been picked up, pay for debris disposal, or had to document all of our activity concerning our street sweeping program with IDEM. This was all completed by Envirosweep. In 2017, DPW continued with the very popular leaf pick up program. We encourage residents to bag or mulch their leaves, but from the middle of October to the middle of December DPW crews really did a nice job of cleaning the curb line of leaves. In late 2017, we finally got a taste of winter and DPW crews were on top of it with salt spreading and removing snow.

There has been a significant investment made in the snow removal program. Within the last year we have purchased new pick up trucks with snow plow packages and we have purchased new spreaders, which we now deploy 5 spreaders for pre-salting and that is the most spreaders that DPW have used in a long time if ever. Needless to say, the citizens of Beech Grove are very fortunate to have the type of Public Works Department that we have. I have to once again commend DPW and each employee who works in this department for the good work that is done each and every day.

In 2017, we were once again very successful in obtaining grants to offset the cost of infrastructure upgrades. As mentioned earlier, we received $959,000.00 in funding from INDOT for the construction of sidewalks, we received $396,000.00 in funding to repair local roads and streets, we were approved for $400,000.00 in funding for local road and street repair in 2018 and we were awarded $40,000.00 for a Main Street façade planning grant through OCRA.

In late 2017, we applied for funding for another infrastructure project through INDOT and the I-MPO. We applied for $418,491.00 in funding for the construction of sidewalks on Thompson Road, which appears to be scored favorably. We will find out in February if the I-MPO will approve our request. In 2018, we will continue to prepare for the construction of the Round-A-Bout (2019) at Arlington and Churchman and Phase 1 of the Greenway (2020), which will wind through our park system and behind South Grove School. All of these projects would have almost been impossible to do without the assistance of the I-MPO and INDOT. Much work was done to file all of the necessary paperwork in order for this to occur. Our DPW Director, Brad Meriwether should be commended for his hard work on all of these grants. Thanks also goes to the Board of Public Works and Safety for approving these projects, the City Council for approving budgets which funds 20% of the costs and other fees, and the Clerk’s Office for submitting all payments in a timely manner.

In 2017, our public safety departments performed at a very high level as well. We all should be aware of the demand being placed on our Police and Fire Department from an emergency response, exposure and evidence perspective. My main concern is that I feel the demand for our services is ever increasing, and soon could overrun us. Simply put, we are out of space in our buildings, yet, we continue to grow. You will understand, if you visit our Police Station on Churchman Avenue and the Fire Station on Albany and get a first hand look at the buildings.

Our Fire Department responded to 5,489 EMS calls (ambulance runs) in 2017, and we made 4,214 fire responses with a total fire loss of $2,365,925.00. It is clear to see that we are running the wheels off of our ambulances and fire engines. This will result in a much sooner replacement time. Our next fire engine should be purchased in 2020 with an estimated cost of approximately $450,000.00. Our ambulance division billed $5,718,989.00 and collected $1,281,299.00 in 2017. Our EMS crews delivered 187 doses of Narcan to patients who had overdosed and at least 44 doses of narcan was administered to patients prior to the arrival of our EMS crews. This is a terrible statistic. Our EMS crews also administered 617 doses of nitro spray to patients having a cardiac emergency, by far the most treated symptom presented to our EMS crews. Our ambulances delivered 1,880 patients to St. Francis South, 735 patients to Community Health Network, 600 patients to Eskenazi Hospital, and 553 patients to IU Methodist Hospital.

In 2017, our Firefighters received new structural firefighting turnout gear at a cost of $73,500.00. New portable radios at a cost of $150,000.00. New Thermal Imaging Cameras at a cost of $6,860.00 and one of our ambulances was re-chassied at a cost of approximately $78,000.00 for continued use without the issuance of any debt. In 2017, we hired an additional Firefighter and in 2019, or maybe sooner, it is our intent to hire another additional Firefighter to bring our staffing level up to 35. This is the highest staffing level that I can ever recall having. In 2018, we have increased the clothing allotment disbursement and it is also our intent to begin a Community Based Paramedicine program with local hospitals, renew our agreement with Franciscan Alliance concerning ambulance coverage and staffing, re-chassis another ambulance and to purchase new self contained breathing apparatus for our firefighters.

In 2017, our Police Department made 23,644 dispatched responses and recorded no homicides, although we had 2 self defense shootings by security guards which resulted in deaths. In 2016, we had 25 Part 1 crimes ( homicide, assaults, rape and robbery). In 2017, we had 24 Part 1 crimes. Our total cases are up by 18.6 %. These numbers are an indication of how good our Police Department performs with regards to what is occurring throughout Marion County. I will continue to talk about the fact that crime can occur at any time and at any place and no one should let their guard down. One of the interesting observations is the number of people arrested on drug related charges. That number is increasing each year and it states the obvious fact that we are no different than any other city in Indiana concerning the drug problems that we face.

In 2017, our Police Department collected over 460 pounds of medicine discarded by citizens in the front lobby of the police station. This is a much better scenario than discarding the medicine in the trash, flushing the medicine down the toilet, or by having the medicine get in the wrong hands and used for other purposes.

In 2017, we added an additional officer and in 2018 it is our intent to hire 2 additional Police Officer’s which will bring our staffing level to 35 sworn Police Officers. This is also the highest staffing level for our Police Department that I can ever recall. In 2017, we purchased 9 new police cars at a cost of approximately $300,000.00 and 24 portable radios at a cost of approximately $150,000.00, without the issuance of any debt. The Police Department continued to make changes in the IDACS program to accommodate ever changing regulations. In 2017, we replaced body armour for each Police Officer and purchased new protection shields and in 2018, we increased the clothing allotment disbursement for uniform replacement.

I want to go back to what I alluded to earlier in my report. It is becoming more apparent that the demand on our public safety departments could soon be greater than our ability to respond. This is attributed to our changing society. Simply put, we have to grow as a Police and Fire Department or we could fail. We also have to keep in mind that we are making more responses than ever before. Witnesses need to be separated from suspects when brought to the police station, physical evidence seized must be properly documented and stored to where the chain of custody is not disturbed, and Police Officers must have a secure inside area where they can safely process people placed under arrest. Provisions must be made so our public servants can exercise, hold community meetings, train, clean protective equipment, clean themselves from body fluid exposure and carcinogenic products absorbed through the skin, and to properly qualify with their weapons. We currently do not have this.

We also have a major security, environmental, ADA challenge and evidence storage problem that has evolved at our Police Department. We have a 9,000 square foot building designed for 20 employees and built in 1972 trying to keep up with 2017 technology, real time crime and over 40 employees including a city court. It isn’t working anymore and our ability to solve crime and produce witnesses could be compromised.

This is why I will recommend to the City Council that we construct a new Police Station by 2020 and remove the current one, and in 2021 construct a new Fire Station to replace the Fire Station on Albany. The Fire Station on Churchman Avenue will remain open and repurposed for EMS services. Most folks who visit our Police and Fire Station have left the buildings with the same recommendation, “you need to construct new buildings”. But

I’m also sensitive to debt and I feel that we have done a wonderful job of lowering our debt since we began in 2012. This spring, I will present a proposal to the City Council on the timeline and give the City Council options on financing this critical improvement to our public safety departments. We have to do it, we have no choice.

2017 was a very good year for the city and I believe that 2018 will be just as good if not better. Our services provided are top notch and all of the programming is only going to get better over time. It is a high honor to serve as your Mayor and I look forward to the continued growth of our beautiful city.

Well done to all.