

DECEMBER 2020

THE BAD NEWS

It was only a matter of time, COVID-19 reached the Island. The first rumors appeared on October 26 when (supposedly) a visitor, who wasn't feeling well, got the results that he was positive. Did he leave? Nope, he stayed and partied. This led to at least one household self-quarantining. Then came our ever popular Halloween weekend. Two weeks later and there are at least three confirmed cases on the Island and two people are undergoing testing. The Health Dept. and Village have been remarkably quiet about this. No mention on their website or at the Council meeting of November 15. One business closed 'temporarily' on November 2. The village's first priority should be to its residents, letting them know they might have been exposed and encouraging them to self-quarantine and monitor their health closely and Erie Co. Health Dept. has been silent on this issue. As I write this, the governor has placed additional restrictions on gatherings, travel and large meetings. It looks like we are back to attending Council meetings online again.

SOME GOOD NEWS

Shout out to TOM BARTLETT for receiving the 2020 Shieldcastle Award from the Black Swamp Bird Observatory for outstanding volunteer service! Tom has been banding birds at our Scheele Preserve on Kelleys Island for 25 years now – and just celebrated his 95,000 bird banded in his lifetime! Tom is a gifted biologist, and his work in bird conservation has led to significant properties being preserved by the Museum and partner organizations. Another thank you to his amazing wife, Paula, who is with him every scientific step of the way and who deserves her own award!

THE ELECTION - This was an exciting election, even here on the Island. Precinct details show that we have 324 registered voters and 260 voted (80% turnout) with 117 voting in person and 143 absentee. The results: Trump 155 vs Biden 97, and Kaptur 123 vs. Weber 130.

VETERANS DAY was brief and poignant. Easily 50 people showed up. The ceremony was followed by a flag retirement ceremony at the fire pit.

KELLEYS LIFE – Miss your newspaper? Make sure to visit www.kelleysislandhistorical.org and click on Old Newspapers to catch up while you are away. There are also loads of old Island newspapers on the site from the 60's through the 90's.

LIFE FLIGHT – MetroHealth is officially our new Life Flight provider (taking over from St. V's). Legislation was passed on October 21 and took effect 30 days later. The Village took action to establish an EMS coordinator position. The EMS Coordinator will organize and lead the EMS services for the Village and must be a certified paramedic. The deadline for applicants is/was December 4.

The School Board and Village are considering opening up Kelley's Hall for EXERCISE CLASSES this winter, while the library remains closed. The Chamber announced the results of their election: President-Todd Hanes, vice President-Dawn Soldner, Treasurer-Dan Hazard, and Secretary-Janet Wermuth.

The FERRY's new December schedule is 7 days a week.

COUNCIL NOTES

A record 40 minute meeting. Hardly any reports, poor microphones so that anyone attending online could not hear anyone but the Mayor. Our EMS had seven runs and one clinic patient. The POLICE DEPT. issued two tickets (failure to control which resulted in an accident and expired license plates) and five warnings (speed and allowing an underage driver). The Mayor swore in our new officer James Bartus. Winter House Check and Wellness check forms are available at the Village office or online (www.KelleysIsland.us). The gate at the TRANSFER STATION will be re-installed after a survey of the property is completed. People have been entering the grounds and the result is trash blowing everywhere. Not cool. The TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE reported that they met with Frontier engineers who changed out the data equipment on the six test phones, naming the test a success. After

November 20, a new improved Wi-Fi plan will be available everywhere on the Island – but you can still keep your current DSL line. The WATER DEPT. recommended an increase in water rates, but Council wants a better explanation of why it is needed. The new CAMPING PERMIT legislation passed, you can request a copy from the Village office. A Lower Cliff resident complained about TARGET SHOOTING within 200 ft. of houses, at all hours. Target ranges must be inspected and approved and there are set hours for target shooting. WINTER COUNCIL MEETINGS – For the last several years, council has taken a hiatus from the January and February meetings. Eric Longbrake asked Council to reinstate those meetings. Originally it was because so many council members travelled and were unavailable – so no quorum, but with online attendance, that is no longer an excuse. When it came to a vote – it was 3 to 3 and the Mayor broke the tie voting no. The reasons were that people were upset when Council passed legislation during the winter when they could not comment and that Council Members “needed a break.” It is hard to imagine that this is a valid argument with online meetings that last less than an hour, and can be held anywhere.

NOVEMBER

Finally, some (almost) normalcy on the Island. It seems that more people were coming to the Island in October than in previous years. Quite a few visited the history museum, glacial grooves and inscription rock as part of home-schooling. But now, the Island officially begins to shut down. The seasonal liquor licenses expired on October 31, so many restaurants are now closed. The Island House has applied for a change in their license to year-round. Gift shops are pretty much closed now too, or only open on weekends. Painting on the water tower is wrapping up. The leak on Huntington should be repaired after all the tower work is completed. The new road at the transfer station was partially paid for by the antenna people. New houses are still going up and there are so many for sale. It is mind-boggling sometimes. Work continues on the new St. Michael's community hall. High winds halted ferry service one Sunday. Thankfully, Facebook posts warned everyone, but there still quite a few people stranded for the night. Halloween was a little different with many events cancelled. But never fear, the children got to wear their costumes and over indulge in candy like always, but under safer conditions.

Our school – We now have 8 students enrolled in the school: 1 - 1st grader, 3 - 2nd graders, 1 - 4th grader, 2 - 5th graders and 1 - 12th grader. Thinking back, I can remember when we had 30 kids in school and when there was none. Looks like we may have a graduate next year.

Several years ago the village established an emergency alert system. Unfortunately, it was rarely used. Plans are in the works to reactivate it. The Village is also considering setting up a Facebook page. There is quite a bit of information on its website (KelleysIsland.us) including meeting minutes, alerts, forms, and some useful links.

COUNCIL NOTES: October was our first in-person Council meeting this year and 10 people showed up. There was also an option to attend online. The Police reported 275 phone calls, 9 reports, and no arrests. There was one ticket issued for disorderly conduct intoxication. Speeding, riding on a vehicle, allowing a minor to drive and failure to observe a stop sign resulted in 13 warnings. There were 4 accidents (2 hit and run and 2 boat). There were 11 assists with EMS and the Fire Dept. House checks are starting up again, so sign up. Forms available at the Village office or download on www.KelleysIsland.us. A grant was received from COVID-Cares and will be used to purchase items for the Village and the safety services and include: touch less enhancements, sanitizer systems, UV light sanitizers, and new laptops (for virtual communications, training and meetings). Hose and hydrant testing was completed by the Fire Dept. Burn permits are required and are now available at the Village office. The Planning Commission approved a conditional use permit for an Addison Road resident. Meetings continue on the Metro Health proposal to provide this Island with Life Flight. Assessment letters went out for the paving project on Memory, Fernwood and McGettigan. Council issued a

proclamation honoring Pastor Virginia Parks as an outstanding citizen of Kelleys Island. She plans to retire on January 1, 2021 and has been a big part of this Island community.

OCTOBER

Finally, cool weather. Driving through town we smell delicious smells, cruising past the campground it's bacon and wood smoke, magnificent sunsets, brisk clean winds off the Lake and in the evening, we hear the owls. What an overload on the senses. Cindra and Jennie did another swim (year 26!). You can still donate so they can grant just one more wish. Weird stuff from around the village: The police pulled over a vehicle with a mis-matched license plate. The owner said he brought it from home because he heard you need plates on the Island. A 14-year old wanted to know where he could ride a jet ski. Absentee ballot information/requests have arrived. School has started and here, the kids actually go to school. The former Monarch/Sweet Valley Wine Co. on Division St. has finally sold. It was originally the Rush family winery. Labor Day fireworks were a real treat. VFW memberships are now available for 2021 (this is a big source of income for our post). Finally, St. Michael's Hall was moved to another location in anticipation of another, larger building to be constructed.

COUNCIL NOTES – The meeting went much better this month, although it started about 15 minutes late. We still have a tough time hearing anyone not close to the microphone which generally includes a couple of Council people as well as the safety services (so no reports here). New computers will be ordered for the Village office. Council is considering an ordinance to deal with hardships for unpaid water bills. These would be tiered based on income with proof in the form of a tax return. Pat Seeholzer suggested monthly meter readings to minimize undiscovered leaks; however, as it takes several days to read the meters and time to bill out, receive and post payments, it is unlikely that this will happen, as the added cost of hiring additional staff is unfavorable when balanced against the cost of leaks. The Water Dept. continues to phase in the touch and read meters and expects to be completed in another couple of years.

LEGISLATION - There was a first reading on the revised camping permit which deals with overnight camping, permit requirements, etc. Another on the Metro Health proposal to replace St. V's for emergency and medical services. A public meeting will be scheduled. A second reading on revising procedures for purchases. Two important ordinances were passed. One to change the posting places to eliminate the one in the corner of the park and replace it with the restroom bldg. The other amended the timeframes for target shooting: now target shooting is allowed from Noon to 5:00 (formerly 1-5:00) and starts on September 15 (instead of November 1). Target shoot sites still must be approved by the Police Dept. (section 137.08 of the Village code).

SEPTEMBER

What can we say; it has simply been one unusual summer. Judging from the number of walk-ons on the ferry and the lack of golf carts for rent, it looks like we are having a good summer. But judging from the crowds that we see at the various watering holes, it looks like attendance is down. The two biggest beaches are very busy but few people are walking around with gift shop bags. This will be one of those summers that no one will be able to predict. We are not sure if it is COVID related, but there seems to be more houses than usual on the market, and they are selling pretty fast. It seems like the for sale sign goes up and next thing we know, there is a big house sale as people leave the Island or get ready to bring their own stuff to their new house.

We love reading the Chamber Witch posts about the strange and unusual questions that people ask when they pop their heads in the door. Some are obviously people not reading or listening, and some just have us scratching our heads. The Chamber has been busy with 532 inbound calls; 364 outbound calls; 500 in-person visitors; and 130 Facebook posts.

The History Museum has been busy too – it seems like more families are stopping in but fewer marathon shoppers. Lots of people are searching for their family roots (and the museum has people that can help) or looking for the history of their new Island home. It is gratifying to

get 5-star reviews on Trip Advisor and Google My Business. Did you know that the KI History Museum has almost 2000 followers on Facebook? The KI Historical Assoc. has a new Blog post (you can find it on their website and on the Chamber's). In the last month Leslie has posted items about the Island's Telegraph (part 2), the influenza epidemic of 1920, the history of the Statue of Mary on Titus Road, and the N. side quarry building (that big cement thing at the State Park).

Our Audubon Club (On FB-Bird Kelleys Island) has replaced the monthly pot luck meetings (and we so miss them) with monthly nature walks. The KI School Field station has been keeping us entertained with outdoor displays most Saturdays. The Landowners Assoc. has given away washable face masks.

The Erie Co. Health Dept. did a second COVID test day on the island, geared towards businesses, however less than 40 people show up for testing. In the meantime, they have cancelled the regular Health Clinic visits at the school until further notice.

COUNCIL NOTES – There aren't any this month. Even though few people show up to the meetings, Council has not yet opened the doors to the public. The public could not attend the last meeting at all. The remote access did not work (the meeting leader could not connect to sign on) and people who tried to call in were disconnected or put on hold several times.

AUGUST

Wow – we jumped right into August and skipped July altogether. So very hot. All events like were cancelled making it very hard to adjust to a summer lifestyle. Yes, we have loads of visitors but no, they are not wearing masks (although that has improved after the big scare at Put-in-Bay). We are not sure why people think that the Islands are 'safer' – we get the same people coming here that visit stores and restaurants elsewhere. With all the cancellations, the KI History Museum is still moving forward with their Arts & Crafts show on August 1. Social distancing is really easy at this outdoor event.

ODD STUFF - You know, every group, organization, and business has a Facebook page. It is absolutely the best way to keep up on news and updates. Start by searching 'Kelleys Island' and see what pops up and then Follow your favs. The KI Historical Assoc. has been adding old 1938 newspapers to their website (KelleysIslandHistorical.org) and the KI Audubon Club just upgraded their website (KelleysIslandNature.org). Sometimes it is difficult to find, but the KI Landowners site is KILA.ROCKS. Like the new ball diamond? Thanks go to Bob Simonson, Dave Marko, and Augie Palladino for donating time, materials and equipment to renovate the field. A beautiful, but unmoving swan made its appearance at the State Park dock. Put there to scare away the other birds that leave their calling cards on the new dock. Trumpeter Swans are very territorial, even if they are not real. The Health Dept. did COVID testing on Friday the 10th. So far, looks good. In two hours they tested 106 people and all the results came back negative. Residents on W. Lakeshore got an eyeful recently as a couple on a boat (pretty close to shore) went skinny dipping in the warm waters of Lake Erie.

2020 CENSUS UPDATE - Do you have a building or house that was unoccupied on April 1? Maybe your summer house? The online form doesn't deal with that. You have to CALL IN and speak to a representative. Just a few questions. With so many rental and seasonal uses and businesses on the Island, we need to get them all counted. It really DOES affect benefits we get. Call in your seasonal or rental houses reports to the Census office: 1-844-330-2020.

CHAMBER NEWS – The Chamber published their very first newsletter, which included some fun facts: Inbound calls: 600; Outbound calls: 480; roughly 150 in-person visitors (office opened June 12 and counting is hard when it gets busy). There were 41 lodging inquiry emails sent (please note that these always contain multiple requests and they also counsel many people over the phone) and 128 Facebook posts. Yipes – so very busy.

VFW NEWS – The VFW here also has a newsletter. They are keeping the Canteen Covid Clean. If you see a barstool leaning against the bar it's been sanitized, there's also plenty of hand sanitizer and wipes on the bar along with anti-bacterial soap in all bathrooms. New things this year include hotdogs with all the fixings and thanks to John and Jean Kuyoth who have donated a popcorn maker, they will be offering fresh popcorn. Thanks to everyone who donated to the Parking Lot fund. Make sure you support this organization with a social membership. They are our winter lifeline on the Island.

COUNCIL NOTES – Council evolves. This meeting was in-person, with the public attending online. Unfortunately, it was very difficult to hear reports from people a short distance from the computer's microphone. BURN PERMITS are on hold due to the dry weather. The airport is trying for a couple of grants: a heliport (\$203,000) and LED runway lighting (\$347,800). New camping and RV regulations have been presented to the Planning Commission for review and presentation to Council. There are piles of mulch available on Huntington Lane – way too much for use on the Curilla Preserve trails. It is available free for the taking. Assessment documents are moving forward for the McGettigan, Memory and Fernwood repaving project. The Mayor suggested that Council consider making masks mandatory on the Island and surprisingly, the only two objections included enforcement issues and whether masks were actually needed. There was an executive session to discuss 'personnel issues'.

JULY

All we could talk about was the big wind storm of the June 10. It was like a mini hurricane. While the winds were only 60 mph, the slashing rain was really amazing. About 30 large, old trees fell. We were fortunate that only a couple of houses sustained any damage. Across from the water tower, one tree crashed through the roof (while the people were downstairs watching TV). Just as we expressed relief that the power had not gone out – it did - and stayed out all night. Various 'legs' of the power system were brought online one at a time. Some people were without power until well after noon. The good news is that there is firewood available everywhere. But this comes too late as there were multiple postings on Facebook about firewood thefts over the winter and early spring.

No sooner did I submit the June article about the lack of visitors, then we were invaded by tourists and midges; lots of midges, several hatches. As I write this, the first Mayflies are hatching. It is now tourism as usual as businesses comply with safety precautions, but barely a visitor can be seen wearing a mask. While it's great that people are gathering to share stories and enjoy drinks and a meal, it is a little scary to think that they may be sharing more than just good will. So many of the large-scale events have been cancelled – particularly Islandfest and Homecoming. Never fear, other activities, later in the summer, are being planned. The KI Historical Assoc. still plans to hold its Arts and Craft Show on August 1 (social distancing is easy to maintain) and the fireworks will be held September 5, Labor Day weekend. The new Monarch Butterfly Box and Caterpillar Café officially opened and the history museum finally got the go-ahead to open its doors (featured displays this year Island Doctors in the 1800's and the Suffrage debate of 1867). Also, watch for the new History Blog on the Chamber and museum's websites. The KI Audubon Club has replaced their pot-lucks with nature walks (on Facebook: Bird Kelleys Island).

Tax bills are in the mail. Remember, if you didn't get one, call the Erie County Auditor's office to get your address updated. Council's virtual meetings continue and the meetings are quite short. There is no chitchat or arguments since only one person can occupy the microphone at a time. There are still some kinks to work out, like viewing everyone who signed in to see who has their microphone on (birds chirping, TV programs playing) but it does seem to be working. Council hopes to go back to in-person meetings (next meeting is Thursday, July 9 at 7:00). The EMS

squad had six runs, the Fire Dept. is conducting business fire inspections and three body cam systems were approved for the Police Dept.

JUNE

It has been pretty cold with an occasional glorious warm summer day in between. That makes it hard to gear up for summer, as our weather and our usual spring activities are missing or delayed (restaurants and gift shops opening, friends arriving, cottages opening, etc.). We are all running a month or two behind. It has been so very quiet here. We are starting to see maskless faces (generally newcomers and visitors) as businesses open, but all in all everyone has been pretty careful. The Mayor has put out several letters outlining guidelines, but all the press read was Kelleys Island Open – everyone welcome. Not exactly what the Mayor said. The pavilion on Neuman's old dock has been torn down there are been some sightings of a mink at the West Bay and someone noted that two were trapped and released near the downtown area. And we have at least one resident beaver at the State Park. Not unusual, as the pond dries up, they usually leave. Along with all the cancellations this year, we recently learned that both ISLANDFEST and HOMECOMING are officially cancelled. The Chamber is working on something special for early fall though. The best places for information on events and Island activities is, of course, the individual websites and Facebook. Check in regularly, things are changing very fast.

ELECTION RESULTS - The March election finally occurred in late April and only by mail. We have 325 registered voters but since this was a primary with no local issues, only 78 votes were cast. While Trump was the only Rep. candidate for President, the DEMS had 11 candidates at the time the ballots were printed. But almost all backed out by election day. Biden garnered 66% of the vote, Sanders 18%. The Erie MetroParks levy got 76% yes votes. Marcy Kaptur got 88% of the vote. Was the low turnout because of the election confusion or was it simply a lack of candidates?

WHERE ARE OUR CENSUS INVITATIONS? Apparently, the forms come addressed to a physical building address. We, of course, have only P O Boxes. There is no way, with all the new people on the Island, that the P O can figure out who is at which box. BUT you can still fill out your Census form – go online and click the box that says you did not get an invitation. It doesn't look like there is a place for unoccupied dwellings. In the past the Census counted houses and people now it looks like they are only counting a house that has someone living in it. For example: in 2000 the data collected indicated that there are 175 households and of the 312 residents, 146 are over 60 years of age (47%). There were 859 houses on the island and of those, 620 were seasonal housing units (72%) and 42 were for rent. I guess we won't be getting that detail this time.

COUNCIL – It was a rough start to the Council meeting; missing video for some people and others could be heard but were getting notices that they weren't online. It was another short meeting – the POLICE DEPT registered two reports, 153 phone calls, and one arrest for assault. They are working with LaFarge to deal with the alarms that are going off, which appear to be animal intrusions. They are beginning to receive reports of speeding and stop sign violations. As with most organizations, all the police events have been cancelled for the year. EMS reports no runs (always good news). There will be one more meeting for the AIRPORT road relocation (hopefully the FAA will abandon this project). The Water Dept., due to COVID-19, is waiving late fees on the water bills. They received approval to spend \$11,837 for boring equipment and \$4150 to replace the water vending machine which no longer works. Precision Paving received the contract for the assessed PAVING project for Memory/Fernwood/McGettigan and for the Transfer Station. Our new VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR is Steve Wermuth who will start on June 1.

MAY 2020

Words that we never would have used before: Shelter at home, social distancing, essential business, home schooling, virtual meet-ups (concerts, games, meetings, family and friends). Feelings were running high for a while as Islanders took care to self-isolate after a visit to the mainland – no one wanted to be the one to bring ‘the virus’ to the Island. Much to our chagrin, but we keep getting tourists to the Island because they think it was a ‘safe place’ to visit. Following the governor’s orders, new ways of getting our food and groceries appeared. Everyone became street walkers (the nature kind). Even our Village Council experimented with on-line meetings – with pretty good success. Thank goodness for the Internet, phone, email and television. The Mayor has been posting updates on the Village website www.KelleysIsland.us and through the Chamber and Police Dept. Facebook pages. Even the KI Ferry began restricting some groups (like fishermen with boats). As you can imagine, we, like every other community, are re-evaluating programs, opening days, festivals and events. Get to know your community – just search “Kelleys Island” on Facebook and see all the organizations and businesses that have pages for updates.

All in all, life on the Island hasn’t changed much for those who winter up here. But for people who retreated to their island homes from the big city, it is a reality check. We see more people out walking, dogs are getting more exercise than they’ve probably seen in years, people are cooking at home more and roads often look deserted since there is no place to go. Many of us thought we would be tackling long-dormant projects, but we are still in the winter slow-down period, but as the weather warms up, we will once again, perk up and begin to tackle our spring projects.

Probably the biggest news was the draining of the swamp on Division St. by the cemetery. (Doesn’t THAT put things in perspective?) The entire low area was filled with water and at one point, threatened to overflow the road. Various ducks, an Egret and a Heron were routinely seen enjoying the new “pond.” Then one day, it was gone. High winds and waves washed out the sand barrier on the State Park beach, and much of the water receded back into the lake.

COUNCIL

For the first time, we held a virtual Council meeting and 22 people were present (including Village officials). There were some echo problems and it took a little while to get the hang of muting and un-muting the microphone (to reduce background noise), but all in all, it went off pretty well. Not surprising, there was not much to report since the Village is pretty much shut down. The KIPD had just one report, but they were still busy with 860 house checks and 130 phone calls. The Village, ODNR, FAA and ODOT met regarding the relocation of Monaghan Rd. Village officials could not stress enough that we don’t have the funds to accomplish this unless ODNR donates land to us, as we have nothing to offer in exchange. The cost is \$3 million with 5% being the Village cost. Another meeting will follow. It is our hope that this project will be abandoned. This reminds us of the time the EPA required us to get a cost estimate to bring water over from the nearest water plant (in Marblehead) before we could proceed in expanding and improving our plant. That was a waste of time and money. The Village will receive \$20,000 in COVID-19 emergency Federal aid. The water dept. anticipates no disruptions in providing water to the community. The EPA has determined that the Water Dept. can no longer pull meters for winterization. A notice will be forthcoming, but it is expected that a plumber will have to do the meter in/out and a coliform sample will need to be taken after reconnection. There were two applicants under consideration for the Village Administrator position. The Mayor appointed Claudia Brown to the Cemetery Board and Rob Quinn as the airport manager.

APRIL 2020

After a pretty mild winter, February went out like a lion. A couple inches of snow, high winds, Griffing suspended service for a couple of days. The (No) Ice Party moved to the West Bay pavilion because, well there was no ice on the lake. The Ferry started running on March 16 and just as businesses started opening – BAM! the entire state of Ohio closed down. Kids are on a 3-week vacation, all bars and restaurants are closed, no big social gatherings, store shelves are looking bare and the Primary election was cancelled. We will miss gathering together as our friends begin arriving, but, this is what Kelleys Island is like in the Winter!

In the meantime, Spring has certainly arrived. The Red Wing blackbirds came back on Feb. 20, and just this morning (4/16) we heard our first Spring Peepers. As we move forward, big changes are afoot. The Village Pump is officially for sale (\$2.3 million, 6600 sf, 3-story building). The Monarch Butterfly Box will (hopefully) open in May and will feature an 1800 square foot, walk through, greenhouse full of plants and animals. There will be a gift shop and small "grab-and-go" snack bar, The Caterpillar café. The KI History Museum Gift will open (again hopefully) on May 15 & 16 with TWO Free Museum Days.

We are loving the flamingos on Division Street. Did you notice that they change with the holidays? Red and black for Christmas, orange and black for Halloween, pink for Easter and red for Valentine's Day. There are little flamingo children too.

COUNCIL NOTES – The first meeting of the year was pretty exciting. Claudia performed her last duties as secretary of Council as Lisa Klonaris prepares to take over. Kim Valentine resigned as Village Administrator due to health issues. The vacancy will be posted. There were numerous complaints about our engineering firm, CT Consultants, citing failure to prepare documents timely, changing estimates and generally slow progress on projects. Bobby Skeans has done an admirable job doing the work of two people this winter; but with summer coming, watch for the posting of a part-time maintenance worker position. There were very few committee reports as everything slowed down during the winter. The Police Dept. noted that Sgt. Amy Krall resigned to take a full time job at Metro Health in Cleveland. Due to the Corona Virus situation, the Police will not be responding to non-essential calls. The State Park will (almost certainly) be providing an ODNR officer Thursday-Saturday during the season. From mid-December to mid-March there were 215 house checks and 25 business checks.

There was a heated discussion on the first ordinance on the agenda, the annual appropriation. Several Councilmen along with the Chief of Police voiced their objection to the decrease in the Police Dept. budget, a reduction of 7% even though Council increased salaries last year by 7%, which, in turn increased benefit costs. Also, there is a \$10,000 payment coming due on the Ford truck (the previous two payments were covered by donations). Chief Craig argued that Council was setting him up for failure. He also announced that he was advised that our K-9 unit, was to be disbanded. Dundee has assisted the Dept. several times in locating drugs and suspects, and is a favorite with the public.

After heated discussions and an emotional plea not to reduce the Police budget, it all came down to a vote. Greg Ritchie requested an amendment to the appropriations to increase the Police budget and Seeholzer, Finger and Wolfe voted no, while Ritchie, Maust and Longbrake voted yes. As this was a tie, Mayor Ehrbar broke the tie with a No vote. The ordinance will appear on the next meeting agenda, likely a special meeting due to the short deadline. And now we all just hunker down and try our best to weather the virus storm that is upon us.

MARCH 2020

As I write this, February is just past mid-month and it has been pretty quiet. Since the last ferry at the end of January, Griffing Flying Service has been pretty busy bringing people to and from the Islands. We always have mixed emotions when the ferry runs extra long. We get loads of extra time, but we start to miss the ice-o-lation that comes with being 'stranded.' Sure we can fly off, and we thank Griffing for being so responsive to our needs, but, there is something special about being so remote. It is our time to regroup, relax, and put off thinking about all the responsibilities that come with spring. We eat a lot (a LOT), socialize, gather in groups (to read and discuss books, attend exercise and art classes and knit), we visit the library, we walk a lot and otherwise keep ourselves quite busy. Still no ice for fishing!

LIBRARY STATS – Our library is simply the best place to go in the winter (and of course, in the summer too). This will give you some idea of how busy this little branch of the Sandusky Library is. Adult Circulation-2,236; Young Adult Circulation-8; Children's Circulation-539; for a total Circulation of - 2,783 items. Materials added to the collection in 2019: Adult Materials-453; Young Adult Materials-2; and Children's Materials-46; for a total of 501 new items.

RESORT TAX – The Village received \$160,483.47 in resort tax. This represents the 1.5% tax on taxable sales of \$10,698,866. This is down slightly from last year. Looking back, three gift shops closed (Vi's Island Treasures, The Pitt Stop and Kelleys Landing). Speaking of gift shops, it looks like the Zettlers have leased the former Sweet Valley Trading Post/Pitt Stop and are working on the inside. No word yet on what will be going in.

FEBRUARY 2020

The big winds continued to blow stuff down as December closed out. On Dec. 30, gusts over 50 mph blasted the Island. Then on the last day of December we woke to a blizzard with a couple of inches of snow and even more wind. There were lots of tree limbs down and substantial damage to Koster's dock. A good portion of the dock, on the west side of the building, is now washed ashore and it looks like the waves undercut the foundation of the building. We can only wait to see what happens next after some hasty repairs were made. Real estate tax bills are out and if you don't get your tax bill by the end of January, call the Auditor's office. We got an extra few weeks of ferry service because of the lack of Lake ice, which was good because while we escaped the big flu epidemic, we were plagued by accidents and falls. So nice to just pop over for a follow-up visit. We can't thank the KIFBL enough.

FRONTIER TELEPHONE SERVICE – Well the word is out, Frontier is moving toward Chapter 11 bankruptcy in 29 states which should allow the company to "keep operating without interruption of telephone and broadband service to its customers."

NEW YEARS – There was a really big crowd at the Kelleys Island Wine Co. for the New Years' eve celebration. Some of the early crowd opted for the prime rib dinner (which we hear was magnificent), and the later crowd welcomed in the new year with gusto. Pictures appeared on Facebook showing one family doing a polar bear plunge. Sure there was no ice to break through, but really, that had to be extremely cold.

COUNCIL is on hiatus for January and February, mostly because there isn't a lot for them to do and so many of our council members travel during the winter. Bobby (our maintenance worker) managed to get the drain on Division St working again. The old clay tile was filled with tree roots. Nice shiny blue PVC pipe is now installed. It took several pieces of equipment, a long deep trench, lots of manual labor, and lots of help from people to get the job completed.

JANUARY 2020

Winter is here – The Christmas party at the Inn (thanks Pat and Lori Hayes) was a wonderfully cozy affair. Lots of good will and a bunch of sad goodbyes as people prepared to leave for the season. The KI Historical Assoc held an open house at the museum and the resale shop. There were so many people that the little house was warm and cozy, with plenty of food and drinks to keep everyone quite jolly. Over at the museum, quite a few people stopped by who had never visited the museum before. We had a dusting of snow, but on December 17, we actually had 1.5” accumulation. A sure sign of winter’s approach was the free shopping trip offered by the Kelleys Island Ferry. The Kelleys Island School has again, for the 20th year, asked the Erie Co. Auditor to NOT collect 8 mills of school millage. Years ago the school produced a regular newsletter. We were pleased to see that that newsletter has been started up again. It is great to see how engaged the students, teachers and Board are. The last big blast of the year was the Christmas pot luck at historic Kelley’s Hall. The place was filled with happy people and deliriously energetic kids. Santa was outstanding, there were carols and everyone agreed that there was way too much wonderfully delicious food. An outstanding way to celebrate the season.

COUNCIL NOTES

It was a short Council meeting. At the top of the list for next year: an update to the camping ordinance to more accurately deal with camping, RVs, motor homes, storage of vehicles, employee trailer housing, and clarify how long mobile homes can remain on an active or planned construction site. Abandoned vehicle complaints will be acted on with letters sent to two property owners (Woodford Rd. and Lower Cliff). The POLICE DEPT. reported stats for the year: 203 reports, 2482 phone calls, 45 arrests, 112 traffic or misdemeanor tickets, 154 warnings, 15 accidents, 3593 house/business checks, 6 boat patrol events, 66 vehicle lock-outs and 95 assists with other agencies. Remember to complete your house check or welfare check forms and get your favorite people on the list. EMS had one run for the month. Sharon reminds us that dialing 911 is absolutely the best way to get someone to respond. The FIRE DEPT. reports that six people completed the haz-mat course. The KI Venture Resort allowed them to use their conference room and Dave Marco served lunch. The Erie Co. EMA funded the training. The chief corrected his report from last month indicating that the fire hose was donated by the Sheffield Fire Dept. and not Strongsville.