

Guest Column: Mayor Gerry Messmer

“Traffic laws, a fire truck, and Shop Small Saturday”

The following is the third in a series of columns about life in Odessa written by Mayor Gerry Messmer.

ODESSA, Nov. 20, 2018 -- Hello and Happy Thanksgiving from Cathy and I to all of the great folks of Odessa! I hope everyone has a safe weekend, great family time and a break from the daily hustle and bustle.

This week we had a great Board Meeting and I thought I would update you on a couple of issues.

First off, thank you to the folks who came to voice their concerns over the traffic legislation we voted on and passed with your input. One concern from the folks that came, that the Board members all share, is the incessant speeding in Odessa, especially on Main, Church and Speedway Streets. Additionally, the students leaving school and spinning their tires at the corner of Speedway and Church has gotten out of control. Just a couple weeks ago I was almost hit by a car speeding through the crosswalk on Main Street!

The board will finalize three bids for speed tracking devices that will capture the speed data of actual speed and time of day of violators. The devices will provide us with reports we can then turn over to the Schuyler County Sheriff's Department so they can focus their resources on the bad drive times.

Next, in the spring, during better weather, we will look at painting more crosswalks and then putting tent signs in the road stating it is illegal to drive over a crosswalk with a pedestrian in it. A point we discussed and held off on, pending the results of the speed tracking device, is making Church and Speedway a four-way stop to slow up traffic. We would love your input on this topic. Feel free to post your thoughts on the Odessa Facebook page.



On another front, our amazing Fire Department is in the final stages of moving forward with a life cycle replacement of one of our fire trucks. My hat is off to Chief Mike Tomassi and First Assistant JJ Jelliff for the hard work they have done putting this together. The Board voted unanimously, 5-0, to move forward with the referendum to purchase the new truck. We are only waiting on HGAC to confirm some pricing as being within NY State limits, and we are off and running.

Here are a few great things about it. First of all, the capability of the truck will raise the Fire Department's ISO Rating as high as possible based on the gallons per minute capability that we will have. It increases our ISO rating by three full points. What does this mean to you and me? The increased ISO rating will help lower our fire insurance costs by the maximum reduction available based on that rating. It gets better, folks! Chief Tomassi has been able to do this without a need to increase taxes! His judicial management of the budget is allowing the Fire Department to do this within the limits of their current budget. Great job, Mike!

Additionally, the new truck will bring some state-of-the-art capabilities much required by the fire department. First, the water gun on top will be operable from the ground using a control panel, eliminating the need for a fireman to climb on top of the truck, thus reducing risk. Inside, the truck will carry foam for petroleum fires which is a critical capability we do not have and is needed for auto accidents. Currently we have to rely on the availability of sister units in the area, of which there are very few with this capability, to arrive at the scene. And quite frankly, in an accident time is of the essence to save lives.

Finally, please do not forget our 3rd Annual Shop Small Business Saturday that will be held at the Village Hall starting at 10 a.m. Saturday, November 24th. So far, we have 29 vendors as this great event keeps growing each year, so come shop your local businesses! The full list of vendors is on our Village Facebook page. Later in the day, at 5 p.m., will be the 7th Annual Village Tree Lighting in front of the Fire Department. This year we added a little twist as we planted a live tree that will remain in place and be trimmed to a nice shape each summer! Thank you, Steve Siptrott and Ty Rogers, for finding the tree and getting it planted for the Village!

As always, everyone is welcome to the Board Meetings! This is OUR home, OUR Village and your input is important to the Board Members who are here to serve you and represent you!

Happy Thanksgiving, everyone!

--Gerry Messmer