

Village Views

WHEELING, ILLINOIS

MARCH/APRIL 1999

Should Village Clerk Be Appointed or Elected?

For the second time in a decade, voters will be asked to decide the future of Village Clerk, currently a part-time elected position paying \$3,000 per year. The clerk has three primary responsibilities:

- Attending all meetings of the Village Board and preparing the official minutes.
- Sealing and attesting all ordinances, resolutions, contracts, bonds, and such licenses, permits and other documents as required.
- Acting as custodian of all village documents not assigned to another official.

The Board of Trustees decided to place the issue before the voters after evaluating the increasing load of paperwork going before the Village. An appointed full-time clerk would be available to residents during weekday business hours and be better able to manage the flow of documents.

The clerk, whether appointed or elected, is a nonvoting position and does not participate in public-policy decisions. If the clerk becomes appointed, the position would incorporate the duties presently performed by the licensing clerk, resulting in no new costs.

Voters to Elect Trustees on Tuesday, April 13

The Village of Wheeling will join other northwest suburban communities on Election Day, April 13, to set the course of leadership for the next two years. The terms of three members of the Board of Trustees expire this year. In addition to electing trustees, voters will be asked to decide whether the position of Village Clerk should be elected or appointed.

VOTE
April 13

Trustee Openings to Be Filled

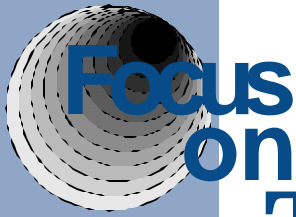
The terms of Trustees Judy Abruscato, Robert Heer and Patrick Horcher expire this year. All are running for re-election. In addition, Wheeling residents Dean Argiris, currently a member of the Plan Commission; retired firefighter Don Malin; and resident Stephen Telow have filed petitions to run for the three open positions.

A drawing to determine ballot position put Argiris at the top, followed by Trustees Abruscato, Heer and Horcher; Malin and Telow. Trustee Abruscato has served on the Board of Trustees since 1987. Trustees Heer and Horcher are completing their first terms.

Eyesore No More: It's Gone!

Making way for progress in creating a "Village Gateway" at Milwaukee Ave. and Dundee Rd., the site of the former Wheeling Auto Repair was cleared Friday, February 19.





Finance Department: Few Complaints, Top Rating for Fiscal Management

"The residential market is so strong that 'any housing development that goes up is sold out.'"

The Finance Department has more regular, direct contact with residents and businesses than any other Village activity. The department, headed by Director Robert W Fialkowski, handles utility billing, revenue collection and business licensing—all activities that residents and businesses may sometimes wish they could do without. And yet very few people complain, and most keep their accounts current with no fuss.

At times, it is the Finance Department's undeniable responsibility to be firm with residents or businesses who fail to pay their bills. Some residents may object, but Fialkowski maintains that the department can't be run like a business. "We have to run it like a government. There's a difference. We have to treat everyone equally, and sometimes we turn people off who don't pay their bills."

Fialkowski explains

While Village government is different from business, some of Fialkowski's responsibilities are much like those of a corporate chief financial officer. The Village does not have shareholders in the same sense that a company does, but it issues bonds and so has to be sensitive to the perceptions of the analysts who set bond ratings.

One rating firm, Fitch IBCA, recently upgraded Wheeling's rating from AA- to AA. (See story on page 3.) Its glowing report praised the Village for "good spending control"

and a "well-maintained infrastructure." Asked to appraise Wheeling's strengths, Fialkowski cited many of the same things Fitch did: financial stability, strong infrastructure, and economic opportunity. He added "service delivery equal to any town and better than many," and a "large diversity in housing." The residential market is so strong that "any housing development that goes up is sold out," he said.

Fialkowski wishes bond ratings were always based strictly on fiscal strength. If they were, he believes Wheeling's rating would be AAA. However, factors beyond the Village's control—many of them highly subjective—may contribute to ratings, he suggests.

The Finance Department's other functions include managing the Village accounting, payroll, investments, liability and health insurance programs, telecommunications systems, computer systems, and purchasing. Two recent priorities have been getting everyone within Village government computer networked and upgrading the Village's Website.

Fialkowski was attracted to municipal government by the opportunity "to make a difference and do things for the public good." In his 18 years with the Village, capital projects that he has overseen brought Lake Michigan water and elevated tanks to the Village, vast street improvements, community development projects, including the Senior Center, and many other residential and commercial improvements.

The Village's biggest economic development problem, in Fialkowski's view, is that its Cook County commercial/industrial tax structure suffers in comparison with neighboring Lake County. (In Cook County, commercial/industrial property is taxed at twice the residential rate.) According to Fialkowski, property originally zoned industrial has been developed as residential, and other property remains undeveloped because of the tax problem. "It's a problem we can't solve by ourselves," he says.

One of Wheeling's undeniable strengths, its reputation for great restaurants, doesn't weigh so

Continued on page 3



Meet Finance Director Robert W. Fialkowski

Bob joined the Village of Wheeling in 1980 as Assistant to the Village Manager. He became Assistant Village Manager the next year. He later served as Director

of Community Development until assuming his present position as Director of Finance and Administrative Services/Treasurer in 1986.

He's responsible for the preparation and control of Wheeling's \$34 million budget. He also oversees the investment of all funds in a portfolio valued at more than \$55 million.

During his tenure, the Village has consistently received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association. He is a past treasurer of the Intergovernmental Risk Management Agency.

Before joining the Village staff, Bob served as Deputy Director of the Northwest Municipal Conference in Mt. Prospect. He holds a Masters of Business Administration from Roosevelt University and an undergraduate degree in civil engineering from Northwestern University. Married and the father of 2, he lives in Arlington Heights.

Milwaukee & Dundee: A Transformed Presence

The winds of change are blowing across the intersection of Milwaukee Ave. and Dundee Rd., and more than 160 architectural designers from around the world are vying to become part of that change.

That's how many firms have responded so far to the call for entries to create a unique gateway to the Village of Wheeling. Posters for the Wheeling Design Competition have appeared on the bulletin boards of many architectural companies thanks to a mailing from Design Competition Services Inc., of Milwaukee, which specializes in facilitating such competitions and was recruited to handle the logistics.

The call for entries stipulates that successful solutions should serve as a focal point and symbolic entry to the Village. The emphasis is on

natural elements. Of particular interest will be the creative ways water features and lighting are integrated into the design proposals. The designs may include other materials and formal components."

Each of the competing architects paid a \$90 entry fee. The winner will receive a \$10,000 cash prize and the right to negotiate with the Village to develop the design. Entries are due no later than April 19. Jurors will determine the finalists by April 24 with winners announced April 26.



Signs mark the site of Wheeling's future "gateway" intersection.

"Successful solutions should serve as a focal point and symbolic entry to the Village. The emphasis is on natural elements."

Wheeling Bond Rating Gets a Boost

The Village received an economic shot in the arm from Fitch IBCA. The bond-rating firm upgraded Wheeling's rating on \$13.4 million of outstanding general obligation bonds from AA- to AA.

"It's an affirmation of our financial condition and the things we've done over the past few years, in terms of alternative forms of revenue keeping pace with expenditure," said Finance Director Robert Fialkowski.

Focus on Finance... from page 2

heavily in the estimation of the finance director. "The industrial areas and large retailers produce far more tax revenues than all the restaurants in town," he says. "My idea of economic development is a 50,000 square foot industrial building."

Looking ahead, Fialkowski does not see "drastic differences" in the way Wheeling develops. "We see slow, steady development continuing. We hope to find a way to improve areas of unincorporated Cook County adjacent to us that have had the affect of reducing the attractiveness of parts of Wheeling for development," he said.

Fitch pointed to three fundamental factors that led to the upgraded rating: continued economic expansion, improved financial performance and moderate debt levels. Fitch's report also cited strong residential development, an unemployment rate almost half that of the rest of Cook County, and per capita income levels 18 percent higher than the county average and 22 percent higher than the state.

Fitch credited "an expansion in residential investment and attendant commercial business" and Wheeling's "proximity to Chicago and O'Hare International Airport, combined with good transportation links" as Village strengths. It singled out the "doubling of home-rule sales taxes and imposition of a telecommunications tax that shifted the tax burden to nonresidents." Telecommunications and sales tax changes reduced dependence on property taxes—now 42 percent of general revenues, down from 65 percent in 1993.

The improved bond rating means the Village will save money on lower interest rates for bonds issued in the future. The economic stability reflected by the upgraded rating also makes Wheeling more attractive for businesses.

"In 1998, three Wheeling students received scholarships of \$1,000 each. . . Funds for the program are provided by private donations."

Wanted: A Few Good Students

The Village of Wheeling and Workforce Development Council of Northern Cook County are looking for a few good students as candidates for the council's Community Scholarship Campaign.

The scholarships, awarded on the basis of need and availability of funds, are intended to help the community and private companies provide training for the work force of the future. In 1998, three Wheeling students received scholarships of \$1,000 each.

The scholarships were introduced in 1993 by the Workforce Development Council and the Northwest Municipal Conference. Funds for the program are provided by private donations.

All of the funds are applied to job training and education, with no administrative deductions.

Past scholarships have enabled students to attend such institutions as the University of Illinois, Triton College, Southern Illinois University, Northwestern University, Eastern Illinois University and Harper College.

The deadline to apply for the scholarships is April 9, 1999. Applications are available at Wheeling Village Hall, 255 W. Dundee Road.

Milwaukee Avenue

It's official. Or it will be on May 2. The Milwaukee Avenue reconstruction project is finally at an end. A ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held at 9 a.m. that day, followed by a 5K run, two-mile walk and post-race party. More than 500 runners and walkers are expected to participate.

The \$11.8 million, 18-month undertaking required cooperation between the Village and the Illinois Department of Transportation. Trees to be planted this spring will complete the final phase. A key artery bisecting the Village and home to the famous Restaurant Row, Milwaukee Ave. was expanded to five lanes frontward. Improved traffic signals, installation of new street lights and other beautification improvements were part of the project.



Village of Wheeling Wel

The Village extends a welcome to the following businesses which have recently located in Wheeling: Express Grinding Inc., Zbigniew Rosinski, 535 N. Wolf Rd., grinding small parts

Shopping@Home Inc., Joe Carey, 401 S. Milwaukee Ave. #170, 847/465-9280, home grocery shopping

Ervi rotest Illinois Air Team, Dennis Palmer, 100 N. Northgate Hwy., 630/993-6200, emission test center

Opto International Inc., Graham R. Wood, President, 220 Messner Dr., 847/541-6786, manufacturer of store fixtures & displays

Admiral Plumbers, Inc., Kenneth Goldstein, 270 Larkin Dr. #A, 847/459-8000, plumbing contractor

Check Into Cash of IL, LLC, Steve Scoggins, 1049 Lake Cook Rd., 847/279-2359, consumer loan Co.

Erwin Wiczer Industries, 500 Harvester Ct. #B, Erwin Wiczer, President, 847/541-

Leak Not, Want Not

If your water bill seems to be high and getting higher, your plumbing system may be siphoning off water through holes as large as a quarter inch. Even pinholes 1/32nd of an inch in diameter can cost an extra \$18.71 a month for a commodity you didn't even enjoy. Consider the excessive costs of leaks posted below, then look for leaks by:

- Pouring food coloring into the toilet tank. Telltale signs of color in the bowl signal a leak.
- Checking all faucets and replacing worn washers or defective fixtures.

Size of leak (55 lbs. pressure)	Wasted water (gals. per month)	Your cost (\$3.17/1000 gals.)
1/4 inch	337,045	\$1,068.43
1/8 inch	94,463	\$299.45
1/16 inch	23,615	\$74.86
1/32 inch	5,903	\$18.71

- Inspecting toilet mechanisms and repairing or adjusting as needed

- Ensuring outside water faucets are shut off.

Get Official Kickoff



celebration is a joint effort of the Village, the Wheeling/Prospect Heights Chamber of Commerce, and the Wheeling Park District. The Village is seeking support from the business community for the May 2 ceremony. Interested business owners should contact Jim Grabowski, Assistant Village Manager, at 847-459-2805.

While construction is finished, beautification activities continue for the northeast and southeast corners of Milwaukee Ave. Dundee Rd. Additional work to convert northwest corner into a commercial and residential development will proceed in the 18-24 months. It is expected that the formation of the Village's "gateway intersection" will be finished by 2001.

Local New Businesses

9556, distributor & assembler of security products

Tandem Metals Inc, 581 S. Wheeling Rd., Drago Kragulj, President, 847/215-1810, manufacturer

Z & S Enterprises, Inc. (DBA Dundee Cigo), 775 W Dundee Rd., Kasim Memon, President, 847/215-7406, gas & mini mart

How Sweet It Is, 600 Northgate Pkwy, Unit E, 847/465-1600, Norman Ross, President, corporate gifts & incentives

Micro Management Technologies, 5260 Capitol Dr., 847/808-6000, David Schadner, President, document imaging software & services

Third Millennium Technologies, 481 E Dundee Rd., Steve Schwartz, 847/808-9970, consultant on interactive computing

Village Hydrant Flushing Starts March 15

The Department of Public Works' Water Division will begin flushing fire hydrants throughout the Village starting March 15, weather permitting. Crews will be out between 6 a.m. and 3 p.m. Flushing, which removes particulate matter and corrosion from the system, will continue through April until the entire system is finished. Signs will be posted in areas

designated for flushing the day before work starts. Residents may notice a slightly lower pressure and discoloration of their water during the flushing program. However, the water will be completely safe to drink. Residents are advised to check the color of the water before beginning laundry to prevent any staining.

Working for Wheeling



Elaine Simpson Village Clerk

Length of service: sworn in April 1, 1997

Birthplace: Chicago

Family: husband, four daughters, one granddaughter

Occupation: Customer Service Supervisor

I've lived in Wheeling... 11 years

I ran for public office to... serve the Village

My political aspiration is to be... a trustee

The accomplishment I'm most proud of... my daughters

The thing I like best about Wheeling is... the diversity

My favorite place in Wheeling is... my neighborhood

My idea of a great day is... helping others, being with family and friends

Three words that best describe me are... giving, caring, responsible

People who knew me in high school would be surprised to know... I want to be involved in politics

I belong to... St. Joseph the Worker church, Wheeling Historical Society

My favorite charities are... American Cancer Society & AIDS Foundation

People who know me well say I'm... outgoing, giving

The last good book I read was... murder mysteries

My favorite quotation is... "Treat others as you would like to be treated"

"Public Works personnel made emergency repairs on an unprecedented seven broken mains during a two-day period... Forty department employees worked around-the-clock."

It Snowed...and They Plowed and Salted

More than 22 inches of snow buried Wheeling on January 2, the second-largest snowfall in Village history. And the 600 tons of salt spread during the storm and over the next three weeks was one of the largest amounts ever used during a snow emergency. In the interim, the Department of Public Works' employees plowed 62 miles of streets. As the snow continued to fall, they did it again and again.

The blizzard was followed by subzero temperatures, which causes the ground to shift, sometimes leading to broken water mains. Public Works personnel made emergency repairs on an unprecedented seven broken mains during a two-day period, although not all were weather related.

Forty department employees worked around-the-clock. Those who live outside of Wheeling slept in in-pronptu facilities in the department's lunchroom or stayed with other employees.

Three of the department's four mechanics were assigned as snowplow operators, reflecting a

standing policy established for all snowstorms. The remaining mechanic handled vehicle repairs, road service and telephone and radio calls. Several trucks were damaged during the heavy snowfall, forcing about \$3,800 in repairs.

The threat of a sudden thaw two weeks after the storm sent crews back onto the streets to clear blocked storm sewer inlets. The snow-removal effort cost the Village about \$40,000 in overtime.

The exhausting statistics:

- 40 - employees on emergency status
- 40 - number of employees eligible for emergency status
- 600 - number of tons of salt spread on the roadways
- 1,283 - hours in overtime for snow removal
- 62 - miles of streets plowed (more than double that in "lane miles")
- 70 - hours the department's trackless tractor spent cleaning up sidewalks

Briefs & Announcements

Yard Waste Pickup Resumes

The Village's yard-waste collection program will resume on March 15, 1999. Residents may bundle grass clippings and other landscape remains with their regular garbage pickup.

New Garbage Rates Announced

Effective March 1, the new monthly rates posted at left go into effect for garbage collection throughout the Village. Please take note.

New Garbage Rates

Single-family detached homes	▶	\$14.31
Multifamily curb service (per unit)	▶	\$11.05
Multifamily common service (per unit)	▶	\$9.47

July 4: Get in on the Fun

The day-long Independence Day festivities are in the active planning stage, with the Special Events Committee preparing an extravaganza

titled "Bridge to Tomorrow."

The festivities will be modeled after last year's highly successful events. About 8,000 people turned out for those festivities, which included face painting, a dunk tank, live music, exotic dancing, the Village's first "Taste of Wheeling" and the traditional parade and fireworks display. Interested residents can help defray the cost of the event and the related "Taste of Wheeling" by donating \$1 with their water bills.

For more information, contact Trustee Judy Abruscato, who heads the committee, at 847-541-8783.

Work Begins on Diversionary Channel

Preliminary tree and site clearing for the Wheeling diversionary channel began December 28. Completion of detailed planning will

Pencil in the Date

Community Calendar

Residents are invited to attend public meetings of the following Village boards and commissions. Most meet in the Village Hall Council Chambers (unless otherwise noted).

Village Board - Mondays, 7:30 p.m.

Plan Commission - Second and fourth Thursdays of the month, 7 p.m.

Board of Health - Fourth Tuesday, every other month, 7 p.m.

Human Rights Commission - Second Tuesday of the month, Village Hall lunch room, 7:15 p.m.

Zoning Board of Appeals - Second Tuesday of the month, 7:30 p.m.

Senior Citizens Commission - Third Monday of the month, Pavilion Senior Center, 10 a.m.

Fire and Police Commission - Third Tuesday of the month, Fire Department Conference Room, 7 p.m.

Palwaukee Airport Commission - Third Wednesday of the month, Committee of the Whole meeting, 7 p.m., regular meeting, 8 p.m., Airport offices, 1020 South Plant Rd.

March

10 - Blood Drive, Village Hall, 255 W Dundee Rd, 2 p.m - 8 p.m

12 - Deadline for registration in Millennium Plaza design competition

15 - Yard waste pickup begins; Last day to register to vote

April

9 - Deadline to file applications for Workforce Development Council scholarships

13 - Election Day

26 - Winner of Millennium Plaza design competition announced

30 - Arbor Day celebration (place & time to be announced)

"The day-long Independence Day festivities are in the active planning stage . . . Interested residents can help defray the cost of the event by donating \$1 with their water bills."

the rest of this year, with full-scale excavation scheduled for spring 2000. The channel, as the name implies, is intended to help prevent flooding by diverting rainwater during times of peak runoff. The 1-1/2 mile project, in the planning phase since 1972, is expected to take about one year to complete. The channel will go from the Wheeling drainage ditch, east of Wisconsin Central railroad tracks, across Hegate Parkway at Strong St., then across Milwaukee to empty into the Des Plaines River south of Lake Rd.

Atrium Makeover Finished

Construction of the damaged atrium at Village Hall has been completed. High winds tore off part of the roof in December causing an estimated \$125,000 in damage. The light over the atrium was ripped off, seven of the nine lights were shattered by flying debris and the inside ceiling plants were destroyed. The same storm caused widespread power outages and felled trees throughout the area. Replacement of the damaged plants will take place in March.

SPEAK OUT

Communicate with Wheeling elected officials and administrators. Your advice, suggestions, questions and opinions are appreciated and will receive response. Please complete this form, detach and return to: Village Manager, Village of Wheeling, 255 W Dundee Road, Wheeling, IL 60090.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Comment _____

Board Actions

Consultants to Begin Street Lighting Program

The Board of Trustees approved a \$30,900 contract with Stanley Consultants, of Chicago, to perform necessary engineering design services relating to the installation of new street lights in the Village. The street lighting improvement program is part of a long-term effort to illuminate all streets in Wheeling.

Stanley Consultants will prepare for future construction by setting priorities, reviewing lighting standards, verifying location of existing lights, furnishing cost estimates, preparing construction documents, and providing bidding assistance. The Village estimates it will take 10 years to complete the project.

First-year construction will cost \$216,000 and will begin after May 1, which is the start of the Village's fiscal year. Construction costs will be budgeted separately every year for the life of the program.

Those areas scheduled for new lighting this year include:

- Wheeling Road from Dundee to Palatine Roads
- The residential area north of Dundee, west of Elmhurst Rd., and south of McHenry Rd.
- Residential area south of Dundee Rd. and west of Elmhurst Rd.
- Residential areas north of Dundee Rd. between Northgate Parkway and Wolf Rd.
- Residential areas south of Dundee Rd. between Sunset Lane and Milwaukee Ave.

- Industrial areas from Glen Ave. north of Hintz Rd.
- Industrial areas from Noel Ave. south of Hintz Rd.
- Old Willow Road west of Wolf Rd.

Liquor Store Revamping Gets Tentative Go-Ahead

Grace Bastone received conditional approval from the Board of Trustees to proceed with work and negotiations aimed at refurbishing and reopening the liquor store in the Gaslight Shopping Center on Dundee Road. The store, operated as Bells Liquors and its attached tavern, closed in 1998.

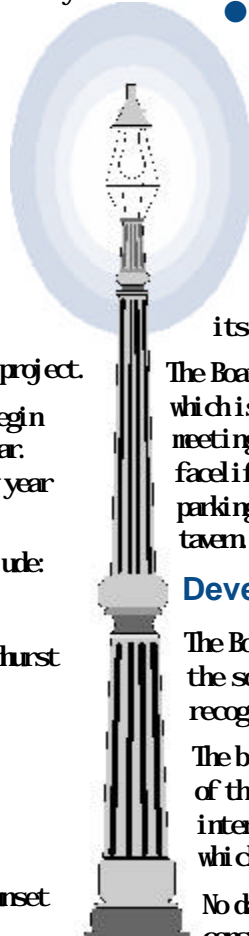
The Board requested Ms. Bastone, who heads a family business which is investing in the property, to appear at a future meeting to present drawings and sketches of the proposed facelift. Trustees also asked for more information about parking availability for both the retail business and the tavern.

Developer of Record Agreement OK'd

The Board of Trustees cleared the way for improvement of the southwest corner of Milwaukee Ave. and Dundee Rd. by recognizing owner Gary Miller as the developer of record.

The board is looking into redeveloping the property as part of the ongoing revitalization of the Village's "gateway intersection." It is part of the Wheeling Shopping Center, which Miller owns.

No date has been set for the purchase or beginning of construction.



VILLAGE OF WHEELING

255 WEST DUNDEE ROAD ● WHEELING, IL 60090
 847/459-2600 ● TDD 847/459-2987
 WEB SITE: WWW.WHEELINGIL.ORG

Fire/Police/Paramedics	911
Non-emergency Fire	459-2662
Non-emergency Police	459-2632
Community Development	459-2620
Economic Development	459-2978
Pavilion Senior Center	459-2670
Public Works	459-2624
Water Billing	459-2607
Village President: Greg Klatecki	459-8116
Village Clerk: Elaine Simpson	541-8692
Village Manager: Craig Anderson	459-2617

Trustees

Judy Abruscato	541-8783	Trevor Lehmann	541-6700
Robert Heer	541-4274	William Spangenberg	520-1019
Patrick Horcher	419-1956	Wayne Wisinski	394-3432

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