GRATIOT COUNTY WHISTLEBLOWER

FACTS | RECORDS | ACCOUNTABILITY

INDEPENDENT LOCAL NEWS AND PUBLIC-RECORDS REPORTING

OCTOBER 2, 2026 | VOL. 1, NO. 3

TOP STORY | PART ONE OF TWO

What Federal Records Show About the St. Louis Hydro Plant's Output

Federal data list the dam's yearly hydro generation from 2002 to 2024. A 2001 license order gave an engineering estimate, and two recent documents describe the current status.

STAFF REPORT | ST. LOUIS | GRATIOT COUNTY WHISTLEBLOWER

ST. LOUIS — The City of St. Louis owns a hydroelectric dam on the Pine River that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) licensed on Nov. 29, 2001, for 40 years. This report sets out what three kinds of federal and engineering records say about the plant's electricity output, and what they leave unanswered. It states each figure with its source and draws no conclusion from them.

REPORTED OUTPUT, 2002–2024

The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) publishes annual net generation for the St. Louis plant (plant code 1852). Its hydro figures, in megawatt-hours (MWh), are shown in the chart above. By year: 2002, 37; 2003, 2; 2004, 274; 2005, 324; 2006, 856; 2007, 506; 2008, 497; 2009, 684; 2010, 796; 2011, 850; 2012, 712; 2013, 661; 2014, 652; 2015, 727; 2016, 783; 2017, 852; 2018, 1,040; 2019, 1,007; 2020, 716; 2021, 425; 2022, 452; 2023, 167; and 2024, 22. The highest year in the series is 2018. EIA's monthly hydro series for the plant shows zero generation from May 2023 on, apart from 9 MWh in January 2024 and 13 MWh in February 2024.

The plant also has diesel and gas engines. Their output is not included here. EIA's July 2026 generator inventory lists two hydro units, Nos. 5 and 6, at 0.2 megawatts each, both with the status "Operating."

Sources: EIA electricity data, facility-fuel series for plant code 1852, annual net generation, hydro, 2002–2024, retrieved Oct. 1, 2026; EIA monthly series for the same plant, 2017–2024; EIA-860M generator inventory, July 2026.

FERC'S 2001 ESTIMATE

When it issued the license (97 FERC ¶ 62,184, Project No. 11428), the commission said the purpose of its economic analysis "is to provide a general estimate" of a project's potential power benefits and costs. In that analysis FERC staff wrote that the Municipal Dam Project "would produce about 1,590,000 kWh annually." That equals 1,590 MWh, the unit EIA uses. The order presents this as the commission staff's estimate, made in 2001 dollars with the regional cost of alternative power, and not as a figure the city promised or guaranteed.

Source: FERC, Order Issuing Original License (Minor Project), City of St. Louis, Michigan, Project No. 11428, Nov. 29, 2001 (accession 20011129-3022), p. 8.

CURRENT STATUS, IN THE DOCUMENTS' OWN WORDS

NTH Consultants, the city's engineering firm, wrote to the city's director of public services on Oct. 27, 2025: "At this time the generators are not functioning and the dam is not generating electricity." In a May 28, 2026 proposal to the city, NTH wrote: "Currently, the generators are not functioning, and the dam is not generating electricity." Both letters were included in city council packets.

FERC's Chicago Regional Office wrote to the city on Sept. 18, 2026, about the city's 2025 Dam Safety Surveillance and Monitoring Report: "Also noted was that Hydro #6 is down for repairs due to a faulty exciter." The letter asks the city to notify FERC "when this unit is back online, or if it will be down for an extended period of time."

The two documents describe the plant differently: NTH refers to "the generators," and FERC names one unit, Hydro #6. The documents do not say whether Hydro #5 is operating.

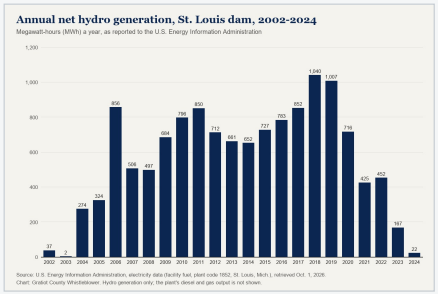
Sources: NTH Consultants proposal to the City of St. Louis, Oct. 27, 2025 (in the Nov. 4, 2025 council packet, p. 65); NTH proposal No. 25003130-20, May 28, 2026 (in the July 21, 2026 council packet, p. 127); FERC letter, Sept. 18, 2026, Project No. 11428 (accession 20260918-3076), p. 1.

WHAT THE RECORDS DO NOT SAY

- Why output changed. None of the documents above gives a reason for the year-to-year changes in reported generation. The FERC letter gives a reason only for Hydro #6, a faulty exciter, and says nothing about earlier years.
- What a repair would cost. The documents give no repair estimate for either generator, and no date when the units are expected to return to service.
- Who paid for early construction. The records reviewed for this report do not state who paid to build the dam or the hydro units, or what those projects cost.
- How the estimate compares with actual operations. The FERC figure and the EIA figures were produced by different agencies for different purposes. This report does not compare them.

This is part one. A second report will follow. We are asking the City of St. Louis and other agencies for comment and records on the questions above, and we will keep seeking answers from the relevant departments. The City of St. Louis is welcome to respond at contactus@gcwhistleblower.com, and any response will be published in full.

SOURCES AND RECORDS TO WATCH ON PAGE 2



Annual net hydro generation at the St. Louis dam, 2002–2024, as reported to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Chart by Gratiot County Whistleblower.

REQUESTS FOR COMMENT LOG

On Oct. 2 we asked the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the Michigan Public Power Agency and the City of St. Louis for comment and asked for replies by Friday, Oct. 9. Part two of this report follows after that date. Each request is listed in full, with its status, at gcwhistleblower.com/requests, and summarized on page 2.

INSIDE

PAGE 2 | The Requests for Comment Log, the hydro numbers, sources and records to watch.

PAGE 3 | Oct. 6 county board agenda: the tax apportionment report, a drain loan and blank dollar amounts.

PAGE 4 | St. Louis cemetery design fee, a sewer lift station and Ithaca's Union Street bids.

PAGE 5 | Airport contracts and fuel sales, and the county medical examiner move.

PAGE 6 | Corrections & Updates, records to watch and about us.

OUR STANDARD

Facts are attributed to records. Open questions are labeled as open. Corrections are logged in public and published reports are not silently rewritten.

Who We Asked, When, and What Came Back

Every request we send to a public official or agency is listed with the date sent, the date we asked for a reply and the result, and the full text is public.

PUBLIC RECORD | AS OF OCT. 2, 2026 | gcwhistleblower.com/requests

AWAITING REPLY	NO REPLY YET	REDIRECTED
4 requests sent Oct. 2; replies asked by Oct. 9	3 requests, sent Sept. 19 and Sept. 30	1 request, sent Sept. 17

When we ask a public official or agency for comment, we list it with the date, who we asked and what came back, whether the answer helps us or not. The log records what happened and does not guess at why an office answered, declined or did not reply. Where an office answers, we publish the answer in full or link to it. We list offices and roles, not private individuals.

AWAITING REPLY | SENT OCT. 2 | REPLY ASKED BY OCT. 9

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Chicago Regional Office

The status of the Hydro #5 and #6 units at the City of St. Louis dam (Project No. 11428), and where the city's operating filings can be found. Sent to the staff contact named in the commission's Sept. 18, 2026 letter.

AWAITING REPLY | SENT OCT. 2 | REPLY ASKED BY OCT. 9

Michigan Public Power Agency

Whether the St. Louis hydro units count toward the city's capacity or energy credit, whether the city's supply arrangements depend on its generating units operating, and which projects or purchases supply the city's energy.

AWAITING REPLY | SENT OCT. 2 | REPLY ASKED BY OCT. 9

City of St. Louis: City Manager and City Clerk (follow-up)

Three added questions on whether electric rates include hydro or dam costs, whether customers are credited for hydro output, and who supplies the city's purchased power. Sent as a follow-up to the request below.

AWAITING REPLY | SENT OCT. 2 | REPLY ASKED BY OCT. 9

City of St. Louis: City Manager and City Clerk

Current status and cost of the hydroelectric units and dam, the basis for the city's "seven percent" statement, what the 1958 and 2001 electric bonds paid for, who paid for the 1977–79 rebuild, and when the city acquired the dam.

NO REPLY YET | SENT SEPT. 30 | NO REPLY DATE REQUESTED

Gratiot County Herald, Editor

Why searches of the statewide public-notice repository return no Gratiot County Herald notices, and whether the Herald submits its legal notices there. The Herald is a private business, so a reply is published with its consent.

NO REPLY YET | SENT SEPT. 30 | NO REPLY DATE REQUESTED

Michigan Press Association

Whether the statewide public-notice repository is receiving submissions from the Gratiot County Herald, any known technical issue, and whether any newspaper is submitting Gratiot County notices. The association is a private organization, so a reply is published with its consent.

NO REPLY YET | SENT SEPT. 19

Gratiot County Administrator (follow-up)

Whether Animal Control employees may answer questions from this publication directly, or whether all questions about county departments must go through the administrator's office. No reply as of Oct. 2, 2026. This follow-up did not set a reply date.

REDIRECTED | SENT SEPT. 17 | DECLINED TO ANSWER ANONYMOUS QUESTIONS

Gratiot County Animal Control

Animal Control's perspective on topics discussed at the Sept. 15 Board of Commissioners meeting. The county administrator, writing as the board's official spokesperson, replied instead of the department. He wrote that he will not respond to questions from anonymous persons.

THE LEAD REPORT | ST. LOUIS HYDRO BY THE NUMBERS

1,590 MWh	1,040 MWh	22 MWh	2 units
FERC staff's 2001 estimate of annual output	Highest year in EIA's series (2018)	Reported hydro generation in 2024	Hydro Nos. 5 and 6, listed at 0.2 MW each as "Operating" in EIA's July 2026 inventory

The estimate and the EIA figures were produced by different agencies for different purposes; this report does not compare them.

RECORDS TO WATCH | HYDRO REPORT

Records to watch The city's notice to FERC when Hydro #6 returns to service or is reported down for an extended period; EIA's 2025 annual figure when published; and the 2026 Dam Safety Surveillance and Monitoring Report, due to FERC by April 1, 2027.

Part two of this report follows after the Oct. 9 reply date.

SOURCES | HYDRO REPORT

- EIA Electricity Data Browser (plant code 1852, St. Louis, Mich.)
- FERC eLibrary, Project No. 11428 (accessions 20011129-3022 and 20260918-3076)
- City of St. Louis council packets, Nov. 4, 2025 and July 21, 2026

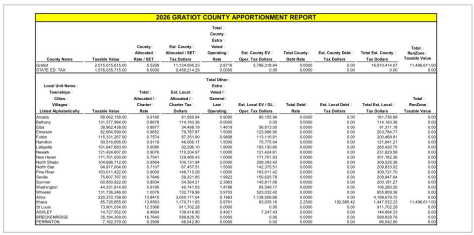
COUNTY BOARD | OCT. 6 AGENDA

Board's Oct. 6 Agenda: A $16.9 Million Tax Report, a Drain Loan and Agreements With Blank Amounts

Three items from the posted agenda. None has been voted on, and drafts can be filled in before a meeting.

STAFF REPORT | GRATIOT COUNTY WHISTLEBLOWER

TAXES | GRATIOT COUNTY | OCT. 2, 2026



2026 GRATIOT COUNTY APPORTIONMENT REPORT

County Name	Taxable Value	County Allocated Rate / SET	Est. County Allocated / SET Tax Dollars	Total County Extra Voted Operating Rate	Est. County EV Oper. Tax Dollars	Total County Debt Rate	Est. County Debt Tax Dollars	Total Est. County Tax Dollars	Total Re/Zone Taxable Value
GRAND	2,015,015,615.00	5.5206	11,124,095.23	2.8716	5,786,318.84	0.0000	0.00	16,910,414.07	11,446,611.00
INCRD ED. TAX	1,576,035,715.00	6.0000	9,456,214.29	0.0000	0.00	0.0000	0.00	0.00	0.00

Local Unit Name - Township - Cities - Villages - Listed Alphabetically	Taxable Value	Total Allocated / Charter Rate	Est. Local Allocated / Charter Tax Dollars	Total Other Voted / General Local Operating	Est. Local EV / GL Oper. Tax Dollars	Total Debt Rate	Est. Local Debt Tax Dollars	Total Est. Local Tax Dollars	Total Re/Zone Taxable Value
Arcada	69,002,158.00	5.9165	81,559.94	0.0000	80,180.04	0.0000	0.00	161,739.98	0.00
Bethany	131,077,994.00	0.9978	114,163.30	0.0000	0.00	0.0000	0.00	114,163.30	0.00
Brady	76,004,000.00	1.4998	75,707.81	1.5000	113,140.91	0.0000	0.00	188,848.72	0.00
Emerson	52,994,500.00	1.9952	75,707.81	1.5000	123,048.08	0.0000	0.00	303,764.71	0.00
Fulton	115,331,267.00	0.7574	87,351.90	3.0000	113,140.91	0.0000	0.00	200,468.81	0.00
Gratiot	101,647,853.00	0.9978	101,438.15	1.5000	152,130.60	0.0000	0.00	253,568.75	0.00
Lafayette	101,647,853.00	0.9978	101,438.15	1.5000	150,130.60	0.0000	0.00	251,420.75	0.00
Newark	121,424,837.00	0.9978	113,304.97	1.0000	121,424.81	0.0000	0.00	231,829.58	0.00
North Shade	104,696,712.00	0.9978	104,491.84	1.0000	104,696.71	0.0000	0.00	209,188.55	0.00
North Shade	104,696,712.00	0.9964	109,191.84	0.0000	209,383.42	0.0000	0.00	209,535.26	0.00
North Star	94,917,004.00	0.7167	67,457.51	1.5000	142,375.51	0.0000	0.00	209,833.02	0.00
Pine River	153,611,422.00	0.9500	145,731.85	1.5000	180,011.42	0.0000	0.00	305,743.27	0.00
Seville	93,837,000.00	0.7500	70,377.75	1.5000	140,755.50	0.0000	0.00	211,133.25	0.00
Sumner	69,600,922.00	0.9044	58,504.01	1.5000	180,915.78	0.0000	0.00	239,341.27	0.00
Washington	44,331,874.00	1.9168	45,741.03	1.4198	85,948.17	0.0000	0.00	109,250.20	0.00
Wheeler	131,736,246.00	1.0078	132,778.96	3.0783	520,032.42	0.0000	0.00	855,809.38	0.00
Alma	1,576,035,715.00	6.0000	9,456,214.29	2.8716	5,786,318.84	0.0000	0.00	16,910,414.07	11,446,611.00
Ithaca	65,728,855.00	1.6763	1,178,711.65	0.0781	83,951.18	2.2350	152,080.42	1,447,722.25	11,446,611.00
St Louis	73,901,234.00	12.3368	911,702.25	0.0000	0.00	0.0000	0.00	911,702.25	0.00
Breckenridge	7,502,379.00	9.2000	69,042.80	0.0000	7,502.38	0.0000	0.00	76,545.18	0.00
BRECKENRIDGE	58,194,000.00	14.7944	599,628.76	0.0000	0.00	0.0000	0.00	599,628.76	0.00
PENNINTON	7,502,379.00	9.2000	69,042.80	0.0000	0.00	0.0000	0.00	69,042.80	0.00

The 2026 Gratiot County Apportionment Report, page 3 of the attachment to Resolution 26-463 on the Oct. 6 agenda. Gratiot County public record; cropped.

County Apportionment Report Puts $16.9 Million in County Taxes on 2026 Bills

Commissioners are scheduled to approve the annual report Tuesday. It lists every millage the county's townships, cities, schools and authorities will levy this year.

ITHACA — The Gratiot County Board of Commissioners is scheduled on Tuesday, Oct. 6, to approve the 2026 Report of Taxes to be Apportioned (Resolution 26-463). State law requires the board to do this each October, and the resolution says its action "will be the official authorization for taxing authorities within the County to levy property taxes for 2026." The resolution and its eight-page report are attachments to the board's Oct. 6 agenda. The vote has not yet taken place, and the figures below are the report's estimates.

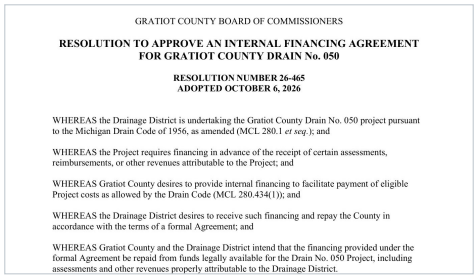
THE COUNTY'S SHARE

The report puts Gratiot County's 2026 taxable value at $2,015,015,615. On that base the county's allocated rate of 5.5206 mills is estimated to raise $11,124,095.23, and its voter-approved extra operating rate of 2.8716 mills $5,786,318.84, for a total of $16,910,414.07. The county debt rate is 0.0000. The two rates add up to 8.3922 mills, the same levy this publication reported when the board adopted its 2027 budget. The report also lists the 6-mill State Education Tax on $1,576,035,715 of taxable value, an estimated $9,456,214.29.

Full report and sources: gcwhistleblower.com/articles/county-apportionment-report-puts-16-9-million-in-county-taxes-on-2026-bills

STATUS: On the Oct. 6 agenda; the vote has not yet taken place. Figures are the report's estimates.

COUNTY FINANCES | ITHACA | OCT. 2, 2026



GRATIOT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AN INTERNAL FINANCING AGREEMENT FOR GRATIOT COUNTY DRAIN No. 050

RESOLUTION NUMBER 26-465
ADOPTED OCTOBER 6, 2026

WHEREAS the Drainage District is undertaking the Gratiot County Drain No. 050 project pursuant to the Michigan Drain Code of 1956, as amended (MCL 280.1 *et seq.*); and

WHEREAS the Project requires financing in advance of the receipt of certain assessments, reimbursements, or other revenues attributable to the Project; and

WHEREAS Gratiot County desires to provide internal financing to facilitate payment of eligible Project costs as allowed by the Drain Code (MCL 280.434(1)); and

WHEREAS the Drainage District desires to receive such financing and repay the County in accordance with the terms of a formal Agreement; and

WHEREAS Gratiot County and the Drainage District intend that the financing provided under the formal Agreement be repaid from funds legally available for the Drain No. 050 Project, including assessments and other revenues properly attributable to the Drainage District.

Resolution 26-465, page 1 of the attachment on the Oct. 6 board agenda. Gratiot County public record; cropped.

County to Lend $203,683 to the Drain No. 050 District at 4.25% Over 15 Years

The Oct. 6 agenda carries a loan agreement between the county and a drainage district. Its exhibit leaves three funding lines blank, and its payment estimate differs from a standard loan calculation.

ITHACA — Gratiot County is scheduled to lend up to $203,683.02 to the Gratiot County Drain #050 Drainage District. Resolution 26-465, an attachment to the Oct. 6 board agenda, would approve an internal financing agreement under the Michigan Drain Code (MCL 280.434). The vote has not yet taken place.

THE TERMS

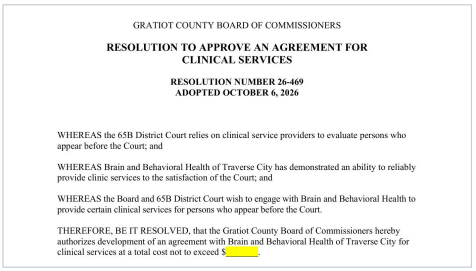
According to the draft agreement, dated Oct. 1, 2026:

- The principal is not to exceed $203,683.02, and the county is not obligated to advance more without an amendment.
- Interest is a fixed 4.25% a year, accruing from the date money is advanced.
- The term is 15 years, with a final maturity of June 15, 2041, and 15 annual installments beginning June 15, 2027.
- Repayment comes from funds legally available to the drainage district: assessments, municipal apportionments, grants or reimbursements, and project revenues. The district may prepay without penalty.
- The money may be used only for Drain #050 costs, including construction, engineering, legal and right-of-way, and each advance is to be backed by invoices or similar documents.

Full report and sources: gcwhistleblower.com/articles/county-to-lend-203683-to-drain-050-district-at-4-25-percent-over-15-years

STATUS: On the Oct. 6 agenda; the vote has not yet taken place. The signature blocks in the draft are blank.

COUNTY FINANCES | COURTS | OCT. 2, 2026



GRATIOT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AN AGREEMENT FOR CLINICAL SERVICES

RESOLUTION NUMBER 26-469
ADOPTED OCTOBER 6, 2026

WHEREAS the 65B District Court relies on clinical service providers to evaluate persons who appear before the Court; and

WHEREAS Brain and Behavioral Health of Traverse City has demonstrated an ability to reliably provide clinic services to the satisfaction of the Court; and

WHEREAS the Board and 65B District Court wish to engage with Brain and Behavioral Health to provide certain clinical services for persons who appear before the Court.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Gratiot County Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes development of an agreement with Brain and Behavioral Health of Traverse City for clinical services at a total cost not to exceed $_____.

Resolution 26-469, page 1 of the attachment on the Oct. 6 board agenda; the highlighted blank is in the original. Gratiot County public record; cropped.

County Board Agenda Leaves Dollar Amounts Blank on Two Service Agreements

Among seven new-business items for Oct. 6, a $176,202 extension contract is complete. Resolutions for the Conservation District and for court clinical services are not.

ITHACA — The Gratiot County Board of Commissioners posted its Oct. 6 agenda with seven resolutions under new business. Three of them authorize agreements with outside organizations, and they are in different states of completion. None has been voted on yet, and drafts can be filled in before a meeting.

EXTENSION SERVICES: A NUMBER AND NO CONTRACT

Resolution 26-466 would approve an agreement with Michigan State University Extension for fiscal year 2027 "at a total cost not to exceed $176,202.00." The resolution says county voters approved an extra-voted millage for Extension services. It refers to "the attached Agreement for Extension Services," but the attachment posted with the agenda is the two-page resolution alone; the agreement itself is not in it.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT: SERVICES AND PRICE BOTH BLANK

Resolution 26-467 concerns the Gratiot Conservation District. It says the district's staff and funding limits cause it to "pass up valuable state and federal funding," and that its long-range plan matches the county master plan on water remediation and safety, agricultural resilience and blight mitigation. The operative paragraphs read: the board "wishes to engage the Gratiot Conservation District to provide _____ services," and "authorizes development of an agreement with Gratiot Conservation District for _____ services at a total cost not to exceed $_____." The resolution also requires quarterly activity reports to the board.

Full report and sources: gcwhistleblower.com/articles/county-board-agenda-leaves-dollar-amounts-blank-on-two-service-agreements

STATUS: None of the resolutions has been voted on; drafts can be filled in before a meeting.

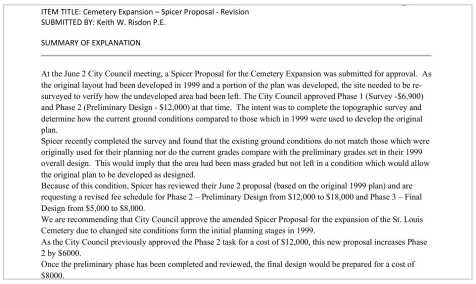
ST. LOUIS AND ITHACA | PUBLIC MONEY

A Cemetery Design Fee, a Sewer Lift Station and Ithaca's Union Street Bids

Two items on the St. Louis council's Oct. 6 packet, and the bid results for Ithaca's Union Street reconstruction.

STAFF REPORT | GRATIOT COUNTY WHISTLEBLOWER

CITY GOVERNMENT | ST. LOUIS | OCT. 2, 2026



ITEM TITLE: Cemetery Expansion – Spicer Proposal - Revision
SUBMITTED BY: Keith W. Risdon P.E.

SUMMARY OF EXPLANATION

At the June 2 City Council meeting, a Spicer Proposal for the Cemetery Expansion was submitted for approval. As the original layout had been developed in 1999 and a portion of the plan was developed, the site needed to be re-surveyed to verify how the undeveloped area had been left. The City Council approved Phase 1 (Survey -$6,900) and Phase 2 (Preliminary Design - $12,000) at that time. The intent was to complete the topographic survey and determine how the current ground conditions compared to those which in 1999 were used to develop the original plan.
Spicer recently completed the survey and found that the existing ground conditions do not match those which were originally used for their planning nor do the current grades compare with the preliminary grades set in their 1999 overall design. This would imply that the area had been mass graded but not left in a condition which would allow the original plan to be developed as designed.
Because of this condition, Spicer has reviewed their June 2 proposal (based on the original 1999 plan) and are requesting a revised fee schedule for Phase 2 – Preliminary Design from $12,000 to $18,000 and Phase 3 – Final Design from $5,000 to $8,000.
We are recommending that City Council approve the amended Spicer Proposal for the expansion of the St. Louis Cemetery due to changed site conditions form the initial planning stages in 1999.
As the City Council previously approved the Phase 2 task for a cost of $12,000, this new proposal increases Phase 2 by $6000.
Once the preliminary phase has been completed and reviewed, the final design would be prepared for a cost of $8000.

Agenda statement for item 11A, page 84 of the Oct. 6 St. Louis City Council packet. City of St. Louis public record; cropped.

St. Louis Cemetery Design Fee Rises to $26,000 After Survey Differs From 1999 Plan

A survey found the unbuilt cemetery land does not match the 1999 layout. On Tuesday the council is asked to raise two engineering fees and to petition the county to abandon part of an old drain.

ST. LOUIS — The St. Louis City Council's Tuesday, Oct. 6 agenda includes two linked items about expanding the city cemetery: a revised fee from Spicer Group, the city's engineering consultant (item 11A), and a petition to the Gratiot County Drain Commissioner to abandon part of a county drain that crosses the site (item 11J, Resolution 2026-22). Both are in the council's posted packet. Neither has been voted on, and the figures below come from the packet.

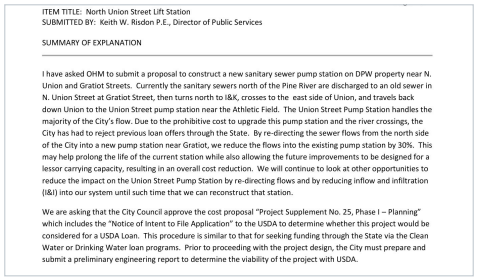
THE FEE CHANGE

According to the agenda statement from the city's director of public services, the council approved two phases of Spicer's June 2 proposal: a survey for $6,900 and preliminary design for $12,000. The statement says the new survey found that existing ground conditions "do not match" those used for the original 1999 plan, which it says implies that the area had been mass graded but not left in a condition that would allow the original plan to be built as designed. Spicer's Aug. 28 letter agreement therefore asks for $18,000 for preliminary design (up $6,000) and $8,000 for final design, which the statement says was $5,000 in the June proposal. Both are estimates billed at standard hourly rates. With the survey, the three phases would total $32,900, compared with $23,900 under the June figures. Reimbursable expenses, such as permit fees, carry a 10 percent processing fee.

Full report and sources: gcwhistleblower.com/articles/st-louis-cemetery-design-fee-rises-to-26000-after-survey-differs-from-1999-plan

STATUS: Neither item has been voted on. Figures come from the council packet.

UTILITIES | ST. LOUIS | OCT. 2, 2026



ITEM TITLE: North Union Street Lift Station
SUBMITTED BY: Keith W. Risdon P.E., Director of Public Services

SUMMARY OF EXPLANATION

I have asked OHM to submit a proposal to construct a new sanitary sewer pump station on DPW property near N. Union and Gratiot Streets. Currently the sanitary sewers north of the Pine River are discharged to an old sewer in N. Union Street at Gratiot Street, then turns north to I&K, crosses to the east side of Union, and travels back down Union to the Union Street pump station near the Athletic Field. The Union Street Pump Station handles the majority of the City's flow. Due to the prohibitive cost to upgrade this pump station and the river crossings, the City has had to reject previous loan offers through the State. By re-directing the sewer flows from the north side of the City into a new pump station near Gratiot, we reduce the flows into the existing pump station by 30%. This may help prolong the life of the current station while also allowing the future improvements to be designed for a lessor carrying capacity, resulting in an overall cost reduction. We will continue to look at other opportunities to reduce the impact on the Union Street Pump Station by re-directing flows and by reducing inflow and infiltration (I&I) into our system until such time that we can reconstruct that station.

We are asking that the City Council approve the cost proposal "Project Supplement No. 25, Phase I – Planning" which includes the "Notice of Intent to File Application" to the USDA to determine whether this project would be considered for a USDA Loan. This procedure is similar to that for seeking funding through the State via the Clean Water or Drinking Water loan programs. Prior to proceeding with the project design, the City must prepare and submit a preliminary engineering report to determine the viability of the project with USDA.

Agenda statement for item 11F, page 105 of the Oct. 6 St. Louis City Council packet. City of St. Louis public record; cropped.

St. Louis Asks Council for $32,570 to Seek a USDA Loan for a North Sewer Lift Station

Tuesday's council packet pairs a small planning fee with engineer estimates of $3.75 million for a new lift station and $3.275 million for rebuilding North Union Street.

ST. LOUIS — On Tuesday, Oct. 6, the St. Louis City Council is asked to approve $32,570 to OHM Advisors for "Project Supplement No. 25, Phase I – Planning" (item 11F). The money would pay for a notice of intent and application work to learn whether a new sanitary sewer pump station near North Union and Gratiot streets could qualify for a USDA Rural Development loan. The vote has not yet taken place.

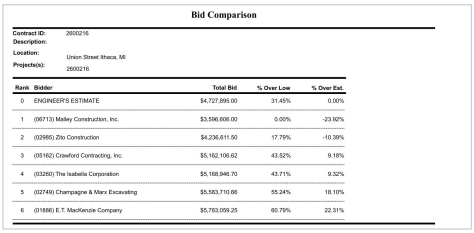
WHAT THE CITY SAYS IT NEEDS

The agenda statement from the director of public services says sewage from north of the Pine River now travels through an old sewer in North Union Street to the Union Street pump station near the athletic field, which handles most of the city's flow. Because of "the prohibitive cost to upgrade this pump station and the river crossings," it says, the city has had to reject earlier state loan offers. A new station on public works property would take about 30 percent of the flow off the existing one, which the statement says could prolong that station's life and let future improvements be designed for a smaller capacity. The item is listed as not budgeted, paid from the sewer enterprise fund, with no budget amendment needed.

Full report and sources: gcwhistleblower.com/articles/st-louis-asks-council-for-32570-to-seek-usda-loan-for-north-sewer-lift-station

STATUS: The vote has not yet taken place.

INFRASTRUCTURE | ITHACA | OCT. 2, 2026



Bid Comparison

Contract ID: 2600216
Description:
Location: Union Street Ithaca, MI
Project(s): 2600216

Rank	Bidder	Total Bid	% Over Low	% Over Est.
0	ENGINEER'S ESTIMATE	$4,727,895.00	31.45%	0.00%
1	(06713) Malley Construction, Inc.	$3,596,606.00	0.00%	-23.92%
2	(02985) Zito Construction	$4,236,611.50	17.79%	-10.39%
3	(05162) Crawford Contracting, Inc.	$5,162,106.62	43.52%	9.18%
4	(03260) The Isabella Corporation	$5,168,946.70	43.71%	9.32%
5	(02749) Champagne & Marx Excavating	$5,583,710.66	55.24%	18.10%
6	(01886) E.T. MacKenzie Company	$5,783,059.25	60.79%	22.31%

Bid comparison for Contract 2600216, page 65 of the Sept. 1 Ithaca City Council packet. City of Ithaca public record; cropped.

Ithaca's Union Street Low Bid Came In 24% Under the Engineer's Estimate

Six contractors bid on the street reconstruction. The low bid was $3,596,606 against an estimate of $4,727,895, and the recommended award depends on two conditions.

ITHACA — Bids for the City of Ithaca's Union Street reconstruction were opened Aug. 25, 2026, and the low bid was $3,596,606 from Malley Construction, Inc., according to the engineer's recommendation letter in the Sept. 1 City Council packet. The engineer's estimate was $4,727,895, so the low bid was $1,131,289, or 23.92 percent, below it. The council's Sept. 1 agenda listed "Award of Bid: Union Street Reconstruction" as new business.

THE SIX BIDS

The bid comparison, prepared by ROWE Professional Services Company, lists: Malley Construction, $3,596,606.00; Zito Construction, $4,236,611.50 (10.39 percent under the estimate); Crawford Contracting, $5,162,106.62; The Isabella Corporation, $5,168,946.70; Champagne & Marx Excavating, $5,583,710.66; and E.T. MacKenzie Company, $5,783,059.25 (22.31 percent over the estimate). The second-lowest bid was $640,005.50 above the low one. The city manager's Sept. 1 written report said six companies bid and that one was a "clear leader" vetted by the engineers.

Full report and sources: gcwhistleblower.com/articles/ithaca-union-street-low-bid-came-in-24-percent-under-engineers-estimate

STATUS: The adopted Sept. 1 minutes and the outcome of the bond sale and of MDOT's review were not posted in the packets reviewed.

COUNTY RECORDS | AIRPORT AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Airport Contracts and Fuel Sales, and the County's Medical Examiner Move

What the county's meeting records show about the Gratiot Community Airport, and who now handles medical examiner work.

STAFF REPORT | GRATIOT COUNTY WHISTLEBLOWER

AIRPORT | ITHACA | OCT. 1, 2026



GRATIOT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE LAND LEASE FOR AGRICULTURAL PURPOSE

RESOLUTION NUMBER 26-408 ADOPTED APRIL 7, 2026

WHEREAS on February 2, 2026, Gratiot County issued invitation to bid number 03-26 to lease land available for certain agricultural uses at the Gratiot Community Airport; and

WHEREAS one bid was received to lease Plot Number 2 consisting of 153.3 total acres; and

WHEREAS the Board of Commissioners wishes to lease the available land for agricultural purposes as described in the invitation to bid.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Gratiot County Board of Commissioners accepts the bid submitted by Stone Fence Organics, LLC, to lease Plot Number 2 consisting of 153.3 total acres for five years, 2026 to 2030, inclusive, for an annual fee of $6,300.00 per year.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board instructs the County Administrator to negotiate a lease agreement with Stone Fence Organics, LLC.

Resolution 26-408, adopted April 7, 2026, from page 176 of the board packet. Gratiot County public record; cropped.

Airport Lighting Upgrade of Up to $436,650, and a Farm Lease at $41 an Acre

Four commissioners approved three airport contracts in one March sitting. In April the county leased 153 acres of airport land to a single bidder for five years.

ITHACA — The Gratiot County Board of Commissioners, sitting as the Airport Authority on the evening of March 17, 2026, approved a lighting upgrade at the Gratiot Community Airport at a cost not to exceed $436,650. It is the largest single airport commitment in the county's meeting records this year.

THREE VOTES IN 20 MINUTES

Vice Chair Bunting called the Airport Authority meeting to order at 6:34 p.m., after the regular board meeting. Chair Owens was absent. The minutes record three resolutions, each on a motion by Commissioner Bailey seconded by Commissioner Sopocy, each carried 4-0:

- Resolution 26-397, "to accept a proposal for Airport Lighting Upgrades at a cost of not to exceed $436,650.00."
- Resolution 26-398, runway crack sealing at a cost not to exceed $10,000.
- Resolution 26-399, hangar leases, "subject to County Attorney approval."

The minutes do not name the lighting contractor, say how many proposals were received, or state how the work is funded. The text of Resolution 26-397 and the proposal it accepted were not included in the March 17 or April 7 packets posted online.

Full report and sources: gcwhistleblower.com/articles/airport-lighting-upgrade-up-to-436650-and-a-farm-lease-at-41-an-acre

STATUS: Lighting contract approved March 17, 2026; farm lease approved April 7, 2026.

COUNTY AGENCIES | GRATIOT COMMUNITY AIRPORT | SEPT. 28, 2026



Gratiot Community Airport on West Seaman Road, Arcada Township, before the August work. USDA NAIP aerial imagery via USGS, public domain; cropped.

Airport Jet Fuel Sales Down 28% This Year as Taxilanes Are Repaved

The Airport Authority's Sept. 15 packet logs a month of paving and crack sealing, a pre-bid meeting on the terminal, and fuel sales well behind last year.

ARCADA TOWNSHIP — Gratiot Community Airport sold about 28 percent less jet fuel in the first eight months of 2026 than in the same months of 2025, according to the airport manager's report in the Gratiot County Airport Authority's Sept. 15 meeting packet.

The report's tables show 15,655.6 gallons of Jet A sold from January through August, down 6,073.8 gallons from the same period a year earlier. August alone fell from 8,178.1 gallons to 4,513.7. Sales of 100LL, the fuel used by most small piston planes, were down about 10 percent, to 15,475.5 gallons. The report also counts 71 days this year with no fuel sales at all, 19 more than in the same months of 2025, and lists low ceilings, high winds and severe weather as the causes.

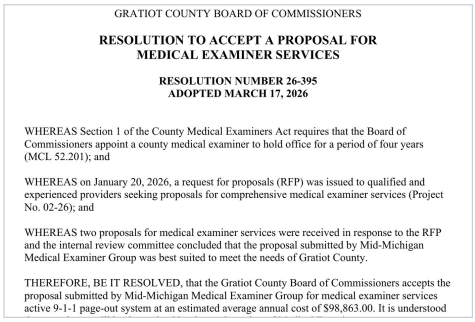
A MONTH OF PAVEMENT WORK

The manager's daily log for August describes a pavement project. Rieth-Riley Construction built a temporary road and removed concrete on Aug. 3, crews pulverized the taxilanes on Aug. 4, and the first 1.5-inch layer of asphalt went down on Aug. 8. The final asphalt layer was laid Aug. 11, and topsoil and hydroseeding followed. From Aug. 24 to Aug. 28 a crack-sealing contractor worked on Runway 18/36, the taxilane to Runway 27, the midfield taxilane and the ramp. A seal coat planned for Aug. 31 was rained out, the log says.

The log's Aug. 20 entry reads, in part, "Pre-bid terminal meeting (15 people here)." The packet does not describe the terminal project, its cost, or when bids are due.

Full report and sources: gcwhistleblower.com/articles/airport-fuel-sales-down-as-taxilanes-are-repaved

PUBLIC SAFETY | GRATIOT COUNTY | OCT. 1, 2026



GRATIOT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT A PROPOSAL FOR MEDICAL EXAMINER SERVICES

RESOLUTION NUMBER 26-395 ADOPTED MARCH 17, 2026

WHEREAS Section 1 of the County Medical Examiners Act requires that the Board of Commissioners appoint a county medical examiner to hold office for a period of four years (MCL 52.201); and

WHEREAS on January 20, 2026, a request for proposals (RFP) was issued to qualified and experienced providers seeking proposals for comprehensive medical examiner services (Project No. 02-26); and

WHEREAS two proposals for medical examiner services were received in response to the RFP and the internal review committee concluded that the proposal submitted by Mid-Michigan Medical Examiner Group was best suited to meet the needs of Gratiot County.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Gratiot County Board of Commissioners accepts the proposal submitted by Mid-Michigan Medical Examiner Group for medical examiner services active 9-1-1 page-out system at an estimated average annual cost of $98,863.00. It is understood

Resolution 26-395, adopted March 17, 2026, from page 83 of the board packet. Gratiot County public record; cropped.

Gratiot Moved Its Medical Examiner Work From Genesee County to a Cadillac Firm

The county now pays an estimated $98,863 a year to Mid-Michigan Medical Examiner Group. The switch took effect April 8, three weeks after the vote, at Genesee County's request.

ITHACA — When someone dies unexpectedly in Gratiot County, the call now goes to a private firm based in Cadillac. The county Board of Commissioners voted March 17, 2026, to accept a proposal from Mid-Michigan Medical Examiner Group and to appoint its physician, Dr. Paul A. Wagner, as chief medical examiner through Dec. 31, 2028.

THE VOTE

Michigan law requires each county board to appoint a medical examiner for a four-year term. The county issued a request for proposals on Jan. 20, 2026 (Project No. 02-26) and received two. The resolution says an internal review committee "concluded that the proposal submitted by Mid-Michigan Medical Examiner Group was best suited to meet the needs of Gratiot County." The packet does not identify the other bidder or its price.

The board accepted the proposal "at an estimated average annual cost of $98,863.00," with the note that "actual cost will be determined by the total number of Medical Examiner cases." The motion by Commissioner Sopocy, seconded by Commissioner Bailey, carried 4-0; Chair Owens was absent.

Full report and sources: gcwhistleblower.com/articles/gratiot-moves-medical-examiner-work-from-genesee-county-to-cadillac-firm

STATUS: Board vote March 17, 2026; the switch took effect April 8.

Corrections, What to Watch Next and Who We Are

Changes to our reporting, the dates ahead, and an honest account of why this publication is anonymous.

PUBLICATION STATEMENT | OCTOBER 2026

CORRECTIONS & UPDATES

Oct. 2 | Animal Control report closed. Our Sept. 19 developing report is now closed. The county administrator wrote that he will not respond to questions from anonymous persons, and our Sept. 19 follow-up has had no reply as of Oct. 2. We added a dated update and changed the label from Developing to Closed. No earlier facts, quotations or attributions were changed. The same day we combined several overlapping update notes into one section; both emails, the administrator's reply and every fact are unchanged.

Oct. 1 | How this site is paid for. Until Oct. 1 our About and Privacy pages said the site carried no advertising. That is no longer true: it now carries advertising code from Google AdSense, and ads will appear once Google finishes its review. Ads are placed automatically and labeled, and advertisers have no contact with the people who write the reports. We do not accept money from readers. A support page said for a few hours that online payment was being set up; it was never switched on and no money was collected.

Oct. 1 | Graphic in the legal-notices report. The graphic with our Sept. 30 report described MCL 691.1051 as amended by 2022 PA 74. The act that amended that section is 2022 PA 76. The article text did not name the act. The same graphic appears on page 2 of the Vol. 1, No. 2 newspaper, which we do not alter after publication; this note is the correction of record for it.

Full log: gcwhistleblower.com/corrections

RECORDS TO WATCH

Dates Ahead

TUES. OCT. 6	**County Board of Commissioners.** Resolution 26-463 (tax apportionment report), 26-465 (Drain No. 050 loan) and the service-agreement resolutions, including whether the blank amounts are filled in.
TUES. OCT. 6	**St. Louis City Council.** Items 11A (cemetery design fee), 11F ($32,570 for the lift-station loan application) and 11J (drain petition). No votes have taken place.
FRI. OCT. 9	**Reply date for our requests.** FERC, the Michigan Public Power Agency and the City of St. Louis. Part two of the hydro report follows after this date.
OPEN	**Records not yet posted.** The city's notice to FERC when Hydro #6 returns to service; Ithaca's adopted Sept. 1 minutes and the bond sale and MDOT outcomes.

ABOUT US: HONEST ABOUT ANONYMITY

Who we are. Gratiot County Whistleblower is an independent local news publication. The people who run it do not publish their names. That is a deliberate choice, and you deserve to know the reasons: to protect residents and public employees who share information they are entitled to share, to keep attention on the records and not on who wrote the story, and to ask hard questions without fear of payback.

What it costs. You cannot check who is behind this. So we made the work checkable: every report links to the documents it rests on. Some officials will not answer an anonymous publication, and records requests under Michigan law need a real name, so volunteer public representatives contact offices under their own names (gcwhistleblower.com/volunteer). We are unpaid volunteers, have earned no money and are not yet a registered business.

How we are paid for. There is no paywall and we do not accept money from readers or payment for coverage from anyone. The site may carry clearly labeled advertising placed automatically by an ad network, and advertisers have no say in what we cover.

There is one address, contactus@gcwhistleblower.com, open to anyone, including anyone we have written about. A reply sent there is published.

REACH OUT

Email contactus@gcwhistleblower.com with tips, responses, corrections or records. Any official or organization named in these pages is welcome to respond, and responses are published in full.

OUR RULES

We start from the record. We ask before we publish and say what the answer was. Anyone named can answer at any time, and a reply is published in full. We label what is not settled, we do not guess at motives, and we correct in public. Read all fourteen rules at gcwhistleblower.com/how-we-work.

PHOTO AND IMAGE CREDITS

Chart on page 1 by Gratiot County Whistleblower. Document images on pages 3 to 5 are public records of Gratiot County, the City of St. Louis and the City of Ithaca, cropped. The Gratiot Community Airport aerial on page 5 is USDA NAIP imagery via USGS, public domain, cropped. Each caption names its credit.

Earlier issues: Vol. 1, No. 1 (Sept. 18) and No. 2 (Sept. 30) at gcwhistleblower.com.