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Village President's Update

August 19, 2026

Police Department and November Millage Proposal

On July 27, the Village Council approved placing a 2.5 mill police proposal on the November ballot. If approved by voters, the millage would be levied for three years and is estimated to generate approximately \$248,100 annually for operating and equipping the Village of Pinckney Police Department.

That amount represents approximately half of the Police Department's adopted 2026 / 2027 budget of \$500,000. Although the millage alone would not provide enough funding to establish 24/7 Village police coverage, it would provide important financial support for maintaining our local Police Department and reduce the amount that must come from the General Fund.

The final decision belongs to Village voters. Before the November election, we will provide residents with clear information about the proposal, its estimated cost to property owners, how the revenue may be used, and the level of police service the funding would support.

At its August 10 meeting, and on the August 24th, meeting the Village Council continued discussing the Police Department's budget, officer scheduling, contractual rates of pay, and the possible use of license-plate recognition and security cameras. These discussions are part of our continuing effort to provide the best possible public safety coverage while remaining within the Village's financial limitations.

Village Budget and Financial Accountability

The Village continues to face significant financial challenges. For several years, money from the General Fund balance has been used to cover ongoing operating expenses. Although the planned use of fund balance may be appropriate in certain circumstances, relying on it year after year to support regular operations is not sustainable.

The Village Council has continued working to strengthen its budget amendment and account-transfer procedures. These procedures are important because they establish clear responsibilities for monitoring department budgets, identifying potential overages, and bringing necessary amendments to the Council before authorized spending limits are exceeded.

Adopting a balanced budget is only the beginning of our responsibility. We must carefully monitor revenues and expenditure throughout the year, make timely amendments, when necessary, control costs, and ensure that public money is spent only for purposes authorized by the Village Council.

Maintaining a balanced and sustainable budget is one of the Council's most important responsibilities. We must make responsible decisions today, so we are not facing the same or an even larger financial problem next year.

Jeff Buerman

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My commitment remains focused on accountability, transparency, protecting essential services, and improving the Village's long-term financial health, even when difficult decisions are necessary.

Department of Public Works

The Village is preparing for an important transition within the Department of Public Works. Council will consider filling a full-time DPW operator position following an upcoming retirement.

Our DPW employees are responsible for water and sewer operations, streets, parks, maintenance, snow removal, and many other services residents depend on every day. Maintaining an experienced and dependable DPW workforce is essential to protecting Village infrastructure and providing reliable service.

This position, along with a Police Department vehicle replacement request, is expected to receive further consideration at the August 24 Village Council meeting. No final decision should be assumed until Council reviews the information and takes formal action.

Downtown Development Authority

I remain proud of the work being done by the Pinckney Downtown Development Authority. The DDA and its volunteers play an important role in supporting our downtown, organizing community events, encouraging investment, and helping move the Village forward.

I want to personally thank DDA Chair Mike Szafranski, Secretary Julie Amy, Vice Chair Jen Cooke, and the entire DDA Board for their dedication, leadership, and commitment to the Village of Pinckney.

I would also like to welcome Steve DeBruyne as an official new member of the DDA Board. Thank you for stepping forward and agreeing to serve our community.

The DDA continues working on several projects, including downtown beautification, bike racks, tree grates, streetlights, the community garden, the Depot project, the Master Plan, and Redevelopment Ready Communities initiatives.

CTAP “Gateway to Play” Project

I am also pleased to congratulate the CTAP Community Committee. The committee's **Pinckney “Gateway to Play” Visitor Infrastructure and Destination Connectivity Project** have been approved by the Explore Brighton Howell Area Destination Development Task Force.

The Village will receive \$5,000 to support the Community Tourism Action Plan developed and submitted by the committee. This funding will help advance the project's goals of connecting our downtown, parks, trails, businesses, and recreational destinations while strengthening Pinckney as a place to visit, explore, and enjoy.

The committee will now revisit the plan to ensure that the project's scope, goals, community partnerships, and measures of success remain aligned with the approved proposal.

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Thank you to everyone who contributed their time, ideas, and effort to developing this plan. This is another encouraging step toward making Pinckney a true “Gateway to Play.”

The next Food Truck Friday is scheduled for Friday, August 21. Additional upcoming events include a movie night on August 29 and a Rails-to-Trails Community Day, movie, and family fun ride planned for September 26.

These events require a great deal of planning and volunteer work. Thank you to the DDA, Village staff, participating businesses, vendors, volunteers, and residents who continue supporting them.

I also remain grateful to Jo Self for everything she contributed in her paid DDA position. Although Jo has stepped away from that role, I appreciate her willingness to remain involved as a volunteer and continue supporting community events.

Community Updates

Surf Internet’s fiber installation continues throughout the Village. As with any large infrastructure project, construction can create temporary disruptions and concerns involving yards, rights of way, sidewalks, and property restoration.

Village staff will continue communicating with Surf Internet regarding resident concerns and incomplete restoration work. Residents who experience a problem should document the location and contact the Village so the concern can be properly reported and tracked.

Thursday evenings in Pinckney continue bringing our community together through the Pinckney Farmers Market and Hootin’ in the Park. The Farmers Market continues to grow, welcome new vendors, and give residents another reason to spend time downtown.

I want to thank Regina Hamlett and her team, the M-36 Rotary Club, participating vendors, event sponsors, and everyone who has worked to make Thursday nights successful.

These events allow neighbors to connect, support local businesses and vendors, enjoy live entertainment, and celebrate what makes Pinckney a special place to live.

Pinckney / Putnam Police Authority

We are continuing our efforts to explore the possibility of creating a joint Pinckney-Putnam Police Authority. A joint meeting is planned for **Wednesday, August 26, at 7:00 p.m. at Putnam Township Hall.**

The purpose of the meeting is to bring Village and Township representatives together to explore the structure, cost, governance, staffing, and practical steps that would be required to create a joint authority.

This meeting does not commit either community to creating an authority. Any formal proposal would return to the appropriate elected boards for public review, discussion, and consideration.

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I want to thank Putnam Township Clerk Val Niemiec, Trustee Jim Jensen, and Treasurer Pat Carney for their willingness to participate in this conversation and explore what may be possible.

I continue to encourage Supervisor Tom Chambers and all members of the Putnam Township Board to participate in this important discussion. Residents of the Village and Township are also encouraged to respectfully contact their elected representatives and express their support for an open and productive conversation.

As community leaders, we must be willing to look beyond our differences and consider what will be best for the Village of Pinckney and Putnam Township five, ten, and twenty years from now.

This does not mean everyone must agree on every detail. It means we should be willing to sit at the same table, listen to one another, review the facts, and determine whether a partnership could provide better and more sustainable public safety for our entire community.

Moving Pinckney Forward

I want to thank our Village employees, DDA members, Village trustees, Planning Commission members, volunteers, business owners, and residents who continue showing up and working for this community.

We may not always agree on every issue, but we share a responsibility to keep the Village moving forward. Our discussions should remain respectful and focused on facts, solutions, and what is best for the people of Pinckney.

Pinckney has real financial challenges, but it also has real opportunities. We are seeing new investment, infrastructure improvements, successful community events, and people who care deeply about this Village.

My commitment is to continue making responsible decisions, protecting essential services, improving accountability, and moving Pinckney forward.

We will not solve every problem overnight, but if we work together and remain focused on solutions, I believe this is the start of something good for the Village.

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