



City of Celina, Ohio

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State of the City 2024

Jeffrey S. Hazel
Mayor

As we reflect on 2024, it is my honor to present the City of Celina's State of the City report. This past year has been one of growth, progress, and community, driven by the dedication of our residents, businesses, and City employees. Together, we've worked to improve our infrastructure, enhance the quality of life, and build a brighter future for generations to come.

From improvements in the City's recreational programs and facilities to investments in infrastructure, Celina continues to thrive as a place we are proud to call home. The accomplishments detailed in this report reflect our collective commitment to ensuring our city remains relevant, safe, and a welcoming destination for everyone.

Our past achievements are important for our community, but we must remain focused on the challenges ahead. Through innovation, collaboration, prudent stewardship of resources, and transparency we will continue to meet these challenges head-on, with the shared goal of making Celina an even better place to live, work, and play.

Thank you for your support and partnership in shaping the future of our City. It is an honor to serve as your Mayor, and I look forward to continuing our journey together in 2025 and beyond.

Serving others, I am

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Mayor

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CITY OF CELINA 2024 STATE OF THE CITY

FINANCIAL HEALTH

In December of 2023, Council members unanimously passed a Balanced Budget request for City operations of approximately \$46.8M for all funds with total projected revenue of \$50M for 2024. Funds remaining from 2023 and excess collections throughout the year were reserved by transfer into designated “set aside” fund accounts for capital projects of Fire and Police Departments, and the Street Fund.

The final combined expenses for 2024 was \$61.15M, which includes the projected expense of \$8.57M from carry-over funds set aside and designated for capital projects without the need for outside borrowing. Major capital projects include the Mill Street Reconstruction Project and Public Works Building construction. Final actual revenue for all funds received in 2024 was \$56.8M.

Administration, City Council, and the City Auditor continued to responsibly manage expenses and strive to reduce overall City indebtedness for our community’s current and long-term financial stability. The beginning 2024 outstanding debt was approximately \$6.41M with an end-of-year principal and interest reduction of \$2.93M. Significant debt reduction updates are as follows:

- The final payment of \$112,280 was paid for Phase 3 of Bryson Park District Improvements
- The final payment of \$2,158,532 satisfied the AMP Electric Improvement Bond Anticipation Note (BAN) initially borrowed against the Electric Fund for the new Electric building.
- Collective debt payments from the 9 TIF Districts were \$293K

The year-end City indebtedness for all funds was \$4.14M. The City’s Investment Accounts are comprised of current Fund balances originating from all revenue sources, including General, Enterprise, and TIF Funds. Investment Accounts are managed by Meeder Investment Management through the City Auditor. The average monthly balance of funds invested were approximately \$47.205M with interest earned between 2.65% - 4.7356%. Total net interest earned for the City by Meeder in 2024 was \$873,825, and total interest from all accounts approximately \$1.306M, with earnings deposited back into their associated funds.

UTILITIES

The City’s Utility Departments continue to provide the essential basics of everyday services for our residents and businesses. Although operating in the background,

Celina's municipal Utilities account for nearly 68% of the City's total initial budget of \$46.8M. Celina Utilities are comprised of Wastewater Treatment, Water Treatment, Storm Water, and Electric Distribution.

Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP)

Initially constructed in 1939 and upgraded in 1993, the City's 3MGD Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) continues to operate under the direction of Superintendent Kerry Duncan, an Assistant Superintendent, and 3 wastewater treatment operators ensuring compliance with its NPDES permit requirements delineated by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA). Final 2024 expenses for Wastewater operations, collection system maintenance, and capital were \$1.82M. Of particular note:

- In 2024, the WWTP treated a total of 709.883 million gallons (MG) of wastewater.
- The plant achieved outstanding pollutant removal efficiencies, with 98.34% CBOD5 removal and 97.95% TSS removal, far exceeding the NPDES Permit requirements.
- The WWTP land-applied 984 wet tons (176 dry tons) of biosolids across 145 acres approved by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA).
- The WWTP served an average of 538 Customers outside the corporation limits and 4,705 customers within, resulting in a total average of 5,243 customers on a monthly basis.
- Total treatment sales for the year amounted to \$2,485,677.61, which is inclusive of \$516,956.96 generated from Outside Customers and \$1,968,720.65 from Inside Customers.
- The Wastewater Treatment processes and facilities have been subject to a Non-Feasibility Analysis as directed by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency with the ultimate objective to eliminate bi-passes into local bodies of water. This study will result in mandatory capacity and process improvements to be implemented by the City.

Water Treatment Plant (WTP) and Water Distribution

The City of Celina Water Treatment Department staff is under the direction of Superintendent Mike Sudman, Assistant Superintendent of Treatment, 5 water treatment plant operators, an Assistant Superintendent of Water Distribution Kurtis Williams, and 2 Distribution staff with final total 2024 expenses of \$4.03M. These staff continue to address critical infrastructure needs, maintaining high-quality service and treatment standards with 24-hour response, and ensuring the reliability of the water system for all residents and businesses. The following is a summary of the year's notable in-house projects:

- In collaboration with Celina City Schools, 1,000 feet of 6" C909 water main was installed in Pond Street at a cost of \$42,453.46; and, 840 feet of 12" C909 water main was installed in Meyer Road at a cost of \$64,462.26.
- Staff completed OEPA-required lead service mapping for the entire system.
- Land-applied 975,498 gallons of wet sludge at a cost of \$93,890.01 (\$0.096 per gallon)
- Completed reconstruction of Sand Filter #4, with Sand Filter #3 scheduled for early 2025.

- Exchanged 320,000 pounds of granular activated carbon (GAC) across all eight filters at a cost of \$358,800.00.

Electric Department

The Electric Distribution Department maintains the City’s electric distribution lines and 4 substations. Superintendent Aaron Siefring works alongside a Crew Leader and seven Linemen with multiple skill levels to ensure reliable and efficient electrical service for our residents and businesses. The Electric Distribution Department had 2024 expenses of \$25.6M and represented nearly 42% of the City’s overall budget. Staff maintains the following services:

- Residential Services: 5,175 customers inside city limits and 2,007 outside
- Commercial Services: 745 customers inside city limits and 210 outside
- 685 miles of distribution lines
- 10 miles of transmission lines
- 12 miles of fiber optic lines
- 4 distribution substations and 1 69KVA substation
- 24 traffic light intersections
- 1,020 street lights

Maintenance of existing infrastructure is an essential objective; however, the department upgrades services and distribution lines to accommodate growth, expansion, and load demands.

- Completed 6 major projects, replacing 102 poles and overhead primary lines, with a total investment of \$101,731.45.
- Single-phase extensions serving residents and businesses amounted to \$30,804.42
- 3-phase extensions totaled \$87,096.62, supporting key commercial facilities, Farms, and the Mercer County Fairgrounds.
- Traffic lights were replaced at Myers/Lilac (\$151,778), extensive lighting installations at Bryson Park (\$61,110.37), tornado recovery efforts (\$210,022.43), and various smaller projects totaling \$506,977.60
- Installed 630 new radio-read meters, improving meter accuracy and efficiency (\$81,900).

Customer Accounts

Customer Accounts is comprised of Director Julie Nedderman, 3 Account Clerks, and 3 Meter Readers with final 2024 expenses of \$1.49M that is funded by Electric (50%), Water (25%) and Wastewater (25%) revenues. These staff assist customers with utility services in addition to billing and collecting service fees. Below is a summary of key statistics 2024:

- **Electric Customers**
 - Inside city limits: **5,920**
 - Outside city limits: **2,217**
- **Water Customers**
 - Inside city limits: **4,772**

- Outside city limits: **567**
- **Solar Customers**
 - Residential: **11**
 - Commercial: **3**
 - REC Program (Renewable Energy Credits) Participants: **1**
- **ACH Customers (payment through direct bank transfer): 2,186**
- **Customer Billings: 90,600**
 - Delinquent accounts collected: **\$13,052.86**
 - Total delinquent billings: **10,257**
- **Miscellaneous Billings**
 - Electric: **68**
 - Water: **588**
 - Sewer: **30**
 - Engineer (permits/new construction): **28**
- **Revenue Highlights**
 - KWH tax collected: **\$602,315.97**
 - Property assessments collected: **\$1,502.63**
- **Payment Transactions**
 - PSN Payments Processed (Credit Card): **25,440**
 - Returned checks: **69**
- **Additional Services**
 - Trash tags sold: **1,884**
 - Shelter house rentals: **94**
 - Amphitheater rentals: **5**
 - Red tent rentals: **4**

Recreation Department

Celina Parks and Recreation, under Director Craig McConkey, offers introductory, skills, and team-building experiences for youth, ages K-6th grade, through the City's Recreation programs. Parks and Recreation had 2024 expenses of \$606,996, which includes the Bryson Pool. Below is an overview of the department's accomplishments and contributions to the community:

- **Baseball and Softball:**
 - **Baseball:** 174 participants (*down 17 from 2023*).
 - **Pony League Baseball:** 17 participants.
 - **Softball:** 149 participants (*up 4 from 2023*).
 - **Co-ed Kindergarten T-Ball** (new in 2024): 47 participants.
 - **Total Enrollment:** 387 players (*up 33 from 2023*).
- **Soccer:**
 - **Girls' Soccer:** 200 participants (*up 8 from 2023*).
 - **Boys' Soccer:** 151 participants (*down 7 from 2023*).
 - **Kindergarten Soccer** (new in 2024): 65 participants.
 - **Total Enrollment:** 416 players (*up 66 from 2023*).
- **Football:** 89 participants (*up 6 from 2023*).
- **Tennis Camp:**

- Two sessions held in May and June saw a combined enrollment of **46 players** in its second year.
- **Total Recreation Sports Enrollment:** 938 youth athletes.

Sponsorships and Volunteer Support

The community's strong support for youth sports programs is reflected in the annual sponsorship and volunteers:

- **Sponsorships:** 57 total, including 16 for Baseball, 12 for Softball, 13 for Boys' Soccer, and 16 for Girls' Soccer.
- **Coaches and Volunteers:** Over 111 individuals dedicated their time and expertise to youth sports.
- **Officials:** 19 umpires for baseball and softball games and 24 referees for soccer matches.

Income Tax Department

The Celina Income Tax Department, managed by Administrator Roxann Shaffer assisted by a Tax Clerk, plays a crucial role in the General Fund through collections of Celina's Income Tax for essential services, such as Safety Services. In 2024, the department continued to make strides in improving collections, addressing delinquencies, and managing accounts effectively. Below is an overview of the department's performance and key metrics:

Total Collections 2024: \$8,203,654 (*up 4.40% from 2023's collection of \$7,857,857*)

The department maintained **8,273 active tax accounts** in 2024, distributed as follows:

- **Resident Individuals:** 5,545
- **Non-Resident Individuals:** 541
- **Resident Businesses:** 417 (including 788 withholding accounts)
- **Non-Resident Businesses:** 754 (including 228 withholding accounts)

Efforts to reduce delinquent tax filers yielded progress:

- **2023:** 1,700 delinquent filers
- **2022:** 1,117 delinquent filers

Outstanding Tax Balances

The total tax balance due from prior years stands at **\$99,876**, with an additional **\$23,575** in penalties and interest. Balances by year are as follows:

- **2023:** \$28,883
- **2022:** \$25,108
- **2021:** \$19,460

- **2020:** \$9,349
- **2019:** \$9,395
- Older balances (2018–2011) total \$7,681.

Police Department

Celina’s Police Department, under the direction of Chief Tom Wale and Assistant Chief Dan Harting, is tasked with the responsibility of protecting our community and enforcing laws. Activities included patrol, responding to calls for service, traffic control during accidents and events, business security checks, surveillance, criminal investigations, serving warrants, arrests, and occasionally partnering with other law enforcement agencies for criminal investigations including drugs, car thefts, etc. The final 2024 expenses for the Department was \$1.63M.

Below is an overview of key criminal investigations handled by the department and are highlighted as a result of the complexity and variety of challenges faced by the Celina Police Officers in maintaining public safety. Of particular note:

- **February 12, 2024:** Eighteen stolen firearms were recovered after being taken by juveniles. Arrests were made.
- **March 7, 2024:** Two vehicles stolen by teens were successfully recovered, and the cases were resolved.
- **March 18, 2024:** A domestic violence case involving attempted strangulation led to the arrest of a male suspect.
- **April 4, 2024:** A patrol officer discovered a fire at Kern’s Chevy, enabling a swift response.
- **May 3, 2024:** A young adult sustained serious, life-altering injuries in a traffic crash while riding an electric skateboard at night.
- **May 4, 2024:** During a traffic stop, officers discovered methamphetamine, which led to an investigation and a subsequent drug trafficking arrest.
- **June 5, 2024:** A woman from Lima was arrested for attempting to burglarize homes in Celina while in possession of a stolen vehicle.
- **August 13, 2024:** A collision between a bicycle and a car resulting in serious injury was thoroughly investigated. Suspect was arrested.
- **September 29, 2024:** A mentally disturbed adult set fire to his parents' home while they were away. An arrest was made.
- **October 10, 2024:** Investigations into car thefts revealed connections to a violent street gang in Dayton. The case remains open.
- **November 3, 2024:** A suspect was arrested for attempted murder after shooting his step-son-in-law in the back.
- **December 31, 2024:** Police investigated an attempted carjacking on S. Main St. that escalated into a standoff. The suspect was shot by a deputy who assisted CPD. The investigation, led by Ohio BCI&I, is ongoing.

Capital Purchases:

- Body Cameras at approximately \$60,000
- Dispatch Radio Console at \$192,552
- Five Mobile Radios replaced at \$32,209
- Two replacement Duty Weapons at \$1,218
- One Computer at \$1,500

Of note, the Department's K-9, Peng, retired from active service after 10 years. Plans are being discussed for a new K-9 once full Department staff is active.

As a result of retirements and resignations over compensation, the Department was short-staffed throughout 2024. Under the direction of Police Chief Thomas Wale and Assistant Chief Dan Harting, the Department had 3 Sergeants, and 8 Patrol Officers on active duty. While there remains a nation-wide shortage of law enforcement personnel, local efforts to attract new recruits included adoption of changes to Ohio Civil Service Laws, National testing requirements that provided a broader base from which to draw applicants, and rules were changed to allow for transfers of Officers from other jurisdictions. Additionally, Celina's Council approved a pilot program through legislation that also appropriated funds to allow hiring of student Trainees and to fund Law Enforcement Academy tuition and related wages. As of December, the Department was able to hire 3 Trainees that are currently in a Law Enforcement Academy for projected graduation in the spring 2025. The City objective is to have a full staff by fall of 2025.

Public Works Department

The Public Works Department had combined expenses approximately \$1.03M, which includes North Grove Cemetery expenses. An additional \$5.87M was appropriated in December for the Mill Street Reconstruction project and construction of a Public Works facility on North Street. Under the supervision of Superintendent Wes Harris, there were six Maintenance personnel, two Sewer Collections staff, one Parks maintenance employee, one Cemetery employee, and nine seasonal workers.

2024 Projects:

- Over 150 yards of concrete street repairs, costing approximately \$42,000.
- Replacement of 1,000 feet of sidewalks & installation or replacement of 17 ADA ramps.
- Pavement markings throughout city at a cost of \$73,198.92 (Griffin Pavement Striping).
- Repairs to the mausoleum for \$59,349 (Wellman Brothers Inc.).
- A total of 173.03 tons of asphalt were purchased from the Shelly Company at \$92.00 per ton, costing \$15,918.76 for patching and general road maintenance.
- Dura-patcher system kept costs low, with 3,410 gallons of emulsion used (\$7,910.55) and 130 tons of stone (\$1,917.50).
- Employees crack sealed 7,500 feet of streets using 6,750 pounds of material costing \$5,332.50.
- Monthly street sweeping was performed citywide, with increased frequency in fall to manage leaves. Downtown streets were cleaned every Friday.
- Crews collected approximately 3,200 cubic yards of leaves from April through October.
- The Department is responsible for 585,967 feet of sewer of which 56,454 feet was cleaned and 25,436 feet inspected via CCTV

- 404 catch basins cleaned, 15 replaced, and 12 repaired.
- 7,012 feet of sanitary sewer was root-treated.
- 2,302 utility locates completed
- New amenities at Bryson Park District include a concrete kayak ramp and parking lot pavement.
- Expansion of Eastview Park Pickleball courts from four to eight
- New tree plantings at multiple parks.
- Nine properties were maintained by crews as a result of neglect or abandonment.
- Staff supported City-wide festivals, such as Lakefest and Taste of Celina with manpower, signage, and cleanup with internal costs exceeding \$20,000.

Spring Trash Collection

Spring trash collection was completed in April 2024 by Maharg's Trash Service, totaling 587.67 tons at a cost of \$34,418.55, which is funded by a \$.10 per bag surcharge. Maharg's Trash and Recycle bags are sold at designated area stores. Statistics in 2024 are as follows:

- Trash bags sold: 347,250
- Recycle bags: 42,750
- Yard bags: 16,150

FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Celina Fire Department had final expenses of \$1.42M. Personnel include Fire Chief Joel Lange, 3 Lieutenants, 12 full-time Firefighter Positions, and six auxiliary members. The Department was also short-staffed during 2024 as a result of retirements, resignations, and transfers to other departments for higher wages and no call-back. Noting only 13 positions filled, the Chief voluntarily returned on shift to alleviate certified personnel shortage while hiring and training new recruits. Paramedic shortages throughout the County prompted the County Commissioners to place a Ballot Initiative on the November ballot to provide additional millage for hiring of paramedics and to allocate \$300,000 to Celina for 3 additional FF-Paramedics, beginning in 2025. Celina has an ISO rating of 4 in the city and 4Y in rural areas, which results in insurance premium savings to area residents and businesses within the Celina Fire District.

The Fire Department is equipped with the following to provide life-saving support, rescue apparatus, and protection for life and property:

- (4) Advanced Life Support Ambulances (owned by Mercer County EMS)
- (2) Engines
- (1) Pumper/Tanker
- (1) 100' Aerial Ladder
- (1) Grass Truck
- (1) Rescue Truck
- (1) Command Vehicle
- (1) Inflatable Boat
- (1) Rescue Boat
- (1) Support Vehicle

- **Calls for Service:**
 - Fire: 359 – an approximate 9.1% increase over 2023
 - EMS: 1,965 – an approximate increase of 4.4% over 2023
 - **Total:** 2,324

- **Training Achievements:**
 - Driver: 88 hours
 - EMS: 181 hours
 - Fire Officer: 12 hours
 - Fire Pump Operations: 46 hours
 - Firefighter Training: 452 hours
 - Fire Inspector: 24 hours
 - Fire/EMS Instructor: 49 hours
 - Special Operations: 135 hours
 - **Total:** 987 hours
- **Certifications Achieved:**
 - Open Water: FF. Grogan
 - Drysuit: Chief Lange, FF. Koch, FF. Grogan, FF. Ewing, and FF. Bellman
 - Rescue Tech: FF. Ewing

- **Capital Purchases:**
 - 10 Mobile MARCS Radios: \$46,207.40
 - SCBA Fill Station: \$19,524.90
 - Gear Washer: \$7,310

- **Expenses Summary:**
 - Fire Equipment Maintenance: \$45,637.35
 - Uniform Allowance: \$37,097.71
 - Training and Travel: \$4,814.49
 - Fitness Programs: \$7,301.00

ENGINEERING - DEVELOPMENT

The Celina Engineering Department has two key engineering positions that process applications of residential, commercial, and industrial developments while facilitating the Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals. Staff works with developers and all departments to insure compliance with construction standards in addition to Floodplain management. Staff monitors, responds, and notifies property owners of high grass, junk, zoning violations, and unsafe buildings for compliance to local codes.

The following Zoning permits were issued in 2024:

- 13 Single Family dwellings
- 1 Duplex
- Thirteen Residential Additions or Accessory Structures
- Two non-residential buildings and one addition

The following City projects were under construction or completed in 2025:

- The Shelly Company resurfaced over two and one-half miles pavement at a cost of \$833,777 that was funded through the Half-Percent Supplemental Income Tax
- Wagner paving completed the parking lots areas within the Bryson Park District for a cost of \$352,882
- Heyne Construction is building the Bryson Park Restroom at a cost of \$312,400, and was substantially completed by December
- The installation of Pond Street and widening of Meyer Road north of the new West Elementary School under Celina City School was completed by PAB Construction at a cost of \$674,298, which included a new water line and over 1,950 feet of new sidewalk
- Approximately 1,700' of Yorkshire and Barnsbury Court were reconstructed by PAB Construction at a cost of \$604,726

NEW BUSINESS

1. Daylight Donuts is under construction on West Logan Street
2. LaCaretta IV Mexican Grill opened up Havemann Road
3. Winans Coffee & Chocolate opened in our downtown on South Main Street
4. Light House Studio opened on South Main Street
5. Morrow BJJ Brazilian Martial Arts gym opened at Main and Market
6. PJ Beauty for Ashes Salon & Spa Limited opened in downtown on South Main Street
7. Celina Manufacturing opened on Grand Lake Road
8. Smash City Burgers opened at corner of Logan and Main Streets
9. Jens Collectibles in former 419 Building on South Main Street downtown
10. Aura Align Pilates Studio opened on South Main Street downtown

MUNICIPAL COURT

Celina's Municipal Court is under the direction of Judge Kathy Speelman with Municipal Court Clerk Sara Bruggeman, two Bailiffs, and four Deputy Clerks. Judge Speelman maintains annual reports with her Court Clerk.

- 3,426 cases were filed in 2024, an approximate 24.5 decrease
- 2,297 Traffic cases were filed
- 422 criminal cases were filed

CELINA AUDITOR

The City of Celina Auditor is Brooke Shinn who maintains all financial records, processes purchase orders, invoices, payroll, investments, annual budget, and coordinates with the City Treasurer Ryan Byers for financial transactions. The Auditor maintains strict guidelines to assure compliance with accounting standards and appropriate expenditures of governmental funds for all departments. The Auditor maintains annual records.

LAW DIRECTOR

The City's Law Director is George Moore who maintains all mandatory legal records, including cases, lawsuits, and related matters in his office, both annual and long-term.

SUMMARY

This 2024 State of the City chronicles the summary of Celina's strong financial health and the transparency of which Council and Administration strive to provide in accountability to our residents, visitors, and the public at large. Individual Elected Officials and City Department End-of-Year Reports are available to view at Celina's Administration Building.

Serving Others for the Betterment of our Community, I am

Jeffrey Hazel
Mayor