

## Table of Contents

Staff Thank You	pg. 2
Emp. Recognition	pg. 3
Emp. of the Year	pg. 4
Reminders	pg. 6
Emp. Transitions	pg. 6
Babies	pg. 6
Holiday Drives	pg. 7
In Memoriam	pg. 7
Wellness	pg. 7
Happenings	pg. 8

# News & Views

December 31, 2019

The City of New Hope's Employee Newsletter

## Park/Aquatic Center Construction Update

Much of the work has ceased due to the frozen ground, but contractors will continue to work in the interiors of the bath house and mechanical building. The contractor for the theatre is also planning to finish additional items through the winter. Park work will resume in the spring. (pictured: Theatre Under Construction at Civic Center Park)



## Police Station & City Hall Open House

On November 14, City Council and staff opened the doors of the new police station and city hall for residents, former staff and others that were interested in touring the new facility. A brief program and ribbon-cutting were hosted by the mayor and City Council and then tours were given through the building. Many familiar faces were seen but also some newcomers that had never been to the building. Staff estimated over 200 visitors participated in the event. (pictured L to

R: Senator Ann Rest, Council Member Andy Hoffe, Mayor Kathi Hemken, Council Member John Elder, Former Council Member Eric Lammle and Council Members Jonathan London and Cedrick Frazier)



## Mark Your Calendar

- Dec. 31 New Year's Event: Open Skate and Movie
- Jan. 1 New Year's Day – City Offices Closed
- Jan. 20 MLK Jr. Holiday – City Offices Closed
- Jan. 22 Wacky Wednesday – Jeans and Slippers!
- Jan. 30 Annual Employee Club Chili Cook-off
- Feb. 17 President's Day – City Offices Closed

## Thank You to Staff

It was a big year with the move into the new city hall and police station. Thank you to all employees for their assistance and cooperation on the move – it would not have been possible without everyone pitching in to do their part and it was great to see departments helping one another. A special thanks to the public works crew who helped with furniture disassembly and moving items out of the old building for use at other facilities. It was pretty interesting to see the old building demolished; and it provided a great view of the new pool and park improvement projects underway. Yes, there were some delays with all the wet weather – but when everything is finished in 2020 – they will be facilities we can all be proud of and they will serve the public well.

Thank you,  
Kirk McDonald, City Manager

### Parks and Recreation

The work on the pool and park projects continued as well as the planning and coordination of the new city hall exterior amenities. But that didn't mean the work throughout the city slowed down. New playground equipment for Jaycee Park was planned and installed. Movies in the Park had a successful season in its temporary location of Northwood Park due to the construction at Civic Center. And the new outdoor patio at the golf course was installed with assistance from public works. Front office staff kept busy with registrations for a variety of programs and the gymnastics and dance programs had another successful year.



### Public Works



Thank you for plowing the many miles of streets early in the morning, the repairing water mains at random times and maintaining the ever-demanding city vehicles and equipment. As well as the planning and coordination on infrastructure projects including Winpark Drive reconstruction, the north water tower repainting and the new street lights on 42nd Avenue. The end results of all of these projects look great!

### Community Development

The development of the final undeveloped tract of land in the city, Windsor Ridge, has been a large project involving a lot of time from several members of the team. Good progress has been made on scattered site housing projects. A good deal of coordination has gone into business expansions of AbelConn and Auto Concepts. Appreciation to each of the inspectors for their work to keep New Hope a safe and aesthetically pleasing place to live and work. Also to the front office staff responding to the many questions that come their way, issuing permits and helping the inspectors keep track of their schedules.



### Police

Thank you for the team effort it takes to keep the community of New Hope a safe and enjoyable place to live and work. Community outreach continues to sow benefits that are reaped at all times. The MRAP vehicle outfitting has been completed and is in service. And the department has overcome a large learning curve for operations in the new building, both because of the significant change in the facility and because of construction delays. Your patience and persistence is appreciated.

### Finance

Thank you for maintaining a high level of achievement reflected both in the results of the annual audit as well as another Excellence Award from the Government Finance Office Association. The successful implementation of Tungsten and purchase cards would not have been possible without a good deal of planning and extra effort.



### Human Resources/IT

Thank you for coordinating the recruitment and hiring process that has resulted in some great new employees and internal promotions this year. Also for all of the extra work in IT that was required in getting the new city hall up and running, as well as the training that has occurred over the last six months.

## Communications

Thank you for the innovation and improvements in the realm of social media resulting in greater exposure for the city in general and in getting the word out to the public on city activities and program. The number of social media posts tripled from 2018 to 2019.



### City Manager Department

The new building has required a huge amount of dedication from this team in planning the move and all of the opportunities that have been presented since operations began. Appreciation is extended for an ever-friendly presence at the front counter and for the on-going coordination of council meetings, insurance claims, facility operations and for putting up with the city manager!

### City Council

And none of this would be possible without a supportive City Council – many thanks are extended to the mayor and each city council member.

2019 was a great year and 2020 promises to be the same. Thank you again to each of you for all of your great work in keeping city operations running smoothly and efficiently!



## Employee Recognition Event

The police department hosted a fantastic event with more than 50 employees and their significant others in attendance. The Elf (the movie)



themed event inspired several festive costumes.

In step with the movie, we feasted on a pasta bar catered by the venue for the evening, Cinema Grill, while the movie played in the background. For dessert,

attendees were served

spaghetti and meatball decorated cupcakes! Following the program attendees were slow to leave, a sure sign of a great gathering. Thank you to the police department for all of your work, especially to Lorilee Stafford, police clerk, and Jeana Allen-Hatcher, police office supervisor. (pictured left are: Tim Fournier, police chief; Kirk McDonald, city manager; and Mic Leone, City Clerk Leone's husband.)



## Service Recognition

Congratulations to employees reaching 5-year milestones in 2019 (in order of start date). Thank you to the council members and members of the management team that were present to recognize each employee for their contributions.

**30 years:** Susan Rader and Steve Ellingson

**25 years:** Scott Slawson and Penny Spitzer

**20 years:** Bruce Stanchfield, Carol Gass, Terry Meillier, Pete Stanley, Mark Claycomb, Tony Loser and Dave Johnson

**15 years:** Jill Smisek, Art Sorenson, Bernie Weber, James Bardon and Chris Swaja

**10 years:** No employees reaching this milestone in 2019.

**5 years:** Josh Eernisse, Jeff Alger, Mike Keithahn, Dave Lemke, Aundrey Wallace and Tony Gust





## Employees of the Year – 2019

**Valerie Leone, City Clerk/Treasurer, and Walker MacBeath, HR Coordinator**

*(excerpted from the city manager's presentation)*

Val joined the city as an administrative clerk/secretary in March of 1988. She has also served as deputy city clerk (1989), city clerk (1989) and city clerk/treasurer (2014 to present). Walker joined the city as an administrative specialist in April 2016 and was promoted to HR coordinator in January 2018.

Both Val and Walker were selected as 2019 Employees of the Year due to the outstanding way they do their jobs every day, they were both instrumental in planning for, executing, and continuing to work on the new police/city hall facility.

As mentioned earlier, this is the first time the city has selected two employees of the year. It was very clear to the management team that they both went far above and beyond and it is also clear that this year has been one that was far from typical.

Val served as the project coordinator for our new facility. She coordinated getting input from a multitude of people on the design of the facility, led the charge for purging the years of material that had accumulated in the old building, sought input on finishes both inside and outside of the new building, attended construction meetings, helped select a furniture company, hired a moving company, and made the move on time! Since the move, she continues to work with the contractor and architect to solve the many issues that needed to be fixed (she is still working diligently to get every punch list item taken care of) and coordinated an open house where hundreds of residents toured and complimented the new facility. With all of the above responsibility she took on, Val continued to perform her many "regular" duties at a very high level. She is responsible for council packets, attends meetings, takes minutes, compiles the synopsis, maintains the city's records, publishes notices, responds to requests from the public, handles claims made against the city, serves as the city's responsible authority for data practices, reviews and approves all accounts payable disbursements, recruits for and trains election judges for her next most favorite thing...the upcoming 2020 election!

Val's nominator commented that "perhaps a new designation of Employee of the Centennial" be vested upon her!

Walker also served extensively with the transition from the old building to the new. Early on, he shared how to declutter spaces like "Marie what's her name"...he took on a great deal of planning for the city's IT and phone needs, he coordinated the move of PCs and other technology, he inputted all the access control data so our ID cards would open the doors they should, he worked with various vendors on the technology in the new facility and continues to do so today. He also has streamlined and improved many HR/Payroll process. He never shies away from digging into an issue, gathering facts and seeing it through to a great resolution. He ensured everyone was knowledgeable of their open enrollment choices and had all their questions answered so they could maximize their benefit elections. He champions the Wellness program, makes himself available to employees by coming in early, staying late, holding office hours at public works, etc. He is responsible for managing each recruitment process and onboarding of new hires. Several times over the past year, candidates have commented about how pleased they are with how organized and timely our process is. This is all due to Walker's dedication and hard work.

At this time, we will present both Val and Walker with matching tiaras and each will receive a \$200 Visa Gift Card. In the near future, a reporter from the Sun Post will likely be tracking them down for a feature story on them both being named the 2019 Employees of the Year!

Thank you to Val and Walker for the outstanding jobs they both do every day! They both have not only the city's best interest in mind, but the best interest of each of us as well. They are wonderful to work with and both do an amazing job.



## Employee of the Year Nominations – 2019

*(excerpted from the city manager's presentation)*

### Dean Blom, Building Official

Dean was nominated for his work on the new facility... countless inspections, being creative in issuing the temporary occupancy certificate, and continuing to monitor the punch list of items that need to be addressed. He is also being recognized for his ongoing dedication and hard work with the pool project and all of the plan reviews and inspections for all the other projects taking place in the city.



### Beth Kramer, Administrative Specialist - City Manager Dept.

Beth was nominated for her exceptional customer service skills, being the “go-to” person for help with copy machines, phones and office supply orders. She treats both external and internal customers sincerely and with a great deal of respect. She makes everyone she comes into contact with feel as if they are the most important aspect of her job. Although she has only been with the city about 1 ½ years, she has a great deal of knowledge of both city operations and the community as a whole.



### Rhonda Peske, Police Clerk

Although Rhonda has only been with the city a short time, she has already made quite an impression. She was nominated for her “can-do” attitude, her calm, cool demeanor (in the midst of 4 arrests/bookings at one time), her flexibility, and her detailed nature which ensures she completes her duties correctly. Thanks Rhonda and here’s to a long service record with the city! (Rhonda was working the evening of the event so unable to attend—thank you for keeping things running Rhonda!)



### Lorilee Stafford, Police Clerk

Lorilee was nominated for being such a great addition to the city. She is always willing to do whatever is needed to get the job done and willing to lend a hand to someone that needs her help. She is very reliable and dependable, has trained in new employees (while still completing her daily tasks), and has stepped in to coordinate events such as Cop on Top (of Dunkin Donuts) and tonight’s employee appreciation event as well.

I am very grateful for the outstanding staff we have and know how fortunate the city is to have such dedicated, dependable employees! Each of the Employee of the Year and nominees will be invited to attend a recognition lunch with the City Manager, Kirk McDonald, in January. Lorilee (left) is pictured here with her co-organizer, Jeana Allen-Hatcher, police office supervisor.



## First of Year Reminders

### Benefit Changes

Jan. 10 will be the first paystub with updated benefit withholdings. Please check and make sure that it is as you would expect.

### Floating Holidays

As was the case in 2019, all employees will receive their two floating holidays at the beginning of the year. Floating holidays are typically for use at the discretion of the employee, however, due to how the holidays fall in 2020 the management team has designated Dec. 24 as a holiday so that most employees will have a four-day weekend. You are welcome to keep one of your floating holidays for use at that time. Remember that floating holidays cannot be carried from year to year, so HR recommends the use of floating holidays instead of personal leave through the year and then to use personal leave or vacation time for Dec. 24. This ensures that if you need to unexpectedly work on the 24th you don't lose that time.



### Coming up!

#### Annual Employee Club Chili Contest—Jan. 30

Get out your favorite chili recipes, pots and serving ladles, as this popular event is back in 2020. Look for posters giving details on the competition and how to sign-up after the first of the year.

## Employee Transitions

### New/Returning Employees

We have three new/returning employees that will be starting on Monday, January 6. Adam Link, community service officer; Andrea Phinney, accounting technician; and Tony Portesan, recreation facilities supervisor. Full spotlights will be coming in a special edition of News & Views early next month.

### Employee Departures

CSO Rodney Coons will be departing to take a police officer position with the city of Sartell, Minnesota. Rodney has been with the city for just over a year and has been someone we've come to rely on. He will be missed but we wish him the best of luck in his new endeavor. Rodney's last shift with the city is today, December 31.



### New Babies

Chris Swaja, police officer, and his wife, Marie, welcomed their first child, Maren, into the world on Oct. 30. (pictured left)



Penny Spitzer, admin. specialist for parks & recreation, greeted her new grandbaby, Bennett, on Nov. 9. Older sibling Teagan, pictured to the right with Penny, was very excited to say hello!





### Holiday Food Drive

In December, 198 pounds of food were delivered to NEAR from the city hall collection bin. In addition, the Skate with Santa event at the ice arena collected another 45 pounds. This brings the 2019 totals to 929 pounds of food and \$25.

### Wacky Wednesday Results

Wednesday the 18th was the last Wacky Wednesday of 2019. \$85 was collected and donated to Robbinsdale Area Schools IB Night of Service to be held on January 23, 2020. They continue to accept donations of travel size soap, shampoo, Kleenex, etc. to place in personal care bags.

Donations can be dropped off at P&R through Jan. 8. In 2019, a total of \$910 was collected from employees for participation in Wacky Wednesday with the majority of the collection being donated to NEAR. Thank you everyone for continued contributions and thank you Susan Rader, parks and recreation director, for coordinating the effort.



### In Memoriam



Our sympathies to:

- Mic Rusk and his family for the passing of his father-in-law, Tom, on Nov. 1
- Shawn Markham and his family for the passing of his father, Joe, on Nov. 18.
- John Elder and his family for the passing of his mother, Mary Ann, on Nov. 23.
- Kirk McDonald and his family for the passing of Marcy's brother, Wayne, on Dec. 12.



### Wellness Program

#### Transitioning to Senior Housing – Oct. 30

Barb Hemberger with Oasis Senior Advisors walked nine staff through the process she takes with individuals that are considering a move to senior housing. She shared a video and handouts to help staff visualize the process and to provide reference materials for future needs. Many were surprised to hear that Ms. Hemberger's services are not paid by the individuals using her services but by the facilities individuals choose.

#### 2020 Planning

The wellness committee will soon hold their first meeting to discuss the 2020 wellness calendar. If you missed the survey and have ideas, please share them with a member of committee. Committee members for 2020 are Mic Rusk, maintenance worker; Matt Rowedder, utilities maintenance supervisor; Aaron Thelen, recreation supervisor; Dean Blom, building official; Rich Johnson, HR/admin. director and Walker MacBeath, HR coordinator. Look for an announcement in January of the first 2020 event.





## Happenings

### Halloween Spirit

While it seems long ago, we can always depend on a few employees to represent the Halloween spirit. (pictured right: Bernie Weber, public works director, and Tim Fournier, Police Chief)



### Coat Drive – Dec. 11



Officer Nichole Korth (pictured left) of the New Hope Police Department collected three bags of donated coats from our residents to be donated in an effort to spread joy, warmth and love this holiday season to those within our neighborhoods. A collaborative effort with 8 other local police departments, more than 1,200 coats have been collected for individuals who need them the most this winter. Thank you to everyone who participated! (adopted from St. Therese's Facebook posting.)

### Teen Toy Drive and Potluck – Dec. 12

Brandon Bell, CD assistant, Aaron Thelen, recreation supervisor and Officer Nichole Korth brought employees together for this fun annual event. All participants were asked to submit a photo of their pet(s) before the event. Those attending were then challenged to guess which pet belonged to which employee. It was fun seeing the variety of companions and names chosen for them. The 27 gifts, \$195 in gift cards and \$50 cash donated went towards the Toy Drive effort coordinated by Nichole Korth, crime prevention officer. Thank you to everyone that shared delicious food and contributed toys and cash. (pictured right is Olive, Eric Piper's panther chameleon)



### Shop with a Cop – Dec. 12

Nichole Korth coordinated the largest success to-date for the city of New Hope. Here are how the gifts stacked up!

- Received 915 toys and \$740 in cash and gift cards from Toy Fest, an annual event hosted by New Hope residents Mike and Allison Isenberg and attended by 165 people this year.
- Took 10 children shopping at the Plymouth Target. Each child was shopping for family and themselves.
- Thank you Nichole, the PD staff, Mike & Allison, residents of Good Samaritan Lodge and the many, many donors!

(Staff pictured in uniform clockwise: Officer Ben Harty; Sergeant Pete Stanley; Detective Tony Loser; Officers Jason Ryan, Kaitlyn Baker, and Britni Austin; Chief Tim Fournier; and Officers Justin Janson and Nichole Korth.)

