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News & Views

July 15, 2020

The City of New Hope's Employee Newsletter

Civic Center and Aquatic Park Updates

Pool: The plaster work on the shallow water and current channel pools was completed and the pools have been filled and the pumps turned on; cameras were installed; installation of the perennials and trees are complete; final sod was installed, as well as installation of the replacement sod on the east side of the mechanical building and cemetery entrance; the rock work and plantings between the vortex and current channel was completed; the sun shades were installed. The slides have been tested. Final wear course of the mechanical building parking lot and entrance to the cemetery is expected soon. Donlar has reached substantial completion of the project!

Park: Between the city hall parking lot and the pool, the sidewalk was installed and the final grading is taking place; installation of the irrigation system has begun. The contractor removed several large cement foundation pieces that were found when prepping for the new sidewalk on the north side of the parking lot. Thank you to staff at public works for breaking them down into manageable pieces and hauling them off!

Performance Center/Picnic Shelter: The final sidewalk has been poured; contractor is just waiting for the irrigation connection to be run by the park contractor, then they will finish the irrigation and sod work.

Above: The shallow depth pool and bathhouse. Left: Vortex pool and current channel.



Mark Your Calendar

Farmers Market - Every Saturday through Oct. 3

July 22 – Wacky Wednesday

July 24 – Movies in the Park: Harry Potter

July 29 – Employee Appreciation Lunch

Aug 11 – Primary Election

Aug 26 – Wacky Wednesday

Sept. 7 – Labor Day: City Offices Closed

2020 Elections Are Upon US!

Election Memo from City Manager Kirk McDonald

Council Member Andy Hoffe and six other individuals have filed for the two council positions that will become vacant on Dec. 31, 2020. Mayor Hemken and Council Member London plus one other individual have filed for the mayoral position that will also become vacant on Dec. 31. To narrow the candidates to four and two for the respective positions, these candidates will all be on the ballot for the August 11 primary election. The general election is on Nov. 3.

As most of you are aware, the city, its staff and organizations providing city services, must remain impartial. Starting with me and extending to every employee of the city, the objective is to be completely fair by staying out of the politics of the race.

There are specific rules outlined in the personnel rules and regulations pertaining to what an employee may and may not do regarding political activity.

It is up to the residents of the city to determine who they want to represent them on the council and it is our job to concentrate on providing the best service possible to the residents and to work with the officials residents elect. They all deserve our respect.



From the Personnel Rules and Regulations

Political Activity:

- a. Prohibited Activities. A City employee may not:
 1. Use official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election or nomination for office.
 2. During working hours solicit or receive funds for political purposes.
 3. At any time use their official authority or influence to compel any officer or employee in the classified service to apply for membership in or become a member of any political organization; or pay, promise to pay or lend any assessment, subscription, or contribution for political activity.
 4. Be a candidate for elective office in a public partisan election.
 5. Any employee who violates these provisions is guilty of a misdemeanor and, if found guilty, is automatically separated from employment with the City.
- b. Permitted Activities. A City employee may:
 1. Express opinion on political subjects and candidates.
 2. Take an active part in political management and political campaigns.
 3. Hold membership or office in a political party, organization or club.
 4. Attend a political convention and participate in the deliberations of proceedings of the convention or any of its committees.
 5. Be a candidate for office or serve as a delegate at a convention as long as such candidacy does not involve a public partisan election.
 6. Engage in volunteer work for a partisan candidate, campaign, committee, political party or nominating convention of a political party.
 7. Sign nominating petitions for candidates in a partisan election for public office and originate or circulate such petitions.
 8. Make a financial contribution to a political party or organization, and solicit and collect voluntary political contributions.

One-year Anniversary

City hall celebrated an important milestone earlier this month. July 1 marked one year in the new city hall and police station. There cannot be enough gratitude conveyed for all of the work staff from all departments did in preparation for and in the process of the move. There has also been a great deal of progress made on the aquatic park and Civic Center Park projects that started shortly after. Please enjoy the photos of then and now (current aquatic park photos on page 1).



City Hall Then (Above) and Now (Right)



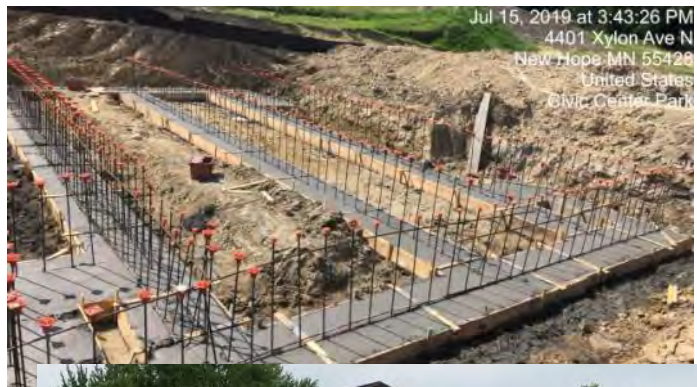
Council Chambers Then (Left) and Now (Right)



Work Session Room Then (Left) and Now (Right)



(Clockwise from Top Left)
Then: Footings for 50-meter pool, Footings for Theatre;
Now: Theatre, 50-meter pool filled



New Employees

Linda Bergemann, Office Specialist – Community Development

Linda started with the city on June 8. She was most recently with Uline, spending 12 years working with them, the first six in Eagan and then moving with the company when they relocated to Hudson, Wisconsin. She had been working for Subway but was on the hunt for a job when a truck demolished the store where she was employed. Husband Jake works for MTI in Brooklyn Center as a mechanic. They live in Champlin where they have been since moving from Eagan 8 years ago.

Linda and her husband, Jake, have three sons Nolan (age 9), Ben (age 6) and Jonathan (age 3). She and Jake went to grade school together in Cannon Falls where Jake was in Boy Scouts with one of her three brothers. Her parents now live in Bloomington where her dad drives short-haul truck for Sunbelt and her mom works for the complex they live in and at the Catholic school where they attend Mass.

Linda's boys are active in sports and the entire family enjoys water activities, ice fishing and outings to the Minnesota Zoo and the Minnesota Children's Museum. And even though the boys and Jake prefer football, she does drag them to a few baseball games each year, particularly to celebrate her birthday!

When she gets alone time she has plenty of hobbies that she enjoys as well. She enjoys crocheting baby blankets, dish rags, pot holders, among other things. She cans jams and pie fillings that she then uses to bake her favorite pastry, pie, along with the lesser favored, but still divinely delicious, chocolate and monster cookies. While engaging in said activities she uses her record player to jam to classic country and 1980s hair bands. One of her favorite experiences was attending Hairball in concert. When feeling less active, she enjoys reading the works of authors including Jane Austen, Alexandre Dumas and J.K. Rowling.



Linda has three brothers and a sister. Jake has two sisters. They spend a lot of time with family, including summer cookouts and a yearly family trip that Linda's parents treat everyone to as a Christmas gift. They've visited the Wisconsin Dells and Branson, Missouri to name a couple. In 2009, her sister and brother-in-law won a Farkle game set. They shared it with the family during time together and it wasn't long before they were hooked. Each year they have a Farkle tournament with a trophy. Her brother has gone as far as build a table (pictured during game time to the left) specifically for the game that allows for large numbers of players with beverage holders. Linda knows how to Farkle!

Welcome Linda, we are glad you are here and would not complain if you need test subjects for your time in the kitchen.

Vicki Thompson, Administrative Specialist – City Manager Department

Vicki comes to us from Camp Smile in Plymouth where she worked as a patient service representative for the last few years. She also brings with her government experience that she gained while working at Wright County Health & Human Services for 10 years.

Vicki, her husband John and their daughter Liz have lived in Maple Grove since 2016. She grew up in Northeast Minneapolis and has also lived in Robbinsdale and Big Lake. She's happy to again be in the suburbs though as she loves the beat of big city life. Vicki and John also share their home with their feline companion, Missy. John professes to be a cat person but Vicki hopes that their next companion will be of the canine variety. Her dad is retired and still lives in Northeast, and her brother sells real estate here in the Cities.

John is from Crystal and is an electrical inspector for the state of Minnesota in Edina performing residential and commercial inspections. They met through a mutual friend that they had both known for years. His parents live close by in Plymouth. Liz also works at Camp Smile and is currently attending North Hennepin. She will be starting the health



management program through U of M – Crookston.

Vicki enjoys traveling however, John does not. Luckily Liz and several of Vicki's friends do! In the last few years she's visited Mexico (3 trips!), New York City and Seattle. One of her favorite things to do while traveling and here at home is trying new restaurants. She said that one of her favorites locally is Brasa in Northeast. A recent Minneapolis dining addition that she looks forward to trying when they are able to reopen is Demi in the Warehouse District.

Continuing on the theme of food... Vicki loves cookbooks and trying new recipes. This year she is enjoying incorporating fresh herbs from her own garden. When asked if she bakes she said yes, brownies, cookies and the sort. I reassured her there was no pressure but that brownies and cookies are ALWAYS well-received by co-workers.

We commiserated on the fact that there is no state fair this year as she volunteered that she often attends The Great Minnesota Get-Together multiple days in any given year. And as you might have guessed, she loves trying all the great foods!

Welcome again, Vicki. We hope that next year we are all able to get back to the fairs!

Retirement

Nichole Korth, Crime Prevention Officer

Officer Nichole Korth has known the New Hope Community in ways that few of us do. Because of her position as the city's crime prevention officer, she has seen babies that she helped fit for car seats come to D.A.R.E. classes as students. She has seen those students become community organizers and parents with their own children needing to be fit for car seats. The car seat education and seat distribution for low-income families has allowed her to connect across the spectrum of the community and it is one area of prevention that she says she is able to see an immediate impact on the safety of children and families when families leave the appointment safer than when they arrived.



Staff were not able to hold a large celebration but her department still showed her much appreciation on her final day!

In elementary school, Nichole wanted to be a veterinarian. As a teen and young adult, she developed an interest in law enforcement after having the opportunities to see local officers and deputies working in her community who proved to be positive role models for her. Her first recollection of having the determination to pursue her calling was after a vehicle crash she came upon as a teen. The parents in the front of the vehicle were injured and the children in the back were traumatized. And the intoxicated individual that caused the accident was unharmed. She knew then that she wanted to dedicate her life to preventing unnecessary tragedies.

When she started with New Hope she had applications out throughout the state. Nichole said it was a different time for police officers, each open position would be applied for by over 1,000 applicants. She felt fortunate to be selected by New Hope and started just one day before Chief Tim Fournier did as an officer.

In 1999, she was appointed as crime prevention officer. She's enjoyed the scope of the work from individuals to businesses, to community activities to statewide initiatives. For the MN Crime Prevention Association she served as a Board Member, Sgt. at Arms, National Night Out Committee Chair, CFMH Committee member, and as the chair of the Minnesota Crime Prevention Association's trading card committee for over 20 years. This committee works in partnership with the MN Twins and Park Printing to produce sports cards with crime prevention tips to be distributed by law enforcement officers throughout Minnesota, South Dakota and North Dakota. She's also served on the Minnesota Child Passenger Safety Task Force and as a volunteer for MN DARE as well as attended MN DARE Officers Association and International DARE Officers training conferences.

She has enjoyed seeing the positive change her presence has had on children who are afraid the first time they see her in the school or in their classroom, and over the course of the curriculum see a police officer in a new and positive way. She is thankful for everything she has learned from her students and hopes to have left a positive impression with students, staff and the community.

When asked what she sees as the biggest change she has experienced in her career, she stated the ways we communicate specifically through websites and social media. It has changed education and the ways communities network.

Not being very good at retirement, she started working part-time at Regions Hospital providing car seat education at their birth center, before her last day with the city. She knows that she will always volunteer for Minnesota D.A.R.E., help at car seat clinics, and will continue to find ways to share her passion for safety and prevention wherever life leads her from here.

She is sad for all the heartbreak and challenges that 2020 has brought to the community and to our law enforcement officers and also that all of the planned recognition events for volunteers, DARE students and Crime Fund donors were cancelled preventing her from recognizing those who volunteer and work hard for crime prevention. That list of volunteers includes her husband, her father and each of her children who have all grown up as part of this community as well. There may be some visits in the future as the youngest intends to continue to volunteer and will need a driver for a couple more years.



Personally, she had dreamed of having a Hawaiian Pig Roast as her send off and inviting her family (upset there is no party), her co-workers and anyone from the community to join and celebrate their work together the last 27 years, and looks forward to a time when we can all celebrate together.

She is looking forward to more sunset cruises on her kayak. She has two boats at the ready anytime anyone would like to hit the water. She will also enjoy a leisurely coffee in the morning and more time to play with the puppies. While she will miss the volunteers and city staff, she's excited to see the changes that will come over the next few years as the departure of some will make way for others to step in to new roles. *(Pictured left: Nichole's van as she prepared to leave on her last day.)*

Recruitment Update

Police Officer Candidates

The personnel board certified four police office candidates in June. All four are currently being backgrounded. Those that successfully complete backgrounding will meet with Kirk McDonald, city manager, and Tim Fournier, police chief.

Employee of the Quarter

Shari Rains, Accountant

Congratulations to Shari! She was nominated for all of the extra work she took on during the start of the COVID pandemic. Her nominator noted that her cohort, Andrea, had only been with the city for a short time and was not initially equipped to work from home. So Shari took on double duty during a stressful time and worked in collaboration with management to determine ways to track both material and labor COVID-19 costs. And as if this wasn't enough, the annual financial audit was still in process, which always creates extra work during a normal year. Most importantly, employees and vendors continued to be paid accurately and on time (and payments to the city continued to be deposited). We are all grateful to Shari for keeping an essential function of the city operating smoothly.



There were six additional nominees:

Scott Anderson, community service officer, for using his keen observation skills to notice and follow an armed suspect during a routine call. New Hope and Golden Valley residents were both greatly appreciative.

Miranda Reed, police clerk, for taking on a regular shift during the adjusted clerk hours due to the pandemic. And for taking on additional responsibilities in preparation for Nichole Korth's retirement.

Mark Severson, recreation facilities manager, for managing the re-opening of the golf course and ice arena while adhering to new state pandemic guidelines with VERY short notice provided.

Penny Spitzer, administrative specialist for parks & recreation, for managing the cancellation of over 250 program registrations. And for quickly removing cancelled programs and adding the new ones following the state-mandated guidelines for the pandemic outbreak.

Aaron Thelen, recreation supervisor, for finding new ways to offer programs that allow for physical distancing and safe practices during the pandemic. WITH a positive, can do attitude!

Jessi Weber, administrative specialist for community development, for handling the work of two remotely as the CD office specialist position became vacant the day that city hall was closed due to the pandemic.

Recognition Due

D.A.R.E. Students Place in Poster Contest

From Nichole Korth, police and D.A.R.E. officer, "Congratulations to RSI DARE Students who placed in this year's DARE Poster Contest with the theme of "DARE to be Kind". Both winning and non-winning entries will be posted on the MNDARE Facebook page. There are some wonderful, positive messages from our students around the state." New Hope had three students place: #2 – Julia, #9 – Fareed Ghani and #15 – Senia Strommen. The first place poster (pictured) is from Joseph-Visitation School - DARE Officer Mario Reyes, Mendota Heights PD.



Employee Celebrations



Officer Hoyt Receives Masters Degree

Congratulations to Tim Hoyt, police sergeant, for graduating with his Master of Arts in Criminal Justice Administration from Concordia University in February. The editorial staff apologizes for the lateness in publishing this and thanks an anonymous tip for bringing this accomplishment to our attention.



Erick Dyer, Police Officer, Welcomes Baby Girl

Congratulations to Erick and his wife, Sarah, on the arrival of their first baby, Elliana Marie. They welcomed her into the world on June 21 (Father's Day!).



In Memoriam



Our sympathies to:

- Rhonda Peske, police clerk, and her husband Brad, for the passing of Brad's father, Chet, on June 2.
- Friends and family of Dick Tougas, retired maintenance worker, for his passing on April 11.
- Friends and family of Jeff McFarlane, retired detective sergeant, for his passing on June 14.

Wellness Program

The wellness committee has used the feedback recently shared by staff to develop plans for moving forward in new ways this summer and fall. Stay tuned for upcoming programs.

Ongoing

Step to It Challenge Completed – May 1-28

This annual effort coordinated by Aaron Thelen, recreation supervisor, once again had an outstanding showing in 2020. New Hope staff finished 4th out of 54 groups in the workplace category with a 4-week average daily number of steps of 15,338. Thank you Aaron and participants!

