

Table of Contents

New Employees	pg. 2
Transitions	pg. 3
Elections	pg. 3
CM McDonald	pg. 4
Staff Kudos	pg. 5
Purchasing Policy	pg. 6
Coming this summer	pg. 6
Happenings	pg. 7
Baby	pg. 8
In Memoriam	pg. 8
Wellness	pg. 8

News & Views

May 25, 2022

The City of New Hope's Employee Newsletter



Time to help New Hope SOAR!

SOAR = Share Observations, Achieve Results!

As you travel through the city, take the time to take a look around and note anything you see that needs tending. **Share** your **Observations** with the appropriate department, to help **Achieve** the desired **Results**.

Some things to look for and the departments to report it to:

Potholes, weeds and/or long grass, street lights out, street signs that need repair—public works

Poorly maintained homes, graffiti, illegal signs, junk vehicles and other code enforcement issues—community development

All park issues, including graffiti in parks—parks & recreation

Thanks from Kirk McDonald, city manager, for helping the city SOAR!

Photo: 2020 In Focus Submission by Theodore Jantzen titled "Sharp"



Mark Your Calendar:

May 25 - Music in the Park: Teddy Bear Band and Rich & The Resistors	June 11 - Young Mudder
May 30 - Memorial Day - City Offices Closed	June 15 - Daytime Music in the Park: The Jolly Pops
June 1 - CM McDonald Retirement Event	June 16 - Movies in the Park: "The Lego Movie"
June 4 - Vehicle Fair	June 17/18 - City-wide Garage Sale
June 4 - Aquatic Park opens for weekend	June 18 - Farmers Market starts
June 8 - Wellness: Intro to the Aquatic Park	June 21 - Deferred Comp Presentations—Tentative
June 8 - Music in the Park: Dirty Shorts Brass Band	June 22 - Wacky Wednesday: jeans or shorts
June 9 - Aquatic Park open daily through Aug. 21	June 22 - Music in the Park: M. Hall & The Tennessee Trio
June 10 - Food Truck Fridays start	June 24 - Special Olympics Torch Run
	July 6 - Music in the Park: Sawyer's Dream

New Employee

Kade Madden, Community Service Officer

Welcome to the city's newest community service officer, Kade Madden. I believe Kade now has the longest commute of our employees, driving in from New Richmond, Wisconsin! Kade said he is used to the commute to Minnesota as he has been doing it for many months, but it does discourage him and wife, Megan, from adopting a dog which they would like to do at some point.

Kade and Megan are both from the Somerset, Wisconsin area and met in high school while working at Pizza Planet in Somerset. They will celebrate two years of marriage in July! Megan is a pre-k teacher at a private school. Kade's mom lives in New Richmond as well and teaches special education. His younger brother attends college in La Crosse. And his grandparents live in Northfield. He and Megan enjoy spending time with family, so it is good that both of their families are all relatively close by.

Kade said that between work and school, he has not had much downtime as of late, but when he and Megan can get away, they greatly enjoy traveling and hiking. They were in Rocky Mountain National Park this last July (*pictured to right*) and have also been to Yellowstone, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. They have camped some, but their focus is hiking. When they do not have as much time to be on the road, they enjoy visiting Grand Marais. Before making a career of law enforcement Kade was in the Army National Guard and during his service he spent time in Texas, Michigan and Georgia.

Once Kade finishes school, he would like to resume training in jujitsu. He has enjoyed martial arts for several years and has his 1st degree black belt from Kyuki-Do. Welcome, Kade! We hope you enjoy New Hope!



Officer Swearing In

Congratulations to Officer Tom Lesnikowski for being sworn in at the May 23 city council meeting with friends, family and peers in attendance. City Clerk Valerie Leone administered the oath. (*photo credit: Beth Kramer, Communications Coordinator*)



Officer Miguel Robles Promoted

Patrol Sergeant – After a lengthy and intense process, Miguel Robles has been promoted to sergeant effective July 18. Miguel has been with the city since July 2007 and has served in several capacities with the police department, including his current assignment of K-9 officer. Congratulations, Miguel! (*photo credit: Beth Kramer, Communications Coordinator*)

Recruitment Updates

Maintenance Worker – The external posting started this week with an expected hire date in July.

Police Officer – The city has started the recruitment process for a police officer. The posting is currently open internally until May 26.

Departures

Kaitlyn Baker, police officer, finished work with the city on April 25. Kaitlyn had been with the city since July 2007 and held many assignments during her time with the city including traffic unit, FTO, firearms instructor, investigator and Explorer advisor. She and her family moved to Alaska this month to be outdoors more. Those of you that know Kaitlyn know that her wit and directness will be missed, and we wish her the very best!





Elections

The council members seats currently held by Council Members Elder and London will be up for election this fall. The candidate filing period is open until May 31. If more than four candidates file, those candidates will be on the ballot for the Aug. 9 Primary Election. The General Election is on November 8.

As most of you are aware, the city, its staff and organizations providing city services, must remain impartial. Starting with the city manager and extending to every employee of the city, the objective is to be completely fair with candidates 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 giving the best service possible to the residents and to work with the officials who residents elect. They all deserve our respect.

From Personnel Rules and Regulations

Political Activity:

Prohibited Activities. A City employee may not:

- Use official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election or nomination for office.

- During working hours solicit or receive funds for political purposes.

- 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.

- Be a candidate for elective office in a public partisan election.

- Any employee who violates these provisions is guilty of a misdemeanor and, if found guilty, is automatically separated from employment with the City.

Permitted Activities. A City employee may:

- Express opinion on political subjects and candidates.

- Take an active part in political management and political campaigns.

- Hold membership or office in a political party, organization or club.

- Attend a political convention and participate in the deliberations of proceedings of the convention or any of its committees.

- 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.

- Engage in volunteer work for a partisan candidate, campaign, committee, political party or nominating convention of a political party.

- Sign nominating petitions for candidates in a partisan election for public office and originate or circulate such petitions.

- Make a financial contribution to a political party or organization, and solicit and collect voluntary political contributions.

City Manager Kirk McDonald Retires on June 1

Communication is Key! - That was the theme that came up repeatedly as I spoke with City Manager Kirk McDonald about his 32-year career with the City of New Hope. McDonald started in Tonka Bay more than 35 years ago and while he enjoyed the work there, they didn't have the need for the planning and development experience McDonald had to bring. For that reason, he was excited to start with New Hope in 1990 as the management assistant and community development coordinator. He spent eight years in that position until being promoted to community development director in 1998, a position he worked in until 2007. Later in his years as CD director for New Hope, he started to look for advancement opportunities. He applied for several city manager positions and was a finalist for some of them. However, he appreciated many things about New Hope and was hoping to advance in this city. He said that he knew when he was appointed city manager, his goal would be to finish his career here. It was in his words, "the perfect match."

When he started as city manager, one of his top priorities was improving communication between staff and the City Council and among staff. He said that this is when his now infamous "Friday memo" was conceived. Initially it was sent only to council members, but at the suggestion of one of the council members, he expanded the audience to include commissioners as well. Eventually staff were also added. Another priority was to be very transparent in all matters, but especially with the budget. He wanted no perception that there were any hidden agendas as it went through the process of being developed, proposed, and eventually approved. His third priority was to build collaboration among employees. At the time he was appointed, there were many information silos within the city and he saw how breaking those down could make staff more efficient. I



asked if he felt he had met these goals and he said he had. Those of us that have worked with Kirk would agree. He has done a great job of building a culture where staff share information widely and in a timely manner. This culture has proved critical to accomplishing each of these goals.

Projects Kirk said he's most proud of are the new city hall and police station, and the aquatic park. He feels that both projects were completed cost efficiently and are areas that residents can be proud of for many years to come.

He also feels extremely fortunate to have such great employees. He says that the longevity of many employees speaks well of the city and he feels that good communication above all keeps employees engaged.

McDonald shared previously that he had planned to retire from the city earlier, but due to the pandemic he decided to stay until operations were closer to normal. In hindsight, he's glad he did so. He said he feels that now is the right time to depart. He has promoted great department heads, the city is doing well, there is a supportive Council in place and the acting city manager is well positioned to serve the city.

When asked how he handled the stress over the years, he acknowledged that the position of city manager is a 24/7 job that requires a lot of organization and positivity when interacting with others. However, he said that he has a supportive wife, coworkers that he considers friends, and he takes time off to fish and spend time outside. He also stated it has been a great advantage that he has had good, elected officials to work with.

Advice he would share: Keep a positive attitude, something that McDonald embodied through the laughter you can often hear if you're in his general vicinity. Work hard and look for the satisfaction in doing so. Realize the good fortune of having a job that rewards you well and you enjoy going to.

What is Kirk looking forward to in retirement? Doing whatever he wants to do when he wants to do it. He's never taken a vacation for longer than a week and longer periods of his own time will be a welcome change. He has several projects in mind at home and likes the idea of not needing to cram them into a weekend. He is looking forward to more golfing and fishing. And he and Marcy have several trips planned for this summer and in mind for the future.

Kirk, I know I speak for many others when I say thank you for all you have done. The way you have not only led staff but taken an interest in your employees as individuals is a gift that we do not take for granted. You have



shown thoughtful leadership as we have navigated situations both serious and heart-wrenching and entertaining and fun. The legacy that you have built both in places and people will remain for many years to come. We wish you well, and you and your *input* will always be welcome (as will be Marcy and her delicious holiday treats). May you always find a Kirka-Cola in your fridge and peanut M&M's in your cupboards!



Staff Kudos



Ash Tree Removals

The following message was sent to the mayor, "Good evening. I really want to compliment and send a thank you for the ash tree removals on the Boone Avenue boulevard.

The communication was timely and complete. When I had questions both the city forester and the city hall receptionist had quick and helpful answers. The text messages worked great.

I actually had to get out both days while the crews were working. They were accommodating, very nice and definitely went above and beyond what I expected. And the cleanup was great.

Please pass this on to the right folks. Thanks!!! I have lived in New Hope for 37 years and cannot imagine being anywhere else." – A resident on Boone Avenue



May is Building Safety Month

On April 11, the City Council proclaimed May as Building Safety Month in the city of New Hope. A thank you and kudos to the building code and inspections staff as well as fire prevention officials for ensuring the safety and desirability of New Hope properties through their work.

May is Arbor Month

On April 11, the City Council proclaimed May as Arbor Month in the City of New Hope. A thank you and kudos to the city forester and public works staff for their work in maintaining New Hope as a designated Tree City USA for the last 24 years and for their diligence in combating the emerald ash borer.



National Police Week May 11-17

On April 25, the City Council proclaimed May 11-17 as National Police Week in the city of New Hope. A thank you and kudos to all of the police department staff for their vital role in maintaining the city as a safe and secure community.

National Public Works Week May 16-22

On April 12, the City Council proclaimed May 16-22 as Public Works Week in the City of New Hope. A thank you and kudos to public works staff for maintaining the city's infrastructure to provide a safe and healthy environment for the community.



Purchasing Policy – January 2022 update

The management team requested that this updated policy be shared with all employees due to the high number of individuals involved with this process for their departments. Please talk to your director about any questions you have.

Amount of Purchase:	Type of quote required per individual item:	Approval required by:	Written bid specifications:	Sealed bids required:	Contract required:
Purchases under \$5,000	two telephone quotes are preferred	Dept. Director	not required	no	no
Purchases over \$5,000 up to \$20,000	two written quotes required unless special circumstances are noted	City Manager	as required based on type of purchase	no	no
Purchases over \$20,000 up to \$175,000	three written quotes required unless special circumstances are noted	City Council	as required based on type of purchase	no	commodities at discretion of City Manager, construction projects, yes
Purchases greater than \$175,000	City Clerk must advertise in City's legal newspaper	City Council	required	yes	yes



Coming this summer!



Food Truck Fridays

Community development staff are bringing the food trucks back to City Hall this summer. The kick-off event will be June 10 and will run weekly through Aug. 19 (except July 15) from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Choose from tried-and-true favorites or try something new. More information and a list of scheduled vendors is available at newhopemn.gov/foodtruckfriday.

Off-Broadway Musical Theatre Season

In celebration of 50 years of theatre under the stars, OBMT will be producing the musical, “Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat”, at the city’s Performance Center. The dates for this year’s productions are July 21-23, July 28-30 and Aug. 4-6. All performances will start at 8 p.m. A donation of \$5 per person is suggested to help offset some costs of productions. OBMT will also be collecting donations for the local food shelf.



Happenings

The Great Shingle Creek Watershed Clean-up – May 4



Thank you to staff for participating recently in two community clean-ups!

Pictured:

Susan Rader, director of parks & recreation; Jill Smisek, office specialist—parks & recreation; Valerie Leone, city clerk/treasurer; Shawn Markham, forester/contract manager; Kirk McDonald, city manager; Tony Portesan, recreation facilities supervisor; Kathi Hemken, mayor; Bernie Weber, director of public works (photo credit: participant resident)



Dorothy Mary Park Staff Clean-up - May 24

Pictured:

Bernie Weber; Kirk McDonald; Penny Spitzer, administrative specialist—parks & recreation; Walker MacBeath, HR specialist/IT coordinator; Susan Rader; Stacy Woods, city attorney; Rich Johnson, HR/administrative services director; Kathi Hemken, Dave Lemke, public works operations manager; Shawn Markham (photo credit: Rich Johnson)



Employee Appreciation Picnic - May 19

Employees enjoyed a picnic at the golf course hosted by the management team as a thank you for great work throughout the year.

Pictured:

Valerie Leone; Tim Hoyt, police chief; Rich Johnson; Kirk McDonald; Jeff Sargent, director of community development; Susan Rader and Bernie Weber (photo credit: Beth Kramer)

Welcome Baby

Congratulations to Will Leon-Aguilar, police officer, and wife, Denise, on their new bundle of joy. Eva was born on April 28 and welcomed home by dad, mom and sister, Natalia.



In Memoriam



Our sympathies to:

- The family of Sergeant Chris Swaja in the passing of his father on April 23.

Wellness Program

April 13 – Gardening Discussion

Gardening Discussion: 17 participants enjoyed meals from Crisp and Green and shared plans, questions and answers to others' questions about this year's gardening adventures. It was a great way to connect with coworkers and I heard several follow-up conversations in the days following the event. Thank you to Eric Piper, housing/code enforcement inspector and all attendees for helping to keep the conversation and great ideas flowing!

May 10 – Healthy Grilling

Hy-Vee Dietitian Alea Lester Fite spoke to 15 employees on choosing healthy options for grilling in the great outdoors, while Tony Portesan, recreation facilities supervisor, and Rich Johnson, HR/Admin Director, grilled for attendees. Alea left behind recipes and seasoning ideas as well.

June 8 – Aquatic Park Introduction – COMING UP!

Don your swim gear and join Tony Portesan, recreation facilities supervisor, as he guides us through the park. Tony will provide a tour of the features the park has to offer and interactive demonstration of ways to use park features that make for a great low impact workout for all skill levels. Following the structured activities, staff are welcome to stay and try out things on their own!

Participants in the tour and interactive demos will receive two (2) passes for the aquatic park to be redeemed during the 2022 season. This event is being held during non-public hours. RSVP to Walker by end of day on June 6.

Group Ticket Purchases – ORDER NOW!

Renaissance Festival – Staff may prepurchase discounted festival tickets for admittance and food. The prices are: adult admittance \$18.25 (\$25.95 at gate), child admittance \$12.50 (\$16.95 at gate) and \$6 food books for \$5. If you're interested in purchasing, please give Walker MacBeath your payment by June 30.

