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# News & Views

September 9, 2020

The City of New Hope's Employee Newsletter

## The Many Masks of New Hope

We have been wearing them long enough now that often times we do not even notice that those we are talking to have a mask on. The Jolly Journalist took a few minutes to capture a few that reflect the unique personalities of those we work with. Thank you to those being willing to be front and center!

*Clockwise: Andrea Phinney, Accounting Technician; Shelby Wolf, Fire Marshal; Brandon Bell, Community Development Assistant; Jessi Weber, Community Development Admin. Specialist; Mayor Kathi Hemken; Susan Rader, Parks & Recreation Director*



## Elections Update



New Hope had a 35% voter turnout for the primary held on Aug. 11. This was an increase from 6% for the same type of election in 2016, although that election did not have any local primaries.

For the General Election on Nov. 3, the following individuals will be on the ballot to fill city vacancies. For mayor, Kathi Hemken and Jonathan London. For council (two open seats), Andy Hoffe, Michael Isenberg, Austin Berger, and Ron Stoffel. A reminder that the city, its staff and organizations providing city services, must remain impartial.

## Mark Your Calendar

Farmers Market - Every Saturday through Oct. 3  
Sept. 22 – National Centenarian's Day  
Sept. 23 – Wacky Wednesday  
Nov. 3 – General Election



SAVE THE DATE— Dec. 3  
Annual Employee  
Recognition Event

## Employee Departures

### Doug Brunner, Police Sergeant

by Chief Tim Fournier (edited)

Sergeant Brunner resigned effective July 31, 2020. I wanted to take a moment and recognize Doug's many achievements in his almost 23 years of service.

Sergeant Brunner began his police career with the city of New Hope on September 22, 1997. Doug quickly emerged as a detailed, thoughtful officer who wasted no time becoming one of the busiest traffic officers in the state. His traffic interdictions resulted in hundreds of arrests for DWI, warrants and drug-related offenses. He was certified as a drug recognition expert where he not only performed field tests throughout the metro, he also was a class instructor with the Minnesota State Patrol. During this time Doug also worked as a field training officer and trained in several officers who have since risen to supervisory levels and/or excelled in other assignments.

On June 12, 2002, Doug was assigned to the Northwest Metro Drug Task Force and over the next three years he excelled in developing informants and disrupting drug traffickers. At the time, he was the first New Hope officer assigned to the DTF. In his first year, he was involved with over 56 cases, made over 52 drug related arrests, and recovered over 3,694 ounces of marijuana, 2,206 grams of methamphetamine and over 352 grams of crack cocaine. According to his supervisor, Doug was one of the busiest DTF officers he had ever seen. Due to his performance and ongoing efforts with the DTF, Doug was named New Hope Employee of the Year in 2003.

On May 1, 2006, Doug was promoted to patrol sergeant. With his wide range of experience in just under ten years, Sergeant Brunner became a valuable asset to the rest of the command staff. He worked as the FTO supervisor and revamped the Citizen's Police Academy. For the next 14 years, he provided leadership and expertise through some noteworthy difficult incidents and investigations, all while remaining one of the top producers on the department.

Throughout his career, Sergeant Brunner built strong relationships with not only his fellow officers, but with various law enforcement agencies and the public at large. He received several Chief Commendations and remained a dedicated, thoughtful officer. Congratulations and thank you Sergeant Doug Brunner for your service to the department and residents of New Hope.



### Todd Black, Police Officer

by Chief Tim Fournier (edited)

Officer Todd Black's last day as a New Hope police officer was Aug. 17. I'd like to take a moment to pay tribute to his many years of dedicated service. He is one of those rare employees who essentially "grew up" in service to the city.

Officer Black began his journey into law enforcement in 1984 as a police explorer. In 1987, he was hired as a part-time community service officer and his service continued when he was appointed to full-time CSO in 1990. He completed his education and on Nov. 1, 1993, he was appointed as a police officer. His journey to this point was a dream come true and served as inspiration for the younger New Hope Explorers.

For the next 27 years, Officer Black served with dedication and distinction. He was a member of the West Metro SWAT Team and in 1998 he traveled to Newcastle, England as part of the European Learning and Training Exchange (ELATE) police program. He also graduated from the St. Paul K-9 program in 1998 and was initially partnered with Murphy. However, it was quickly determined that Murphy wasn't suitable for K-9 use and Todd was introduced to Ben, who he was with until 2006. He was then partnered with K-9 Jack and remained with him until 2012. Some notable tracks include an arsonist in Plymouth and four suspects in Richfield who were responsible for over 30 burglaries. During his time as a K-9 officer, Todd and his partners received several awards and provided countless demonstrations for children and various city events. Todd also received several chief commendations and was an employee of the quarter nominee in 2020.

Throughout his career, Todd was known for his upbeat attitude and love for his fellow officers. His presence will be missed by all of us. We wish Todd and his family well as he embarks on the next chapter of his life.



### **Katelyn Croteau, Crime Analyst**

by Chief Tim Fournier (edited)

Crime Analyst Katelyn Croteau started with the city in 2017 and is leaving the police department effective today, Aug. 28. She has accepted a Psychiatry Doctoral Fellowship with the University of Minnesota, which begins on Sept. 1.

Katelyn was the department's first crime analyst and over the past three years she provided useful data to both the police department and city officials alike. She developed programs and was active with other analysts throughout the metro.

We wish her luck with her future endeavors.



### **Gena Abramovich, Police Officer**

by Chief Tim Fournier (edited)

Officer Gena Abramovich has accepted a police officer position with the City of Eden Prairie. His last day with the New Hope Police Department will be Sept. 10.

Officer Abramovich started his law enforcement career on April 22, 2013. He was previously an explorer and reserve officer in Plymouth. With an in-depth knowledge of computers, his skills were quickly put to use and in 2013 he was appointed to the transition team responsible for the training and implementation of a new records management system. In 2016, he became a school resource officer at Cooper High School. In 2017, he served on the new website design committee. In fact, the police portion of the website looks as good as it does because of Gena's contributions.

Over the years, Gena provided input to several statistical and innovative models to better serve the needs of the department. He has also received several Chief Commendations in his short career.

Thank you for over seven years of dedicated service to the city and its residents. We wish you the best of luck in Eden Prairie.



### ***Special Edition of News & Views To Be Issued***

There will be a special edition of News & Views issued in the upcoming weeks to include an article on the retirement of Chief Tim Fournier and other news.

## **Recruitment Updates**

### **Police Officer Candidates**

The city manager and police chief interviewed two candidates last week. Those receiving conditional offers will proceed to physical and psychological evaluations. Watch for a spotlight in the next News & Views on new officers!

### **Police Sergeant Candidates**

Staff along with leadership representatives from three other municipal police departments interviewed seven sergeant candidates last week. The candidates are being evaluated by their supervisors and co-workers within the department and will participate in two exercises designed to simulate the daily activities of a sergeant, which will be scored as well..

### **Police Clerk**

The external police clerk posting opened last week and closes on Sept. 15 at noon. Several inquiries about the position have been received and several applications have already been submitted.



### **Employee Kudos!**



Shout out to Shawn Markham from a resident, "Shawn, thanks for the quick response in removing the storm damaged hazardous ash tree from the boulevard near our home. It was a relief to us and all the neighbors who walk or drive by the tree to have it removed before it fell into the roadway. Great job!"



## Happenings

### Employee Appreciation Picnic – July 29

Approximately 40 employees attended the annual employee appreciation picnic hosted by the management team. This event usually takes place in May but because of COVID concerns the event was delayed until enough was known about the appropriate precautions needed. *Pictured are our hosts, counterclockwise from upper left: Bernie Weber, Jeff Sargent, Rich Johnson, Tim Fournier, Val Leone, Kirk McDonald, Susan Rader*



### Employee Insurance Committee Meets—Aug. 18

The employee insurance committee, represented by 17 employees, held their annual meeting to discuss changes in the 2021 benefit offerings. Sue Frick, Senior Client Manager with Gallagher Benefit Services, presented the following information. 2021 health insurance premiums will increase for all plans by the 9% rate cap minus the ACA premium tax of 2.62% (repealed by US Congress), for a rate of 6.38%. The committee recommended the acceptance of a proposed one-year extension of the current agreement through 2022 with a 9% rate cap. Management concurred and submitted the signed proposal. There are no other premium rate increases for benefits in 2021. Benefit adjustments highlighted were the change of PSA testing from a preventive service benefit to a non-preventative benefit and PrEP drugs used for the prevention of HIV will be 100% covered. If you have questions, please see human resources.



### In Memoriam



Our sympathies to Matt Remore, recreation facilities supervisor, and his family, for the passing of Matt's mother, Sharon, on Aug. 20.

## Wellness Program

### Outdoor Activity Passes – July

20 employees co-purchased New Hope Village Golf Rounds, Minnesota State Parks Permits and University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum Tickets in July. This new wellness program was intended to give employees additional opportunities to be active and outside with friends and family in a pandemic-safe way.

### Recycling – August 19

18 employees took part in a virtual presentation by Tim Pratt, Hennepin Recycling Group's administrator on "Recycling Myths and Mysteries Solved...Mostly." Participant lunches were co-purchased by employees and the city from Hy-Vee deli. There were several questions that followed the presentation and attendees commented on the great information.

### Flu, Shingle and Hepatitis B Vaccination Clinic – September 22-23

As done last year, we will be expanding our vaccination offerings this year to include Hepatitis B and Shingles. We will again be partnering with Hy-Vee. You may receive all three vaccinations on the same day.

### Take it Outside! - September/October

Take it Outside! is a four-week physical activity and mental well-being challenge developed by Hennepin County Public Health Team. It is very similar to Step to It! but with a more intense focus on getting outdoors. Studies have shown that



being outside for even short periods of time, especially when immersed in natural surroundings, can boost mood and increase self-esteem. The program will include weekly participation prizes as well as a drawing for three larger prizes at the conclusion.