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News & Views

May 15, 2020

The City of New Hope's Employee Newsletter



Hats Off to City Employees

The management team and I thank you for your continued efforts to find ways to perform your job duties and fulfill the needs of the residents and those working in the city of New Hope for the last almost two months. We know this effort requires care and dedication that we do not take for granted. We also appreciate your patience as we continue to work through new challenges, some of which we have probably yet to discover! As we proceed through the duration of this pandemic, please continue to share your thoughts and ideas with your director and me. I wish all of you and your families good health.

With much appreciation,
Kirk McDonald, City Manager

Civic Center and Aquatic Park Updates

In demonstration of the work that has continued, there has been a great deal of progress over the last few months across (and around) the parking lot. Here are a few of the recent highlights Susan Rader, director of parks & recreation shared:

Aquatic Park—Curb and gutter were installed for the small parking area near the mechanical building, top soil was added around the 50-meter pool, irrigation work started and the installation of the concrete floor for the current channel has started.

Civic Center—The majority of the sidewalks have been poured, grading of trails continues and installation for the light pole bases has started.

Performance Center/Picnic Shelter—Seats were set. The stone work was completed on the performance center, earth work was completed, sidewalks prepped and the stage cement sealed.

City Hall Landscaping: The flag pole lights were installed, monument sign letters were added and all electrical is complete. The irrigation along the east side of city hall was started.

City Manager Kirk McDonald and Parks & Recreation Director Susan Rader raised the US Flag in front of the new city hall building for the first time on May 1, 2020.



Mark Your Calendar

- Staff Appreciation Picnic – Postponed until Fall
- May 16 Golf Course Plant Sale
- May 19 Council Candidate Filing Opens (through 6/2)
- May 25 Memorial Day – City Offices Closed
- May 27 Wacky Wednesday
- June 6 Virtual Vehicle Fair Opens
- June 20 Farmers Market Opens
- July 3 Independence Day – City Offices Closed



And what would Spring be without:
Time to help New Hope
S.O.A.R!

S O A R = 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—
Public Works

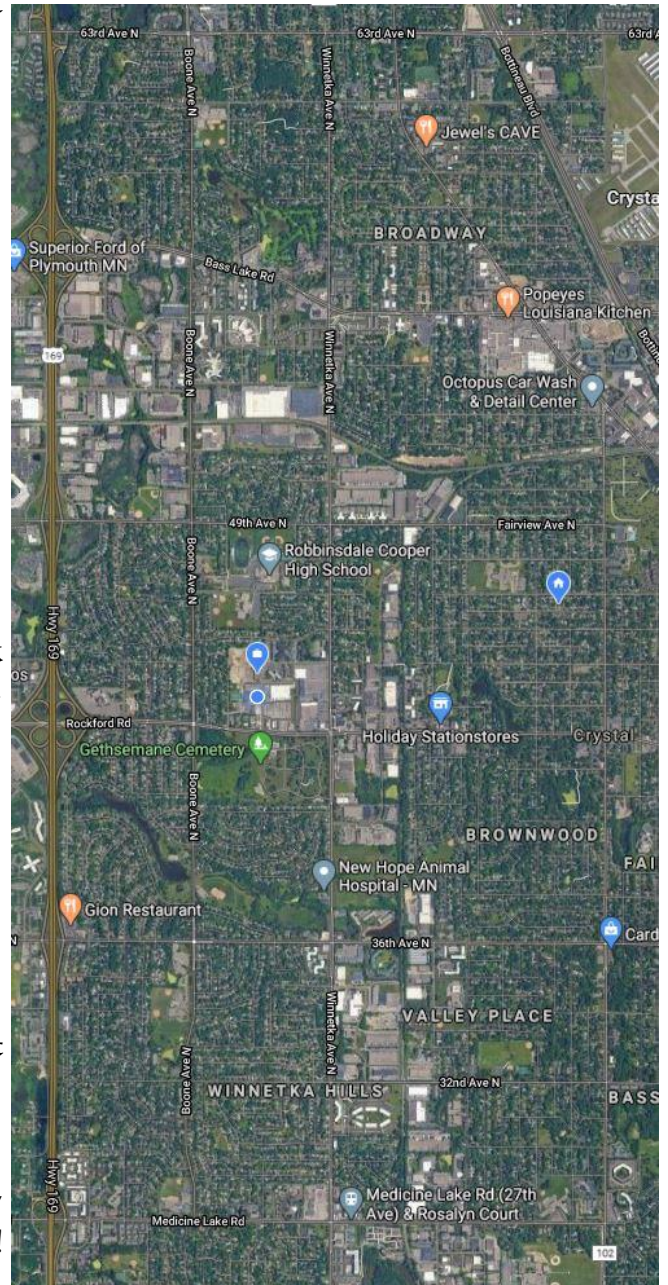


Poorly maintained homes, graffiti, illegal signs, junk vehicles and other code enforcement issues—
Community Development



All park issues, including graffiti in parks—Parks & Recreation

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



New Employees

Kim Julin, Police Clerk

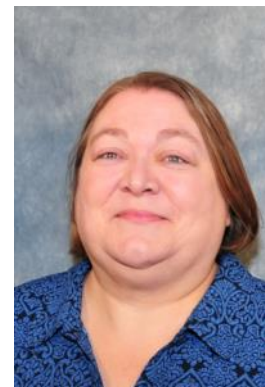
Kim Julin is our newest police clerk, starting on February 24. Kim brings a range of experience with her including time at Anoka County, Interstate Parking, and General Mills. She spent the first few years of her life in south Minneapolis where her parents started a roofing business that they continued for over 30 years. The family then moved to a small farm near Becker (back when Becker Furniture World was just a pole barn) where they farmed mostly soybeans. They also raised some animals over the years, including cows, pigs, turkeys, geese, ducks, chickens, and guinea hens.

Kim moved back to the Twin Cities and mostly has lived in Brooklyn Center and Robbinsdale. But now she lives nearby in Crystal with her partner of 7 years, Jeff, and their three feline companions: Miss Sophie Softpaws, Goober and Baby Spooky Boo, a “failed” foster. Jeff served for many years in the army as a helicopter pilot. After leaving military life he worked as an air traffic controller and for an alarm monitoring company.

All of Kim’s family lives in the Big Lake/Becker area and she spends a lot of time being a favorite auntie to her brother and sister’s children, as well as those of friends. Her brother has a place in Becker where the family often gathers to spend time playing board games, grilling out and just enjoying time together.

She enjoys road trips and has a fondness for oversized roadside attractions and quirky museums and landmarks. She and a group of friends went on a number of marathon weekend trips to “capture” big things, even going so far as Winnipeg one weekend. When staying in town she’s active in her church, likes comedy clubs and enjoys completing crossword puzzles with Jeff. She’s also an avid reader and is currently a member of not one, not two, not three but FOUR book clubs! Two are through Hennepin County libraries and two through friends. The clubs’ selections include fiction and non-fiction. One of her recent favorite reads is Dear Committee Members. But she doesn’t have much time to read in December, when she and a friend bake holiday cookies in abundance. Last year, they baked over 150 dozen cookies.

Welcome Kim! We hope we get a chance to taste some of those cookies this holiday!



Anthony Larson, Community Service Officer

Anthony Larson joined the city on March 2, as a community service officer. His most recent experience was in security at the Mall of America. Anthony and his wife Maddilynn are newly married as of October. They have been together for 3 years and have a son, Gary, who is almost one year old.

They are both close to their families. Maddilynn operates and teaches at a dance studio in Eagan that her mom started and has operated for many years. They teach ballet, jazz and contemporary dances. Maddilynn and her sister were raised in Eagan, and that’s where she and Anthony lived until recently moving to Apple Valley.

Anthony comes from a slightly bigger family, all of which still live in the northeast metro. He’s the 7th born of 9 with 6 sisters and 2 brothers. His dad works for the Arden Hills DVS Exam Station. His mom has always worked out of their home in Columbia Heights and is now kept busy caring for Anthony’s 13 nieces and nephews.

As you might expect, Anthony is very proud of Gary. He says that he’s a happy kid that is well-behaved, save maybe when he just can’t resist feeding his best friend, Bear, from his own plate. Bear is the family’s two-year-old rescue, a German Shepard/Lab mix. Gary enjoys being outside and walking as much as his parents. When Anthony and Maddilynn get some down time just the two of them, they enjoy evenings out enjoying a dinner and movie.

Anthony also enjoys time away from the cities, fishing and spending time canoeing in the Boundary Waters. When they want to get out of town as a family they spend time at their family cabins. A couple of times a month they travel to Maddilynn’s family’s in Detroit Lakes as it offers most of today’s conveniences, unlike Anthony’s family’s in Willow River that’s a bit more “rustic.” Detroit Lakes also puts them closer to Maddilynn’s extended family that live in North Dakota, where her parents are both from. In March, Anthony took his first plane ride when he and Maddilynn flew to Vegas for a Bruno Mars concert. Welcome Anthony! We hope you enjoy New Hope!



Returning Employees

Nicole Boss, Part-Time Police Clerk

After a brief hiatus away from the city, Nicole joined us again starting on February 24 in a part-time capacity. Her previous employee spotlight can be found in the January 2017 edition of News & Views.



Departed Employees

Ben Frank, Office Specialist—Community Development

After almost 2 ½ years with the city, Ben Frank has departed for a position with the City of Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development Department as a development coordinator. Ben learned his position as office specialist in the community development department quickly and continued to expand his knowledge through his tenure. We wish him the best in his new position.

Carol Gass, Accounting Technician

Carol went out as she came in, with a bit of a surprise. When she came into city hall in 1998, her intention was to apply for a police clerk position. Her children were older and she was looking to return to work outside of the home. However, then HR Manager Sherry Draper pulled her into an interview with Larry Watts, director of finance at that time. The city had an employee in Larry's department leave unexpectedly, and given Carol's background as CFO for her and husband's construction business, she was a good fit for the temporary, part-time position. As wouldn't surprise anyone that knows her, in March of 1999, the city promoted her to a full-time accounting clerk.

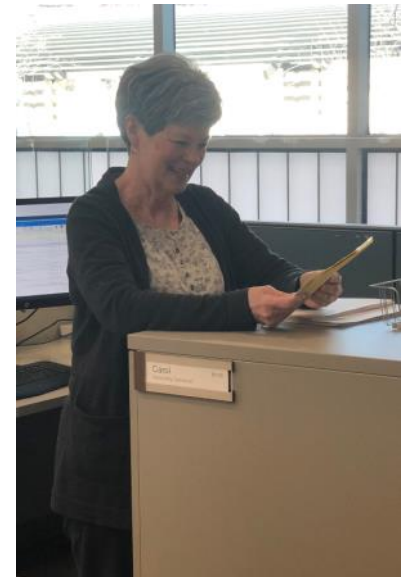
When asked what has changed the most, Carol said that when she first started, she saw a great deal of resistance to change. As the years passed, personnel changed, new ideas were welcomed and she enjoyed surrounding herself with positive people. Carol said the processes that are used to accomplish the job have continued to improve over the years as well. This is demonstrated by the fact that when she was first hired, there were five positions in finance and now there are two full-time positions plus AEM consulting, accomplishing even more in a given year!

Carol has loved her work at the city over the years and the challenges that came with each new day. It was fun for her to create and assist in new processes and see them implemented. But she will not miss the drive! She and her husband, Rob, had lived in Maple Grove for 32 years before moving to Elk River in 2015. That significantly increased her previous six-mile commute.

But now she's looking forward to helping her daughter-in-law with her nature-based preschool and continuing to be with her granddaughter in the mornings as they wait for the school bus. Carol said she plans to get a dog, and maybe some chickens. She will be spending more time in Traverse City, Michigan with her sister and two brothers. She has a trip planned for June. If she's able to make it with the current travel recommendations, it will be the first time she's ever been on a two-week vacation!

In closing, Carol said that the city has been a great place for her to work. She always felt comfortable and wanted to go to work. The only part of her job that seemed like work was the drive!

For the ending surprise, Carol's last day was officially March 30. However, because of the city hall closure due to the pandemic, her last day in the office was March 17. She had spent the previous 2 ½ months providing thorough training to her successor, Andrea, so we wished her the best a little early. Our deepest gratitude to Carol for her almost 32 years of service – you were always there with great information, a willingness to help and a smile! *Photo Above: Because of the sudden closure of city hall, staff had an impromptu gathering for Carol on what became her last day.*



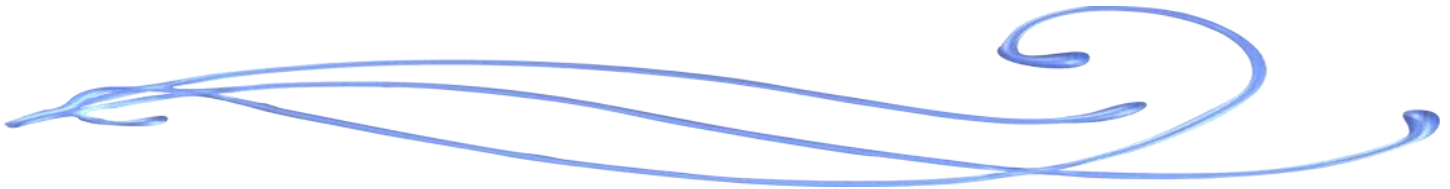
Departed Employees (continued)



Eve Lomaistro, Human Resources Coordinator – In Memoriam

Eve Lomaistro, Roving Reporter, former editor of News & Views and human resources coordinator emeritus, passed away on May 2. As many of you know, after retiring from the city in January 2018, Eve moved to a retirement community in St. Petersburg, Florida. She very quickly grew to love her new community and remained active, including contributing to the community newsletter! Yours truly, the Jolly Journalist, had the privilege of visiting Eve this last November. The photo on right was on an outing to Boyd Hill Nature Preserve, just a couple of miles from Eve's community. She enjoyed hearing about the on-going adventures of the many city employees that she had come to know over the decades of working with and hiring.

Unfortunately, last year she had a recurrence of cancer that moved slowly but eventually took her life. Eve's celebration of life was held and recorded last September. If you would like to see it, please let me know and I will be happy to send you the link. Eve, you will be so deeply missed!



Recruitment Updates

Communications Coordinator Selected

Congratulations to Beth Kramer, former administrative specialist for the city manager department. After 2 years with the city in her former role, Beth was selected as the new communications coordinator effective April 27. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications with a public relations emphasis from Metropolitan State University and before coming to the city, worked in communications at Best Buy for nine years. We're excited to hear from you in your new role Beth!

Office Specialist Selected

Linda Bergemann was named as community development's new office specialist this week. She recently worked for Uline Shipping Supplies and will be starting with the city on June 8. Look for her employee spotlight in the next edition.



Administrative Specialist Candidates Sought

With the vacancy left by Beth Kramer, recruitment is underway. The plan is to have someone in place by the end of June so they can learn the election process during the August absentee voting period, before the busy November presidential election.

Police Officer Candidates Sought

In anticipation of some possible vacancies, the personnel board has given approval for city staff to complete a recruitment cycle to develop a certified list. External recruitment started this week and will close on May 26.

Employee of the Quarter

Dean Blom, Building Official

Through a series of connections starting with utility billing, Dean was advised of an elderly resident that members of the utility crew had just assisted with an emergency water shut-off and needed assistance. Dean and a plumber he was working with at the moment was able to re-establish water in the home for the resident. Then Dean made some neighbors aware that were able and happy to assist the resident with moving furniture and starting the clean-up process. Congratulations and thank you Dean, most of us will be there one day, and it's comforting to know there are people like you watching out for us! *(photo to right: Dean conducting an inspection)*



There were two additional nominees:

Todd Black, police officer, for his on-going service since 1987 as CSO, officer and K9 officer. During this time he has encountered profound tragedy and worked selflessly and heroically time after time.

Tony Gust, police officer, for his consideration of others and always offering to take the call, no matter the day he's had. Tony's nominator said, "Tony puts 110% into every call he takes."

Additional Recognition of Employees

Join me in thanking these employees for extraordinary efforts recognized by members of the community and their peers.

Officer Korth Receives Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association Award



Officer Nichole Korth has received the MCPA's Distinguished Service Award. Nichole's nominator stated "Officer Nichole Korth began her police career in September 1993. She became a D.A.R.E. instructor in 1995, bouncing between night shift and day instruction to 5th grade students. Officer Korth was assigned as a full-time Crime Prevention Officer in February 1999. Since that time, she has poured her heart and soul into her position in an effort to make New Hope a better city, especially for children. Officer Korth has taught over 10,000 fifth grade students as well as thousands of first and third graders D.A.R.E and Halloween safety. Officer Korth is involved in too many programs to list, but is an active participant and leader in each..."

Officer Korth is known statewide as a dedicated, passionate servant to the community..."

Finance Team Earns City Recognition in Reporting Excellence

In March, the city was notified by the Government Finance Officers Association that the city's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the fiscal year ending Dec. 31, 2018 qualified the city for a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in government accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management. Congratulations to the finance team and AEM for helping the city achieve this goal again this year.



Officer Ryan Nominated for Police Officer of the Year

Earlier this month, Officer Jason Ryan was to be participating in the LEU Maryland Division Ruff Ride, the first specifically dedicated memorial bicycle ride to recognize law enforcement K-9 partners that have died in the line of duty. The ride was cancelled due to the current pandemic, however, the West Metro VFW recognized Jason's accomplishments in fundraising and awareness prior to the ride with their nomination of him as Police Officer of the Year. Congratulations to Jason for this nomination!



New Hope Police Department Supports Cancer Survivor

On April 25, the following was sent by Mara Bain, Forest Lake Mayor, to the New Hope City Council. "...I want to extend my thank you to the New Hope Police Department and the city of New Hope for playing a special role in a big day for my family. Yesterday my uncle and longtime New Hope resident Don Bergeron completed his last round of a six-week series of radiation treatments for a glioblastoma, a cancerous brain tumor. This treatment is scary under any circumstances. To do it in a pandemic without the in-person support of family and friends is especially remarkable.

My family organized a social distancing parade yesterday afternoon to celebrate Don's milestone. New Hope PD, Crystal PD, Golden Valley PD, and Ensign Avenue neighbors were notified, and together we all created a special moment for Don. Don's daughter is a police officer in Colorado. She and her family participated via FaceTime. It was a special moment for her (and all of us) to see her law enforcement family step in to support her family in a time where she would give anything to be here...My thanks to you and your police department for playing such a special role on a big day during a very difficult time."

Officer Dyer and K9 Dex Aids in Apprehension

Eden Prairie Police Chief Greg Weber recently mailed a letter of appreciation to Chief Tim Fournier for assistance Eric Dyer, police officer, and K9 Dex (*pictured to right*) provided in April. Not only did the team assist with location of a suspect, they also located articles that the suspect had discarded during the pursuit. Good job Officer Dyer and K9 Dex!



City Clerk Leone Fan Gives High Praise

Earlier this month an election judge of almost 20 years resigned due to concerns about coronavirus exposure. As part of his resignation, he paid a compliment to City Clerk Valerie Leone, "With every involvement, I have been totally impressed with your work and your style. Whether it be training, primary election, or the actual election, you were so good. You taught us well, you supported our efforts, you solved our problems on the spot, and you trusted us. One cannot expect more from a leader. I may be retiring from 'active duty,' but I will forever be a Valerie Leone fan and advocate. Your work for the city of New Hope is exemplary and much appreciated!"

WHERE's the Wellness Program?

Now that employees are returning to work in the city, the wellness committee will be discussing how to resume the program with events that will allow physical distancing. Please watch for and participate in the survey that will be sent out in the near future.

Ongoing

Step to It Challenge – May 1-28

Hennepin County's annual Step to It Challenge launched on May 1. If you haven't already signed up, it's not too late to be a part of the New Hope team! <https://www.steptoit.org/>



Happenings

Police Explorer Fundraiser

The Explorers raised over \$800 at the Frankie's fundraiser on March 9. Thank you to each of you that participated and supported, and to Frankie's for continued support!

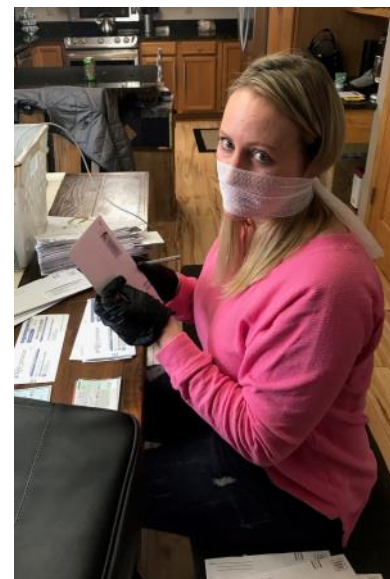


Stantec Employee Ex"seeds" Expectations

Dan Boyum, city engineer, shared that a Stantec employee, Paul Bockenstedt, has been going above and beyond through work on rain gardens in the city including the cleaning out of litter and supplemental seeding from his own personal stock. As Dan said, "Paul's donation from his personal stock shows his commitment to one of our Stantec mottos of Being Better Together, and I know both Ann and I appreciate his help on all our projects for that extra work he puts into them."

New Routines

When staff were first sent out of the offices, employees worked hard to make sure essential tasks continued to be completed so that residents didn't see changes in the services they are used to, and so that the bills continued to be paid! At that time information about virus transmission was largely unknown. *Pictured right: Carissa Hoyt, utility billing clerk, opens mails at home with an improvised mask.*



Employee Celebrations

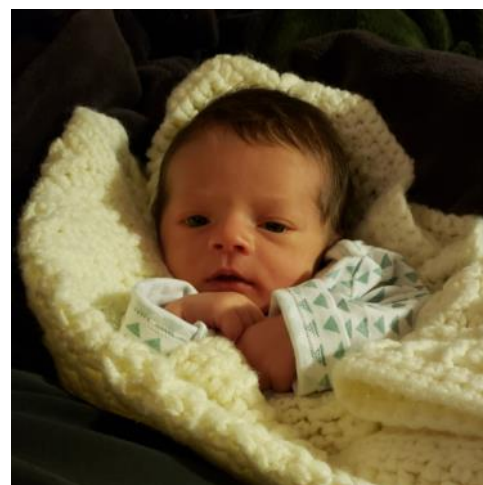
Brandon Bell, Community Development Assistant, Marries

Congratulations to Brandon and his new wife, Lily Bevis (left), on their March 8 wedding. They were married at First Universalist Church in Minneapolis with a reception at the Minneapolis Event Center. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, their honeymoon in the Canary Islands was limited to activities on the property. Instead of proceeding on to Portugal, they had to

return to the states. We hope they're able to enjoy the rest of their honeymoon in the near future!

Tony Gust, Police Officer, Welcomes Baby Boy

Congratulations to Tony and his wife, Kelsy, on the arrival of their first baby, Jeffrey William (right), on March 18.



Employee Assistance Program Reminder

Remember that if you need assistance working through changes in your life or the world around us, trained professionals at Mutual of Omaha are available 24/7. The employee assistance program is available for all employees and is a resource for many concerns including emotional well-being, family and relationships, and legal and financial matters. They can be reached at 800.316.2796 or mutualofomaha.com/eap.