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News & Views

July 25, 2024

The City of New Hope's Employee Newsletter



Thank You

*This message was originally shared by **Reece Bertholf**, **City Manager**, on behalf of himself and the City Council via an email to staff on the evening of July 2.*

Good evening, everyone!

July marks the halfway point of 2024. I am writing to thank ALL OF YOU for a wonderful start to 2024.

Every department is working in sync, and it is palpable. I continue to feel the excellent quality of life in New Hope, every day. From the families celebrating in our parks, to the kids riding their bikes to the aquatic park, it is clear to me that people love New Hope. So much of that quality of life is due to your hard work. Thank you!

I realize that not all of you have the holiday off and, for those that will work so that others can enjoy their day, as always, we recognize you and thank you! There are not enough words.

I hope everyone enjoys the weekend and takes time to reflect on a successful six months of 2024.

Sincerely,

Reece

*Pictured: **Mayor Kathi Hemken** and **Reece**, Photo Credit: **Beth Kramer***



Mark Your Calendar:

Aug. 6 – New Hope's Night to Unite
Aug. 13 – Primary Election Day
Aug. 16 – Food Truck Friday Ends
Aug. 16 – Cop on a Rooftop

Aug. 21 – Battle of the Badges Blood Drive
Aug. 28 – Wacky Wednesday – Jeans/Shorts
Sept. 2 – City Holiday: City Offices Closed
Oct. 2 – Save the Date: Employee Golf Tournament

New Employee Spotlights

Makenna Dickey, Police Clerk

Makenna lives in Saint Michael where she spent her childhood as well. Her mom, who also lives in Saint Michael, works in an assisted living facility. Her Dad lives in Nowthen and is an ATM technician. Makenna's three brothers, Taylor, who is older, and Bradyn and Jordyn, who are both younger, all live in the Metro area. The newest addition to the family is Makenna's fiancé, Dalton. He buys and sells vintage Ford trucks and is a driver for a sheet metal business. Makenna is definitely a dog person, as between her mom and dad's homes she lives with Rufus, her pit bull mix and five others. Willow is a westie terrier, Norma is an alpha blue blood bulldog, and Louis, Ruby and Izzy are all also pit bull mixes.



As with so many of us here in Minnesota, when the weather is right, Makenna wants to be out in it. You might find her hiking any number of state parks or out camping with family. Her father's family has land in Hillman and they spend a lot of time camping and hanging out there. When she wants to put her feet up, she has a Harley Sportster that she enjoys cruising down windy, back roads. If she wants to travel a bit further from home, Nashville is a favorite destination. Makenna enjoys Nashville's country lifestyle including the music and southern sweet tea. She is also planning to travel westward one of these days.

When she wants to take things inside, there is no shortage of activities she participates in. From playing cards, bowling, watching horror and action movies or just hanging out with friends and family, to cooking and baking for them, she keeps active. When asked what might surprise her colleagues, she shared that she enjoys painting landscapes in acrylic and plans to explore selling her work at some point in the future.

Makenna heard about the position with the City from **Lorilee Stafford**, police admin. specialist. We hope we are everything Lorilee told her about us!

Pictured LtoR: Dalton, Makenna, her stepmom, Courtney, and dad, Randy

Mark Ales (pronounced *alice*), Maintenance Worker



Originally from Blaine, Mark now lives in Fridley. Prior to coming to New Hope, Mark served six and half years in the Army National Guard as ammunition specialist in Minnesota's Red Bulls. Post-discharge he worked in security and general HVAC. His mom, who also lives in Fridley, is a retired admissions administrator for Hennepin Tech College. His dad, who was a maintenance custodian at 3M has passed. When asked about his extended family, Mark talks fondly about his military family and spending time playing with the many adopted nieces and nephews he has with that group (*pictured are Mark and one of his nieces*).

Mark enjoys being outside, chilling around a bonfire and spending time with friends. To stay fit he practices Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and Muay Thai at a gym in Blaine. He's not opposed to eating out, though he said he's not fancy, a basic meat and veggie guy. When hanging around home he enjoys watching a good sci-fi or action flick and cooking for friends and family. His specialties range from chicken, turkey and steak to banana pudding.

Mark enjoys some travel, recent adventures include a Bahama cruise and upcoming this fall is an Alaskan cruise. The Grand Canyon and Mount

Rushmore are on his destination list. Mark is also a dog and cat person and he said that he will be adopting a dog again soon. We are glad you're here Mark, and we'll be sure to get you out of the office so you can continue your explorations!

Departures

Congratulations to **Jeana Allen-Hatcher**, police office supervisor, on her retirement, effective Aug. 16. On her way out the door, Jeana agreed to sit down and share just a few things with the Jolly Journalist. Jeana has been with the City since 2008. For the first several years, it was as a part-time police clerk. She had started with New Hope while still working for the City of Fridley full-time in their public works department. She had been with Fridley for many years but was looking to pick up some additional shifts and she'd always had an interest in law enforcement. That's why in 2012 she transitioned to full-time at New Hope as a police clerk. Then in 2017, she was promoted to the police office supervisor.



Jeana's always been one to be in the office early, when asked why, she said she appreciated the opportunity to organize her day before others started coming into the office. This organization contributed to her being recognized several times over the years including employee of the third quarter in 2013, employee of the year nominee in 2014, employee of the quarter nominee in 2017 and Chief Commendations in 2018 and 2019.

Jeana said she is looking forward to retirement for several reasons. Her husband, George, has semi-retired and they're looking to enjoy more time together golfing, spending time at their seasonal home north of Cambridge and helping their son with his new house. Eventually, they're planning to transition to the snowbird lifestyle.

As we prepared to part, Jeana shared some simple, but powerful advice, "Stay safe!"

We wish you the best, Jeana. I'm sure many of us will continue to hear your direct statements and laughter for years to come!

*Pictured L to R: **Melissa DeLeeuw**, evidence technician; **Rhonda Peske**, police clerk; **Jeana**; **Riley McIlrath**, office supervisor; **Lorilee Stafford**, admin. specialist for police*

Also departing since the last issue are:

- **Matt Collier**, police officer. Matt had been with the City since January 2017.
- **Carissa Scherber-Hessian**, community service officer. Carissa had been with the City since September 2022.

We wish them both success in their future endeavors.

Recruitment Update

Police Officer

- One candidate is in the process of meeting job offer conditions.



Former Colleague in the News

Congratulations to **Aaron Chirpich**, former community development specialist, for his promotion to the city manager of Columbia Heights. Aaron was with New Hope from 2014 until 2019, when he left to take the community development director position at Columbia Heights. *Photo Credit: Kenneth Seaton*

Kudos



Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting

At its June 24 meeting, the City Council accepted from the Government Finance Officers Association the above-named award for the City's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) for the fiscal year ending Dec. 31, 2022. It is the highest form of recognition in government accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government entity and its management. Congratulations to the finance and Abdo team for helping the City achieve this goal once again.

Happenings

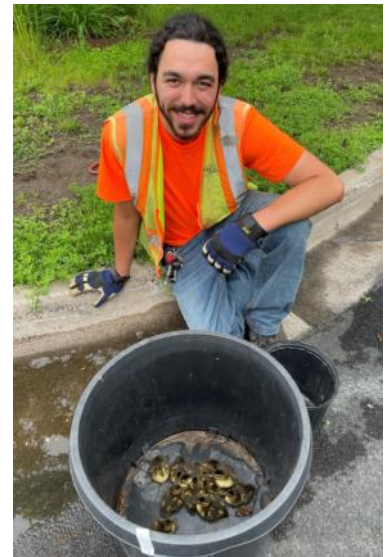


Appreciation Picnic - May 14

Employees enjoyed a bountiful picnic at the golf course hosted by the management team as a thank you for another great year! Pictured L to R: **Reece Bertholf**; **Rich Johnson**, HR/admin. dir.; **Andrea Phinney**, city clerk; **Jeff Sargent**, community development dir.; **Susan Rader**, parks and recreation dir.; **Tim Hoyt**, police chief; **Bernie Weber**, public works dir. and **Valerie Leone**, city clerk. Photo Credit: Beth Kramer (editorial apologies for the omission of this event last issue)

Duckling Rescue - June 3

From **Matt Rowedder**, utilities maintenance supervisor (edited): "A resident on their daily walk noticed that baby ducks had fallen into the storm sewer, so they called public works for assistance. I sent **Jack Hernandez**, seasonal maintenance worker - utilities (pictured) and **Mic Rusk**, maintenance worker, to provide rescue. When they arrived, there were eight baby ducks in the bottom of the sewer huddled up and another three a little further down the line. Jack and Mic were able to rescue all eleven and return them to their mother." Photo Credit: Resident **Catrina Mujwid-Cole**



Growth Through Opportunity Interns Sworn In - June 10



On June 10, Growth Through Opportunity (GTO) summer interns **Ismail Diriye** (left) and **Tate Johnson** were sworn in at the city council meeting. The City of New Hope has partnered with Empower Inclusion to provide adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities the opportunity to learn more about City operations while gaining valuable job skills. Through the summer, Ismail and Tate will work closely with multiple City departments including the police department, parks and recreation and public works. If you haven't yet met them, please take the opportunity to introduce yourself if you see them. They are accompanied by Paul Rapp, a job coach with Empower.

Stantec in the Community Day - June 18

Several Stantec staff participated in their annual community day by volunteering for projects at Fred Sims Park, Northwood Park and the New Hope Golf Course. This included weeding, planting and mulching. As part of the day, the group of more than 25 cooked up a BBQ lunch and invited all New Hope employees to attend. Thank you, Stantec, for being wonderful partners to work with! Pictured are Stantec employee volunteers including **Dan Boyum**, city engineer, **Ann Ackerson** and **Craig Larson** that work with the city. *Photo credit: Susan Rader*



Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run - June 21



Members of the New Hope Police Department and city staff participated in the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics that routed through New Hope. Pictured are participants representing New Hope. *L to R: Melissa DeLeeuw; Lorilee Stafford; Lorilee's daughter; Riley McIlrath; Brad Kallio, crime prevention officer; Sergeant Mike TenEyck; Makenna Dickey; Aaron Thelen, recreation supervisor; Andrea Phinney; Officer Jared Kuyper and three of Jared's children.* Photo Credit: Emma Fiedler

Food Truck Fridays

As we're sure you have noticed, community development staff brought the very popular food trucks back to City Hall this summer. The kick-off event was June 7 and will run weekly through Aug. 16 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.



Additional Parks and Recreation Events

July 31 – Music in the Park: Pan Handles Steel Drum Band
Aug. 1 – Movie in the Park: Cool Runnings
Aug. 2 – Wet and Wild Water Day
Aug. 7 – Family Storytime in the Park: The Nanny

Aug. 7 – Music in the Park: The Michael Handler Project
Aug. 18 – Aquatic Park—Last Day of the Season
Aug. 21 – Family Storytime in the Park: Troll Queen
Aug. 22 – Movie in the Park: Coco
Aug. 28 – Music in the Park: The Dollys



Elections

The council seats currently held by Mayor Hemken and Council Members Hoffe and Isenberg will be up for election this fall. The Primary Election will be held on Aug. 13 and the General Election is on Nov. 5.

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 (on non-city time):

- 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.



Celebrations!

- Congratulations to **Corey Cracknell**, police officer, and his wife, Jen, on their marriage that took place on May 7. They were married in Las Vegas with many friends, family and colleagues present.
- Congratulations to **Chris Swaja**, police sergeant, and his wife Marie on the birth of Baby Madeline. Madeline was born on July 5 and is doing well.



In Memoriam



Our sympathies to:

- **Reece Bertholf** and his family for the passing of Reece's grandmother.
- The family of **Larry Watts**, retired finance director, for his passing on July 5. Larry worked with the City from 1969 until his retirement in 1999.



Food Pantry Update

Susan Rader provided us with an update on the donations to the food pantry for the year as of June 19. To date, 522 pounds of food and \$635 dollars have been collected through Wacky Wednesdays. Thank you to everyone for your generosity!

Wellness

Disc Golf – June 11

Seven employees participated in this wellness event. **Aaron Thelen** explained the rules of the game, introduced us to the equipment used and demonstrated expert throwing technique. It was a fun outing! Pictured: **Nick Macklem**, stormwater specialist/project coordinator, looks on as **Matt Rowedder** makes his first throw.



Renaissance Festival Tickets – Orders due July 31

Staff will again be organizing a discounted ticket purchase for this event. Maximum ticket prices will be adult \$20.50 (gate price \$27.95), child (5-12 years of age) \$14.50 (gate price \$18.95), and food books \$5 (\$6 value, not available at the gate). Reply with quantities needed by Wednesday, July 31. Because the price decreases with the greater number of tickets purchased, the lower the price goes, Walker MacBeath will email your total due after that date. Tickets do NOT need to be purchased for employee use – you can buy them for anyone you would like! Tickets will arrive before the festival weekends begin and are valid for any of the 2024 festival dates.

Upcoming



Battle of the Badges Blood Drive – Aug. 21

The event will be held at City Hall, 1 to 7 p.m. Those interested in signing up can contact organizer **Melissa DeLeeuw**.

Summer Picnic – Aug. 28

Details will be sent out in the coming weeks.

Annual Vaccination Clinic – Sept. 10 & 11

Hy-Vee staff will be providing flu, hepatitis b, shingles, pneumonia and Covid-19 vaccinations on both of these mornings. Sign up information will be sent out in the weekly employee update email.

