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News & Views

April 8, 2021

The City of New Hope's Employee Newsletter

Officer Lamers Retires After 31 Years

From leap pad to life-long career, that's what New Hope was for Officer Andy Lamers. In 1990, when Andy was looking for work as a police officer there were jobs, but many more job seekers. He had applied at several departments without success when Dave Born, a New Hope officer that he knew, encouraged him to apply here at New Hope. Andy applied, thinking that if he was hired, he would work here for two to three years and then move on to a larger department. When those years had come and gone, there was word that one of the K9 officers would be retiring soon. Andy had gone into law enforcement knowing that he wanted to work with a K9, so he stayed on. Unfortunately, that first open K9 position went to another officer, but he decided to stay and try for the next one.



Officer Andy Lamers and Chief Tim Hoyt

In 1995, he and K9 Alex became a team and would work together until 2001. Andy spent 22 of his 31 years with New Hope working on a K9 team. Alex was followed by Baron in 2001 and then Gideon in 2007. Looking through his personnel file, there are dozens of commendations and letters of appreciation for Andy and his companions' work on cases ranging from kidnappings and homicides to burglaries and drug trafficking.

I asked Andy about the biggest changes he has seen. He replied technology and communication. He talked about how communication using computers has taken the place of so much that used to be done via radio. He also talked about how expectations have changed in regards to the amount of time an officer spends out on the road versus in the office. Now there is more paperwork and with individual computers, dictation isn't used as much for filing reports. He feels that the Taser has been the biggest game changer for officers, giving them a tool to quickly subdue physically aggressive subjects with the minimum amount of risk for both parties involved. He also joked that his locker has gotten a lot bigger over the years.

He encourages his colleagues to remember to take the time to talk to people, and to listen. He also shared the sage advice that those we deal with most often are not those we work for. The silent majority we rarely work with far outnumber those we deal with, and they appreciate what we have to do.

So what now for Officer Andy Lamers? First the transition to days. He said that he's often asked why he worked nights for more than 25 years. Working with a dog, he felt that's when the team was most needed. And when he quit working with a dog, it had been so many years of working nights, he didn't see the reason for mixing it up at that point. Over the next month he's not slowing down, he has plans to sell his home, prepare a property in Missouri for resale and

Mark Your Calendar:

April 28—Wacky Wednesday/Wellness: Eating Better on a Budget

May 1-28—Step To It

May 26—Wacky Wednesday, Music in the Park and Wellness: Home Tips and Inspection Tricks

May 31—Memorial Day Holiday: City Offices Closed

SAVE THE DATES:

Sept. 1—Employee Appreciation Cookout

Dec. 9—Employee Recognition Event

then find a new home with his significant other up here in the cities that will accommodate their combined family. He said that the time in Missouri would give him a chance to see what retirement is like and decompress; I told him that with the work he has planned it didn't really sound like retirement!

Andy, you have been a force for good here in the city of New Hope. We know that we won't forget you, hope you won't forget us and wish you many years of enjoying the next phase of your life!



Andy and former Officer Lowell Campbell

Building Official Dean Blom in Phased Retirement



Dean officially started his phased retirement on Feb. 29, but he continues to work for the city as building official until he departs fully later this spring. As I sat down with Dean, I told him that it seemed like we had just sat down for his employee spotlight a short while ago. But indeed it has been over three years since we welcomed Dean as our new building official.

At that time, his goal coming into New Hope was that it would be the city he retired from. It was an ideal fit for his remaining years of work given the mid-size of New Hope and that he lives in town. And it was a building official position, something that Dean wanted as a capstone to his career. Further, he was excited about working here, as when he applied, he had been a resident for 10 years and knew Roger Axel, former building official, from trainings over the years. So he knew that New Hope was well-managed and a good place to work. And he says he was right in his perception. This is the third city he has worked for and after his previous experiences, he's impressed with how well staff work together and

generally get along with one another. It's been a good place to work.

When asked, he said that he feels good about his accomplishments. He had two goals when he started. First, to aid the city in continuing to move projects along. And second, to aid the community development department in continuing to build its reputation as a partner and resource in development.

Dean has pride in both the city hall and the aquatic park, but also in many other smaller projects. A project that he remembers vividly is the remodel of Twin City Garage Door's office space. They took a unique approach to the design and used their product, overhead doors, in the construction to excellent results. He said he's also enjoyed being able to go into buildings he's passed many times and find out what happens inside of them.

Dean has many things that he's looking forward to when he finishes his phased retirement in the upcoming weeks. First and foremost, he's looking forward to time at the New Hope Aquatic Park with his grandsons. He's looking forward to more reading time, more motorcycle time and time to volunteer at places such as the Habitat House being built in New Hope and the Food Group. He summed it up brilliantly when he said, "I'm looking forward to fewer 'have to-dos' and more 'can if you want tos'."

He encouraged those of us still working to keep up the great work. He hopes he has contributed positively to a well-run organization.

Dean, on behalf of the organization, you most definitely have made many positive contributions. In addition to your professionalism, knowledge and skills, you have a contagious smile and laugh, and in a relatively short tenure, you have put them all to work here. You will be missed!



New Baby in the Family

Congratulations to **Aaron Thelen**, recreation supervisor, on the arrival of Wesley, the newest addition to his family. Wesley was born on March 8 to the delight of Aaron, Amy (mom) and big sister, Emmaline.

Recruitment Updates

General Inspector

The city is close to completing the recruitment for a general inspector, the vacancy created by Eric Hanson's promotion to building official. Candidates met with the personnel board on Monday and those moving forward will meet with City Manager **Kirk McDonald** and Community Development Director **Jeff Sargent** on Friday.

Police Officers

The city welcomes **Tom Lesnikowski** as the newest police officer for the department. Tom will be starting with the city on May 10. There is one more conditional offer pending and that will be determined in the upcoming weeks. A new recruitment will begin to fill Andy Lamer's position later this spring with the intention to have officers ready to begin once there are FTO openings.

Community Service Officer

An external recruitment is underway for CSOs. The city is building a certified list to hire from as vacancies are anticipated in the upcoming months. Applications are due April 12.

Staff Changes

Police Administrative Specialist Position Revived

Congratulations to **Brandi Hearn** for her promotion to administrative specialist for the police department effective March 17. She has been with the city as a full-time police clerk for five years, working overnights until recently moving to the day shift. Brandi will be working with the police department's command staff/administration, and assisting the community relations and crime prevention officer working to deepen relationships with our community.

"New" Full-Time Clerk

With Brandi's promotion, **Miranda Reed** moved to full-time days effective April 5. Many of you might not have yet met Miranda because of her previous schedule, even though she's been with the city since 2012. Stop by and say hi!

Officer Bardon Going Back to Class

Now that in-person classes have resumed at Cooper High, **James Bardon** has been appointed to one of the school resource officer positions effective April 6. James has had a wide range of responsibility since joining the department in 2004 and is excited to start this new assignment.

Employee of the Quarter – First Quarter 2021

Matt Remore, Recreation Facilities Supervisor

Matt is responsible for scheduling ice time at the arena (among many other things). With pandemic guidelines in place, this has taken extra effort. Then with the shutdown in November, both the high school and youth hockey seasons were delayed forcing Matt back to the drawing board for these seasons as well as adult hockey leagues, open skate and the lesson program. These changes came with the need to make/adjust assignments for dressing areas. COVID has created a constant cycle of read, interpret, apply, communicate and repeat for staff. Matt has taken these challenges in stride and makes sure the many groups using the arena receive the time they need and know what to expect when they arrive. Thank you, Matt, for representing the city in a first class manner to so many from our community!

There were two additional nominations received:

Megan Hedstrom, stormwater specialist and project coordinator, for her fantastic work with the Meadow Lake Community Action Plan, the many inquiries that have been coming into public works and recent IT needs.

Gina Karstens, public works admin. specialist, for her work with the right-of-way permitting process. She has organized the information needed to assist staff with more efficient permit review and responses to inquiries.





Employee Kudos



- ♦ Shared by Police Chief **Tim Hoyt**: I wanted to share some comments from a citizen who happened to see Officer **Miguel Robles** stop at a food shelf and unselfishly help out staff. This citizen stated he was “flabbergasted and speechless” watching the officer serve his community. He went on to say that these small gestures could change some of the negative opinions of police officers by citizens in the metro. He was extremely appreciative of the police officers in New Hope. It’s these type of contacts with our community which will set us apart from other departments. Miguel did this on his own, and it was not set up by the department. Great job Miguel on your commitment to making a difference in New Hope through community service and outreach.
- ♦ Thank you to Maintenance Workers **Mic Rusk** and **Kevin Zurn** for increasing the safety of staff and vendors entering and leaving the city hall roof. They built four sets of the stairs, making the transitions for both the city hall and police station mechanical areas to roof and back much safer.



Reduced Parks & Recreation Rates for Staff

Staff are able to purchase half-price golf passes for \$7.50 (staff use only) and recreation programs or aquatic park passes (for staff or immediate family) at the resident rate. Penny and Jill at the parks and recreation counter can help you with all of the above!

Food Shelf Update

Susan Rader, parks and recreation director, shared the following totals for 2021 to-date: 237 pounds of food and \$350!

Wellness Program

Sleep: Why it matters and how to improve it – March 10

Approximately 17 employees joined a presentation given by Beatrice Comty-Charnock. Beatrice provided many ideas for ways that individuals can improve the quantity and quality of sleep. Some employees noted that much of what she presented is information they had heard before, reinforcing there isn’t getting around the benefits of a good night’s sleep!

Meal Planning - Apr 28

Dietician Ryan Weiler will lead attendees through a virtual tour of Hy-Vee’s departments sharing meal prepping tips, cost effective recipes and simple healthy meals. Lunch will be boxed lunches from Hy-Vee. Hope to see you there!

Step to It – May 1-28

From **Aaron Thelen**, Recreation Supervisor and Step to It Coordinator

This year’s challenge will be May 1-28. Free registration opened online April 1 at steptoit.org and t-shirts are available (while supplies last) at the parks and recreation office. You can participate as an individual or with a group. It’s not just about walking—most activities (even household activities) can be converted to steps by using the online step conversion chart. Log your activity daily or weekly in an online Step to It account.



Keeping it Clean Tip

From **Shari Rains**, Accountant

When disposing of used face masks, remember to clip the strings before tossing them in the trash. Unfortunately, sometimes refuse goes astray and there is a chance that an animal could become entangled in the strings before the mask is incinerated or buried.