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# News & Views

December 30, 2021

The City of New Hope's Employee Newsletter

## Thank You to Staff

While 2021 was still far from normal, I am grateful for the return of some routine. It was good to have everyone back together to work in person on a regular basis and once vaccines were available, to hold events such as City Day and the employee recognition event. One highlight of the year that was not routine was the delayed grand opening of the new aquatic park. Another was the level of hiring the city experienced, especially in the police department, as we saw several employees retire and depart, resulting in many new hires and promotions.

A big thanks to each of you for your continuing commitment to meet the expectations of those we serve in ever-changing conditions.

Kirk McDonald, City Manager

## Parks and Recreation



As I mentioned above, the opening of the aquatic park was a highlight of the year. Before the park even opened, office staff had sold almost 1,000 season park passes. Aquatic park staff welcomed and watched over more than 47,000 guest visits, a number that exceeded the old facility by almost 30,000. Feedback from the community has been enthusiastic and grateful.

Staff put the new performance center to use with six “Movies in the Park,” four “entertainment in the park” events and coordination with OBMT on their first production in the space. Golf course staff sold more than 27,000 rounds – the highest number in almost 20 years! And the replacement of playground equipment at Corner Park and the basketball court at Little Acre were completed before the end of the summer.

All of this while working with contractors and vendors to oversee the replacement of the south rink roof at the ice arena, golf clubhouse HVAC unit and many other more minor replacements and repairs throughout recreation facilities.

## Public Works



Many hours were invested in the final planning for the public works facility remodel. Each member of the public works staff has made accommodations in their work since June, when

construction began. This will be rewarded with increased work efficiency and equipment longevity. Perhaps affected the most, the central garage staff continue to ensure that equipment is ready to go for the many

### Mark Your Calendar:

Dec. 31 – New Year’s Holiday: City Offices Closed  
Jan. 17 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: City Offices Closed  
Jan. 26 – Wacky Wednesday – Jeans & Slippers  
Feb. 1 – Precinct Caucuses  
Feb. 2 – State of the City  
Feb. 21 – Presidents’ Day: City Offices Closed  
Feb. 23 – Wacky Wednesday – Jeans

operations based out of public works.

The emerald ash borer program continues to be funded as staff work to slow the destruction of the city's tree cover. And after extensive planning and communicating with residents and the watershed association, the Meadow Lake drawdown is underway to combat invasive species found in the lake.

The annual infrastructure project was substantially completed along with the crack repair/seal coat/fog seal projects, resulting in a 4% increase of excellent or good ratings in city street conditions on the City Services Survey from 2020 to 2021. Lastly, to the relief of all city staff and residents alike, public works staff contributed to the repair of the railroad crossings on Boone and Winnetka avenues!

## Police



the police department has seen a high level of turnover as members of the department retire and move on to other endeavors. Remaining staff have contributed many hours to make sure shifts are covered and to lend their knowledge in the promotion of new officers and recruitment of new staff through interviews.

The department implemented the use of body worn cameras, an officer wellness program and in partnership with the communications coordinator, tip411, a new system for reporting crime tips anonymously to the department. Staff also welcomed the implementation of a shared social work program coordinated by Hennepin County, providing additional resources for those in need.

And with the leadership of the new community relations and crime prevention officer, along with the efforts of members of the entire police staff, community engagement is at the highest level it has ever been. Staff have expanded and reinvented programs, most recently Blue Santa and the Tri-City Santa Parade.

## West Metro

The major apparatus replacement report was accepted by both the New Hope and Crystal City Councils and resulted in four new engines being ordered for leasing mid-year. Staff coordinated the training of city staff on ICS (incident command systems) and emergency management procedures this fall. And they have successfully completed recruitment of a class of 13 new firefighters and played a large role in Safety Camp.



## Finance



Finance staff were rewarded for their hard efforts with a clean 2020 audit and the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for 2019. They assisted city staff with the planning for and allocation of almost \$4 million dollars in funding from the federal government. And the ice arena energy conservation bonds were refinanced with a projected savings of approximately \$150,000 over the next seven years. And they made this all happen while ensuring that every invoice and employee was paid on time and accurately!

## Human Resources/IT


On the IT side of things staff worked with city staff, Solution Builders and LOGIS to ensure that projects involved the appropriate specifications to meet needs now and in the future. This included security upgrades at the aquatic park, Civic Center Park, public works, the golf course, the ice arena and city hall, as well as the body camera deployment for police and the replacement of all desk phones throughout all city facilities. In response to needs accentuated by the pandemic, both council chambers and Northwood Conference Room were upgraded to allow for videoconferencing. All staff were transitioned from MS Office to Office 365, a subscription-based solution that will result in the melding of several different products under one umbrella.



On the HR side, online applicant tracking and onboarding systems were implemented to increase the efficiency in hiring of staff, as staff coordinated the hiring and onboarding of nine employees in 2021.

## Communications

## A colorful illustration of a two-story house with a red-tiled roof and white walls. The house has several blue windows and a central door. It is surrounded by greenery, including a large green tree on the left, a smaller tree with orange fruit on the right, and various bushes and flowers in the foreground.

 Staff worked with several new businesses to establish themselves in New Hope including Hamernick's Flooring Superstore, Orijin Stone and Pocket Square Cocktail Lounge and Distillery. CD staff worked with Council to pass an ordinance amendment requiring curbside organics collection by residential refuse haulers. And the office staff coordinated a fun opportunity to bring more visitors to city center during the summer, Food Truck Fridays.

Thank you to Council for your on-going partnership and support as staff work to meet the needs of residents and visitors to the city. With the return of in-person events, Council members have continued to embrace their role as ambassadors for the city with attendance at many events.



## Employee Service Recognition Event



The city manager and HR/admin departments were responsible for planning this year's event. It was held on Dec. 9 and almost 50 people attended the celebration held at the golf course clubhouse. The theme for this year was plaid and with the many decorations already in place by the golf course staff, it was a beautiful setting. A delicious buffet was catered by New Hope-based Fork and Flair.

In addition to the service awards, several door prizes were awarded; two attendees, Linda Bergemann, community development office specialist, and Matt Anderson, Walker MacBeath's guest, received awards for their plaid attire and all employee attendees received a gift card to various New Hope businesses. Thank you to everyone involved with planning and for the many that were able to attend and cheer on our fellow employees during their recognition. A special thanks to the members of the community development team for 100% attendance! Pictured Left — Shari Rains, Accountant and Vicki Thompson, Admin. Specialist for City Mgr Dept.; Right — City Clerk Val Leone, Susan Rader, Bernie Weber (photo credits: Beth Kramer)





## Service Recognition

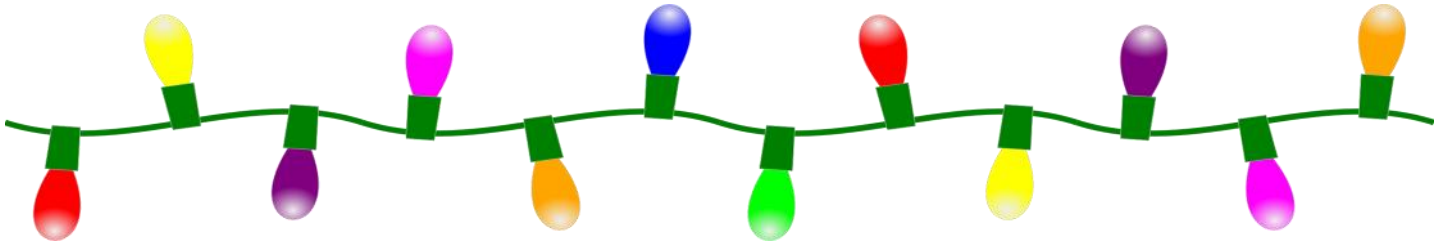
Congratulations to employees reaching five-year milestones in 2021. Thank you to the members of Council and the management team that were present to recognize each employee for their contributions.

15 years: Eric Hanson, Building Official; Tim Hoyt, Police Chief; and Nadine Jacobs, Police Officer

10 years: Dan Peacock, Maintenance Worker

5 years: Pat Cunningham, Maintenance Worker; Brandi Hearn, Admin. Specialist; Walker MacBeath, HR Coordinator; William Leon-Aguilar, Police Officer; Jason Ryan, Police Officer; and Lorilee Stafford, Police Clerk

*Photo: Council Members Andy Hoffe, John Elder and Mike Isenberg; Mayor Kathi Hemken; City Manager Kirk McDonald; and Directors Rich Johnson, Bernie Weber, Jeff Sargent, Susan Rader and Tim Hoyt. (photo credit: Beth Kramer)*



## Employee of the Year



Beth Kramer, Communications Coordinator

*(adapted from the city manager's presentation)*

Beth joined the city in April of 2018 as the administrative specialist in the city manager department. There she assisted people on the phone and in-person, learning more about the city than most people will ever know. In May of 2020, she was selected to become the city's communications coordinator where she has combined her in-depth knowledge of the city, experiences from her time at Best Buy and amazing skills to bring her role to a whole new level of excellence!

Beth was selected as the 2021 Employee of the Year for the great job she does every day and the way that she does it. She is always willing to help

anyone out to ensure the city is communicating in a clear, accurate and engaging fashion to its many audiences. Her nominator shared how even though Beth has a million things on her plate, "she has never once complained or brushed

me off...she's always ready to listen, advise and/or help". They went on to add "Beth is on the short list of people I wouldn't hesitate to ask. If she doesn't know, she knows who to direct me to."

Beth has truly gone above and beyond this year. With the continuation of the COVID era, she has continued to find creative ways to get the city's message out. She proposed the implemented change of eliminating "In the Pipeline" and increasing the number of times In Touch is published from four to six times a year, she has made significant gains in the city's social media and online presence and assisted in rolling out the tip411 app, just to name a few.

In a nutshell, Beth is involved in almost everything happening in the city. If she isn't planning an event, she's promoting and marketing it, assisting with or facilitating it, or at least taking photos.

In appreciation of Beth's efforts, she has been presented with the customary tiara as well as a \$200 Visa Gift Card. Thank you to Beth for the outstanding job she does every day! She is always looking for ways to improve the city's communications, increase resident engagement and overall contributing any way she can to the team!

## **Employee of the Year Nominees**

*(adapted from the city manager's presentation)*



### **Eric Hanson, Building Official**

Eric received two nominations for the great job he does as the building official. He has been the building official for about nine months, learning his new role as well as training his replacement to become the city's general inspector. Eric has increased the customer friendliness and efficiency of inspections, is always willing to lend a helping hand and is truly a resource for staff, residents and contractors.

### **Carissa Hoyt, Utility Billing Clerk**

Carissa was nominated for the great job she does handling utility billing and special assessments. She frequently is called on to deal with residents who are not happy with the bill they've received and often, she's able to "turn their frown upside down." Carissa is also playing a key role in the water meter replacement program which will last several years.

### **Brad Johnson, Maintenance Worker**

Brad was nominated for being observant and noticing smoke coming out of an area, investigating it and realizing a man was in peril because the dumpster he was in was on fire. Brad called 911 and put himself in jeopardy by helping the man out of the dumpster, saving him from serious harm.

### **Brad Kallio, Community Relations and Crime Prevention Officer**

Brad was nominated for the outstanding job in his new role of community engagement officer for the city. Brad took on this role during some very challenging times, engaging police officers to reach out to the community. He has combined forces with other city departments and has truly thrived in developing relationships and building bridges with the community.

### **Tony Portesan, Recreation Facilities Supervisor**

Tony was nominated for the amazing job he did to prepare, open and operate the New Hope Aquatic Park in its inaugural year. Tony gladly accepted the challenge of getting the facility ready as well as hiring and training a brand-new staff for a brand-new facility. Tony has an incredible work ethic, working days, nights, weekends and holidays as well as being on call 24/7 during the swim season to handle emergencies.

### **Aundrey Wallace and Kelly Thompson, Maintenance Workers**

Aundrey and Kelly were nominated for taking care of the street department this summer when it was short-handed.

### **Bill Robberstad and Jeff Winkel, Central Garage Supervisor and Mechanic**

Bill and Jeff were nominated for going above and beyond every day to keep the city's vehicles running and their ability to "fix just about anything." They installed the heat and air conditioning in the MRAP, are very knowledgeable regarding the city's many, many vehicles, are always willing to help others and did all this while their workspace has been under construction.

A huge "thanks" to each of the nominees for the work they do every day. I am very grateful for all the outstanding staff we have and know how fortunate the city is to have such dedicated, dependable employees. All nominees will be invited to attend a recognition lunch with me in January.

## Officer Commendations

Article and Photo by Beth Kramer

On Monday, Dec. 13, 2021, New Hope Sergeant Mike TenEyck and Police Officers Daniel Fitzmaurice and Rajaneé Michael (pictured left to right) received the Crystal Police Department Chief's Award of Commendation. The awards, presented by Crystal Police Chief Stephanie Revering (pictured far right) at the New Hope City Council meeting, recognized their actions in response to a 911 hang-up call on Sept. 20, 2021, in Crystal.



Per the commendation: The Crystal Police Department Chief's Award of Commendation is presented to "an individual who has gone above and beyond to assist the Department or the Community" and is proudly being presented to New Hope Police Officers Rajaneé Michael and Daniel Fitzmaurice and Sergeant Michael TenEyck with great appreciation and gratitude for their brave and decisive work and life-saving measures on this call. In very large part because of their quick actions, training, and calmness during a very chaotic scene, at least two lives were saved and a violent assailant was arrested without incident.

## CSO Anderson to Retire



To Protect and To Serve: Community Service Officer Scott Anderson had left the insurance and investment world and following the passing of his father, desired an opportunity to serve and to give back to his community. Fate would find him conversing with former police chief Tim Fournier at a Citizens Police Academy that Scott was participating in. Scott asked Tim if he thought law enforcement was a profession that would still be attainable for someone of his learned years. Tim suggested Scott try out the police reserves to see if it was something he would enjoy. Scott took that advice and found that he did enjoy it, enrolled in classes to obtain his law enforcement certificate and applied to be a CSO for New Hope. He was hired, quickly promoted to officer and then, as life has the tendency to do sometimes, he was thrown a curveball that led him to resign for a year.

Scott returned to the city as a CSO in April of 2018 and has been with the city in that position since. Over the years, he has received four chief commendations and was nominated for employee of the quarter four times, receiving it twice. The common theme for each of his nominations was not his willingness, but his enthusiasm for seeing something that should be

done and doing it.

When asked what was next, he said he and his wife, Lorraine, would be selling their house here in New Hope and making their lake house their home. We'll be sad to see them leave the community but take heart, he said we're all welcome anytime.

Advice to share? At first, he professed no, but upon reflection he did share that he thinks that if you don't enjoy your work, find something else to do. He said he's enjoyed the people he's worked with here in New Hope; and was proud to be a member of the New Hope Police Department. Scott's last day will be Jan. 7.

Thank you, Scott, for your outstanding service in a relatively short time. Your smile and quick wit will be greatly missed by all of us!

## Recruitment Updates

Police Officer – Seven police officer candidates met with the city manager and police chief this week. The preferred candidates will start the backgrounding process next week.

Community Service Officer – Two candidates are currently undergoing backgrounding.

Police Clerk – The external posting is open and will close on Jan. 11.

## Holiday Drives

The generosity of our community has known no limits this year. The efforts of so many staff are commendable, both in collection and delivery duties, as those around us continue to be in need.



### Coat Drive

To start the season, 190 coats were collected for those needing a little extra help in keeping warm!



### Holiday Food Drive / Conclusion of 2021 Food Drive and Wacky Wednesdays

As 2021 wraps, organizer Susan Rader, parks and recreation director, made a final delivery last week to NEAR Food Shelf and the year-to-date totals were 1,493 pounds of food and \$1,040. Of that total, 726 pounds were from the holiday food drive and 105 pounds were collected by the New Hope Dance Program. The money was collected from employees from monthly Wacky Wednesday events. Thank you to everyone who contributed over the year!

### Toy Drives – Dec. 2-5



New Hope residents (and council member) Mike & Allison Isenberg continued the tradition of their annual Toy Fest and collected approximately 60 toys and \$7,205 in cash and gift cards.



Many toys were collected at the police station and city hall as well. \$1,500 went to support Blue Santa, the toys went to PRISM and the remainder of the cash/gift cards went to NEAR. Thank you to Mike, Allison and the many others that made this generosity possible. *Pictured Left: Commissioner Roger Landy; Allison Isenberg; Dave Kiser, CCX; Council Member Mike Isenberg*



### Teen Toy Drive – Dec. 14

Organized by Brandon Bell, community development assistant, Brad Kallio, community relations officer and Aaron Thelen, recreation supervisor (*pictured above*) this annual event returned to its historical format of a delicious potluck catered by the 25 employees in attendance bearing gifts for the toy drive. 10 toys and approximately \$400 in gift cards and cash were collected!



### First Ever New Hope Blue Santa – Dec. 15

As noted earlier, Community Relations Officer Brad Kallio continues to reinvent events to better meet the needs of the community. This year Blue Santa replaced Shop with a Cop. Ten families with a total of 21 children in need were invited to city hall to receive gifts, play games, craft and enjoy refreshments with members of the New Hope Police Department. They even had a special guest of Santa Claus wearing a BLUE stocking cap. Brad and Brandi Hearn decorated Northwood Conference Room, council chambers and the city hall lobby with decorations that had employees and attendees alike marveling at the magic. *Pictured: Upper Photo—Standing: Officer Rajaneé Michael, Sergeant Mike TenEyck, Officer Jared Kuyper, Blue Santa, Chief Tim Hoyt, One of Santa’s Helpers, Sitting: Santa’s Helpers, Community Relations Officer Brad Kallio and Brandi Hearn, Admin. Specialist for PD; Lower Photo: Sergeant Marty Williams and one of the attendees (photo credits: Beth Kramer)*





Officer Rajaneé Michael leads attendees in a game of Holiday Bingo. (photo credit: Beth Kramer)



### Tri-city Santa Parade – Dec. 18

Another first for the community, personnel from the police departments of New Hope, Crystal and Robbinsdale as well as West Metro Fire-Rescue joined together to present a holiday parade that drove through many neighborhoods of all three communities. The route in New Hope passed by almost all city parks to give children a place to play as they waited. The several-mile route took approximately two-and-a-half hours for the vehicles to travel and community reception was phenomenal with residents lined up throughout New Hope.



### Santa for a Senior – Dec. 20

Gifts collected by West Metro Fire personnel were delivered on Dec. 20 to North Ridge, St. Therese, Good Samaritan and Centennial Gardens Nursing Homes. The photo shows just some of the presents to be delivered. When the Jolly Journalist asked coordinator Joel Nelson, WMFRD Assistant Chief of Operations, said that to their knowledge every gift tag had been picked up and returned with the requested gifts!



## 2022 Budget Adopted

The New Hope City Council adopted the 2022 preliminary budget and tax levy at its meeting on Sept. 13 and has been reviewing all department budgets over the last several months.

On Dec. 13 the Council adopted the final 2022 general fund budget of \$16,179,193, which is an increase of \$242,216 (1.5%) over the 2021 budget of \$15,936,977.

Major changes in the 2021 budget include:

- An increase of \$281,056 for wage and benefit increases (\$131,694 for reallocation of personnel expenses from EDA to provide funding for scattered site housing/redevelopment projects; \$149,362 for all other general fund personnel costs). A 3% cost of living adjustment is budgeted for employees along with an increase in the city's share of health insurance coverage for an adjustment based on a survey of New Hope's comparable cities in the Metro. A 3% increase in City Council salaries is also included in the budget.
- IT charges to the general fund increased \$105,200. The software for body cameras (WatchGuard/\$30,000) is allocated to the police department budget, and in 2022 a small percentage of the HR director/coordinator personnel cost is allocated to the IT budget.
- There is an increase of \$65,859 in the budget for West Metro Fire-Rescue District due to a 4.9% increase in New Hope's share of the joint powers agreement.
- The budget includes a \$50,000 increase for the Emerald Ash Borer Removal/Replacement Program on public property (city right-of-ways, parks, etc.) due to the increasing occurrence of the disease in the northwest metro area.
- 2022 is a gubernatorial election year, and there is a \$39,000 increase in the budget for election judge costs.
- There is a \$315,454 decrease in central garage charges primarily in the police department (for leasing vehicles) and the street department (reduced equipment purchases).
- The city is scheduled to receive \$866,642 in LGA (local government aid) in 2022, which is a \$4,916 increase over 2021. The revenue will be utilized in the general fund to offset central garage equipment and building replacement charges; it is not used for general operations.
- There is a decrease of \$130,000 in building permit and related revenue, as the Windsor Ridge single-family home development will be nearly completed at the end of 2021.

The tax levy for the general fund is \$11,393,354, which is \$513,889 or a 4.72% increase over the 2021 general fund levy of \$10,879,465.

The city tax rate is projected to increase slightly from 62.60% in 2021 to 62.72% in 2022. Taking the total tax levy into account (city/county/school district), out of 4,774 single-family properties, approximately 28% will see an increase between 0 and 4.9% and 53% will see an increase between 5% and 9.9%.



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**Technology Reminder:** Be sure to submit a ticket for any requests for Solution Builders. You can do this by emailing support@sbinc.com OR clicking the SB icon in the lower right-hand corner of your computer screen OR by calling 612.787.7678 (612.SUPPORT).

***Why can't I just "catch" the tech when they are onsite?***

The onsite techs need every bit of their time to focus on projects that cannot be supported remotely. On-site techs have been instructed to re-direct any in-person requests to a support ticket first. Then if the remote support team can't provide a solution, they will prioritize it when on-site.

By having a ticket for each request it also helps management better evaluate the city's needs for IT support.

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**CORRECTIONS:** The Jolly Journalist heard from Retired Captain Scott Crocker after the release of the last issue and there were a couple of errors in his retirement article: they used propane for fuel, not hydrogen and he was not the first to go on ELATE.

## Celebrations!

Tony Gust, police officer and wife, Kelsy, welcomed daughter, Emma, to the world on Dec. 17. Congratulations, Tony, Kelsy and Big Brother Jeff!



## In Memoriam



Our sympathies to:

- Our sympathies to Bernie Weber, public works director, and his family for the passing of Bernie's stepmother, Sally, who passed away Dec. 15.
- Mary Arnold, long-time commissioner and New Hope resident passed away in April. In appreciation for her service to the city, a bench at Corner Park (*pictured*) has been dedicated in her honor. The inscription reads, "In Memory of Mary Arnold, 15 Years of Dedicated Service to the City of New Hope Personnel Board."



## Wellness Program

### Home Safety – Dec. 8

Fire Marshal Shelby Wolf presented on home safety tips that mirrored what she would do if conducting a home safety inspection. Some of the highlights include real fires (versus TV fires) move much quicker, hotter and are extremely dark; having and testing smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors saves lives; escape plans should be practiced and include a family meeting spot; never leave any sort of fire (candles, stoves, fireplaces, cigarettes) unattended in the home; have fire extinguishers at every high-risk location in your home; and keep your home clean and clear of combustible debris! 14 employees participated and many commented on how good it was to receive this information that they could put into action.



### Home Safety – Dec. 8

The wellness survey email has been sent out. Please take a moment to participate. It really helps the committee in prioritizing topics!

