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News & Views

April 25, 2019

The City of New Hope's Employee Newsletter

Police Station & City Hall Construction Update

On the interior, installation of floor coverings and terrazzo began last week on the city hall side. Doors and hardware and solid surfaces are being installed over the next several weeks along with the installation of the soffit in the vestibule.

On the police interior, installation of ceiling grid and HVAC ceiling/electrical/fire sprinkler drops will take place over the next several weeks. Floor coverings are scheduled to be installed starting this week. Stairs and railings are currently in process. Work continues on the parking garage with rough-ins of the following: plumbing, electrical, HVAC and sprinkler. Locker room and bathroom accessories are scheduled this week as well. Jail cell doors, glass and elevator were installed last week.

On the exterior of the building, metal coping and exterior soffit on the police side is scheduled over the next several weeks. The generator will be set when drier conditions prevail and storm water system work is scheduled for the middle of May.



City Hall and Pool Parking Lots, Landscaping, and Park Trails - Contract with Sunram Construction, Inc. in the amount of \$2,806,727.30. Landscaping work started this month.

Outdoor Theater and Picnic Shelter - Contract with American Liberty Construction, Inc. in the amount of \$1,478,790.42. Work is scheduled to start in June and be finished by October 2019, with the exception of the turf restoration.

Skatepark - Contract with Custom Builders for \$249,213.25. Work is scheduled to start in June and be finished by October 2019.

Park/Pool Planning Update

At the March 25 city council meeting, several contracts were awarded:

Demolition of City Hall, Theater, Shelter Building and Hockey Rink - Contract with Veit & Company, Inc. in the amount of \$250,811.48. Demolition of theater, shelter building and hockey rink took place in April. Demolition of city hall will take place late July/early August.

Outdoor Pool Facility - Contract with Donlar Construction Company in the amount of \$11,350,275. Construction started this month.

Mark Your Calendar

May 2 Bike Rodeo 6 – 8 pm

May 22 Wacky Wednesday &
Emp. App. Lunch

May 27 Memorial Day Holiday

June 1 Vehicle Fair 10 am—Noon

June 27/28 City Hall Move

Note: There will be no New Hope
Farmers Market in 2019.

Time to help New Hope SOAR!

SOAR = 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 **O**bservations with the appropriate department, to help **A**chieve the desired **R**esults.

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!**



Young Mudder—Recognition Award

The following communication was received by the Parks and Recreation department from the Minnesota Recreation and Park Association (MRPA) in March “The MRPA Awards Committee reviewed twenty-eight award applications in all and is pleased to inform you that your organization has been selected as a MRPA Award of Excellence recipient for the following projects: **Programming & Events – Young Mudder.** ...congratulations on your selection as a MRPA Award of Excellence winner!”

Congratulations to Aaron Thelen, recreation supervisor, and his co-creators of this award-winning event! The 2019 event is scheduled for June 8.

Happenings

Annual Employee Club Chili Cook-Off

This fierce competition was held on Feb. 27 with six contestants and almost 30 attendees. Congratulations to our winner, a first-time attendee and chef, Chef Beth Kramer for her dish entitled, White Chicken Chili.

Wacky Wednesday/Food Pantry Donations

Thus far in 2019 staff has delivered 402 pounds and \$255 to NEAR. The next Wacky Wednesday is May 22.

Police Explorer Fundraiser & State Conference

The Explorers raised \$525 at the Frankie’s fundraiser on March 4. They will be attending the state conference this weekend in Rochester.

Staff Appreciation Picnic—Upcoming on May 22

On Wednesday, May 22, the management team will be serving up grilled burgers and chicken breasts, along with traditional picnic side dishes, toppings and beverages, to say thank you to city staff for your great work over the last year. You are welcome at 11:30 or 12:15 and RSVPs with choice of meat and time should be sent to Walker MacBeath, HR coordinator, by Friday, May 17.



Last year’s chili cook-off winner, Brandon Bell, passes the trophy to Beth Kramer.

Employee of the 1st Quarter, 2019

Andrew Kramer, Streets and Parks Supervisor

Andrew's nominator recognized the long hours that Andrew worked during this past winter as he and his team cleaned up after several snowfalls in rapid fire. Before the plowing comes the preparation and the monitoring of the weather, which Andrew does exceptionally well. After the snowfalls come many calls and criticisms from frustrated residents, Andrew consistently "maintained fairness" during these calls. Because of the vacancy of the utilities maintenance supervisor position, Andrew also had to learn some new duties and work with the rest of the public works management team to make sure everything was covered. His nominator also recognized that Andrew works well with the other managers and his team and is not afraid to get his "fingers dirty."

Andrew has been with the city since January 2010 and was promoted in April of 2017 to the streets and parks supervisor. You know that if he's on the job, it's going to be done well. Congratulations Andrew!



Employee of the Quarter Nominations

We had a total of four nominations for the quarter. Congratulations to each of you!

Penny Spitzer, parks and recreation admin. specialist, for taking it upon herself to refresh all of the hole in one plaques at the golf course with a new design and new photos.

Johnny Vang, housing and code enforcement inspector, for his persistence in working with a resident's property that has been poorly maintained for several years. This included two court appearances to provide testimony as well as special inspections of the property on behalf of the court.

Public Works Street Department Employees for their work on removing the trees at city hall in advance of the upcoming demolition and construction. The nominator stated, "The work performed was above and beyond the normal scope of work performed on a daily basis. It was taken on with enthusiasm and finished at a brisk pace. They were able to complete the job without the machinery contractors generally use for a project that size which required extra effort both mentally and physically."

Citizen Recognition of Employees

Please join me in tipping my hat to these employees for compliments received from residents.

- For those snowplowing this winter the management team received many compliments including, "...what a great job you and your team do...I'm impressed how quick you get everything done...", "I called once to complain..., I'm calling now to thank you for the terrific job you're doing on our street," "whoever plowed Flag Avenue today, Brilliant!...a lovely plowing job," "I wanted to say thank you to the city for the terrific clean up that has occurred on Boone Ave with all the snow on the street, it looks fantastic! Thank you for all the extra efforts...", "Xylon, between Bass Lake Rd and 56th St was so bad no one could get up the street in a car and a guy in the road dept. (Andrew?) sent a plow over within 15 minutes!"
- And a special note on the same topic from one of our police officers, "Just wanted to give a shout out to the streets director and employees. Spanish Immersion was sort of trapped in their lot without the ability to get the kids across the street safely at the crosswalk from all the snow. PW was super busy with not only 2 water main breaks but also all the snow around the city. ...I asked if they could send someone over to RSIS to clear out that intersection so the kids could use the crosswalk after school. They crossed the middle of the road earlier out of necessity. The streets folks quickly shot down there and cleared it out for them so they could reach the crosswalk and cross it. So huge thank you to them! You made a great impression on those principals and staff."
- A note sent in after interacting with Aaron Thelen, recreation supervisor, "He is very positive and quite helpful."

Reduction Contest—Time to Vote!

As announced earlier in the year when we held the first reducing day at city hall, we asked staff to submit items that they were disposing of that might be a bit unusual in some way. Here are the items submitted that are the oldest, funniest, craziest, etc.. items they disposed of. Please take a moment to go to [surveymonkey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5QY8CBK) and cast your ballot. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5QY8CBK> Winners will be announced in the next edition of *News & Views*.



5 1/4 Floppy Disk



Brick from Pre-1999 Pool Concession Stand



National Gold Medal Finalist Award



Feather Duster



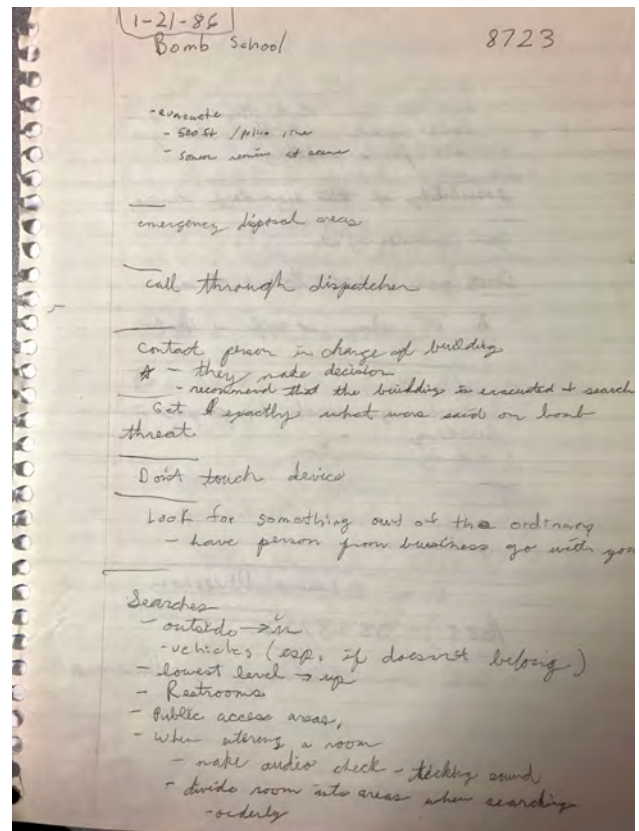
National Gold Medal Winner Award



Microfiche Reader



Film Projector



Bomb School Notes

New Employee Spotlights

Matt Rowedder, Utilities Maintenance Supervisor

Matt Rowedder joined city staff on April 1 as the new utilities maintenance supervisor. Matt is a long time resident of the Twin Cities, mainly in the west suburbs and most recently in Crystal where he owns a home. Before coming to New Hope, Matt worked for the city of Golden Valley for 19 years where he was a utilities crew leader. His wife, Shelly, has worked in park maintenance for the city of Oakdale for 17 years. The two of them met at a work conference and have been married for 12 years. They have a son; nine-year-old Marik enjoys being outside working alongside Mom and Dad.

His parents live in Rogers and are both retired, Dad from American Family Insurance and Mom from Tennant. Matt's three brothers also all live in the area. Shelly, who was raised in Oakdale, also comes from a family of six and has two sisters and a brother. Between the two of them they have four nephews and five nieces. Sounds like a lot of fun at family get gatherings!

Matt is also a battalion chief for West Metro Fire-Rescue, with which he's been with for more than 11 years. Shelly is a former professional softball player for a team in Italy. She is highly dedicated to the sport and tried out for the Olympics when playing and is in the North Dakota Softball Hall of Fame. She is currently an assistant coach at Hill Murray School in Maplewood for their varsity team.

In their down time, the family spends time at their cabin on Mille Lacs Lake. They boat, fish, enjoy watersports and just relax. The fun doesn't stop in winter as they spend time up there ice fishing and snowmobiling. And just in case they get bored, Matt said that there are always projects they are working on. When they want to relax away from home they enjoy traveling. They have been to the Caribbean and Mexico a few times each and greatly enjoy both.

Welcome to New Hope, Matt! We are glad you chose us for the next step in your career.



Rhonda Peske, Police Clerk

Rhonda Peske became our newest employee on April 15 as a police clerk. She will be training over the next several weeks during the day but then moving to the evening shift. Most recently Rhonda was with Hennepin County as a public safety records clerk at the Juvenile Detention Center. She and her husband Brad live in Otsego where they have owned a house for 19 years. They share their home with their youngest daughter, Jennifer, and dogs, Phoebe, a schnoodle, and Daisy, a cockapoo. Phoebe and Daisy are both about two years old and full of energy Rhonda says.

Brad also works in the area. He has worked for District 281 almost 25 years, first as a diesel mechanic, and then when the district outsourced their transportation services, as the head night custodian at Sonnesyn. Her parents are both retired, dad from the Minneapolis School District and mom from office work, and live in Zimmerman. Brad's father lives in Robbinsdale.

Rhonda and Brad were high school sweethearts at Cooper High. She was raised in Crystal and Brad in Robbinsdale. They have two daughters. Kate and husband Scott live in Texas with their one-and-a-half-year-old son Eli. Kate served in the Army Nurse Corp at Fort Hood and still works on post as a civilian public health nurse. Scott also works on base in construction management. Jennifer will be graduating from Winona State University on May 10 with a double major of special education and art. She is currently student teaching and living at home but will be moving north this summer in preparation for starting her first teaching position in special education for Verndale School District. Jennifer's boyfriend Kevin lives in Coon Rapids and works in St. Cloud for the Paramount Center for the Arts.

When asked what might surprise others about herself, Rhonda replied with the fact that for many years she was the fire-arms administrator at Cabela's. She said that while she's not a shooter she has tried trap shooting.

When they aren't in Texas visiting their new grandson (and his parents of course) or spending time on home projects, you can often find them spending time fishing. They have a favorite resort on East Silent Lake in the Perham area that they often vacation at.

We are glad to have you here at New Hope, Rhonda, and hope you find the shorter commute agreeable!



Staff Transitions/Recruitment Updates

After five years with the city, Aaron Chirpich, community development specialist, was offered a position with the city of Columbia Heights as their community development director. Aaron's last day with New Hope was April 1. Co-workers gathered to thank Aaron for his time with the city. Best of luck, Aaron!

Staff is in the process of holding internal candidate interviews to fill the position.

As announced in the last News & Views, police clerk **Kate Larson** retired on Feb. 28 after 14 years with the city. Photos at bottom of page.





Wellness Program

Past Events

March 20, 2019—Tour of Public Works

Many staff never have reason to visit the public works facility on International Drive. So on Mar. 20 the committee arranged for All Taco Food Truck to be on-site to provide \$5 taco, burrito and quesadilla meals for employees (the city paid the remainder for the 39 employees that participated). Employees from different departments had the opportunity to eat together in the public works lunchroom. Following lunch, non-public works staff received a tour of the facility.



April 9-11, 2019—Biometric Screening

To date, 59 employees have taken advantage of this annual screening that is administered by Hy-Vee. For participating, each employee received a gift card to Hy-Vee or Fleet Farm. Even if you have annual screening by your doctor, this is a good way to obtain supplemental information on your biometrics. If you have participated in past screenings, Hy-Vee is able to provide your results from previous years, just ask the dietician on staff. If you haven't been able to complete this yet, you are welcome to anytime by calling the dietician and scheduling at appointment. Let them know you work for the city and they will send the invoice to us. Once we receive the invoice, HR will give you your gift card. The city does not receive individual results, only an aggregate report.



April 24, 2019—Step to it Pre-Launch

17 employees participated in this fun activity yesterday, Aaron Thelen, recreation supervisor and Step to It coordinator for the city, explained how the May 1-28 program works, what the benefits and great prize opportunities are, and led us on a short hike around city center while attendees enjoy a Panera lunch. It's not too late to sign up for Step to it—go to Park and Rec and they can assist.

Upcoming Event

June 18, 2019—Healthy Grilling with Hy-Vee

Hy-Vee staff will join us at the New Hope Golf Course grills to give us some tips and tricks on ways to cook outdoors in a healthy way. More details to follow next month.



In Memoriam



Our sympathies to the family of Glenn Erickson, retired public works maintenance worker, that passed away on Mar. 7 from liver cancer.