



January 2022

**3033 St. Croix Trail South
P.O. Box 219
Afton, MN 55001**

**City of Afton Dashboard
A Summary of Current Happenings**

- ◆ 2022 Property Tax Levy – As noticed mid-summer, the council approved a 2.8% increase in City property taxes for 2022. The City portion of your property taxes accounts for about one-third of your total tax bill.
- ◆ Putnam Boulevard New Speed Limit Signs – Due to the planned long-term use as a share-the-road bike trail, the portions of Putnam still open to vehicle traffic will be signed at 20 MPH. Signage regarding the prohibition of motorized vehicles on the closed portions of the road will also be added.
- ◆ 60th Street New Speed Limit Signs - The speed limit on 60th Street between Trading Post Trail and Oakgreen will be set at 35 MPH to match the current speed limit on Trading Post Trail. The segment west of Oakgreen Avenue to Neal will be set at 45 MPH.
- ◆ ATV's– By ordinance these types of vehicles are not allowed on the right-of-way of any city, county or state road within the city limits. If you see these being operated illegally, call 911.
- ◆ Old Village Street Lights – The council approved a dimming system for the Old Village streetlights. The equipment will be purchased immediately, and the installation will wait for warmer temperatures. The new system is wireless which is a considerable cost savings over a wired system. The signal that will control the lights is very low power and is active only when the light intensity is changed.
- ◆ Museum Grant – the city was awarded a \$147,000 Legacy Grant by the Minnesota Historical Society to restore the large 100-year-old mural above the stage. The grant application was a joint effort between the city and the museum due to the city's ownership of the building and the museum's 100-year lease with the city. The restoration includes structural stabilization of the sagging wall prior to restoration. The museum will remain open during the project and the public is invited to interact with the team of art conservationists. The project will be complete in late summer of 2022.

SAR

Sand/Salt Available for Residents

The City provides a sand/salt mixture for Afton residents to use to control ice on driveways. Please fill buckets only - no skid loaders - **This service is not for commercial use.**

The mixture is at the city garage located at 1675 Stagecoach Trail. New this year—the mixture is located inside of the yellow storage bin on the right side of the building as marked.

The City Office is Closed

Friday, December 31

Monday, January 17

In observance of New Years Day & Martin Luther King Jr. Day

CITY MEETINGS

January 3, 2022

Planning Commission Meeting
7:00 PM (In-Person)

January 18, 2022

City Council Meeting
7:00 P.M. (In-Person)

January 26, 2022

Parks Committee Meeting
6:00 P.M. (In-Person)

Public Participation Via Zoom Will Continue to be Available for City Council Meetings. Information on how to join the meetings will be posted on the City website along with the agenda and meeting packet.

CITY COUNCIL

<u>Mayor:</u> Bill Palmquist	651-308-0569
<u>Ward 1:</u> Annie Perkins	651-592-3007
<u>Ward 2:</u> Lucia Wroblewski	651-436-3982
<u>Ward 3:</u> Stan Ross	612-720-6478
<u>Ward 4:</u> Randy Nelson	651-436-2479

CITY HALL

651-436-5090

CITY WEBSITE

www.ci.afton.mn.us

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Animal Control	715-220-1332
Building Inspector	651-436-6469
Burning Permits	651-248-5103
Environmental Center	651-275-7475
Highland Sanitation	651-458-0043
Otter Lake Animal Care	651-426-8871
Fire Dept	651-436-7033
Sheriff's Dept	651-439-9381

EMERGENCY 911

Notes from the Mayor

Happy New Year! Last year, I am sure I said something about being hopeful that we had seen the worst of this pandemic and looked forward to a normal year ahead. Since that clearly did not happen, today I will simply say I hope you had a wonderful holiday season and that in the coming year we can continue to work together and each do our part to make this enduring challenge a little better for all of us.

In December, the city council passed the 2022 budget and the tax levy. This budget included a smaller than planned for tax increase to fund our roads and infrastructure as we wait to see how future state and federal aid end up being funded. If none of these turn into the type of ongoing funding we can base future budgets upon, we will have a slightly larger increase next year to get our internal road plan back to the funding goals we laid out several years ago. However, I am hopeful we will see ongoing state aid at a minimum for cities of our size beyond the two years the legislature approved in the last session.

The council approved a new system for fine tuning the street lights in the Old Village. This system uses a very low power signal that is relayed from one light to the next to set the output, rather than a large scale network. This means the signal is active only when a change in light intensity is made. This system was cheaper than the cost to replace even one or two of the actual lamps, so a big thanks to our staff for working over several years to find a cost-effective solution to the issue of excessive light and wasted energy in the late hours of the night.

As a reminder, it is illegal to drive ATVs on city streets. We had an unfortunate incident last month where a pet was killed by an ATV being driven illegally on a residential street. We are working on ways to address that to ensure it does not happen again.

For the second year in a row, the Lower St. Croix Valley Fire Department appreciation dinner scheduled for January had to be cancelled. In 2022, please make sure and reach out to all our volunteer fire fighters and EMTs to thank them for all they do. We are fortunate to have so many dedicated individuals working in our community. As we come to the end of our second year of this pandemic, their help and sacrifice has kept us all safer and healthier.

-Bill

Have an Interest in Historical Architecture?

Do you have an interest in architecture, historic buildings and preserving Afton's heritage? **The Heritage Preservation / Design Review Commission** is looking for members with an architectural background.

The HPC/DR meets to review projects to ensure they meet the City's Design Standards for the Old Village. Meetings are monthly or as needed.

Applications are available on the city website, or by calling City Hall at 651-436-5090.

TEST YOUR HOME FOR RADON

January is National Radon Action Month. Radon is a colorless, odorless, radioactive gas and is the second leading cause of lung cancer after smoking. It can enter your home through the foundation and floor-wall joints. Winter is the best time to test for radon.

Two in five homes tested in Minnesota have radon levels that could pose a major health risk. A radon test is the only way to find out how much radon is in your home. Free radon test kits are available to Washington County residents. Learn more at:
<https://www.co.washington.mn.us/2481/Healthy-Homes>

Or call Washington County at 651-430-6655.

Meeting Highlights

December 6, 2021 Planning Commission Meeting

The Commission:

- Held a public hearing for a minor subdivision for a lot line rearrangement at 14521 and 14539 Afton Blvd. The commission recommended approval.

December 21, 2021 City Council Meeting

The Council:

- Held a public hearing for the 2022 proposed Budget and Tax Levy.
- Approved the 2022 Budget and with a 2.8% increase in the Tax levy .
- Approved an application for a minor subdivision for a lot line rearrangement at 14521 and 14539 Afton Blvd.
- Approved the purchase of dimming system for the downtown street lights.
- Approved speed limit signage on Putnam Blvd. along with signage prohibiting ATVs.
- Approved speed limit signage establishing a speed limit of 35 miles per hour on the segment of 60th Street between Trading Post Trail and Oakgreen Avenue and a speed limit of 45 miles per hour on the segment of 60th Street west of Oakgreen Avenue.

MEETING PACKETS, VIDEOS AND APPROVED MEETING MINUTES ARE AVAILABLE AT:
www.ci.afton.mn.us

Belwin Conservancy Upcoming Events

Saturday, January 8

Hiking into the Night

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Belwin's Education Center, 1553 Stagecoach Trail S.

Join us for an exploration into the other half of day, when darkness envelops our world. We will begin inside with a brief overview of winter night life at Belwin and then head out to witness the beauty of the dark. We will end our evening with light refreshments around a fire. Come dressed in layers for any weather. RSVP required. \$20 per family. Open to ages 12 and older (youth must be accompanied by an adult).

belwin.org/event/hiking-into-the-night/

Belwin Conservancy
1553 Stagecoach Trail South
Afton MN 55001
651-436-5189
www.belwin.org

REDUCE HOLIDAY WASTE

Americans generate 23% more waste in December than any other month of the year. That's 36 extra pounds of waste per person! Reduce the amount of holiday waste going into the trash by knowing where to throw it.

Reuse it

- Gift boxes & bags
- Tissue paper
- Bows & ribbons

Recycle it

- Cardboard boxes (flatten)
- Paper cards & envelopes
- Bottles & cans
- Catalogs & magazines
- Popcorn & cookie tins

Bring it to the Environmental Center

- Holiday lights & cords
- Plastic bags, bubble wrap, & plastic air pillows
- Electronics & batteries

Trash it

- Tissue paper
- Wrapping paper with glitter or foil
- Styrofoam
- Bows & ribbons



Washington County Environmental Center
 4039 Cottage Grove Drive
 Woodbury, MN 55129
 651-275-7475





CITY OF AFTON
3033 ST CROIX TRAIL SO
P.O. BOX 219
AFTON, MN 55001

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AFTON MN 55001
PERMIT NO. 15

Valley Library

Rediscover Valley Library

Valley Library is open! If you haven't been to the library in a while, now is a great time to stop by Lakeland Village (384 St Croix Trail S, Lakeland) to browse new materials, use a computer or meeting room, and participate in free library programs for all ages.

Library Hours

Visit the library on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m., and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Masks are currently required for all visitors over the age of two, regardless of vaccination status.

Upcoming Events

Family Storytimes are available every Monday at 10:30 a.m. Develop early literacy skills with stories, songs, fingerplays, and more! For children of all ages and their families.

Valley Book Club meets in person on the fourth Thursday of each month from 5-6 p.m. to discuss a selected title. This book club is free and open to all.

A variety of Take and Make Activities are available for free each month. Visit the library to pick up all the supplies you need to complete a fun craft at home.

Learn more about all Valley Library programs at WashCoLib.org/Events.

Check the library website for information on reading activities, library programs, and current hours.

Valley Branch Library

384 St Croix Trail S
Lakeland, MN 55043
651-436-5882
www.washcolib.org



**PATRON
AFTON, MN 55001**

You may view this newsletter
IN COLOR
on the city website.



*Please recycle this
newsletter after use.*

Washington County Christmas Tree Drop-off Sites

When the holiday season is over, recycle trees by dropping them off at one of the available locations in Washington County. Facilities have varied hours of operation, fees, and restrictions for each site. Tree stands, plastic bags, tinsel, wire, lights, and all other decorations must be removed before drop-off.

Private waste haulers, cities, or townships may also accept holiday trees. Residents should contact them directly for more information.

Sites accepting trees from all county residents include:

- Cottage Grove: Rumpca Companies, Inc., 9600 Glendenning Road - open to all residents, 9 a.m. to 3p.m. Jan. 2 and Jan. 8. Cost is \$2 per tree, which will be waived if a canned good is brought in for donation to the local food shelf. For more information, call Rumpca Companies at 651-459-1556.
- Washington County: Northern Yard Waste Site, 5527 170th St. N. in Hugo – open to all residents, Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. No charge. For more information, call Washington County at 651-430-6655 or see www.co.washington.mn.us/yardwaste.