



# October 2016

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

## Afton Roads a Major Concern for Residents and City Council

Town roads comprise 43% of the total miles of roads in Minnesota, but towns receive little or no state or county road aid. Afton currently has 45.72 miles of roads. Because of our treasured low density, this amounts to almost half a mile of road per household. Battered pickup trucks suited to inexpensive gravel are not favored by the majority or our residents, so vehicle-protecting pavement covers all but .87 miles of our roads.

As I mentioned last month, and as complaining e-mails I receive note, some Afton roads are in desperate need of repair. Our Public Works Committee has just completed a survey which concluded that 7.66 miles are in need of reconstruction at a city engineer estimated cost of \$425,000 per mile, 14.07 miles are in need of mill-and-overlay at an estimated cost of \$250,000 per mile and 23.14 miles are in good condition and will not need attention other than crack-sealing until 2023, at which time micro-coating will extend their life dramatically. The .87 miles of gravel road will continue to require only inexpensive annual maintenance.

Current cost of all road reconstruction and mill-and-overlay, if done all at once, would be \$6,773,000. Delaying reconstruction of the worst roads does not significantly increase the cost of reconstruction, but requires residents to put up with much worse roads. Delay of mill-and-overlay, crack-sealing or micro-coating causes roads in those categories to more rapidly fall into the reconstruction category, dramatically increasing the cost of total road repair over time.

The Council is currently working on the challenges presented by the above circumstances by searching for the optimum balance among the following factors: de-graded roads resulting from delayed reconstruction, very high levy increases for **several years to enable pay-as-you-go funding, and interest and bond placement costs if future levy proceeds are diverted to the present through bonding. Bonding obviously enables accelerating current road expenditures but does so by diverting** a percentage of future levies to the non-productive placement and interest payments. The council at its last regular meeting, following numerous committee meetings and work sessions, set a proposed 2017 budget and levy at 9.86 percent. This significant levy increase is not enough to guarantee roads can be maintained without future bonding, but is on the other hand not so small as to absolutely require bonding. If the city is able to restrain spending in other areas, does not have unexpected expenses and if revenues do not drop precipitously, it is possible that roads can be maintained on a pay-as-you-go basis. If a ten-year bond at 2% is used to immediately upgrade some roads, it would be paid off at the same time as the existing original paving bond enabling, based on current projections, conversion to pure pay-as-you-go funding of roads from that point forward, but with a portion of ten years of levy proceeds going to interest rather than directly to beneficial use.

Council members differ on the most likely consequences of the 9.86% levy increase: some believe that it is high enough to enable pay-as-you-go, and others believe it will require bonding to meet resident demands for better roads and to reduce total costs over time. We were unanimous that the proposed levy and budget are the most prudent given the competing factors and underlying uncertainties. All agree that further study of the alternatives will yield a clearer choice.

Richard Bend, Mayor

### CITY MEETINGS

**October 3, 2016**

Planning Commission Meeting  
7:00 P.M.

**October 18, 2016**

City Council Meeting  
7:00 P.M.

**October 19, 2016**

Heritage Preservation Commission  
5:00 P.M.

**October 19, 2016**

Natural Resources & Groundwater  
6:30 P.M.

**October 26, 2016**

Parks Committee  
6:00 P.M.

*All meetings are held at City Hall  
unless otherwise noted.*

### CITY COUNCIL

|                |                |          |
|----------------|----------------|----------|
| <u>Mayor:</u>  | Richard Bend   | 436-7684 |
| <u>Ward 1:</u> | Bill Palmquist | 308-0569 |
| <u>Ward 2:</u> | Joe Richter    | 436-1819 |
| <u>Ward 3:</u> | Stan Ross      | 436-1346 |
| <u>Ward 4:</u> | Randy Nelson   | 436-2479 |

### CITY HALL

Monday — Friday

9:00 a.m. — 4:00 p.m.

651 - 436 - 5090

### CITY WEBSITE

[www.ci.afton.mn.us](http://www.ci.afton.mn.us)

### IMPORTANT NUMBERS

|                       |              |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| Animal Control        | 715-386-7789 |
| Building Inspector    | 436-6469     |
| Burning Permits       | 248-5103     |
| Environmental Center  | 430-6655     |
| Highland Sanitation   | 458-0043     |
| Hillcrest Animal Hosp | 484-7211     |
| LSCV Fire Dept        | 436-7033     |
| Sheriff's Office      | 439-9381     |

**EMERGENCY 911**

# Elections, Politics, Civic Duty... *Don't Miss This!*

## Important Voting Notices



## Important 2016 Afton Elections

**General Election, November 8**  
**VOTE In Person** 7:00 a.m.—8:00 p.m.  
 Shepherd of the Valley Gym, 14107 Hudson Rd

*Not in Town???* **VOTE Absentee**  
 September 23 through November 7  
 at a Washington County Service Center

*New in Town???* **REGISTER by October 18**  
 To save time at the polls on Election Day

**VOTE for your City Council representatives:**

**Ward 1 — 4-year term**  
 Bill Palmquist  
 Simon Wirth

**Ward 4 — 4-year term**  
 Randy Nelson (unopposed)

**Mayor — 2-year term**  
 Richard Bend (unopposed)

**All Wards will vote for the Mayoral seat.**

## The Public Works Committee needs YOU!

Afton has several active committees whose volunteers are an invaluable asset to Afton's residents and elected officials.

Are you a resident concerned with the state of Afton's roads? Do you have an interest or expertise in planning road repairs and strategic road improvements based on the age, shape and traffic volume of the roads?



**If so, this committee is for YOU!**

Afton's Public Works Committee identifies, reviews and monitors issues relating to roadways and bridges, traffic control, city utilities and levee and water resources. They review and recommend updates to the City's Capital Improvement Plan for roads. The committee schedules meetings as needed.

Please consider this opportunity to be involved in Afton's decision-making and city budget process. Complete the "Application for Commission or Committee" on the city website and drop it off, email or mail it to City Hall.

## "Building Community"

Submitted by Robert Dickie

**What does it mean to live in a community that knows we are all connected?**

Is this our community's future: children, families, and individuals that live in isolation; politicians that don't listen to each other (or us); growing racial and economic separation; and, seniors that experience many obstacles to remaining in their homes?

**This is a bleak picture that does not have to be the future of life in the St. Croix River Valley.**

**What can we do together to prevent this?**

Join the Directors of Community Thread, the Bridge for Youth and the St. Croix Family Resource Center, the Washington County Sheriff and the County Attorney, a District Judge, Mayor of Stillwater, area residents, clergy, and a major employer for a round-table conversation that will invite your participation in addressing these questions.

**Where:** First Presbyterian Church  
6201 Osgood Ave N, Stillwater

**When:** Thursday, October 13, 2016

**Time:** 7:30 — 8:30 p.m. followed by a meet and mingle

For more information visit: [stcroixfrc.org](http://stcroixfrc.org), call or text 651-231-7807, or e-mail [cparsons@stcroixfrc.org](mailto:cparsons@stcroixfrc.org).

Conversation hosted by the First Presbyterian Church of Stillwater and the St. Croix Family Resource Center.



## High Speed Internet upgrades in Afton

Construction on Afton's Internet upgrade is moving ahead, but is a little behind schedule. CenturyLink is installing new DSLAMs (the green junction boxes that convert fiber optic signals to wired signals) and Fiber Optic feeder lines throughout Afton.

A spokesperson for CenturyLink has indicated that the major fiber optic build out has been completed with approximately ten more miles of fiber remaining to be installed. The equipment at CenturyLink's switching station has been installed to handle the upgraded speeds in Afton, which will range from 10mbs to 100mbs (download) speeds.

Construction includes fifteen new project sites and is scheduled to be completed sometime in November. As project completion nears, CenturyLink will be sending notices to all Afton residents informing us that the new system is about to come on line.



Crew installing new DSLAM in Afton

If you would like more details on the high speed internet project, please contact Stan at [ward3@ci.afton.mn.us](mailto:ward3@ci.afton.mn.us).

Stan Ross, Chair, High Speed Internet Committee

## Planning Commission Highlights, September 12

### Held PUBLIC HEARINGS for the following:

- **Recommended DENIAL** for a Solar Energy Ordinance Amendment, by SEV MN1, LLC, Janice Schwitters & Steven Moll to allow a solar farm as a conditional use or interim use in the Agricultural District to enable a solar farm at 12351 15<sup>th</sup> Street S. The proposed 5-megawatt array of photovoltaic panels would cover about 40 acres. The City's solar ordinance allows solar arrays in the Agricultural and Rural Residential Zones, to a max of 2,000 square feet when they are fully screened. Solar farms are allowed in the Industrial zone, but are prohibited in the Agricultural and Rural Residential zoning districts due to concerns about the impact on the rural character of the City. Several residents spoke against this solar ordinance amendment and against the proposed installation of a 5-megawatt solar farm on the 15th Street property.
- **Recommended DENIAL** for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment by Will Carlson to rezone four parcels from Agricultural to Rural Residential, to enable a subdivision creating 18 lots on 103 of 200 acres. The proposed rezoning needed to be in harmony with the goals, policies and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan related to the overall land use of the City and the preservation of agricultural uses and the city's rural character.
- **Recommended APPROVAL** for a Conditional Use Permit for a Trailer Parking Facility for Brockman Trucking on Hudson Road, PID 05.028.20.11.0007; they currently have two similar trailer parking lots along Hudson Road. Brockman does not need the proposed parking lot at this time; if the other parking lots are developed into a higher use, Brockman wants to be ready with another parking lot. There was some concern about the flexible timeline of starting construction within a year. A condition was added for vegetative screening compliance with city standards with a 5-year guarantee of tree replacement.
- **Recommended APPROVAL** for an Ordinance Amendment Opting Out of the Temporary Health Care Dwelling Statute, since Afton has ordinance language that allows the use of certain temporary dwelling units to care for infirm family members.
- **Continued** the Ordinance Amendment for Steep Slope Exception to Restrictions for areas of existing Man-Made Slopes created by construction of roads and related ditches.
- **Recommended APPROVAL** of the Ordinance Amendment to adopt the Washington County Septic Ordinance by reference.

## Downtown Improvements Project Update

- Construction of the Downtown Village Improvements were scheduled to begin this fall; however, this schedule was subject to the completion of Section 106 federal funding requirements. Due to a delay in this process, the start of construction has been changed to Spring, 2017.



- The Section 106 requirements involve avoiding adverse effects to historic and cultural properties. While the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, acting for the federal Environmental Protection Agency, has determined the project will not cause adverse effects, and the Minnesota Historic Preservation Office has concurred with this determination, several tribal governments have objected to this determination, specifically in relation to effects on a mound site in the downtown area.
- The City and the MPCA are working to resolve the objections of the tribal governments to enable a Spring, 2017 construction start.

## City Council Meeting Highlights, September 20

- **Denied** the request for the LSCV Fire Relief Association Pension Fund increase from \$3,250 to \$3,400.
- **Approved** \$5,000 to upgrade Afton's portion of the Afton-Lakeland Bike and Pedestrian Trail.
- **Delayed** the Solar Ordinance amendment per the applicant request.
- **Denied** the Will Carlson Comprehensive Plan amendment for rezoning from Ag to Rural Residential on 4 parcels at Trading Post Trail and 60<sup>th</sup> Street S.
- **Continued** to October 18 the CUP application for Brockman Trucking for a truck parking facility on Hudson Rd.
- **Adopted** the Washington County Septic Ordinance by reference.
- **Adopted** the ordinance to Opt Out of the Temporary Health Care Dwelling Statute, as the city has language allowing temporary housing for infirm family members.
- **Authorized** 2016 Bridge Inspections to be completed by the City Engineer, not to exceed \$2,466.
- **Authorized** the Request for Proposals for Solid Waste Management Services from providers.
- **Approved** the 2017 Preliminary Tax Levy of \$2,041,901, which is a 9.86% increase from 2016. This levy can be decreased but not increased at the final Budget and Tax Hearing at the December 20 City Council meeting.
- **Decided** that cluster mailboxes in neighborhoods would not enhance Afton's rural character.
- **Approved** the ordinance amendment for additional Septic Compliance Inspection Triggers in Afton.
- **Approved** a letter of support to the County Commissioners to reappoint Jill Lucas to the Valley Branch Watershed District Board of Managers.
- **Approved** the concept plan for the Sheriff's Deputies facility adjacent to Afton City Hall.
- **Approved** burial plots and the fee of \$1,000 for the Isaacson family at Mt. Hope Cemetery as a donation to the Afton Historical Museum.
- **Approved** 2016 street repairs for Pennington Avenue bank erosion for \$7,000; a 30<sup>th</sup> Street bridge repair for \$37,600; and, repairs to 15<sup>th</sup> Street S with a skim coating for \$35,000. All quotes for repairs were from Tri County.
- **Approved** a park picnic table donation from Sandi Alexander as a dedication to her husband to be placed in his favorite spot in Steamboat Park.



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 Branch Library October Events

### Preschool Storytime

Mondays, Oct. 3, 10, 17, 31, 10:30 - 11 a.m.

Stories, songs, rhymes and more develop early literacy skills. Siblings welcome.



### STEM Saturday

Saturday, Oct. 15, 10 a.m. - noon

Explore "LittleBits" with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) through hands-on activities and creative projects!

Ages 7-17.



### Color Me Calm: for Teens

Saturday, Oct. 22, All Day

Coloring isn't just for kids! Join us for this special event to celebrate Teen Read Month. Come and hang out, relax with your friends, and create a beautiful piece of art that we will display in the library.



### STEAM Storytime

Monday, Oct. 24, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Stories, songs, rhymes and special activities involving fun with Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math focuses on a different theme each month.



### Dog Gone Reading

Tuesday, Oct. 25, from 4 to 6 p.m.

Children K-7 read aloud to a certified therapy dog and its owner/trainer. Sign up for a 15 minute reading session at the library or call 436-5882.



### Valley Library Book Club

Thursday, Oct. 27, from 5 to 6 p.m.

This month's book is: "The All-Girl Filling Station's Last Reunion" by Fannie Flagg.

Visit the library to pick up a copy of the book. Just read the book, come, and join the discussion. Open to all.



**PATRON**  
**AFTON, MN 55001**

View this newsletter  
**IN COLOR**  
on the city website.



Please recycle this  
newsletter after use.

### Washington County Library hosts

**Author Expo**  
**Saturday, October 1**  
**9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

8595 Central Park Place, Woodbury

- Book signings and conversation with 20 authors: 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- Local author and publisher Sybil Smith will teach a free writing class for first-time authors from 11 a.m. to noon. The class will detail the necessary steps to locate a publisher and offer ideas of how to promote your first book. Seating is limited. Register by calling 651-731-1320 or online at [www.washcolib.org](http://www.washcolib.org).
- Kao Kalia Yang, author of the award-winning book "The Latecomer," will discuss her new book, "The Song Poet," from 1 to 2 p.m. "The Song Poet" is about Yang's father's life as a Hmong refugee in Minnesota.

**Author Expo is free and  
open to the public.**

### Belwin Conservancy

**Saturday, October 15 Events**

Education Center, 1553 Stagecoach

**Belwin Trails—Open 3rd Saturday**

11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. — for members

Hike on 225 acres of forest and prairie.

**Invasive Species Workshop**

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. — all welcome

Informational session on equipment, chemicals and techniques for controlling invasive plant species. Bring questions. No sign up.

### Veteran's Day Dinner

*Coming up in November...*

**Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>**  
**5:00—7:00 p.m.**

St. Francis of Assisi Church, Lakeland

**FREE Veteran's day dinner** & prizes hosted by the Yellow Ribbon Alliance of the Lower St. Croix Valley for all area veterans and their families. No advance registration is necessary. Call Mary at 651-436-8696 or go to [www.st.croixvalleyyellowribbon.org](http://www.st.croixvalleyyellowribbon.org).