



**December 2023**

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

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

- ◆ Speed enforcement is a high priority for the council. To improve speed enforcement, the council approved the purchase of a second radar speed sign trailer. The speed trailer displays the driver's speed along with the posted speed limit. The trailers are very effective in slowing down traffic. Public Works staff manages the deployment as directed by the council. Please be kind to your neighbors and don't speed!
- ◆ The council is putting in place a new system for tracking and enforcing code violations. The goals of the new system are to improve responsiveness to code violations and increase effectiveness in achieving code compliance.
- ◆ The "Afton Village Holiday" tree lighting will be held on December 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 in Town Square Park. For more information go to <https://exploreafton.com/afton-village-holiday/>.

SAR



**The City Office is Closed**  
**Monday, December 25**  
**Tuesday, December 26**  
**Monday, January 1**  
*In observance of the Holidays*

**CITY MEETINGS**  
**December 4, 2023**

Planning Commission Meeting  
7:00 PM

**December 19, 2023**

City Council Meeting  
7:00 PM

**January 8, 2024**

Planning Commission Meeting  
7:00 PM

Public Participation Via Zoom Will Continue to be Available for City Council and Planning Commission Meetings.

Information on how to join the meetings will be posted on the City website along with the agenda and meeting packet.

**CITY COUNCIL**

- Mayor: Bill Palmquist 651-308-0569
- Ward 1: Annie Perkins 651-592-3007
- Ward 2: Lucia Wroblewski 651-436-3982
- Ward 3: Stan Ross 612-720-6478
- Ward 4: 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**



**Afton Village Holiday 2023**

**FRI. Dec 1st 5-8:00pm**  
**SAT. Dec 2nd 11-3pm**

**For more information visit:**  
<https://exploreafton.com/afton-village-holiday>

## Notes from the Mayor

The city is working with the Lower St. Croix Valley Fire Department to identify bridges and large culverts on private driveways so the department can determine if their heaviest vehicles can safely drive over them. If you have either of these on your driveway, please contact the fire department or the city. Together we will work on ways to understand load limits, to ensure the fire department is aware of any situations where some of their vehicles may not be able to cross a bridge or culvert, and to determine options to enable adequate emergency access to your property. The first step is to know, in advance of an actual emergency, if there are any access restrictions that could be an issue. With this information, the fire department can work with you to plan and be best prepared to respond effectively if there is an emergency at your home. We all hope that call never happens, but our volunteer firefighters want to be prepared if it does.

We received notice from Washington County that home values in three communities rose significantly more than the average within the county. One of those communities was Afton. Unlike the last few years where the home value increases were fairly uniform across the county, this means there will be a tax shift on the county portion of our property tax. If you have received your Truth in Taxation Notice you might have already noticed this. We are now making up a larger share of the county-wide residential tax base, and the county tax rate that is applied will result in a larger increase here than in other areas with lower value increases. Although the City of Afton's 2024 preliminary budget has a 3.89% tax levy increase, that is only one part of the property tax bill. The county portion of your tax bill typically represents up to 1/3 of the tax bill, and due to this shift, we have been told that, although the County's tax levy is increasing by 3.9%, Afton properties may see a 10% increase in the county portion of their property tax statement.

-Bill

### Mattress Recycling Update

In October the City of Afton partnered with Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy to provide free curbside mattress and box spring collection through Second Chance Recycling. 58 households participated and 105 mattresses were collected and recycled. Thank you for making a significant impact on our environment by diverting those mattresses and box springs from our landfills. We hope to participate in the program again next year.

### **Budget and Tax Hearing**

*All are Invited to Attend Afton's 2024 Budget and Tax Hearing*

**7:00 pm, Tuesday, December 19, 2023**

The hearing is an opportunity for the public to ask questions and provide feedback regarding the proposed budget.

**The 2024 Proposed Budget is available at City Hall or on the City's website at:**

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

(Click the top tab: "Government—City Finance Information")

### Winter Snow Reminders

- ◆ The City's snow plow contractor hits the streets on a one-inch snowfall; however, if icy or slippery conditions exist, they may be sent out to also sand/salt hills and intersections.
- ◆ Keep garbage containers off the street until the plow has come through.
- ◆ Plowing snow onto or across a city street is illegal; violations are a misdemeanor and civil penalties may apply.
- ◆ Please slow down and drive for the conditions of the road, especially on Afton's curvy roads and hills.
- ◆ Be patient. We try to get around to all "Primary" routes within 24 hours; "Secondary" roads within 48 hours.
- ◆ The City will clean the main sidewalk in town along St. Croix Trail. The other sidewalks are to be cleared by the property or business owner.
- ◆ If your road has not been plowed or dangerous conditions exist, please call us at City Hall 651-436-5090 so we can get it the attention it deserves.

## Meeting Highlights

### November 6, 2023 Planning Commission Meeting

#### The Commission:

- Held a public hearing for an application for a Variance at 12671 10th St S for a garage.

### November 21, 2023 City Council Meeting

#### The Council:

- Approved the 2024 meeting schedule for the City Council and the Planning Commission.
- Approved hiring Eckberg Lammers as new prosecution attorney.
- Approved liquor license renewals for Afton House and the Lumberyard Pub.
- Approved adoption of the Washington County All-Hazard Mitigation plan.
- Passed resolution of support for flashing pedestrian crosswalk signs at the roundabout intersection at Afton-Lakeland school.

MEETING PACKETS, VIDEOS AND APPROVED MEETING MINUTES ARE AVAILABLE AT:  
[www.ci.afton.mn.us](http://www.ci.afton.mn.us)

## Belwin Conservancy Upcoming Events

### Winter Twilight Hike

**Saturday, December 9th, 2023**

4:30 pm - 6:30 pm

Belwin Conservancy Hilltop Classroom 1553

Stagecoach Trail, Afton MN 55001

Presented in partnership with Saint Paul

Public Schools Community Education

Cost: \$25 per person

### Women Walking

**Saturday, December 16th, 2023**

6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Belwin Conservancy Hilltop Classroom 1553

Stagecoach Trail, Afton MN 55001

Cost: \$20 per person

### Winter Solstice Bonfire

**Wednesday, December 20th, 2023**

6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields

15601 Hudson Rd. N, Lakeland, MN

Cost: \$10 per car (cash or check)

Join us for our annual Winter Solstice Bonfire!

Enjoy a roaring bonfire, guided night hikes, live

music, and a prairie labyrinth. Cookies and hot

cider will be available inside a warming tent.

Guided night hikes will be offered throughout

the evening. At 6:15 pm, Jenny Hanlon, of

Stillwater Early Childhood Family Education

(ECFE), will be leading a short hike and songs

specifically geared towards families

with children 5 and under.

### Winter Twilight Hike

**Saturday, January 13th, 2024**

4:30 pm - 6:30 pm

Belwin Conservancy Hilltop Classroom

1553 Stagecoach Trail, Afton MN 55001

Cost: \$10 per family

Take a winter walk in the magical hours of

twilight when day is ending and night is just

beginning. Begin inside for a short introduction

and then head out on the trail to witness the

wonder of this special time. End around a

campfire with hot beverages.

Led by Jim Rue and Lynette Anderson. Come

dressed in layers for any weather, wear com-

fortable hiking footwear for the season, bring

water. Flashlight or headlight with a red light

option is optional. RSVP required.

For details and registration contact:

**Belwin Conservancy**  
**1553 Stagecoach Trail South**  
**Afton MN 55001**  
**651-436-5189**  
[www.belwin.org](http://www.belwin.org)

## Community Thread's Holiday Hope Urgently Seeks Family Sponsors

Community Thread is urgently seeking 250 family sponsors to support residents in need during the holidays. Holiday Hope sponsors provide individually chosen gifts and/or gift cards to low-income families, older adults, and adults with disabilities. Through a partnership with Cub Foods, Community Thread provides a gift card to purchase a holiday meal.

Thanks to the generosity of community members and business sponsors, Holiday Hope makes a meaningful impact in the lives of individuals and families living in the Stillwater Area School District, Landfall, Oakdale, and Woodbury. In 2022, Holiday Hope served 3,188 individuals, including 1,793 children. Due to inflation and other financial stressors, the need is greater than ever and the number of people requesting support is expected to increase by 15% over last year.

Family Sponsors are needed to help local neighbors like Mike. "My family lives in a mobile home park. We love Minnesota and have dreams of owning our own home. My wife and I each work multiple jobs, but with raising four children, it's nearly impossible to make ends meet. Holiday Hope will give us extra help to have a nice holiday."

The need is real, and there are many easy ways to make a difference and help local neighbors, including: sponsoring a family, making an online donation, or donating gift cards in \$25 increments (Walmart, Target, Kohls, Amazon, and Holiday Station Stores). Sponsorship forms are available on Community Thread's website, by phone or email request, or in person at Community Thread. Forms will be accepted through December 1. Wish lists for gift cards and gifts are also available online. Visit [www.CommunityThreadMN.org](http://www.CommunityThreadMN.org) more information.

This year's Holiday Hope program is sponsored by Cub Foods, Afton-Bayport-Lakeland Lions, Heraeus, Brian Krafthefer, Andersen Windows and Doors, Sharon King, Artis Senior Living – Woodbury, Jerry's Auto Body, and Simonet's Furniture.

Since 1967, Community Thread has maximized resources and engaged volunteers to improve the quality of life for adults and their families in our community. To learn more, call 651-439-7434.



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

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**Valley Library Events & Important Dates**

**Closed December 25 & January 1 for Christmas & New Years Day**

For Adults:

The Valley Library Book Club does not meet in December. The title for the next meeting on **Thursday January 25, 2024** is Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates

For Kids:

**Every Monday 10:30-11:00 AM** Family Story time

**Saturday, December 11, 10:30-11:00AM** Super Storytime

**Thursday, December 14th 3:30-5:30**  
Brick Builder's Club  
Drop by to design, build and create with LEGO bricks. No registration required. This program is recommended for ages 5-12.

For complete information and to register for programs contact:  
**Valley Library**  
651-436-5882  
[www.washcolib.org](http://www.washcolib.org)

**PATRON  
AFTON, MN 55001**

**Online payments** are now available for city permits & fees including Building Permits and Sewer Payments,  
[www.ci.afton.mn.us](http://www.ci.afton.mn.us)



*Please recycle this newsletter after use.*

**Washington County will have its own Name a Snowplow contest**

Washington County residents are invited to help name one of the county's snowplows.

The submission form opened Nov. 20 and be open until Friday, Dec. 15.

County staff will review the submissions, and bring forward the top ideas for voting from the public in January 2024, when a winner will then be selected. Any submissions that include profanity or other inappropriate language will not be considered.

Submissions will be gathered through Survey Monkey at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/WCNameAPlow](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WCNameAPlow)

**Please join us at the Lower St. Croix Valley Fire Station for:**

**Pancake Breakfast with Santa**

**Sunday, December 3, 2023**

**8 am—Noon**

1560 St. Croix Trail South  
Lake St. Croix Beach



Come and enjoy all-you-can-eat pancakes, sausage, juice, milk and coffee! Santa will be visiting during the breakfast for photo opportunities.

Free will offering! Bring your food donation of non-perishable food items to help stock the local food shelves. Let's do our part to help others!

