



December 2024

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

City of Afton Dashboard
A Summary of Current Happenings
Transportation Options for Older Adults

The city occasionally gets questions from older residents about transportation options available to assist them. Listed below are a number of helpful resources.

- ◆ GoWashingtonMN.com provides transportation information from multiple providers in one spot. You can call 651-430-6651 to talk to the Washington County transportation navigator.
- ◆ The Volunteer Driver Program through Thrive at Community Thread provides rides and social connections for older adults. For information about this program, call 651-439-7434 or go to GoWashingtonMN.com or Communitythreadmn.org.
- ◆ Medical Rides may be covered by a person's insurance, simply call the customer service number on your insurance to ask if transportation is included in your plan benefits.
- ◆ Veterans receive rides to the VA through the DAV. To schedule a ride, call 612-467-2768 (non-ambulatory riders call 612-467-5799).
- ◆ Transit Link, a Public Transit Service of Metropolitan Council, operates in areas without Metro Transit Service. Call 651-602-5465 or visit <https://metro council.org/Transportation/Services/Transit-Link/Service-Details.aspx>

SAR

Afton Village Holiday 2024

The charming St. Croix river town of Afton, MN. will be transformed into a winter wonderland with Horse & Wagon rides, Strolling Carolers, Christmas Tree lighting, Artist Gift Market, Children's Crafts, festive food & drinks and more.

CANDY CANE TRAIL NOV. 29TH-DEC 1ST
CELEBRATE MERRY & BRIGHT DEC. 6TH-8TH
WRAP IT UP FESTIVE GIVING DEC. 13TH-25TH
COMFORT & JOY DEC. 20TH



Full Schedule of Events at:
<https://exploreafton.com>

CITY OFFICE CLOSED

Tuesday, December 24
Wednesday, December 25
Wednesday, January 1
In observance of the Holidays

CITY MEETINGS

December 2, 2024
Planning Commission
7:00 PM

December 3, 2024
Natural Resources & Groundwater
Committee
5:00 PM

December 11, 2024
Heritage Preservation Commission
6:00 PM

December 17, 2024
City Council 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

Notes from the Mayor

The city recently received another award related to the Old Village project. The Minnesota Association of Floodplain Managers (<https://www.mnafpm.org>) singled out the flood control portion of the project and named it the **2024 MNAFPM Project of the Year**. It is great to see recognition of the hard work done by our city staff. The levee upgrade portion of the project provided protection to the Old Village area for a 100 year flood event and greater, and resulted in the Old Village area no longer being considered to be in the floodplain, which will help to encourage reinvestment in the Old Village.

The city will hold its Truth-in-Taxation hearing at the December council meeting. The 2025 proposed property tax statements were sent out by the county in November. This year, most residential properties in Afton saw reductions in taxable value. This does not necessarily result in a reduction in actual taxes paid, as that amount is determined by the overall tax base and the budgets passed by the taxing authorities. But it was good to see the reductions after the increases last year in Afton that were significantly higher than in other parts of the county.

As I mentioned two months ago when we passed our preliminary budget, Afton is proposing an increase of 1.94% for the city. However the other portions of the property tax bill, from the county for instance, had larger increases to their budgets. Each of those taxing authorities will hold their own public hearings. Information on those hearings is located on the proposed property tax statement.

The collective budgets of the taxing authorities, and the valuations of property done in the spring, determine the amount of property tax each property owner pays. The proposed property tax statement reflects the taxes that would be due based on the collective preliminary budgets. The final budgets are approved after the Truth-in-Taxation hearings in December. Our hearing on December 17 is a time to make comments on the city budget for next year. This is not the time to raise questions or concerns regarding the assessed value of your property. This process happens in the spring, starting when property valuation notices are mailed out. The process for dealing with questions or concerns related to the assessed value for a property is explained in those notices. The appeal process happens in the spring.

The annual Afton Village Holiday weekend is December 6-8 in the Old Village. It kicks off with the tree lighting at 6pm on Friday in Town Square Park. Hope to see you there!

-Bill

Check Your Home's Energy Efficiency

Did you know the library has devices to measure your electricity consumption or identify air leaks in your home? All Washington County Library branches have Xcel Energy Power Check Meters and Draft Check Meters available for checkout!

A draft check meter can help you find air leaks in your home. Knowing where they are and learning steps you can take to address them can make you more comfortable and help you save energy and money.

A power check meter measures electrical energy consumed by electrical appliances. Instructions cover how to use it, the average electrical energy usage of typical 120-volt household appliances, and easy ways to reduce energy use in the home.

Contact your local library branch.

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 4, 2024 Planning Commission Meeting

The Commission:

- Held a public hearing for a variance application to increase the height of a portion of the roof line at 16530 Swede Hill Drive S.
- Held a public hearing for a variance application for an attached garage at 1050 Neal Ave S.
- Reviewed background information on the Cannabis Regulation Ordinance.

November 19, 2024 City Council Meeting

The Council:

- Approved a variance application to increase the height of a portion of the roof line at 16530 Swede Hill Drive S.
- Approved a variance application for an attached garage at 1050 Neal Ave S.
- Reviewed the draft Cannabis Regulation Ordinance.
- Approved 2025 liquor license renewals for Afton House and Lumberyard Pub.
- Approved the Lower St Croix Valley Fire Relief Association request for a pension benefit increase.

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

Belwin Conservancy Upcoming Events

Winter Twilight Hike

December 7, 2024 4:30 pm - 6:30 pm
 Hilltop Classroom

Cost: \$25, \$29, or \$33 (sliding scale)
 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.

Women Walking

December 14, 2024 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm
 Hilltop Classroom

Cost: \$20, \$35, or \$50 (sliding scale)
 Come and help us celebrate the seasonal changes in the natural world. Vernal Equinox, Summer Solstice, Autumnal Equinox, Winter Solstice, each brings us to a new season, a new place in our annual trip around the sun. We will gather together indoors to share easy, yogic centering exercises and a brief conversation about our theme. We will then move out to the woods and prairies for walking meditations and experiences in the natural world. We will end our time together with light refreshments around the fire.

Winter Solstice Bonfire

Friday, December 20 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm
 Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Fields

Cost: \$10, \$20, or \$35 per car (sliding scale)
 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.

For details and registration contact:

Belwin Conservancy
1533 Stagecoach Trail South
Afton MN 55001
651-436-5189

www.belwin.org



Calling all Bakers & Farm Stands.

Please support the Afton
 Museum's
 annual bake sale for the Holiday in the
 Village event.

Drop off your festively wrapped baked
 goods at the museum on Thursday,
 December 5th.

Questions: email "info@aftonhistoricalmuseum.com"
 or call 651-436-3500

Mattress Collection 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. 45 households participated and 97 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 and playing a role in employment for those coming out of incarceration or with employment barriers.

Budget and Tax Hearing

All are Invited to Attend Afton's 2025 Budget and
 Tax Hearing

7:00 pm, Tuesday, December 17, 2024

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

**The 2025 Proposed Budget is available at
 City Hall or on the City's website at:**

www.ci.afton.mn.us

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



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

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
AFTON MN 55001
PERMIT NO. 15

Valley Library Events & Important Dates

Library Closures:

December 25th in observance of Christmas Day

January 1st for New Year's Day

Valley Library open 2:00-5:00pm:

December 24th Christmas Eve

December 31st New Year's Eve

Did you know that Washington County Libraries needs your help to determine the success of the Valley Library Extended Access pilot program? The pilot program continues in December – your feedback will help Washington County Library accurately consider the Extended Access needs of the Valley Library community . As a refresher: This pilot program will grant a limited number of Washington County Library cardholders access to the Valley Library 7 days a week from 6:00am to 10:00pm. You can learn more about the Extended Access pilot program, including how to apply to participate, at <https://www.washcolib.org/551/Extended-Access>

For Adults:

The Valley Library Book Club meets **5:00-6:00pm** on the 4th Thursday of every month **PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF DATE TO ACCOMMODATE FOR THE THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY.** This book club meets in person in the Valley Library Conference Room. The title selection for the **Thursday December 5th** meeting is "Under the Wide and Starry Sky" by Nancy Horan. Copies are available to borrow at the Valley branch.

For Kids:

NO STORYTIME DECEMBER 23RD AND DECEMBER 30TH
Every Monday 10:30-11:00 am Storytime

Monday, December 9 10:30-11:00 Music and Movement Storytime

Saturday, December 21 11:00-1:00 Kid Builders

Week of December 9-14 Monthly STEM Challenge

Monday December 30th 11:00-2:00pm
Join us for a Winter Break Craft Extravaganza

For complete information and to register for programs contact:

Valley Library 651-436-5882
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




Please recycle this newsletter after use.


Please join us at the Lower St. Croix Valley Fire Station for:
Pancake Breakfast with Santa
Sunday, December 1, 2024
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!



Fire Extinguisher Recharge Event



Commercial and Residential Invited:
What: Annual Fire Extinguisher Recharging
Where: Lower St Croix Valley Fire Department
When: Tuesday, December 3 from 9:00 am to Noon
By: Bill Becker Fire & Safety
Cost: Varies and Paid directly to Vendor