



**February 2021**

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

## Information on Afton's Internet

The City has been getting a few calls about our Internet connectivity. Here is some information and debugging suggestions for your connectivity.

### CenturyLink (CTL) DSL:

- Every household has a copper wire that connects you to a local DSLAM (junction box on the street) where the signal is converted to a fiber optic signal. This communication "path" is dedicated to your home and, therefore, no change in performance will occur as your neighbors go online.
- Download vs upload speeds are asymmetric, upload speeds are typically 1/10th the download speed.
- The speed available to your home is directly affected by the distance from the DSLAM, the greater the distance the slower the speed.
- Your speed may be significantly increased by requesting CTL "double bond" service to your home. There may be a charge for this.
- You can add another phone line to your home with a second DSL modem which will create a second WiFi channel. i.e.: to allow your kids to use one Wi-Fi channel and your home office the other channel.
- CTL uses both underground and overhead wires. If you see tree branches on wires report it to CTL or Excel Energy.
- Make certain that the speeds you are getting matches the speed you are paying for! Typically, in Afton the cost is roughly \$45 for 40Mbps speed.
- You can test your speed by going to the following link. <https://www.centurylink.com/home/help/internet/internet-speed-test.html>
- You can find out what speed is available to your home with this link: <https://shop.centurylink.com/MasterWebPortal/freeRange/shop/guidedShoppingStart?bones#module=start>.
- Do not confuse speed with signal integrity. The wires from your home to the DSLAM are copper and are susceptible to corrosion. Corroded copper wires will cause apparent speed loss.
- If you are experiencing intermittent connectivity, changes in speeds or low speeds, contact CTL's repair department and ask for a tech to come to your home and repair the issue. CTL is responsible for the wires outside your home while you are responsible for the wires inside your home.
- CTL may charge you if their tech comes inside your home.
- There have been multiple reports of poor speeds which were solved by getting a new DSL modem and / or replacing the wire coming from the Network Interface (junction) box on the outside of your home to the DSL modem inside your home (those pesky mice can cause lots of issues with your connectivity).



*Continued on Page 2*

### The City Office is Closed

**Monday, February 15**

*In observance of Presidents Day*

### CITY MEETINGS

The regular meetings of the Planning Commission and City Council are being held remotely. Other Volunteer Commissions and Committees are canceled unless otherwise noted. Remote meetings of those committees may be held if timely action is needed and if properly noticed.

**February 1, 2021**

Planning Commission Meeting  
7:00 P.M.

**(To be held remotely)**

**February 16, 2021**

City Council Meeting  
7:00 P.M.

**(To be held remotely)**

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](http://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

We had our first hiccup with the new world of virtual meetings last month. Due to an error with the meeting link posted on the city website, we had to reschedule the regular council meeting from Tuesday to Friday. I want to apologize to everyone who tried to log in. I know that people who have items on the agenda often have time constraints and other potential issues, so we appreciate your patience and understanding. Staff has now implemented a double- and triple-check method for making sure this does not happen again. I will say though that at the time it was happening on that Tuesday evening, as unfortunate as it was, my overwhelming thought was amazement that it had not happened before that time. We have been holding virtual meetings per the CDC guidelines for over ten months now, and the fact that this was our first snafu speaks to the quality of our city staff, and how they have adapted to the pandemic. They have done a great job ensuring the business of the city keeps moving forward.

On that note, the improvements to City Hall we were able to make with the help of the federal CARES funds will be largely completed soon. At that time, we will begin to discuss when and how we will return to more in-person meetings. My feeling is that it might be a hybrid of sorts to start. These investments will enable committee and council members, and the public, to continue to participate remotely through the technology investments we made. Because of this we will have the ability for some members to be in person, along with some members of the public, while others who may have health issues where extra precautions are required, to continue to participate virtually. We have installed improvements to the ventilation system, a dais with the ability to have plexiglass installed when needed, and other safety measures to allow us to return as safely as possible. More to come on that in the coming months.

Our 2021 road improvement bid package came back with much better numbers than last year which is great news. Last year's high costs forced us to put off some of the roads scheduled for last summer. I believe we will get back on track to meet the annual goals we laid out when the initial street revitalization plan was put in place several years ago. Although the council has not made a final determination on that, or on some of the additional roads we are considering adding, I feel that we will get a lot of infrastructure work done this summer. This is good for the city, and the economy. For Afton, it is possible that when we are finished, there will only be about 3 miles of the over 50 miles of city streets in Afton yet to be completed. The best news is the Public Works Committee included life-cycle maintenance costs into the road revitalization plan. This will ensure the funding is in place to keep them in good repair long after the initial reconstruction has occurred.

I hope you are able to get out and avoid cabin fever this winter.

-Bill

### Information on Afton's Internet *(continued from Page 1)*

#### **Comcast Cable:**

- Comcast is only available in a few small sections of Afton and has quoted several million dollars to build out all of Afton.
- Your house shares a common wire with your neighbors and as more users connect speeds decrease.
- The speed available to the homeowner is not affected by distance.
- Comcast uses both underground and overhead wires.

#### **Fiber to the Home**

- CTL pulled many miles of fiber optic cable in Afton when the build out took place a few years ago.
- The gross infrastructure for fiber to the home was added during the build out.
- Fiber is very reliable and has symmetric speeds.
- The cost to bring fiber to the home would be at the homeowner's expense.
- If a neighborhood wants fiber to their homes a better option is to install a new DSLAM to service those homes. The cost would be about \$50k per DSLAM paid for by the neighborhood.

Stan Ross,  
Ward 3 Councilman  
ward3@ci.afton.mn.us

## Meeting Highlights

### January 4, 2021 Planning Commission Meeting

#### **The Commission:**

- Held a public hearing for the FOC Preliminary Plat application for a 6-lot subdivision in the industrial zone.
- Reviewed and recommended denial of the John & Kim Ziton Variance application at 4102 River Road.
- Discussed a draft Ordinance Amendment regarding the use of shared driveways for subdivisions.

### January 22, 2021 City Council Meeting

#### **The Council:**

- Extended the declaration of local emergency.
- Approved the 2021 Meeting schedule.
- Approved annual committee appointments for City Council members.
- Designated the official depository, newspaper, signatories, city engineer and city attorney.
- Appointed election judges for 2021.
- Approved the FOC Preliminary Plat application for a 6-lot subdivision in the industrial zone.
- Discussed the draft Ordinance Amendment regarding the use of shared driveways for subdivisions.
- Discussed the 2021 Pavement Improvement Project.
- Approved 2021 pricing increases for trash and recycling services through Highland Sanitation.

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

## Want to get involved in CITY DECISIONS?

The two commissions below are in need of an additional member each. Please consider lending your time, interests, knowledge, expertise and voice to the following:

### **Heritage Preservation / Design Review Commission**

Do you have an interest in architecture, historic buildings and preserving Afton's heritage? The DR/HPC is looking for members with an architectural background. The Commission meets to review projects to ensure they meet the City's Design Standards for the Old Village. Monthly meetings when needed.

### **Parks Committee**

Identifies and reviews issues relating to parks and open spaces in the city. Makes recommendations for upgrading and maintaining city parks. Monthly meetings or as needed .

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

## Belwin Conservancy Upcoming Events

### **“BELWIN AT 50” ON DISPLAY JANUARY 15 – FEBRUARY 21, 2021**

*In-person and virtual tours available for  
“Belwin at 50: A Love Affair with Nature”  
at The Phipps Center for the Arts in Hudson,  
Wis.*

2021 marks Belwin Conservancy's 50th anniversary. Join us as we kick off the year with our anniversary show, *Belwin at 50: A Love Affair with Nature*, at The Phipps Center for the Arts in Hudson, Wis.

#### **EVENT DETAILS**

*Belwin at 50: A Love Affair with Nature*

**January 15, 2021 – February 21, 2021**

The Phipps Center for the Arts

109 Locust Street

Hudson, WI 54016

[thephipps.org](http://thephipps.org)

#### **Regular Gallery Hours**

Monday – Wednesday: 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Thursday & Friday: 9:30 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Saturday: 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

#### **Extended Saturday Hours**

January 16, February 6, 13 and 20: 12:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

#### **Extended Sunday Hours**

February 7, 14 and 21: 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

#### **Saturday, February 20, 2021**

Education Center Third Saturday

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Free and open to everyone! Explore the Belwin Education Center and its miles of rolling, wooded trails. Bring your snowshoes or cross-country skis. Trails are not groomed in the winter. The Education Center building will be open for check in, directions, and restrooms. Face masks are required to enter the building.

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



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



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

### Valley Library February 2021

**The Library will be Closed  
February 15, 2021**  
*In observation of Presidents Day*

Washington County Library is currently offering a variety of online programs for residents to enjoy at home! Registration is required so that participants receive the link to join virtually. In addition to featured events, book clubs have transitioned to virtual meetings and storytimes premiere on our Facebook page every Tuesday and Wednesday at 10:30 a.m.

**Valley Library is open with limited capacity and modified hours.** Visitors can come to pick up holds, browse materials, and use computers without an appointment. Our meeting rooms will remain closed.

When visiting Valley Library, please help protect everyone in the library by:

- Wearing a mask in the building.
- Practicing social distancing from other visitors and staff.
- Keeping your library visit to one hour or less.

**Valley Branch Library**  
384 St Croix Trail S  
Lakeland, MN 55043  
651-436-5882  
[www.washcolib.org](http://www.washcolib.org)

Open with limited capacity. Current hours:  
Monday, Wednesday, Friday:  
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Tuesday, Thursday: 12 to 7 p.m.

### **Pet License Renewals Due**

**ALL DOGS (& cats)** that venture out-of-doors in Afton are required to be licensed and have current rabies vaccinations. This is for the health & safety of residents, pets and wildlife.

Two year licenses for altered pets is \$5; unaltered is \$10. Current license period is January 1, 2021 — December 31, 2022. *(What a deal!)*  
**An additional \$5 late fee applies after March 31.**

For each pet, complete an Animal License Form, found on Afton's Home Page, attach a copy of the current rabies vaccination certificate and appropriate fee per animal. Mail or bring to City Hall.



**PATRON  
AFTON, MN 55001**

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



*Please recycle this  
newsletter after use.*

### **Lower St Croix Valley Fire Department Updates**

#### **Calendar Fundraiser**

By now you should have received your 2021 LSCVFD Community Events Calendar in the mail. A big shout out to our community for the great response with our calendar fundraiser as donations still continue to trickle in. A significant portion of the donations raised during this event help our department Dive Rescue team members operate in safer conditions as we continue to update their equipment in the way of dry suits, breathing apparatus and communications technology. We are very appreciative of the support we receive from our neighbors and friends in the Valley community that we so proudly serve.

#### **Hydrant Clearing**

We would also like to get out our annual appeal for everyone to clear hydrants as we continue through the winter months. Everyone knows the importance and the time saving during critical emergencies that this task accomplishes. Please do your part if you have a hydrant adjacent to your property! If you see someone clearing a hydrant in your neighborhood, be sure to thank them!

