



March 2024

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

City of Afton Dashboard
A Summary of Current Happenings

- ◆ Hard to believe but it has been seven years since the Downtown Improvement project was completed. At that time the council established a seven-year period for all properties in the Old Village sewer service area to connect to the city's sanitary sewer system. That seven-year period expires at the end of 2024.
For those who have not connected this is a reminder that all residential and commercial properties in the Old Village sewer service area are required to connect to the city's sewer system by the end of this year. Keep in mind that contractors have long lead times so contact your contractor soon.
Once you have selected a contractor and have a construction date range, contact the city and obtain a plumbing permit. The permits are valid for 180 days. Once the hook up has been completed and the building inspector has approved the connection the information will be entered into the city's sewer customer database and the monthly billing at the rate of \$55 per Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) will commence.
If a resident or business fails to connect by December 31st, 2024, a penalty fee of three times the normal monthly fee will be charged starting on January 1, 2025.
The total number of properties to be hooked up to the city sewer system is approximately 100. To-date the total number of properties hooked up is 50.
- ◆ The council passed an ordinance extending the moratorium regarding the sale, testing, manufacturing and distribution of products containing THC within the City until January 1st, 2025.
- ◆ The City and the Afton Marina and Yacht Club have agreed to a settlement to resolve issues related to the Downtown Improvement project.

-SAR

Presidential Primary Election
March 5, 2024

Eligible voters in Washington County may vote during the March 5 Presidential Primary. The Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party, Republican Party, and Legal Marijuana Now Party will participate in this primary.

Voters will be required to request a ballot for the party of their choice and will vote for a presidential candidate; no other offices will be on the ballot.

A voter's choice of party ballot will be recorded and must be provided to the chair of the political party selected. How a voter votes on the ballot remains secret.

- **Early in-person voting** began January 19 and ends Monday, March 4 at the Cottage Grove Service Center, Stillwater Government Center and Woodbury City Hall.
Hours are:
Monday - Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Saturday, March 2: 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Monday, March 4: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- **The polling location for Afton residents on Election Day** is Shepherd of the Valley, 14107 Hudson Rd S. from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, March 5.
- View your **sample ballot** at mnvotes.org.
- To vote **early by mail**, visit mnvotes.org or call 651-430-6790 and request an absentee application be sent to you.

CITY MEETINGS

Canceled—March
Planning Commission Meeting

March 12, 2024
Natural Resources & Groundwater
Committee Meeting
5:00 PM

March 2024 TBD
Heritage Preservation Commission
6:00 PM

March 19, 2024
City Council Meeting
7:00 PM

March 2024 TBD
Parks Committee
6:00 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

Former Mayor Richard Bend has let the city know he will be stepping down from the Fire District Board in the coming months. Since leaving office, Mayor Bend has continued to serve in this vital role, many of those years as the board chair. He has provided excellent leadership on many crucial issues, including updating the joint powers agreement between the five cities of the Fire District, updating the bylaws of the Fire District which include the operating procedures of the Fire Department, and helping to guide the budgeting and long-term planning for the Fire District. Thank you Mayor Bend!

I am happy to report that the legal issues with the city and Afton Marina related to the downtown improvement project have been resolved. The main issues dealt with the Marina's assessment for the project and the cost of wastewater treatment. I want to thank the board members who worked with the city in good faith to find a resolution that avoided the need for a trial. I believe the agreement is a good solution and settlement for both parties. I am looking forward to continuing to work with the Marina and its board on issues important to the Marina and our community.

At our February meeting the council appointed two new members to the Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee. Petra Brokken and Scott Hafner both bring incredible experience and passion to the committee as it continues the work of ensuring our water and environment are protected. Thank you Petra and Scott!

The Eastern Twin Cities Islamic Center located here in Afton and the Minnesota Council of Churches will once again host an Interfaith Iftar dinner (opening of the fast in the month of Ramadan) on Thursday, March 28. This event is always an enjoyable way to meet and spend time with people from different backgrounds, faiths, and communities. There is no cost to attend, but you need to register with the Minnesota Council of Churches at Mnchurches.org/what-we-do/taking-heart.

-Bill

Interfaith Iftar Invitation

Eastern Twin Cities Islamic Center (ETCIC) would like to invite all Afton residents to our annual Interfaith Iftar (opening of fast in the month of Ramadan) dinner on **Thu Mar 28th, 2024** at our Islamic Center located at 12585 Hudson Rd S, Afton. The event will include an opportunity to see our Islamic Center, dinner and an opportunity to meet and enjoy the company of people from different backgrounds, faiths and communities. This event is being hosted in **collaboration** with Minnesota Council of Churches and is **free** and **informal**, but requires registration with the Minnesota Council of Churches at <http://mnchurches.org/what-we-do/taking-heart>



2024 Local/County Board of Appeal & Equalization & Open Book Meeting Schedule

Each year, Washington County mails Property Tax Statements by March 31. A Notice of Valuation and Classification for taxes payable in the following year is mailed in the same envelope. The Valuation Notice shows the estimated market value and classification of the property and contains Local Board of Appeals and Equalization information.

The assessment date is January 2 and forms the basis for the following year's tax. For example, a valuation notice sent in March 2024 will be the basis for your 2025 tax.

Afton is an Open Book community, meaning taxpayers may attend any of the four Regional Open Book meetings **OR** they can call the County Assessor's office and speak to an appraiser regarding their valuation or classification appeal. It is not necessary to do both.

<u>Regional Open Book-Cottage Grove</u>		Cottage Grove City Hall
Thursday, April 4, 2024	5-7pm	12800 Ravine Pkwy S
<u>Regional Open Book-Oakdale</u>		Oakdale City Hall
Wednesday, April 10, 2024	5-7pm	1584 Hadley Ave N
<u>Regional Open Book-Woodbury</u>		Woodbury City Hall
Thursday, April 18, 2024	5-7pm	8301 Valley Creek Rd
<u>Regional Open Book-Stillwater</u>		Washington Cty Govt Center
Wednesday, April 24, 2024	2-7pm	14949 62nd St N

Meeting Highlights

February 5, 2024 Planning Commission Meeting

The Commission:

- Held a public hearing for a sketch plan review for a proposed subdivision of 46 acres located generally between I5222 and I4960 Afton Boulevard.

February 20, 2024 City Council Meeting

The Council:

- Held a public hearing regarding the extension of a moratorium regarding sales, testing, manufacturing and distribution of products containing THC. No comments were received. The moratorium was extended to 2025.
- Approved a plan for a garage at 12671 10th St S.
- Reviewed a sketch plan for a proposed subdivision of 46 acres located generally between I5222 and I4960 Afton Boulevard.
- Adopted the updated/recodified city code.
- Approved the reappointment of several members of the Planning Commission and Heritage Preservation Commission to additional 3-year terms.
- Appointed Petra Brokken and Scott Hafner to serve on the Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee.

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

Belwin Conservancy Upcoming Events

Women Walking

Saturday, March 16th, 2024

6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Belwin Conservancy Hilltop Classroom 1553

Stagecoach Trail S., Afton, MN 55001 Cost:

(Sliding scale) \$20, \$35, or \$50

Open to women over the age of 16. RSVP required.

Frog Walk at Oxbow Trails

Monday, April 22nd, 2024

7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

Oxbow Trails

2638 St. Croix Trail, Afton 55001

Cost (sliding scale): \$10, \$18, or \$25 per family

Dress for the weather. This is a rain or shine event.

Celebrating Your Wild Voice!

Saturday, April 27th, 2024

9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Belwin Conservancy Hilltop Classroom 1553

Stagecoach Trail S., Afton, MN 55001 Cost

(sliding scale): \$35, \$50, or \$70

No singing experience or talent required at all. Must be 16 and older.

Led by Barbara McAfee and Lynette Anderson.

Bring your own lunch; Light snacks, tea and hot chocolate provided.

For details and registration contact:

Belwin Conservancy

1553 Stagecoach Trail South

Afton MN 55001

651-436-5189

www.belwin.org

First Responders from the Lower St Croix Valley Fire Department rescued a deer from a retention pond in the downtown village on February 19.

Upon rescue, it was discovered the deer had been severely injured by an arrow and responders had to put it down. Archery season ended in Minnesota on December 31. Whoever shot this deer appears to have done it out of season and left it to suffer.

Many thanks to the responders from the Lower St Croix Valley Fire Department!



Information for Well Owners

- ⇒ Washington County offers water testing on Tuesday mornings for a modest fee. Call 651-430-6655 or visit www.co.washington.mn.us/637/Water-Tests
- ⇒ The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) maintains information for well owners on water testing, PFAS, well maintenance and licensed well contractors. www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water
- ⇒ You can request testing for PFAS here: <https://webapp.pca.state.mn.us/gw-sampling-req/>
- ⇒ The Natural Resources & Groundwater Committee will be offering well water testing for Afton residents this June. Details will be provided in upcoming newsletters.
- ⇒ Residents are encouraged to work with a licensed well contractor in the event their well needs to be disinfected.



When you have a project that requires digging, your first step is to contact **Gopher State One Call**. You can do this by using GSOC's Homeowner Online Locate Request system or by calling the One Call Center. (651)454-0002 -or- (800)252-1166 www.gsocsubmit.org



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Valley Library Events & Important Dates

Did you know that the Libby app lets you take a library of eBooks, eAudiobooks and eMagazines with you wherever you go? Did you also know that the Washington County Library eCollection is only a small part of the eCatalog available through Libby? All registered Library card users have access to the entire Melsa: Twin Cities Metro eLibrary through Libby. The Libby eCollection can also be accessed on most desktop and laptop computers through libbyapp.com. Learn more at <https://washcolib.org/533/eBooks-eAudiobooks-eMagazines>

For Adults:

The Valley Library Book Club meets 5:00-6:00pm on the 4th Thursday of every month. The title selection for the **Thursday March 28th** meeting is "The Sentence" by Louise Erdrich.

For Kids:

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

Monday, March 18 10:30-11:00AM Super Storytime

Thursday, March 14 3:30-5:30 Brick Builder's Club

Special events for Spring Break:

Tuesday, March 26th Batteries, Bulbs, Wires 3:00-4:00. Registration is required, Ages 5-12

Wednesday, March 27th River Weavings 11:00-12:30. Registration is required, Ages 5-12

Thursday, March 28th Spring Break Craft-noon 2:00-4:00, Ages 5-12

The Valley Library Art Cart is available whenever the library is open. We provide the supplies and you provide the creativity!

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.

Getting Ready for Spring:

Rinta Community Garden

Spring will be here soon; time for gardeners to get their hands dirty. The Rinta Community Garden has 25 plots available to residents of the Lower St. Croix Valley.

There is no charge for using a plot. Gardeners are asked not to use pesticides and to use organic fertilizers. There is no well water at the site, but 2 rain barrels collecting runoff from a small shed will hold 250 gallons of water for irrigation when necessary. The installation of a high fence has thwarted hungry deer.

If you are interested in a garden plot at Rinta, contact Afton City Hall or go to the Afton website for an application (Located under "Parks, Park Reservations & Special Events"). Complete and return it to Afton City Hall, 3033 St. Croix Trail, P.O. Box 219, Afton, MN 55001.

Application deadline is April 1, 2024

If you have additional questions, contact Barbara Ronningen at bjronningen@yahoo.com.

Don't forget Daylight Savings!

"Spring forward" one hour on March 10th

