



**April 2020**

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

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) City Hall Procedures

Regarding the recent outbreak of novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), we are taking precautions to prevent spread of disease at the Afton City Hall and are monitoring the situation and following guidance from public health officials to provide a safe environment.

While the City staff will continue to provide essential services, they will no longer meet face-to-face with members of the public. All communication will be via electronic means including telephone and email. As much as possible, the submittal of permits or other documents should be done electronically. Alternately, any permits, payments, and documents can be placed in a drop box in the City Hall lobby or the drop box outside the front door of City Hall and call 651-436-5090 to let us know you left an item needing attention. We will be continually emptying the box throughout the day. All Building Permits will be mailed when approved.

## COVID-19 City Council Meeting Process Changes

The City Council is reviewing options for holding Council meetings, to ensure transparency and the opportunity for public comment and input, while protecting the health of Council members, staff and the general public. The safest method of holding Council meetings is to hold them remotely or virtually. This means that rather than Council members, staff and the public meeting in the Council Chambers, each of these groups would participate via phone and/or on-line via the internet. The Council will be discussing meeting options at a special Council meeting in the coming days, and will determine the meeting method well in advance of the next Council meeting, scheduled for April 21. This will enable the public to be informed as soon as possible regarding the type of meeting and how they will be able to participate. Our priority remains to provide residents the means to provide comments and input regarding all items on upcoming meeting agendas, while protecting public health. Please watch for more information on the City website and the City Facebook page.

## COVID-19 Community Response

Right now in our community people are coming together to help those in need. They are checking in on neighbors, bringing supplies, helping those who should stay home by running errands. We also heard from other residents who were ready to help during this challenging time and reached out to see what they could do. As the city worked on ways to help facilitate this we were contacted by Community Thread, a local nonprofit serving the St. Croix Valley since 1967. Community Thread has at its core the mission to connect volunteers to meet the needs of the community. They are now set up to match volunteers with people needing help. Currently, they are only able to do this for residents in the Stillwater Area School District, which includes all of Afton. If you need help, please contact the phone number or website below. If you can help, either as a volunteer or with a financial contribution, please do. Here is a portion of their announcement:

Community Thread is matching volunteers who are willing to help with local residents who are requesting help. Support may include:

- Letters/drawings sent during confinement
- Check in phone calls
- Grocery, meal, or medication delivery
- Transportation to essential medical appointments

For more information, visit the website (link below) or contact Jennifer, the Volunteer Center Director, at 651-789-4170, or [Jennifer@CommunityThreadMN.org](mailto:Jennifer@CommunityThreadMN.org)

<https://communitythreadmn.org/covid-19-community-response/>

## CITY MEETINGS

**All meetings of volunteer Commissions and Committees are CANCELED for April**

**April 21, 2020**

City Council Meeting  
7:00 P.M.

Please see the adjacent article regarding COVID-19 City Council Meeting Process Changes, and watch for more information on the City website and the City Facebook.

## 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	651-436-1346
Ward 4:	Randy Nelson	651-436-2479

## 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	715-220-1332
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

A lot has changed since I wrote to you last month. In the last several weeks some drastic measures have been put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19. During this time I got a message from a neighbor wanting to know how she could help our older neighbors and those with health issues deal with these challenges. She ended by saying, "We have plenty of citizens who can make Afton shine as a community."

In the midst of this pandemic, the thing that has been lifting me up has been seeing those people whose thoughts immediately turned from self to family and community. I could not agree more: We have plenty of citizens who will make Afton shine as a community.

The good news is as we began working on how to help those in need, we were contacted by a great non-profit that let us know they were working on a plan. The information on Community Thread is located on the front page of this newsletter. They will facilitate matching those who need assistance with those who can help. Do not hesitate to contact me, your council member, or the city of Afton if you need more information. We are fortunate to have residents, non-profits, faith organizations, and local business stepping up to help. Thank you!

As a city we have suspended our committees and commissions at least through April. We have put in place a plan for doing virtual meetings if that is required. We have also implemented new office procedures at City Hall to keep our staff and our residents as safe as possible. Complete details on this are located in this newsletter and on our city webpage. As a council, we will continue to do what we can to adapt and ensure the business of the city continues to get done. We are committed to doing our part to slow the spread of COVID-19, helping to keep our medical facilities from being overwhelmed.

So many are doing so much for all of us.

- Thank you to all our volunteer fire fighters and Chief Stanley.
- Thank you to our local deputies, Sheriff Starry, and our partners at Washington County.
- Thank you to all the doctors and nurses from Afton and beyond who are continuing to work to help deal with this crisis.
- Thank you to all of you who continue to go to work at grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations, transportation centers, and other vital businesses.
- Thank you to the farmers and food processors, and everyone working to keep the supply chain intact.

We owe them all a great debt of gratitude. I know we will come through this disruptive and scary situation stronger, and more unified as a community.

**-Bill**

### 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 20 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.

If you have additional questions, contact Barbara Ronningen at [bjronningen@yahoo.com](mailto:bjronningen@yahoo.com).



## March Meeting Highlights

### March 2, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting

#### The Commission:

- Held a public hearing for the Short Term Rentals Ordinance.
- Recommended approval of a variance application at 14186 Valley Creek Trail.
- Discussed development of a schedule of non-compliance fees and other enforcement tools.

### March 17, 2020 City Council Meeting

#### The Council:

- Approved a variance application at 14186 Valley Creek Trail.
- Adopted Ordinance 03-2020 regarding short term rentals.
- Approved payoff of Downtown Project Temporary Bonds.
- Discussed planning and procedures relating to the COVID-19 outbreak.

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

Contact Belwin directly for  
current information on April  
Events

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

## April Tour of Afton's Wastewater Treatment Facility CANCELED

The tour of the wastewater treatment site planned for April 30th is postponed indefinitely due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

## The Afton 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade Committee

New Policy – the committee has instituted a new policy for those desiring to participate in the 4th of July parade. We now require you to go to the parade's web site <http://aftonparade.com/>, click on the parade application tab, and fill out the "Parade Participant Application" on line form. There is no cost to participate in the parade but we now require this form be filled out prior to the parade. This measure is part of a continuing effort to make the parade as safe as possible.

Volunteers - needed to help manage the safety of pedestrians. Please help by volunteering the day of the parade. To do so contact me at [stan@aftonparade.com](mailto:stan@aftonparade.com).

Stan Ross,  
Chairman,  
Afton Parade Committee



## Washington County Environmental Center

The Environmental Center will remain open to the public, while county staff is closely monitoring the situation related to COVID-19.

Household hazardous waste management is an essential public service, like other utilities, and the Environmental Center is a key part of that service in the East Metro.

To ensure the health and safety of staff and customers, we are making the following changes to our drop-off procedures:

- Stay in your vehicle during drop-off.
- Items should be placed in a location that is easily accessible to staff; this will limit face to face interaction.
- During this time, staff will not need to scan your driver's license. Instead, you will be asked about your county of residence and/or your zip code.
- **The Free Product Room is currently closed.**

We will share updates through this e-mail list and at [www.co.washington.mn.us/envirocenter](http://www.co.washington.mn.us/envirocenter) if Environmental Center services/operations are adjusted further.

## METAL & TIRE RECYCLING DAY

Mark your calendars ~ Metal and Tire Recycling Day is scheduled for Saturday, June 6, 2020 at the City Garage, 1675 Stagecoach Trail. 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Watch your May Newsletter for more details.

## WHERE TO VOLUNTEER, DONATE MEDICAL SUPPLIES

### You may be able to help

The Center for Emergency Preparedness and Response, Minnesota Department of Health, is asking that offers for help be funneled to these two places during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Volunteers (people)** at <https://mnresponds.org>

**Products, medical equipment, venues** (from businesses, schools and universities, medical facilities) at [hsem.ppp@state.mn.us](mailto:hsem.ppp@state.mn.us)

For Department of Labor and Industry updates related to COVID-19, visit [www.dli.mn.gov/updates](http://www.dli.mn.gov/updates).



CITY OF AFTON  
3033 ST CROIX TRAIL SO  
P.O. BOX 219  
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PERMIT NO. 15

**Valley Library April 2020**

**All Washington County Library branches are closed. Learn more at [WashCoLib.org/COVID19](http://WashCoLib.org/COVID19).**

Visit the website, [WashCoLib.org](http://WashCoLib.org), for the latest library information.

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

**PATRON  
AFTON, MN 55001**

City of Afton  
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**INCOLOR**  
on the city website.



*Please recycle this newsletter after use.*

**Lower St Croix Valley FD Pancake Breakfast Postponed**

Due to the ever-changing COVID-19 virus, the Lower St Croix Valley Fire Department, following the guidelines set by MN Dept of Health and the CDC, will suspend nonessential gatherings until further notice. Ultimately and unfortunately, our annual spring pancake breakfast scheduled for Sunday, May 3rd will need to be postponed at this time.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause you. We believe the health and safety of our community and the health and safety of our fire department emergency responders is paramount at this crucial time and need to limit exposure and decrease the spread of the virus. In case of an emergency, please call 911. We will always be there for you!

- Lower St Croix Valley Fire Department

**Aggregate Industries Brush Days Schedule 2020**

**Saturdays**

**8:00 a.m. – 10:50 a.m.**

**(Gate locked at 11:00 a.m.)**

April 25

May 16	August 15
June 20	September 19
July 18	October 17

**NO construction lumber**

**BRUSH ONLY!**

Please stay in your vehicle while on-site, except for in the dump area to facilitate removal of brush from your vehicle or trailer.

*Located off St. Croix Trail, north of I-94 across from the Bungalow*

**Coronavirus (COVID-19): Small Business and Nonprofit Guidance & Loan Resources**

An SBA economic injury disaster loan declaration has been made for the state of Minnesota. The declaration made Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) accessible to Minnesota businesses and nonprofits during the COVID-19 pandemic. If the city of Afton can be of any assistance in this process, please let us know. For more detailed information, please follow the links below or type COVID-19 Disaster Loan into your internet search engine.

[https://www.sba.gov/page/coronavirus-covid-19-small-business-guidance-loan-resources?fbclid=IwAR3x42t\\_Mj2qku9fV-H-OGtcY-5J8\\_5pvobZFKkyZuNy-KpQor0KDgkj6hE](https://www.sba.gov/page/coronavirus-covid-19-small-business-guidance-loan-resources?fbclid=IwAR3x42t_Mj2qku9fV-H-OGtcY-5J8_5pvobZFKkyZuNy-KpQor0KDgkj6hE)

<https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>

Lower St Croix Valley Fire Department  
LSCVFD Ambulance COVID-19 Response Update  
Date: March 24, 2020

Due to the events in our world today, The Lower St Croix Valley Fire Department and Ambulance service has been working tirelessly with partners at Regions Hospital (Medical Director), The CDC and the MN Department of Health, as well as our mutual aid agencies, to develop response plans to keep, not only our valuable First Responders and EMT's safe, but to keep the residents that we serve safe as well.

Some highlights that residents need to be aware of during a 911 call for ambulance assistance:

1. All calls for EMS, including crashes and in-house medicals, dictate that patients are provided with a mask upon immediate arrival. For in-home medicals, prior to our Duty Officer or ambulance crew accessing the patient, family will be provided a mask at the door step to place on the patient's face. Other family members will be asked to leave the room to provide for proper distancing and other COVID-19 spread possibilities. In some cases, Dispatch will provide a call back number that will be forwarded to our crew to allow for a quick phone interview prior to arrival so that we can size-up the medical.
2. In the event of COVID-19 symptoms (Cough, Fever and Breathing Issues), patients may be asked to Shelter in Place or Self Transport to the hospital if they and the family are able to. We would provide contact to the destination hospital in this event to coordinate your arrival. If the LSCV ambulance or any mutual aid ambulance is to provide the transport, no family members may "ride-along", except in the case of a pediatric or special needs patient.
3. Consider sending a cell phone with the patient in the event that the destination hospital is diverted and changed to a more appropriate hospital. This happens frequently due to hospital staffing and bed loads.
4. Even though an in-home medical is not COVID-19 related, we will still practice universal precautions and social distancing as we do in our day-to-day lives now.

#### IF YOU THINK YOU'RE SICK:

CDC advises you to know your risk level and call the hospital ahead of time for possible testing and follow their advice. These symptoms make you at higher risk: fever, cough, difficulty breathing; being an older adult; other conditions like heart or lung disease. Just because you are displaying symptoms doesn't mean that you will be tested.

By calling your medical provider or local hospital prior to calling 911 puts less of a burden on the EMS system. Follow the provider's instructions referencing isolation and/or testing. They will advise you appropriately if they feel you need an emergent ambulance transport. You will notice that as we move through these times, that we are moving at a more methodical pace trying to keep you and us safe. Be assured that we are following guidelines established as an emergency transport provider.

Protect others by keeping that 6' distance when possible and don't be offended when asked to do so. Wear a face mask if sick and listen for instructions from a reliable agency. Follow all other prevention tips.

The LSCVFD will notify our Medical Director at Regions about patient screening responses and suspected cases whether there is a hospital transport or not. We will continue to follow CDC and MN Dept of Health procedures as we transfer patients into Emergency Department care at destination hospitals.

Any questions, please call your local medical provider or the LSCVFD at 651-436-7033.

Note: Above procedures are subject to change based on changing conditions.