

The Bridge

Connecting with our residents

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February • 2018

Message from the Mayor - The Interworking of a City Operation

During my time as Fire Chief some years ago, I had the experience of working with several departments in our City government. I was involved in putting together the budget for the Fire Department, emergency preparedness planning, and building and site plan safety review and I will not down play that because there are so many moving parts, it took a lot of effort from many people. In comparison, it was a very small part when compared to the entire operation of our City.

As we all know, City employees, individual City departments, and the City government as a whole, are easy targets for negative comments when it comes to taxes, rules, budgets, etc. By not having a full picture of the talent that City staff, City Council Members, and the citizens who sit on the boards and committees bring to the table, it's difficult to have a full appreciation of the complexity of operating a City.

Our City is very fortunate to have very experienced and department heads and employees. These dedicated people are on the job day-to-day and know how to work within set budgets and strive to do what is best for the City and its residents.

As I write this column, we are in the final stages of hiring a new City Administrator. We, as a Council, are focused on a candidate that will be able to step in with few issues, take over the operation, and bring new ideas and experience to the City.

The other major issue that is currently in discussion is a

community center. This is a project that is being undertaken by the Belle Plaine School District. Since part of the plan for the complex is to include a swimming pool, the school district has asked the City to become involved. This request comes at a good time. For several years the City has been looking at the most cost effective way to either repair or replace the existing pool due to the age, compliance, and condition of the current facility. I would ask that as citizens you take the time

and research the correct information and facts regarding this project, the potential benefits to the overall community and the correct financial impact numbers. Often times during public entity projects a lot of misinformation, misinterpreted facts, and personal opinions are shared freely. It's easier to hear and listen to this type of information than do your own research and make an educated decision. Please contact the Belle Plaine School District if you have questions.

As we look forward to winter heading to spring, it's always an exciting time of the year at City hall. Spring brings increased activity in terms of public and private projects. We are all continuing to work hard to attract additional businesses to the City which will help increase our tax base. Because of the recent growth in the residential sector, we are running low on new housing lots so we are working to get additional developments opened up to meet the new housing demand. It appears that 2018 will be another good year for new housing permits.

“Spring brings increased activity in terms of public and private projects.”

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Create Your Own Job – Start A Business

Make what you want, when you want -

Perhaps you have recently lost your job and are having trouble finding something that suits your needs or you are looking to adventure out on your own. John Endris, of Scott County's Open to Business has put together creative business ideas that could be operated right here in the Belle Plaine area with minimal start-up costs. We will highlight a few ideas in this column each month and try to spark your entrepreneurial spirit. If you are interested in starting your own business, Open to Business partners with Scott County CDA and can help with everything from helping to formulate your business plan to pointing you in the direction of appropriate financing opportunities. Their website is www.opentobusinessmn.org.

Community Development Spotlight

Check out these ideas -



- 1. Cross Country Ski Rental/ Guide Service & Mountain Bike Rental and Trails:** During the winter in the Twin Cities there is an avid community of cross country skiers. Cross country skiers utilize the chain of lakes in Minneapolis and a variety of locations in St. Paul, but those are packed and over used. Since this type of exercise attracts nature lovers and relies

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I would like to thank the City Staff, the City Council, and the Commissioners and Board Members for your continued dedication, vision and commitment to our citizens. I am looking forward to many more achievements in 2018 and continuing to make Belle Plaine a place we all want to call **HOME!**



Reminder of *Snow Removal Regulations*

Parking will not be permitted on residential streets during a snow emergency, when snow has accumulated to a depth of one-half (1/2) inch or more. Downtown parking will be posted as NO PARKING during a snow emergency. Don't let your vehicle get towed, sign up for Nixle, a free program which sends an e-mail and text message to your cell phone regarding snow emergencies and / or community information. Sign up for free at www.nixle.com.

Don't Let Your Vehicle Get Towed!



City Council Contacts:

Mayor, Christopher G. Meyer	612-756-0662
cmeyer@ci.belleplaine.mn.us	
Paul Chard	952-873-4568
pchard@ci.belleplaine.mn.us	
Cary Coop	612-964-1008
ccoop@ci.belleplaine.mn.us	
Theresa McDaniel	952-393-1654
tmcdaniel@ci.belleplaine.mn.us	
Ben Stier	952-292-4683
bstier@ci.belleplaine.mn.us	
Belle Plaine City Hall	952-873-5553
cityhall@ci.belleplaine.mn.us	

on that connection, advocates will travel to new sites to fulfill this passion. Since Belle Plaine has easy access to the Minnesota River, this seems to be a viable seasonal business opportunity. This could be ski rental, guided tours of the river, or lessons people could take (date nights). The operator could offset the seasonality of this business with mountain biking (rental and guides).

- Coffee, Smokes and Book Café:** This type of business could be a great fit for Belle Plaine given the active social scene in the Downtown area. Granted, this type of business generally has low average sales per person and has a tendency to attract "campers" (people who sit there all day), but there is an opportunity to do something unique with it. To discourage people from camping at a table all day and surfing the net, seating would need to be limited. Often, coffee and smokes establishments offer book exchanges and accept book donations, so this could be a great way to get people to stop in for coffee and browse some used books. If the business was set up more like a library than a typical coffee shop, then this endeavor could spawn book clubs, local literary events, and used book sales. Since Belle Plaine offers several affordable storefronts, an operator could have low operating costs and ample room to flourish.
- Promoter:** There is plenty of opportunity for a promoter in Belle Plaine. A promoter could host events such as: a marathon or mud run, a live music festival, a farmer's market, an art fair, a number of ethnic festivals, or even a paint-ball tournament. This business model relies on charging booths more money to be in the event than the permit and marketing costs. You will need to pay the performers less than the ticket cost (essentially sharing the profits with the performers). Someone interested in this would need to be a good manager, well organized, and digital savvy to keep marketing costs low.

Look for more ideas in the next newsletter!



February 2018 Government Calendar

5	Design Committee	5:15 p.m.
	City Council	6:30 p.m.
8	Public Works.....	9:00 a.m.
12	EDA	5:00 p.m.
	Planning Commission.....	6:30 p.m.
13	Public Safety.....	4:30 p.m.
19	President's Day.....	Offices Closed
20	Park Board.....	5:00 p.m.
	City Council	6:30 p.m.

218 N. Meridian St. • P. O. Box 129 • Belle Plaine, MN 56011
Phone: 952-873-5553 • Fax: 952-873-5509

www.belleplainemn.com



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