

# The Bridge

Connecting with our residents

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City of Belle Plaine

March • 2020

## Message from the Mayor: A Sense of Community

Christopher G. Meyer – Mayor

Over the past few years since being elected as Mayor, I have touched on the importance of community and community involvement. Recently I attended a larger conference in the Twin Cities and the theme for this gathering was “We are better together”. This statement really hit home on many levels for me. Reflecting on this idea in a community setting, it makes sense that it takes so many people to be involved in so many of the different aspects of our community. For me, the definition of “better together” means that all of us who have made the choice to make Belle Plaine our home and raise our families here all come together for the greater good of the community. As we get older, we look back on our lives and fondly remember when “times were different” or “life was easier” - I hear these sayings all of the time. With a much faster lifestyle these days and with so much technology, we sometimes do not make the same type of connections with other residents or community members that we had in those days gone by. I have the pleasure of knowing families in Belle Plaine who have lived here for multiple generations and families who are just establishing Belle Plaine as their favorite hometown. We have so many residents in our community with so much talent and expertise that we have to find ways to put this to use and find opportunities for them to come forward to be “better together”.

*We are  
better together*

One other topic I wanted to touch on is one that a friend of mine spoke about during a recent employee discussion that I attended. His theme was the idea of the “Two T’s”, which stands for trust and thankfulness. This idea goes along with my first thought of “better together”. To be successful in life, trust and thankfulness are two of the most important attributes

that a person needs to build on. A person needs to earn the trust of others, as well as, trust others. Fostering and building trust by and between citizens, elected officials and staff, will help our community move forward and be successful. The other “T” being thankfulness, also needs to be present in order for our community to build on for a positive future.

Recently, we had guests stay at our house from a larger Wisconsin city and from the Chicago area. During their stay, my wife and I were proud to take our friends on a tour of Belle Plaine. During the tour, they commented on a few things that were somewhat of a surprise to me. The first observation was the sense of pride we have in our community and how proud we were to show off our town. Both of these families

are involved in several groups and events in their larger cities, but do not feel the same sense of community that we do in a smaller city. The other observation they mentioned was the fact that everyone greeted us as we moved about town and that I knew so many people by name. They joked that I waved at everyone as I drove through town. To me this is just a natural thing to do - I did appreciate hearing the view from someone outside of our community.

I would ask that we all work towards the “better together” thought process and embrace the “Two T’s” to make our favorite hometown the best that it can be.

I would like to acknowledge our Police Chief Tom Stolee for his 20 years of dedicated service to our residents. Chief Stolee is a true believer in Community Policing and having his staff and officers treat people like people and to see the greater good in everyone. Thank you, Tom your service is very appreciated.

## Welcome Jason Wadsley!

Join us in welcoming Jason Wadsley as the newly appointed Aquatic Center Manager and Event Coordinator. Jason started his employment with the City on February 10th. We asked Jason a few questions so that we could get acquainted.

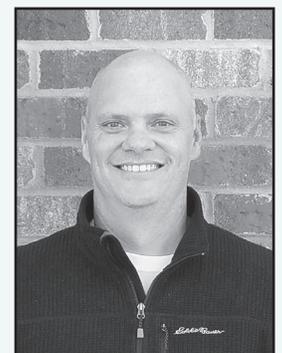
**As the Aquatic Center Manager and Event Coordinator, what will your primary focus be in the next few months?** I will be managing the new aquatic center and hockey rink and be working with the new and current lifeguards, aquatic staff members and warming house attendants to ensure a safe and fun atmosphere. I will also be working on developing new events and continuing the successful programs that utilize and highlight Belle Plaine parks and facilities.

**What factored into your decision to work for the City of Belle Plaine?** I consider Belle Plaine home. We have deep roots here, especially since our children are in school here and are involved in so many activities.

**Are there recreational amenities that you are surprised that Belle Plaine offers?** Yes, the Blaha Bird Sanctuary and the Archery Park.

### What is your background?

I was born and raised in a small farming community in northwest Iowa. I attended the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls where I got my Bachelor’s Degree in Recreation, Parks, and Leisure Services. I worked for Waconia Community Education running their youth recreation programs, leagues, and special events for the past 19 years.



**Family?** My wife, Beth, and I *Continued on page 2*

moved to Belle Plaine in 2003. We have two sons, Landon who is a fourth grader at Oak Crest Elementary School, and Owen who is a first grader at Chatfield Elementary School. Both boys are actively involved in sports and other activities. Beth has been working in Belle Plaine since 2005 for the Lutheran Home Association.

**Favorite family activity?** Our family enjoys outdoor activities like camping in the summer months and snow skiing in the winter. Beth and I enjoy watching our boys participating in their sports activities.

**On a lighter note, what is your favorite band?** Kip Moore – I’m a country western fan.

**Favorite spectator sport?** Football

**What is streaming on your T.V.?** The series “Yellowstone”.

## Census 2020: Everyone Counts

Watch for Census 2020 invitation letters arriving at your door in March. Your Census response influences infrastructure allocations, school funding, and business investment decisions, so your participation is needed. If that’s not enough of an incentive, your response is required by law.

Letters inviting you to complete the 2020 Census form will arrive first, followed by a reminder letter and a reminder postcard. If you do not respond to the Census count request by mid-April, a reminder letter and Census form will be mailed to you. In-person follow-up will occur if no response is received by May 1st.

It’s important to ensure that every member of your household as of April 1, 2020 is counted, that includes newborns, older individuals, and people who are not family members. People unsure if another Census responder included them, should submit a completed form as the Census Bureau has processes in place to resolve duplicate submissions.

As in past years, Census responses will be accepted by mail and by phone. New in 2020, responses will also be accepted online. Respond from anywhere, anytime, by using a mobile phone, tablet, laptop, or desktop computer. All online responses are encrypted to protect personal privacy.

The 2020 Census is safe and secure; your privacy is protected. It’s against the law for the Census Bureau to publicly release your responses in any way that could identify you or your household. By law, your responses cannot be used against you and can only be used to produce statistics.

For those looking for employment, there are local, flexible, temporary jobs available at the Census Bureau, apply today at [2020census.gov/jobs](http://2020census.gov/jobs).

Be on the lookout for 2020 Census information and please do your part to make sure everyone in Belle Plaine counts!



### Ask Your Mayor - ????

We are featuring a new segment in the newsletter called “Ask Your Mayor”. Perhaps you have wondered about the history of particular City organization like the Fire Department or how parks are designated. This is an opportunity for residents to ask questions of our Mayor and learn more about Belle Plaine. Email City Hall at [cityhall@ci.belleplaine.mn.us](mailto:cityhall@ci.belleplaine.mn.us) by the 15th of each month, and include “Ask the Mayor” in your subject line. The Mayor will answer questions each month to total 20 for the year celebrating 2020, so be sure to get your question in early!

### ANNOUNCING THE 2020 Community Conversation Dates

Hosted by:  
Belle Plaine City Council\* and Staff

Wednesday, May 13 - Downtown Plaza  
 Wednesday, June 10 - Union Square/Tiger Park  
 Wednesday, July 8 - Tour of City Facility (Tentative)  
 Tuesday, August 4 - National Night Out at Heritage Park  
 Wednesday, September 2 - Food Truck Night at the Downtown Plaza

\*There may be a quorum of the Belle Plaine City Council present

### Snow Removal Regulations

**Parking will not be permitted on residential streets** when snow has accumulated to a depth of one-half (½) inch or more. Downtown parking will be posted as NO PARKING during a snow emergency.

### City Council Contacts:

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### March 2020 Government Calendar

<b>2</b>	Design Committee .....	5:15 p.m.
	City Council .....	6:30 p.m.
<b>3</b>	Presidential Primary .....	7:00 a.m.
<b>9</b>	EDA .....	5:00 p.m.
	Planning Commission .....	6:30 p.m.
<b>10</b>	Public Safety .....	7:30 a.m.
<b>12</b>	Public Works .....	9:00 a.m.
<b>16</b>	Parks Commission .....	5:00 p.m.
	City Council .....	6:30 p.m.

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