

# The Bridge

Connecting with our residents

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City of Belle Plaine

May • 2019

## Message from the Mayor: Growth in a Small City

*Christopher G. Meyer – Mayor*

As a citizen of Belle Plaine, it is important to be aware of the challenges and issues that the City faces in its day-to-day operations. Belle Plaine is not unlike many other rural suburbs that have to manage issues dealing with growth. Growth of the City is something we have to prepare for regardless of whether it is something that we as citizens want to embrace or not.

As we all know, that due to our very convenient location between the Twin Cities and Mankato, it makes Belle Plaine a very desirable place to live and raise our families in a safe environment. With a very short drive, we can enjoy all that the metro has to offer; from college and national sporting events, to dining, museums, zoos, and concerts - the list is endless.

So how can managing growth be a challenge? Currently, we are experiencing an up-tick in residential building, which fills in our residential lot inventory. We are also seeing that many of our elderly residents are remaining in their homes, which puts pressure on the housing market, especially in the first-time homeowner category. Because of high land costs and development expenses, we have heard from many potential local and national developers that if additional residential lots were to become available at today's costs, the end-housing prices would be in the \$300,000 - \$400,000.00 price range. You can see that this has an impact on many of our young adults who want to either continue living in Belle Plaine or return after college. This group of people are faced with housing costs that may not be realistic for their budgets. This also puts extreme pressure on our rental market due to the limited number of units available and pushes up rental rates, which makes it hard for many of our residents to afford the rent.

The City is able to offer financial incentives to offset the increasing costs to assist residents and developers. Every city in our area is in competition for the same thing - residential

and commercial development. To stay competitive and attract these investment dollars, we need to "think outside the box" to ensure we are on the forefront.

We often hear comments about property taxes and the cost of water and sewer fees. The utility fees and property taxes are impacted by a variety of factors such as property values, tax base, and operational costs. Several years ago, the City made decisions to ensure that its infrastructure (water, sewer, parks, trails, public works, and public safety) would accommodate the current population and future growth by financially investing in these systems. With each year, many of these expenses are being paid down, residential and commercial growth will also reduce the impact on each property and resident. There are several residential and commercial development projects pending for this spring that will help in many of these areas.

As a City, we are committed to the needs of our residents and look for every opportunity to support them. As I mentioned in previous articles, there is also the problem of our population base falling short of the needed numbers for certain types of commercial development. We hear that while developers are considering Belle Plaine, they look at what would be a reasonable service area and calculate those numbers. In many cases, our population falls short of what many of these models require, which then has developers looking to other communities.

So again, some people do not want the City to grow and to remain static, but they also want the potential offerings and amenities of a larger city. You can see that it is a constant balancing act for the City Council and for Staff to manage these opportunities and ensure that best decisions are made for all of Belle Plaine. We remain committed to our "favorite hometown" and believe that we will continue on the most positive path forward.

*...We are  
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## Spotlight on - Public Works Department

This month we are spotlighting the Belle Plaine Public Works Department. This staff is not only experienced in a variety of trades including construction, heavy equipment operators and mechanics, they also hold many required licensures and certificates. These include; Certified Swimming Pool Operators, a Certified DOT Mechanic, CDL, Certified Heavy

Equipment Operators, Waste Water and Water Operators, Master and Certified Electricians, Tree Inspectors certified through the Minnesota Department of Forestry, CPR, Emergency Management Response, Tiger Watch, and an Accounting Degree for our in-house billing. On staff are also past and current Belle Plaine Firefighters and members of the volunteer ambulance

service.

The Public Works crew maintains approximately 50 miles of roadways and alleys throughout the City by sweeping the streets, fixing holes, painting stripes, and clearing snow. They also maintain the 330 acres of City owned property that includes the maintenance and monitoring of the City water and sewer facilities ensuring that

*Public Works Spotlight Continued*

the City has clean water and sanitary sewer discharge. Among the acreage are 109 acres of parkland for Belle Plaine residents to enjoy. Throughout the year, you will see some of the crew working at the annual Clean-Up Day, and assisting with set up for BBQ Days, German Days, St. Patrick's Day and other community events.

Notable projects the crew worked on in 2018 were constructing the Downtown Plaza and refurbishing the Hewey Vietnam era helicopter at Veteran's Park. This year, they will be assisting with the 2019 Street Construction Project and are currently assisting at the new Aquatic Center.

Community Service is important to these men and women and believe in being a part of the Belle Plaine community. They are all members of the Public Works Union and each year volunteer their time at the Santa Shack along with the Police Union.



Left to right bottom row: Public Works Superintendent Alan Fahey, Shannon Rose, Sarah Meyenburg, Kyle Theis. Top row: Mike Herrmann, Mark Herd, Josh Muehlenhardt, Mike Breeggemann, Nicholas Pollack, Nathan Bigaouette, Todd Otto.

If you have concerns or question please contact the Public Works Department at 952-873-6742. For after hour emergencies, call 952-658-9051.

**YOU ARE INVITED TO:**

*Community Conversation Artist Showcase*

Hosted by:  
Belle Plaine City Council\* and Staff

May 15, 2019 From: 5:30-7:30 PM  
At the Downtown Plaza

A one-night event open to local artists for display and sale of original art.

Visit with Artists: lana k. beck, Alan Hennen, Reanna Jakes, Ally Krommendyk, Amanda V. Judd, Layla Gardell and Barbara Page.

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

Find information about how you can be code compliant in the

**GUIDE TO  
CODE COMPLIANCE**

Brochures are available at City Hall, or at [www.belleplainemn.com](http://www.belleplainemn.com).

For more information, contact the Community Development Department.

**City Council Contacts:**

<b>Mayor, Christopher G. Meyer</b> <i>cmeyer@ci.belleplaine.mn.us</i>	<b>612-756-0662</b>
<b>Paul Chard</b> <i>pchard@ci.belleplaine.mn.us</i>	<b>612-685-8873</b>
<b>Cary Coop</b> <i>ccoop@ci.belleplaine.mn.us</i>	<b>612-964-1008</b>
<b>Renee LeMieux</b> <i>rlmieux@ci.belleplaine.mn.us</i>	<b>952-356-4126</b>
<b>Ben Stier</b> <i>bstier@ci.belleplaine.mn.us</i>	<b>952-292-4683</b>
<b>Belle Plaine City Hall</b> <i>cityhall@ci.belleplaine.mn.us</i>	<b>952-873-5553</b>

**May 2019 Government Calendar**

<b>6</b>	Design Committee .....	5:15 p.m.
	City Council .....	6:30 p.m.
<b>9</b>	Public Works .....	9:00 a.m.
<b>13</b>	EDA .....	5:00 p.m.
	Planning Commission .....	6:30 p.m.
<b>14</b>	Public Safety .....	4:30 p.m.
<b>20</b>	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](http://www.belleplainemn.com)

