

# The Bridge

Connecting with our residents

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City of Belle Plaine

November • 2020

## Message from the Mayor: Early Winter!

Christopher G. Meyer – Mayor

We often joke that Minnesota has two seasons - early winter and late winter. It happened again this year! We were raking and hauling leaves one day, then shoveling the great white stuff the next day. Now early November looks like there will be some high 60-degree days, so put the shovel aside and pick up the rake again. In visiting with our Public Works Superintendent, the variable weather change can be a challenge for his department as they go from their normal fall clean up and shutdowns to plowing snow. At any rate, they are quick to adapt and can handle these challenges with no problem! As we move towards the new season, please remember that the parking regulations regarding snow are in effect. So please be mindful of the weather and move your vehicles as needed.

By the time you are reading this article, the election will be over. We would like to take the opportunity to thank the election judges and staff who work hard making sure that our election process is seamless and all of the State and Federal guideline requirements are followed. If working with the elections is of interest to you, please watch as the next elections approach as there is always a need for election judges and additional help.

Recently, there have been several serious house fires within our community. We would like to acknowledge our Public Safety Departments for their quick response and their aid to these families during their time of need. We can also be proud of our community for coming together in assisting

Stay safe  
and  
healthy!

the families by providing food, clothing, and financial help. As difficult as these situations are to deal with, living in a community of neighbors who really care makes it a bit easier to move forward. If you were one of those who stepped up, thank you for helping. I would ask that we all continue to help our friends and neighbors, as we are able.

Another topic that needs to stay in our awareness is that of our mental health in regards to COVID. Many of our residents have been sheltered in their homes for an extended period with limited interaction with others. There are opportunities to take part in some activities through our community education and recreation departments, school activities, as well as through civic and church organizations. The organizations are operating within the required guidelines with the hope of ensuring our health and safety. So, for your own good or that of your family members, take advantage of these offerings and participate as much as you feel comfortable. Winter will be long and we all need to find ways to be active for our physical well-being, as well as for our mental health.

Snow will start falling again soon, so please watch the City website ([www.belleplainemn.com](http://www.belleplainemn.com)) and newsletter for information regarding the skating and hockey rinks, as well as our new sledding hill. Get out and enjoy the new season with enthusiasm and enjoy all that our favorite Home Town has to offer!

Stay Safe & Healthy!!

## CARES Act Business and Resident Relief Grants Still Available

Businesses and residents facing challenges related to COVID-19 may still access CARES Act funding through local grant programs.

The Business Relief Grant reimburses businesses up to \$10,000 for COVID related expenses including business interruption. As of the writing of this article, the City has approved grants to 20 businesses totaling \$120,000. The average grant amount is just over \$6,000.

The Resident Relief Grant helps residents with past due rent or mortgage payments. As of the writing of this article, the City has approved grants to 23 residents totaling \$40,000. The average grant amount is approximately \$1,800. Grant program applications will be accepted until funds are depleted or until the program expires.

Access grant guidelines and applications at [www.belleplainemn.com](http://www.belleplainemn.com) or contact Cynthia Smith Strack at City Hall.

Visit [belleplainemn.com](http://belleplainemn.com) more information.

## Welcome Chief of Police Terry Stier

On September 2, 2020, Terry Stier took the Oath of Office to become Belle Plaine's Chief of Police. Prior to his appointment to Chief, Terry was Detective Sergeant at the Belle Plaine Police Department.



## Grants Available For Residential Property Owners

The City of Belle Plaine Economic and Development Authority has grants available for residential property owners to improve the energy efficiency of the property. If you own a residential property within the City and it needs updating, the project may be eligible for a matching grant up to \$1,000. This year, \$10,000 was allocated to the grant with funds still available. The EDA reviews the grant programs each year and funds are usually available starting in February.

Matching grants of up to \$1,000 are available for façade and energy efficient improvements to owners of any type of residential property. The goal of this grant is to reduce blight within the City of Belle Plaine by assisting persons with low or moderate incomes for the purpose of renovating or rehabilitating existing homes with exterior or energy efficient improvements. Owners of homesteaded residential properties can apply for funding to assist with several types of projects to upgrade the energy efficiency of the house and may be eligible for exterior upgrades. Exterior upgrades can include replacement of windows, siding, roofs, and shingles. Other energy efficient upgrades can include HVAC equipment, household appliances, and solar energy panels. Landscaping and exterior painting may be eligible provided they accompany other eligible activities. A building permit will be necessary

for most projects; the grant administrator will let the property owner know if you will need to get a building permit. Owners of rental property can apply for the façade and energy efficient improvement grant providing the proposed improvements assist in remedying conditions that may potentially decrease the property's value. Applicants must apply for the grant and provide evidence of blight on their properties.

Grants are awarded for one half of the project cost up to \$1,000. Upon approval, if an eligible project quote is for \$3,000, the grant will be \$1,000. If the eligible project quote is for \$1,500, the grant will be \$750. The EDA will process the payment upon proof of paid invoice and close of building permits.

To participate in the program, you must be income qualified. Grantees must provide evidence that they are of low or moderate income as determined by the Low (80%) Income Limits for Scott County, Minnesota, reported annually by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Even though the year is coming to a close, there is still time to apply for either grant this year. Call City Hall at 952-873-5553 for more information or visit the City website at [www.belleplainemn.com/housing-redevelopment-authority](http://www.belleplainemn.com/housing-redevelopment-authority).

# Shop Local

# Support Our Local Businesses

# Dine Local

### 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 (½) 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](http://www.nixle.com).

## November 2020 Government Calendar

- 2 Design Committee.....5:15 p.m.
- City Council ..... 6:30 p.m.
- 3 General Election..... 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
- 9 Public Works..... 9:00 a.m.
- EDA ..... 5:00 p.m.
- Planning Commission..... 6:30 p.m.
- 10 Public Safety..... 7:30 a.m.
- 11 Veterans Day Observed ..... City Offices Closed
- 12 City Council Special Meeting ..... 5:30 p.m.
- 16 Parks Commission ..... 5:00 p.m.
- City Council ..... 6:30 p.m.
- 18 OAA Blakeley Township ..... 6:00 p.m.
- 26 - 27 Thanksgiving Observed..... City Offices Closed

### City Council Contacts:

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