

NEWSLETTER

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MAYOR JOHNSON'S LETTER

What a beautiful spring we have had this year. Last year, the wettest in history, made it almost impossible to get spring crops planted. This spring field work was done under almost perfect conditions. Crops look great, except where they were drowned out from the heavy rains the weekend of May 16th and 17th and the following hot weather. I finished the first cutting of hay the second week of June and last year I was just starting around the 4th of July.

Congratulations to our 2020 High School and College graduates. This has been a rough year for them with the schools closing, distance learning the norm and all the special events and open houses canceled. Some very inventive processes were used to make certain events special, but the hoped for memories still linger, I'm sure.

Our Independence resident, June Sutton, (continued page 2)



Mayor
Marvin Johnson

MEETINGS

City Council

1st & 3rd Tuesdays at 6:30 pm

Planning Commission

3rd Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

**Workshops are posted
as scheduled**

www.ci.independence.mn.us



Congratulations to Long-Time City Councilmember Lynn Betts!

Lynn Betts, who is serving her 4th term in the City Council (which she began in 2001), has won the Minnesota Women in City Government award for the positive impact she's had in not only the government but the community. Before her time on the City Council, she served on the Parks Commission from 1994-2001. She was very instrumental in helping develop our beautiful Pioneer Park as well as getting a number of events in the City up and running. She is a strong voice for those needing help and guidance. She has played the piano at her church in Mound and taught piano lessons for years. We are very proud of Lynn for her well-deserved award. Thank you Lynn!

Just celebrated her 105th birthday on June 14th. Congratulations! The Sutton farm is located on the western border of Independence. June's sister, Florence, was my first grade school teacher in our one room country school, Armstrong, located just south of the Lewis Cemetery on County Road 90 and Main Street. Drinking water was brought to the school in pails from the neighbors home. Two "out houses" were the plumbing facilities. The school had electricity and in later years we had a modern forced air oil furnace for heating. The school was closed and sold at a public auction for \$1500.00 in 1949 when the school district became a part of the new consolidated Orono School District.

Since our last newsletter, I can't believe the way the world has changed. My calendar book has all events canceled and zoom meetings added. Fortunately with today's technology we have been able to keep functioning somewhat normally. I find it strange to use so little gas in my car. The one nice part of Zoom meetings is that I can keep checking my watch, run the household on a scheduled time wash my face, comb my hair, have agenda and supporting materials on hand, sit down at the computer and I'm ready for the meeting. It has worked but is certainly not the best way for public participation. Plus my computer chair is not built for comfort!

The Council is looking forward to meeting in person soon with staff. However, it will be a period of time before the general public can participate in person in the public forum. Lets hope that we don't have a second wave of Covid19 and have to revert back to the procedures started in mid-March.

I did have several calls from our residents regarding their safety during the disturbances in the metro area. I assured them that our Public Safety Department had collaborated with many of our neighboring departments and had a plan of action. Also, knowing that our staff was not working elsewhere and that we had double patrol on during night shifts gave callers a new comfort level.

The major summer event to keep in mind is the August 11 Partisan Primary. On that ballot is the selection of a U.S. Senate Candidate and a vote to narrow down the field of our Hennepin County Commissioner candidates. If you do not wish to vote in person, request an absentee ballot very soon. The ballot includes four political parties, but you can only vote in one party, the same as it has been for years. The national Presidential election is November 3rd this year.

Work is continuing on the refinements of the County Road 92 north and south intersection with U.S. Highway 12 plans. Some type of an "Open House" presentation will be planned in the near future. This work and the County Road 90 and U.S. Highway 12 round-a-bout is to be built next year.

The City was able to secure an extremely low rate of interest on a bond, so presently an overlay is being done on several miles of our blacktop city streets at a lower cost than estimated. We will also be doing some much needed remodeling on City Hall and the Public Safety building.

With so many unknowns in the future, I want to wish for you a safe summer and hope that we can see more normal future ahead.

Marvin D. Johnson, Mayor



Burn Permits

Burn permits are issued through West Hennepin Public Safety.

You may come in or call 763-479-0500 for more information.



**Chief Gary
Kroells**

PUBLIC SAFETY NEWS CHIEF'S DESK **WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY**

Director Gary Kroells

Following the death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, Minnesotans, our country, and the world were horrified and appalled by his death. West Hennepin Public Safety (WHPS) is committed to working with our state lawmakers, stakeholders, and police commissioners to review our use of force policies and procedures. We must make real changes to ensure excessive and inappropriate use of force does not occur at WHPS.

To keep current on best practice policies and changes in Federal, State and Tribal policies, WHPS has utilized Lexipol Policy Services since 2013. They also review all changes in state legislation, case law and evolving best practices throughout the country. Lexipol utilizes Minnesota state-specific policies vetted by public safety attorneys and law enforcement professionals. Over 3,000 law enforcement agencies among 35 states use Lexipol, including 84 out of 87 County Sheriff Offices in Minnesota. WHPS is committed to transparency with our policies and have posted our complete policy manual on our website www.westhennepin@westhennepin.com.

In reviewing use of force incidents between 2015-2019, WHPS Officers handled 39,610 incident reports, arrested 1,207 individuals, and helped 496 people during a mental health crisis. In these five years WHPS averaged 12 use of force incidents per year with a total 58 use of force cases. Thirty-three (33) incidents involved soft empty hand control escorts, 3 hard empty hand, 6 display Taser incidents, 18 display weapon cases, one taser deployment on a suicidal male who rushed officers and wanted to end his life, and zero cases involving deadly force. In all 58 response to resistance documented cases by WHPS Officers, not one single complaint of excessive force was received.

As required by law, the Minnesota Board of Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) regulates the licensing for every law enforcement officer in Minnesota. Officers are required to have 48 hours of training every three years to maintain an active peace officer license. That continuing education averages out to 16 hours per year.

On July 1, 2018, the chief law enforcement officer for every state and local law enforcement agency is required to provide training in the areas of crisis intervention and mental illness crisis, conflict management and mediation and recognizing and valuing community diversity and cultural differences to include implicit bias. Each officer is required to attend 16 hours of training in these categories every three years.

In review of our training record between 2015-2019, each WHPS Officer trained over 60 hours per year, far exceeding the POST Board requirements. Training is vital to the growth of our officers' skills. We will continue to push for increased training focusing on de-escalation involving use of force. (continued p.4)

WHPS has utilized mobile video recorders in our patrol squads for over twenty years. In 2018 WHPS added Viridian FACT DUTY Weapon Mounted Cameras to each patrol officer's duty weapon. When our officers remove their weapon from their holster the incident is recorded by a weapon mounted camera. In 2019 all patrol squads were updated with new video recorders. Our agency is actively researching the addition of body cameras for each patrol officer.



WHPS Officers are proud and honored to serve the citizens of Maple Plain and Independence. Our agency will continue to evaluate our policies and procedures and will work tirelessly to provide the best police services to our communities.

NIGHT TO UNITE POST PONED!

SAVE THE DATE OCTOBER 6TH, 2020

Please join the Minnesota Crime Prevention Association and hundreds of communities throughout the State of Minnesota for the annual Night to Unite (NTU), Minnesota's statewide celebration which normally takes place on the first Tuesday of August of every year has been delayed until the fall due to COVID-19.

West Hennepin Public Safety and the State of Minnesota is recommending a delay in your celebration until the first Tuesday in October due to the COVID-19 pandemic. More information to follow in the coming months from West Hennepin, City of Independence, and the City of Maple Plain. Save the date of October 6, 2020, for future Night to Unite events.



State law limits City responsibility for sewer back-ups because the City does not have exclusive control of the City's sanitary sewer system. Damage can occur to homes and property for which the City will not be legally liable. As a result, a prudent homeowner may wish to discuss purchasing additional coverage with their homeowner's insurance carrier/agent.

Note to Residents with City Sewer:

***It is urgent that residents on city sewer discontinue the use of "flushable wipes". The system is severely compromised due to the flushing of "wet wipes" or "disposable wipes".** During the past nine months approximately \$4000.00 was spent on the system due to pump damage from wipes.

After wet wipes are flushed they exit to the city sewer system but unlike toilet paper they fail to disintegrate. They clog pumps, causing them to break down and redirect stagnant waste water back into your homes. So-called flushable wipes are a growing hazard to public health across the country.

Please help control the cost of our system as the City is working to maintain our sewer system as efficiently as possible. The only paper that should be flushed is toilet paper.

Additionally, do not dump cooking grease and oils down the drain. Flushing out the grease with hot water will not work either; this only causes a build up further down the drain and eventually contributes to stoppage in the lateral or sewer pipes.

For more information contact Public Works at 763-479-0530.



Did you know?

Approximately 98 percent of wildfires in Minnesota are caused by humans.

Smokey Bear was created in 1944 and reminds us that “Only You Can Prevent Wildfires.”

More than 50 wildfires are started each year in Minnesota by campfires that are not completely extinguished, too large or unattended.

Campfire Safety

- **Use a fire ring and build your fire at least five feet away from any combustible material.**
- **Keep a bucket of water nearby to put out the fire.**
- **Keep a kid-free zone of three feet around the campfire.**
- **Never leave your campfire unattended.**
- **Check burning restrictions with the DNR before starting your campfire.**



WWW.MAPLEPLAINFIRE.COM

1645 Pioneer Avenue, Maple Plain, MN 55359 763-479-0520

Orono page goes here....



VOTE FROM THE SAFETY OF YOUR HOME BY REQUESTING AN ABSENTEE BALLOT

All Minnesotans can submit a request for an absentee mail ballot for both upcoming elections-August 11 and November 3. Residents voting absentee by mail instead of in person on election day will help the City maintain social distancing. For the August 11 Primary, Hennepin County encouraged Cities to reduce or eliminate absentee voting at City Hall. Therefore, the City will NOT be holding absentee voting in City Hall.

Go to mnvotes.org and select 'other ways to vote' to request your absentee ballot. Your request will be processed, then Hennepin County will be able to mail you a ballot as soon as the absentee balloting period opens, which is 46 days before the election. For the upcoming primary absentee balloting begins June 26. Allowing plenty of time for this process will ensure it gets to you, you can cast your vote, and return it to Hennepin County before Election Day. Your ballot will come with instructions and a return envelope. Voters can track the status of their mailed ballot to ensure their vote has been counted at: <https://mnvotes.sos.state.mn.us/AbsenteeBallotStatus.aspx>.

In case you aren't comfortable with balloting by mail, any qualified voter may also go prior to election day to:

Hennepin County Government Center

300 South Sixth St.

Minneapolis, MN 55487



NLC Service Line

Warranty Program by HomeServe

The City of Independence is notifying residents of a program provided through the National League of Cities (NLC) Service Line Warranty Program administered by HomeServe. This program offers affordably priced emergency repair/ replacement plans that address aging sewer infrastructure and interior plumbing. Many homeowners are not aware of their responsibility for the portion of the service line until that have a repair emergency. Information will be sent out to residents in the mail soon but if there are questions in the meantime please call 1-866-974-4801 or visit:

www.NLC.org/serviceline

**CITY OF
INDEPENDENCE**

**1920 County Road 90
Independence, MN 55359
Ph.: 763-479-0527
Fax: 763-479-0528
tgronstal@ci.independence.mn.us**

City Officials

Mayor– Marvin Johnson

City Council

Brad Spencer

Lynn Betts

Ray McCoy

Steve Grotting

City Staff

Administrator/ City Planner– Mark Kaltsas

Public Works Director– Shawn Bode

Building Inspector– Bruce Satek

Assistant City Administrator– Beth Horner

Administrative Assistant– Trish Gronstal

City Officials

Planning Commissioners

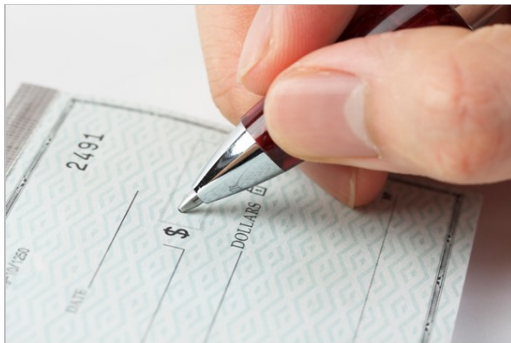
Robert Gardner

Leith Dumas

Tom Palmquist

Steve Thompson

Anita Volkenant



**PAY
YOUR SEWER
BILL ONLINE!**

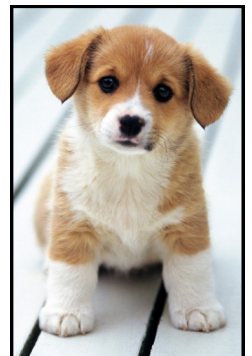
Tired of writing a
check every quarter
of forgetting to send
it and having to

check! Sign up online through “pay bill” on the City
website and schedule your quarterly payments to be sent
automatically.

www.ci.independence.mn.us

**Love your
dog?**

**Get them a
lifetime
license for
\$20!**



*Do you have a new puppy or just have
not yet purchased a license for your
dog? Fill out the application on the city
website to register your furry family
member today!*