



Mayor's Column

By Dan Denno

COVID, taxes, and the essential government worker

Well, here we are coming up to the yearly anniversary of our state closing down our local businesses, putting our residents out of work, not allowing our residents to practice their religious faith freely or their right of assembly. If this seems like all I write about, please note that the owner of the SRO compared it to being in the movie "Groundhog Day", getting ready to open, opening, getting ready to close, closing, then doing it all over again. I feel that just about the time we almost rid ourselves of these restrictions, they get thrown right back at us. The governor has stated that he feels bad because COVID has been ruining our economy. I do not see COVID causing our economy to collapse, I see the state of Minnesota collapsing our economy. As the city council has stated multiple times, we feel that all these actions are unconstitutional. We have three large bar/restaurants in our city that have been hit hard by these edicts. At the Oak Roads Grill a big concern is that loyal employees had to get other jobs in order to get by and are not available to come back to work at the restaurant. The manager there commented that it is very difficult to schedule the employee's shifts because the rushes are completely unpredictable. Now that these two businesses are allowed to reopen AGAIN they are both very appreciative of the support from the local residents. They wanted to give everyone a big "THANK YOU". The Refuge used to have weddings all year long but have been closed ever since golf season ended. These are just some of the largest public businesses that we have in the city that have been drastically affected. There are many smaller businesses that have been affected in the city, many just closing their doors and going out of business. Those that have not been affected by loss of income or business can consider themselves to be part of the fortunate group.

As we move forward as a growing city, there are

certain things that we need to keep up or upgrade which will eventually cause some tax increases. We try to maintain an open and transparent government, and we want everyone to be aware of large expenses in the future. One of the items that we are looking at upgrading is our fire station at the City Hall. In order to maintain a safe working environment for our firefighters we are looking at changing some of the existing bays to different functions and adding some new bays. As always, the city council is very concerned about getting the most value for your tax money without spending for things that aren't necessary, logical or of value. This will be somewhat of a drawn-out process while we look at some designs to make sure we have what we need without getting what we don't need. The other area that we do upkeep on a yearly basis are the roads. After a road is 20 years old we do just an overlay as it is needed. However, after a road is over 40 years old the upkeep is much more expensive, requiring a grind up of the existing road and a new surface installed. We have many roads in the city that are starting to get to that 40 year age and will start requiring a more expensive repair. We have been discussing this issue over the past two years and will start determining what the financial needs will be. These are the two most expensive items coming up in the future. Even though we may be looking at raising taxes a little in the future, we are still proud to be the lowest taxed city in Anoka County.

The state government, while shutting down hundreds of businesses and churches, made sure that all of its employees were essential workers, and none of its employees were furloughed without pay. While people throughout the state lose income due to the shutdowns the governor is proposing a budget that has a 10% increase over the last budget with an expected personal tax increase of 10% and a corporate tax increase of 15%, all because the state doesn't want to trim any of its expenses. So while your city government is always looking for ways to keep the budget from increasing, the state government takes your tax savings from you in order to keep growing their budget and growing their regulations. Instead of trying to cut red tape, the regulation and tax train keeps chugging along, causing more expenses for cities and counties, and more taxes for you.

Keep the faith and pray for a better year. You all deserve one. Have a fun summer.

2021 City of Oak Grove Summary Budget Data

The purpose of this report is to provide summary 2021 budget information concerning the City of Oak Grove to interested citizens. The budget is published in accordance with Minnesota Statutes Section 471.6965. This budget is in summary form: the complete budget may be examined at Oak Grove City Hall, 19900 Nightingale Street Northwest, Oak Grove, MN 55011. The city council approved this budget on November 30, 2020.

Budgeted Governmental Funds (General and EDA)	2020 Budget	2021 Budget
Revenues		
Property Taxes	2,343,631	2,503,279
Special Assessments	-	5,000
Licenses and Permits	201,000	202,500
Intergovernmental Revenues	357,153	295,896
Charges for Services	5,000	5,000
Fines and Forfeits	25,000	20,000
Interest on Investments	10,250	10,250
Miscellaneous	26,000	28,283
Other Financing Sources	-	-
Total Revenues	2,968,034	3,070,208
Expenditures		
General Government	730,048	740,092
Public Safety	1,162,619	1,172,347
Public Works	568,622	512,932
Culture and Recreation	72,817	75,093
Conservation of Natural Resources	13,828	12,898
Economic Development	14,400	8,000
Streets and Highway Construction	-	-
Capital Outlay	123,500	176,500
Transfers to Other Funds	200,000	300,000
Miscellaneous	82,200	72,346
Total Current Expenditures	2,968,034	3,070,208



Sunday, March 14

Is the perfect time to remember to change the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. It's also a good idea to check your detectors once a month.

Recycling – Save the Date!

Spring Recycle Day is Saturday, April 17.

Recycle day is held at the Public Works garage from 9:00 a.m. until noon. The Public Works Garage is located at 815 Viking Boulevard.

Recycle tires, appliances, electronics, scrap metal, and fluorescent bulbs. Paper shredding will be available to shred your confidential or miscellaneous documents. For more information please contact City Hall.



Building Department Inquires

Please send all permit applications and plans to permits@rumrivercc.com.

Please refer to your Plan Review Comment Sheet for the assigned inspector and contact information to schedule an inspection. For permits that do not require review, email inspections@rumriver.com or call 763-331-7722.



City Administrator's Updates

Loren Wickham
CITY ADMINISTRATOR

2021 Budget & Levy

The City Council adopted the final tax levy of \$2,503,279 for 2021. The 2021 tax rate is 21.39% down slightly from 2020. A copy of the 2021 Summary Budget is available on page 2 of this newsletter.

City Council Changes

Congratulations to Paul Tradewell and Mike Wylie on their re-election and election to the City Council. Thank you to Councilmember Lawrence for his many dedicated years to the City of Oak Grove. Councilmember Lawrence was recognized for his years of service at the December 14, 2020, City Council meeting.

City Staff Changes – Promotions and New Hires

Congratulations to Jessica Rieland, Matt Anderson, and Rob Engler on their recent promotions. Jessica Rieland was appointed City Clerk last fall, Matt Anderson was appointed Public Works Director after Tim Smith retired, and Rob Engler was appointed Fire Chief in September. Katie Kalland was hired as a part-time administrative assistant last fall. Welcome, Katie. Justin Overby was hired in Public Works as a street maintenance worker. They are all great additions to the Oak Grove team, and we are happy to have them on board.

New Fire Fighters

The following firefighters were hired in 2020 by the Oak Grove Fire Department (OGFD): Bryce Gilbertson, Ben Couch, Jared Nichols, and Mark Ward. Gilbertson, Couch, and Nichols graduated from the Anoka County Fire

Academy Class of 2020. Congratulations and welcome to the team.

Ben Couch resides in Nowthen with his girlfriend, April, and has been a part of the Oak Grove Fire Department since February 2020. He loves snowmobiling and fixing vehicles in his spare time. He also works at Our Farm Christmas Trees in Oak Grove full-time when he is not at the fire department. Since elementary school, he has wanted to become a firefighter and has a passion for helping his community and informing families about basic fire safety. He is looking forward to serving the Oak Grove community and being a part of the OGFD family.



Ben Couch

Bryce Gilbertson grew up in East Bethel and went to St. Francis High School. He graduated from St. Cloud State University with a bachelor's degree in business management and currently works at Medtronic. He moved to Oak Grove in 2019 and has been a part of the fire department for six months.



Bryce Gilbertson

Tim Smith Retires

Public Works Director Tim Smith retired late last fall. Thank you for your 50+ years of dedication and service to the residents of Oak Grove. It is much appreciated. Smith's career started when Oak Grove was still a township with many gravel roads. He left the City in a good position with the Public Works Crew he developed and his commitment to quality road maintenance. Smith did a great job taking care of the township and city roads for many years. Oak Grove has the best roads in the county because of his leadership. Enjoy your retirement, and we wish you all the best.

(LEFT) Tim Smith early in his career with Oak Grove Public Works pictured with his father (right).

(RIGHT) Tim Smith by an Oak Grove road grader with his grandchildren.



2021 Construction Projects

The City is in the process of putting the 2021 Road Improvement Projects out for bid. The City Council will consider awarding the bid to the lowest responsible bidder at an upcoming City Council meeting. The tentative list includes overlay projects for the neighborhoods of Swanson Villas of lake George, Walden Estates, and Cedar Area. Anoka County will overlay 181st Avenue NW from CSAH 9 to CSAH 78 in Oak Grove this year. To learn more about all of these projects, see the maps below for additional information or visit the 2021 Road Improvement Projects section of the City's website www.ci.oak-grove.mn.us.



— Overlay 2021



EXHIBIT A
2021 STREET IMPROVEMENTS
OAK GROVE
ANOKA COUNTY, MN

New Rescue Vehicle in Service

The Oak Grove Fire Department took delivery of a new rescue vehicle in November, and it will be located at Station #1, in the City Hall building. Due to community growth, the department has implemented a duty crew program, and a smaller truck was needed to respond to medical emergencies. But the new rescue was designed to be a multi-purpose vehicle, and it is also capable of going to vehicle accidents and assisting at structure fires. The fire department partnered with Custom Fire Apparatus to design an ultra high-pressure foam system commonly used in Europe and is gaining popularity in the United States. This system introduces foam into the water, which is then atomized into tiny particles that absorb more heat than a standard firefighting nozzle. The new truck is also equipped with battery-operated rescue tools for faster deployment replacing the older style. The City now has a rescue truck at both fire stations to better serve residents and respond to emergencies quickly.



Oak Grove Tree Lighting

Thank you to the Oak Grove Parks Commission and the generous sponsors, A Family Tree & Brush Service, Agape Moments Photography, Integrated Protection Systems (IPS), Wrap 1 Signs and Graphics, and former mayor Mark Korin. They made the first Oak Grove Tree Lighting Event possible.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions on group gatherings, the City had to cancel the public event. The tree was lit through January 31, and residents could enjoy the sight at their leisure. For more information on the event, visit www.ci.oak-grove.mn.us/events. The 2021 tree lighting is in the planning stages. If you are interested in being a sponsor, volunteer, or food vendor, please contact City Hall at 763-404-7000 or info@ci.oak-grove.mn.us.



2021 Official Newspaper – *Star Tribune*

The City's official newspaper for publishing legal notices is the *Star Tribune*. Legal notices are available at www.startribune.com and on the City's website, at City Hall, and the Recycling Drop-Off Center at 19045 Main Street NW.

Oak Wilt

Oak Wilt is a fungus that kills hundreds of mature oak trees annually. New infection sites occur when oaks are damaged, cut or pruned during the months of April, May, June and July. Once a new infection site is established,



the fungus can spread to neighboring trees through their root systems. It is important to remember not to cut/prune oak trees during these months. Infected trees should be removed the following winter and chipped, burned, or sealed with plastic to limit the number of fungal spores available during the spring months. Infected wood

should not be moved offsite. If you do need to prune or cut down an oak tree make sure you do it by the end of March or during the winter months.

PUBLIC alert

City alerts can be received as an automated SMS text message, email or phone call. This service will be used to notify residents of important information.

To sign up or if you are enrolled and do not receive the message, please contact the City at 763-404-7000 or email admin@ci.oak-grove.mn.us to verify your registration.



The City of Oak Grove values its local businesses. To support and promote the success of

commercial, industrial, and home-based businesses in our community, the City has launched a "local business directory" page on its website. To see a list of Oak Grove business, or if you would like to have your home-based business listed on the City's Local Business Directory page, please visit the city's website at www.ci.oak-grove.mn.us/business

If you have a local business in Oak Grove and would like to be featured in an upcoming newsletter or interested in advertising, please contact City Administrator Loren Wickham at admin@ci.oak-grove.mn.us or 763-404-7075.



19900 Nightingale Street NW
Oak Grove, MN 55011
www.ci.oak-grove.mn.us

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Website
www.ci.oak-grove.mn.us

City Hall
General Information
19900 Nightingale Street NW
Oak Grove, MN 55011
Phone: 763-404-7000
Fax: 763-404-7001
Monday-Friday
except holidays
8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Anoka County
Sheriff's Office
(Police non-emergency)
763-427-1212

Fire & Police
Emergency
911

City Council

Mayor	Dan Denno	ddenno@ci.oak-grove.mn.us 763-443-4729
Council Member	Weston Rolf	wrolf@ci.oak-grove.mn.us 612-385-4036
Council Member	Paul Tradewell	pault@ci.oak-grove.mn.us 612-910-7577
Council Member	John West	jwest@ci.oak-grove.mn.us 763-250-1740
Council Member	Mike Wylie	mwylic@ci.oak-grove.mn.us 612-845-5103

City Staff Directory

City Administrator	Loren Wickham	lwickham@ci.oak-grove.mn.us 763-404-7075
City Clerk	Jessica Rieland	jrieland@ci.oak-grove.mn.us 763-404-7007
Building Official	Andy Schreder, Rum River Construction 763-291-3704
Account Specialist	Lisa Hart	lhart@ci.oak-grove.mn.us 763-404-7022
Public Works Director	Matt Anderson	manderson@ci.oak-grove.mn.us 763-434-1441
Fire Chief	Rob Engler	rengler@ci.oak-grove.mn.us..... 763-404-7000

Monthly Meeting Schedule

City Council	Second and last Mondays 7:00 p.m.
Planning Commission	Third Thursday 7:00 p.m.
Parks Commission	Third Wednesday 6:30 p.m.

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