



BIRCHWOOD VILLAGE NEWS



City of Birchwood Village, MN

Winter 2019

CITY OF BIRCHWOOD VILLAGE BUDGET

The purpose of this report is to provide summary 2020 budget information concerning the City of Birchwood Village to interested citizens. The budget is published in accordance with Minnesota Statute Section 471.6965. This budget is not complete; the complete budget may be examined at Birchwood City Hall, 207 Birchwood Avenue, Birchwood Village, Minnesota 55110 during normal business hours.

Revenues:	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Property Taxes	364,000	388,500
Special Assess. Imps.		100,000
Total Revenues	<u>364,000</u>	<u>488,500</u>
Expenditures:		
Current:		
General Govt	162,059	165,890
Public Safety	80,600	90,315
Streets and Hwys	43,400	50,400
Sanitation	16,300	18,500
Culture and Rec	28,590	29,380
Miscellaneous	3,051	4,015
Special Assess. Imps. (lift station)		100,000
Trans to other funds	<u>30,000</u>	<u>30,000</u>
Total Expenditures	<u>364,000</u>	<u>488,500</u>
Excess (deficiency)	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Property Tax Levy to Fund This Budget	<u>364,000</u>	<u>488,500</u>

Welcome New Residents:

Greg and Kathy Sherwood 15 Birchwood Ln, **Stephen Standish** 112 Cedar, **Wayne Kazmierczak** 140 Birchwood Ave, **Christopher Bergeron** 173 Birchwood Ave, **Mark and Mary Jo Schaffhausen** 262 Wildwood, **Luke and Courtney Wippler** 339 Wildwood, **Cathryn Wandmacher** 415 Wildwood, **Brian Kammerer** 127 Birchwood Ave, **Casey Muhm** 186 Cedar, **Elliot Rauscher and Katherine Weier** 613 Wildwood, **Andrew and Rebecca Place**, 25 Oakridge.

Our Condolences to:

*The family of Tom Patsy on the passing of his father.
The Family of Paul Steinhauer on the passing of his mother.
And the Family of Elmer Weber (See Spring 2017 newsletter for our profile on Elmer)*

Generous Donors to the Birchwood Community Club: Alice and John Anderson

Those that added a Bright Light to the community:

William Sikorski who wrote another stellar play that was recently produced at Landmark Center. The Teapot Dome Scandal is now the third in an annual series that has been produced at Landmark. If you did not get to see this one, make sure you look for another great show next September...we hope!

Check out the White Bear Center for the Arts Members' exhibit: Residents **Craig Witthaus, Amy Vreeland and Ellen Maas Pratt** have works displayed.

DOG LICENSE RENEWAL

It's time to renew dog licenses again for another two-year permit period (Jan 2020 – Dec 2021). Licenses must be renewed by Jan 15, 2020. See application on the last page.

\$25 WATER BILL SURCHARGE

We have been limping along with our current meter reading contract and are reaching the end of an era. Currently, a person walks the village with a hand held reader and points it at every meter in town. That means that person has to make it through snow and walk around homes and spend the better part of a day doing this work. The company has been reluctantly providing the service and has been continually raising its rates to give us incentive to upgrade our system. That time has come in

light of the technology of the 21st century. In addition, our utility advisor recommends that we upgrade our water meters at this time.

The city has obtained bids for this improvement. The cost for the transition is up to \$145,000. Accordingly, the council recently approved a \$25 quarterly surcharge as a result. That surcharge will sunset when the expenditure has been recovered (approximately four years)

PLEASE KEEP YOUR CATS INSIDE

The recent deer hunt has generated a number of comments. One of those was a concern about other wildlife welfare: cats spending time at neighbors camped below bird feeders killing the birds. This feline trespassing is causing neighborhood frustration. It can also escalate to an unhappy situation for all. For the safety of your cat, please keep him/her/it confined to your yard or inside. Your neighbors will appreciate your effort.

SNOWPLOW FEEDBACK?

Send us your thoughts – good or bad.
info@cityofbirchwood.com

GWBLF GRANT

Birchwood was awarded \$2000 for help in creating a multi-sport, multi- season court over the hockey rink base. This will allow the rink to be used most of the year and create opportunities for more users including basketball, pickleball, and four square. The sport court will be the same surface as at the tennis courts. It will also remove the need to paint the asphalt as that has not been a successful solution to covering the black surface. The city is seeking funds from other organizations. More to come.

ICE RINK/WARMING HOUSE BITS:

Opening soon. ****WEATHER PERMITTING!****
Hours to be determined. Watch the City website or register for City emails for updates.

Contact City Hall if you are interested in helping at the rink this year.

ELECTION JUDGES NEEDED

Have you ever wanted to work as an election judge? The City is hiring election judges for the 2020 Presidential Nomination Primary. If you are interested, **contact City Hall before January**.

BELL TOWER RECOGNITION

Our generous bell tower donors will be recognized with a plaque as previously noted. However, the building committee is looking at a comprehensive approach to our village hall. We are currently working with an architect to guide us on proceeding with building repair, restoration or reconstruction. (The siding and roof are in need of repair and the committee is looking at what is the best use and value for our needs).

So we will coordinate the village hall signage in conjunction with the building. Thanks so much for your patience and your help in giving the bell a home and a platform to display part of our unique history.

SHOVELING OPPORTUNITIES

Kindly consider adopting a hydrant near you and shoveling it out after it snows. We appreciate your help in keeping our community safe.

Also, the meter reader needs access to your water meter. Please clear a path through the snow to make his job easier. Thank you!

JAY PATH COMING

The city council voted recently to put a path through city property along the western edge of Hall’s Marsh. The city is working with the new owner of the adjacent property to allow walkers to get off the street and avoid icy roads and hills. It is a lovely stretch and should be a good way to see wildlife on the pond. We hope you enjoy the change.

VILLAGE HALL PIANO

The City is saying goodbye to its piano. Contact City Hall if you are interested in it or know someone who might be.

NORDLING PARK NAME REDUX

Our parks honor past residents who have made significant contributions to our community. (Hall’s Marsh, Bloomquist Park, Tighe-Schmitz Park, Curt Feistner Memorial Reserve) Research has revealed that one park, Nordling, was named due to the proximity of a resident to the park. In fact, the property was donated as per city subdivision code by Bacchus development when White Pine Lane and Hall Court were subdivided.

The council brought up the idea of giving tribute to someone or something that reflects our heritage or our dedicated past residents. Since our 100 year anniversary is coming up in 2021, now is a good time to decide its future. Here are the names presented and the count for each. Please weigh in on this if we have not heard from you. Send your comments to the city clerk/administrator.

- Polly Shank 5 (or rename Ash Path to Shank Path)
- Wingfield (Duke/Skip) 2
- Dean (Steve) 1
- No Change 1
- Other –various (geographical/historical/generic) 3



VILLAGE CHRISTMAS PARTY

Come celebrate the season with your neighbors and Santa. Santa Claus will make a special appearance at the annual Birchwood Holiday Party on Wed., Dec. 18, from 5:30-7:00 p.m. at the Village Hall. All Birchwood children are invited to stop by and decorate their own cookie and sip on hot chocolate, make an ornament and tell Santa their Christmas wishes. This is an opportunity for all Birchwood families – kids and adults alike – to enjoy a bit of holiday cheer with their neighbors! This event is free and snacks and beverages will be provided. Kids wearing jammies are welcome. If you have questions or would like to help at the party, contact: Alicia (AliciaJakola@hotmail.com) OR Felicia (fdtibayan@gmail.com)

SPECIAL ASSESSMENT TOWN HALL MEETING

The City Council will be holding a town hall meeting for all Birchwood residents on Thurs Feb 6, 2020 at 7pm to discuss how residents wish to pay for road work going forward. The outcome of this meeting will determine how the current Lake Avenue road project and all future road work is paid for. The two options being considered are:

- 1) to assess only the properties that receive an increase in property valuation from the work, and
- 2) to levy all residents for all city road work through property taxes.

With the first option, residents will only pay when work is done to their streets and the amount will depend on the appraised value that the project has on the individual property. With the second option, all residents will pay for all road work citywide and the amount will be based off of the individual property tax rate.

All residents are encouraged to attend. **Please come ... and bring a neighbor with you.** In the alternative, you may reach out to the mayor/council members or city hall with your thoughts.

2020 TAX LEVY

By now you have received your proposed taxes for the next year. The city levy increased by about 34%. This is a large increase. Bear in mind, the city's portion of your tax bill is about 25% so the overall effect is a city tax increase of about 7%. Your values may differ somewhat due to the peculiarities of tax rates relative to property valuation. Keep in mind property values have increased overall. Also remember the school bond referendum increase was not included in your estimated tax statement.

The main culprit for the city's increase is the recent construction you probably noticed at the base of South Shore Blvd. That was our project to remove the Birchwood Lane lift station and coordinate with White Bear Township and use their nearby lift station for a handful of residents on Birchwood Lane. The city council was appraised a year ago that the old lift station was broken, obsolete and not repairable. This new, efficient solution was not cheap (\$420,000) but still less than the cost of replacing the current structure (\$500,000). And we will no longer have to pay for repairs, maintenance, and electricity, nor will we need to arrange for generator back up since gravity works 24/7/365.

This additional \$100,000 per year tax increase will sunset in four years when the costs of construction have been recouped. The city also put in an emergency grant request to the legislature. We are hopeful that the legislature will support us with this unexpected, emergency expense. We will cross our fingers and keep you posted on the status of this grant request.

SENIOR & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Are you in need of senior services this winter? Did you know that the City partners with Northeast Youth & Family Services (NYFS) to provide discount services to Birchwood seniors for these services?

Visit www.nyfs.org or call 651-429-8544 to learn more about senior services as well as mental health, juvenile delinquency diversion, and youth development.

ORGANICS RECYCLING

The organics drop-off program at the Washington County Environmental Center is now officially LIVE! Residents can drop-off bagged food scraps, paper towels, and more at the Environmental Center during open hours. Details can be found at: <https://www.co.washington.mn.us/organics>

MAYOR'S NOTES:

Last month the city council awarded a contract for a new property assessor. The change was made because the council wants accountability and valuations that are in keeping with the market. In the past five years, the overall city values have experienced double digits increases then flat growth followed by large increases again. This is not in keeping with the real estate market when the reality is growth has been more gradual and consistent. These more dramatic rises have caused our residents to pay higher county and school taxes relative to our other communities while we wait for them to catch up to our increases.

The change gives residents the opportunity to communicate directly with the appraiser at our city hall through a Board of Review (which the city council sits as). This gives the city council the opportunity to monitor our valuations. In the end, the goal is to ensure all residents are heard and treated fairly in the process.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

CITY HALL: 207 Birchwood Avenue, Birchwood MN;
tel.: 651-426-3403; email: info@CityofBirchwood.com

Administrator Tobin Lay 651-426-3403
tobin.lay@CityofBirchwood.com

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Mary Wingfield (Mayor) 651-653-1022
wingfield.mary@gmail.com

Randy LaFoy (Deputy Mayor) 651-429-9229
lafoybwd@gmail.com

Kevin Woolstencroft 651-426-3718
kevinshouse25@gmail.com

Jessi Aakre
jaakre.birchwood@gmail.com

Jon Fleck
jonathan.fleck1@gmail.com

DOG LICENSING IS MANDATORY IN BIRCHWOOD!!!
IF YOU OWN A DOG, PLEASE COMPLETE FORM AND RETURN IT WITH
THE APPROPRIATE FEE(S). PLEASE USE ONE FORM PER DOG



**CITY OF BIRCHWOOD VILLAGE
APPLICATION FOR DOG LICENSE
2020-2021 LICENSING TERM**

Owner _____

Microchip # _____

Address _____

Phone No. _____

Dog's Name _____

Age of Dog _____

Breed _____

Male or Female (circle one)

Color _____

Veterinarian _____

Date of Rabies Shot _____

Rabies # _____

RETURN APPLICATION, PROOF OF VACINATION AND CHECK TO:

**City of Birchwood Village
207 Birchwood Avenue
Birchwood, MN 55110**

Clerk's Record:

License No. _____

Date Issued _____

Amount _____

Licenses are for two years and are issued in even-numbered years. Newly-licensed dogs in odd-numbered years are charged 50% of the two-year fee. The license will be mailed to you upon receipt of your application/fee. The license must be put on the dog's collar by January 15, 2020.

The license fee is \$20.00 per dog and will be good through December 31, 2021. The late license fee will be triple the regular fee if the license is not purchased by February 15, 2020. Failure to obtain a license by February 15th could result in a court summons. Licenses are required for dogs 6 months of age and older.

City code requires that all dogs must be restrained 12 months of the year.