



BIRCHWOOD VILLAGE NEWS



City of Birchwood Village, MN

Winter 2022

CITY OF BIRCHWOOD VILLAGE BUDGET

Next year's tax levy will result in a city reduction of 3.5%!

The purpose of this report is to provide summary 2023 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>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Property Taxes	493,841	512,000
Capital Improvement		
 Total Revenues	<u>493,841</u>	<u>512,000</u>
 Expenditures:		
Current:		
General Govt	225,605	183,845
Public Safety	110,190	94,145
Streets and Hwys	64,700	49,400
Sanitation	23,964	20,800
Culture and Rec	35,382	29,880
Miscellaneous	4,000	3,930
Trans to other funds	30,000	30,000
Total Expenditures	<u>493,841</u>	<u>512,000</u>
 Excess (deficiency)	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Special Property Tax	0	100,000

Our sympathies to: the Sorenson families on the passing of father and grandpa NORT.

Julie and Mike Mullan on the passing of their four-year-old daughter, Ida. Our community grieves with you.

Welcome New Residents: Joe Nasvik, 406 Birchwood Av; Scott Lopez, 268 Wildwood; Mark & Nancy Mammel, 143 Wildwood; Gavin & Angela Linnihan, 725 Birchwood Av; Ash Keswani, 23 Wildwood; Tina Yost, 232 Cedar, Jeff & Jennifer Goudreau, 30 Birchwood Ln, Derek Quast, 403 Birchwood Av; Nicholas & Veronica Boreen, 4 Oakhill Ct, Emma Solheim, 138 Wildwood.

Special Thanks to Dolores Schreiner, Jerry Carlson & Jackie Jarosz, Richard & Janet Cristan, Renee Lemieux, Ron & Mary Sternal, Dave & Pat Trepanier, Jerilyn Gluck, Bill & Mary Hullsiek, Jean & Philip Sutherland, Laura and John Bromell, Dick Galena and Anonymous for their generous donations (+\$50) to the Birchwood Community Club. These supersized donations have helped to underwrite so many positive activities in our community. Thank you!

Thanks to our Volunteers:

- *Andy Sorenson for sweeping off the Village Hall roof and his many hours prepping the Hockey rink.*
- *Kevin Woolstencroft, Jon Fleck, and Mary Wingfield for taking care of the flags for Veterans' Day.*

NEWS BITS:

- The water break surcharge (\$25) terminates with this billing. Water consumption rates are staying the same, but we have increased our water utility fee due to higher costs for maintenance. That flat water fee increases \$10. This fee covers the expenses for maintaining our water system, including breaks. There are no increases on sewer rates.
- **CITY OFFICE HOURS:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:30 am to 1:30 pm and by appointment.
- **NEW HISTORIC MARKERS** have been installed for the Village Hall and Polly's Park. Feistner Preserve sign will be installed in the spring. These additions were partially funded by the Minnesota Legacy grants.
- **DEER HUNT:** Nov 28-29, Dec 11-12 and Dec 19-20. No deer were taken to date.
- **ICE RINK/WARMING HOUSE—check city website for latest info.** Rinks open all day until 9 PM--WEATHER PERMITTING!

PARK BENCHES DONATED!

Bridget Sperl has generously donated the bench and pad at the Village Hall in honor of her late husband John. With the new Historic signage and Announcements board, and new birch trees, the area is a wonderful space to come and relax. **The Birchwood Community Club** sponsored the new bench at Jay Path so you can enjoy watching the birds and other friends at Hall's Marsh. Enjoy!

CITY OFFICE ELECTIONS

The 2022 Birchwood results made news across the country with an unusual, successful write-in campaign for mayor. The story was carried on the front page of the StarTribune. The St Paul Pioneer Press ran multiple stories. And there are some good **You-Tubes** that aired on WCCO and KMSP. Search YouTube using "Birchwood Village". The official counts are as follows:

Mayor:	Council (two seats)
Margaret Ford (write in) 271	Ryan Hankins 438
James Nelson 171	Kathy Weier 391
Michael McKenzie 146	

PLANNING COMMISSION SEAT OPENS

With Ryan Hankins being elected to the City Council, there is a seat open on the Planning Commission. Please send a letter of interest to the City Clerk by Jan 3, 2023.

A COMPARISON OF YOUR TAXES

As noted at the beginning of this Newsletter, your city taxes are going down 3.5% next year. Last year the city tax change was 0%. By comparison, the Washington County levy is increasing 4.9% next year, after increasing 5.68% in 2022.

The Birchwood City Council continues to use Larry Walker's Zero Budget process that has guided us so well over the years. We have no commercial property and virtually no growth, so we also have been seeking grants to supplement our income. (See story below.)

Doing a side by side comparison with other cities is helpful. In Mahtomedi a \$400,000 house is assessed about \$1300 in city taxes. In Birchwood, that same house is assessed about \$850. Of course, cities can impose other, direct taxes such as assessments—something that Birchwood has shied away from in the last decade. The city council has been working hard to ensure we are using your tax dollars efficiently. We hope you agree.

[One other bit: when you get your property tax statement, most of your taxes go to the school district. So your taxes may be going up, but it won't be because of city taxes.]

WILDWOOD LIFTSTATION FUNDING UPDATE

As we head to press, we are still awaiting the status of the US Appropriations bill for FY 2023. Birchwood, along with 14 other entities, is in line to share \$35 million dollars.

Representative Betty McCollum guided our request for our \$480,000 lift station rebuild through so many hurdles. This fall we made the final cut from a list of 70 proposals. One would think that positions us well for final approval, however, we are at the mercy of the Senate and its filibuster. The absolute deadline to get this done is December 31st. After that, our pumpkin comes and we start over. (i.e. It won't happen given the Rep Betty's party will be in the minority.) Watch the city website for updates.

ART EXHIBIT NEWS

Gail Diez had a large retrospective exhibit of art at the White Bear UU Church galleries in Mahtomedi in September and October. Her exhibit was a multimedia show of acrylic paint, collage, mixed media, encaustics and photography. More than 50 people attended the opening. Gail wishes to thank the neighbors who attended.

SHOVELING OPPORTUNITIES

Please consider adopting a hydrant near you by shoveling it out after it snows. We appreciate you helping keep our town safe.

HIGHLAND/BIRCHWOOD PATH PLAN

Coming this spring! Look for this new path to give you an option to veer off Hall Ave for a quiet, short jaunt into the woods before popping out at the end of Birchwood Ave. The city council recognizes residents are supportive of public pathways. Our Comprehensive Plan provides guidance to ensure minimum impact to the neighbors. This route has had significant residential turnover recently. It also has the support of the one property owner who is most directly impacted. Given this unique set of events affecting the fewest residents, the city has approved opening up this public space. (FYI, there will be no extension into Mahtomedi or over to White Pine Ln.) The trail will keep a small footprint. Signage will be placed at both ends. Some deadfall and brush needs to be moved. We are looking for volunteers to assist this spring. Please contact the city clerk to sign up. No skills or tools necessary, except a desire to be part of our next park!

MAYOR'S NOTES

This marks the last newsletter for me. I hope you have found it helpful and informative over the last decade. When I became mayor (again) in 2013, I felt we needed to have a way to reach out to you and build back sense of community. I asked the council for permission to write and edit a newsletter that reflected city business, news bits, neighbor activities, and a bit of trivia. Included were little vignettes of folks who added an interesting dimension to our town (See past issues for "Population 875, Meeting Your Neighbor One Newsletter at a Time".) We are fortunate to have so many people who have been willing to share their stories.

Knowing who your neighbor is, who your kids are, what your dogs' names are, and what street you live on makes our village more than just a mailing address--it provides a sense of place. I grew up here and I believe we have one of the best places on earth to live. I hope you agree.

Thank you for entrusting me with the honor of representing you and being a neighbor. I have learned so much from talking to you as I walked my dog through town. (The dog was not always thrilled to have to spend 15-20 minutes waiting, but he soon learned the drill.) I have enjoyed working to find solutions, and trying to do so in a cost effective manner. Not all ideas were unanimously endorsed by you, but I believe we, the council, were always, always acting in the best interests of Birchwood.

I look forward to a new council with new voices and ideas. Please be patient as they learn and problem solve together. It is a process that can be messy, but it is never more fulfilling than when a consensus is reached on a difficult matter. I wish them all the success in the years to come.

And all the best to you for the upcoming holidays. m