

THANK YOU

To all the citizens and staff who helped remove debris and items around town during our clean up event on November 18th (see mayor's note for additional details):

- Mary & Mark Cahill
 - Sue Fleck
 - Margaret & David Ford
 - Shari Salzman-Hankins, Ryan & Jasper Hankins
 - Cyril & Sue Kapsner
 - Ron Koehnle
 - Kathy Malles
 - Justin McCarthy
 - Al Mitchell
 - Casey, Laura, Charlie & Bridget Muhm
 - Jim Rydeen
 - Mary Sue Simmons
 - Andy & Chris Sorenson
 - Kathy Weier
 - Barton Winter
 - And anyone we might have missed!
- Thank you!

WELCOME NEW RESIDENTS:

- Bradley and Mary Hapka 135 Wildwood Ave
- Matthew Cooperrider 725 Birchwood Ave
- Keith & Shelly Dropkin 430 Birchwood Ave
- David Wolf 23 Wildwood Ave

OUR CONDOLENCES TO

friends and family of longtime Birchwood resident Bob Belknap, who passed away on November 2nd.

JOIN OUR E-MAILING LIST

If you don't receive email notices from the city, please reach out to info@cityofbirchwood.com to be added for emergency and other important updates!

WATER INCREASE SURCHARGE

Due to several breaks, a \$25 water main break surcharge will be added to all quarterly utility bills to help recoup the cost of the repairs until the water fund is replenished.

TENNIS SANITATION RATE INCREASE

Tennis Sanitation has informed the city they will have a rate increase beginning January 1, due to an increase from the Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Center (R&E Center) which will affect monthly rates.

ADOPT A HYDRANT OR DRAIN THIS WINTER

Please watch hydrants to make sure they are free from snow and ice with 3 feet clear to help keep our community safe. Also please clean leaves away from storm drains or roads to prevent them from going in the lake. Thank you!

DOG LICENSES REQUIRED

As a reminder, dogs are required to be on a leash and to have a license - make sure you have yours updated. They are on a three year cycle and available at city hall.

COMMUNITY CLUB UPDATES

THANK YOU!

Thank you to all who participated in the city wide garage sale and expressed interest in other activities being offered through the community club. Through your interest, we were able to connect a resident instructor with the city to host her yoga classes at our city hall. Two more 8 week sessions will be offered starting in January 2024: 1/10 - 2/28 and 3-6 - 4/28. \$88/session, Wednesdays at 9 am - inquire at yogadevo@gmail.com to reserve a spot.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Community Club will host our annual **holiday party** on December 10th, 1pm - 3pm for kids to make crafts and enjoy treats. Please come to the City Hall to enjoy some festive snacks, visit with neighbors and visit with Santa! If you are interested in helping, email us at communityclubbirchwood@gmail.com

PARKS COMMITTEE CORNER

The Parks & Natural Resources Committee wanted to send along a few announcements and reminders for everyone as we all transition to the colder months.

First, a reminder that the **hockey rink** will be opening in December - weather permitting - please keep an eye out for an official announcement from the city for the exact date and hours of operation.

Second, the Birchwood City Council recently amended the city ordinances **banning motor vehicles from beach access easements**. As such, the easements should not be used for snowmobiles or other motor vehicles to access White Bear Lake.

Finally, we would like to remind everyone that **everything we place or pour on the ground ends up in the lake**. Please consider reducing the use of salt when practical or even switching to a bio-friendly ice melting product that is much safer for the environment. Please reach out to a committee member if you have any questions or concerns - we hope everyone has a fantastic winter season!

Zach Michalk

(CONTINUED)

CITY DROP BOX MOVED

The City has moved the drop box away from the street and next to the little library at City Hall.

PREVENT POLLUTION IN OUR WATERWAYS

Rain washes anything that's on the streets into our lakes. Please be sure to clean up dog poop, trash and sweep and rake up leaves and needles on the streets to reduce bacteria, phosphorous pollution and keep trash out of our lakes. Also please use salt sparingly - opt for sand instead!

2024 PRELIMINARY BUDGET

The following budget below is a preliminary summary budget for your review. It will be used for our December 12th "Truth In Taxation" meeting where we will finalize the budgeting needs for 2024. More details of this preliminary budget can be found as the "2024 Preliminary Budget" at <https://www.cityofbirchwood.com/publicnotices>

Following the December 12th meeting, you will find the new and complete budget at Birchwood's website under the "Notices" tab above or obtain a copy at City Hall, 207 Birchwood Ave, Birchwood, MN 55110:

Revenues:	2024	2023
Property Taxes	656,808.59	493,841
Capital Improvement		
Total Revenues	656,808.59	493,841
Expenditures:		
Current:		
General Government	290,850.38	225,605
Public Safety	93,139.66	110,190
Public Works	163,200	64,700
Sanitation	37,480	23,964
Culture and Rec	36,398.55	35,382
Conservation	740	2,000
Other Unallocated	35,000	32,000
Total Expenditures	656,808.59	493,841
Excess (deficiency)	0	0
Special Property Tax	0	0

GREETINGS FROM MAYOR MARGARET

BUDGET UPDATE

The City Council has been working on the proposed City Budget for 2024. A few residents have shared their thoughts about the budget draft presented in the past four City Council meetings. I invite all who have questions to review the budget and reach out to me to discuss concerns

or ideas. Or, you are very welcome to attend the Council meeting on December 12th.

In the preparation of the budget, we looked at past expenses and created projected 2024 expenses and initiatives. We are mindful of the property tax expense for the community and have tried to make the budget both realistic and focused on essential expenses to run the city. I'd like to highlight two major initiatives for 2024 that are needed infrastructure expenses. 1) We have a sewer lift station project which is in part funded by a federal grant and money from the Rice Creek Watershed District. We have budgeted our share of the project expense completely to fund this project in 2024. 2) We are in the process of creating a new road improvement plan and have budgeted funds for the first phase of road repairs in 2024.

GENEROSITY & INSPIRATION: THE WORKDAY UPDATE

We had a successful city wide clean up day on November 18. The workday included picking up trash, cleaning the City Hall kitchen, clearing buckthorn, chain sawing up the big fallen trees along (some of) the City Right of Ways and Parks and clearing and painting the hockey rink. Great progress was made and please join us at the next one. Many hands make light work!

A very special thanks is due to Dan Bailey of Minnesota Grown Services. He is in the village doing a boulder landscaping project and had unloaded his boulders from his really big, heavy-duty trailer. He saw the work being done and asked the volunteers if he could donate the use of his trailer to haul away a full load of wood and brush! He generously said, "I've got an empty trailer and will dump it for you, if you'd like to fill it up". In addition, he swung by Grotto and helped David and Kathy load the 12-150 lb tree stump cookies ready for disposal. His pay-it-forward generosity and strong back is both inspiring and warmly appreciated!

Please join me in thanking the clean-up day leaders, Jim Rydeen and Ron Koehne from our Birchwood Maintenance team. And three cheers and thanks to our community of volunteers listed on the front of this newsletter!

KIDS "MAYOR FOR A DAY" ESSAY CONTEST

The league of MN Cities is encouraging 4th, 5th and 6th graders to share ideas about how they would make cities better through submitting essays to the leagues "Mayor for a day" essay contest, the deadline is December 12th. More information is at www.lmc.org/about/mayor-for-a-day-essay-contest/

As ever, I welcome your visits, emails, and calls. Have a wonderful holiday season.

Margaret Ford