

MINNETONKA MEMO

A publication from the City of Minnetonka



You're invited to THE MARSH



When Barbara Benjamin first walked into The Marsh, she immediately felt a sense of balance – a place where body and mind could work together for overall health.

“The vibe that you get here is one of peace, calm, health,” Benjamin said.

The City of Minnetonka opened The Marsh in May, after purchasing the facility from the YMCA of the North. The facility offers a variety of wellness programs, including fitness, aquatics and spa services.

“The community has really embraced The Marsh. We’re pleased we can offer programs and accommodations that fit our 3,000 members’ diverse needs,” said Recreation Director Kelly O’Dea.

The Marsh offers a variety of membership options, including SilverSneakers and Renew Active – programs that are often free to senior members. You can also combine a membership with Williston Fitness Center to double your recreation opportunities.

Benjamin participates in a variety of programs, from tai chi and Pilates to Barre Fusion and Zumba. When her daughter-in-law was in labor, she spent time in the meditation tower waiting for the birth of her first grandchild. The Marsh, she said, offers a little of everything. “No matter what your gig you can find your spot because they offer heart-pumping stuff, the pool and the mind/body stuff, too.”

Join us for these upcoming events:

Fall Pop Up Market Friday, Oct. 13-Sunday, Oct. 15

This free, daily market will have local vendors showcasing their merchandise from 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Marsh Open House Saturday, Oct. 14

Stop by for a morning sampling of fitness classes from 9 a.m.-noon. Try a variety of 25-minute classes for free!

Historically, The Marsh has been known as a place of accommodation. Longtime member Jane Welch said instructors are great about offering modifications to help people of various abilities, creating a space for everyone. The heated therapy pool, for example, is a valuable resource for people with limited mobility to build strength.

The Marsh is also a place of community, where members get to know one another, said Welch, who often makes morning coffee and organized a fall literature series. O’Dea agreed.

“People know each other at The Marsh and feel a sense of belonging. We invite more community members to check it out and find their place at The Marsh.”

Spa services available at The Marsh

The Marsh now offers limited spa services, including:

- Manicures and pedicures
- Skincare
- Massages

“Our spa services provide a space where you can go to relax your body and your mind.”

Kristin Pimental, Marsh Manager



Learn more and book these services at minnetonkamn.gov/spa



We want to hear from you!

Share your ideas for the future of The Marsh and the city’s indoor recreation facilities in our Community Facilities Survey now available at minnetonkamatters.com.





FIRE DEPARTMENT AND CITY OPEN HOUSE

Tuesday, Oct. 10 | 5-8 p.m.
14600 Minnetonka Blvd.

Minnetonka's annual Fire and City Open House is one the biggest and best events of its kind in the metro area. Drive, bike or walk to the Minnetonka city campus and enjoy a wide range of free activities.



- Ride in a fire truck
- Operate a fire hose
- Enjoy a hot dog
- Climb on a digger
- See first aid demos
- Visit with police officers
- Grab a native seed packet
- Register to vote



Share your feedback on city projects

Stop by information booths at the open house or visit MinnetonkaMatters.com





Council addresses city's future public safety needs

Fostering a safe and healthy community is a top priority of Minnetonka's city council. And the 2024 budget and levy reflect the council's commitment to public safety by beginning the multi-year implementation of the public safety master plan.

The public safety master plan serves as a roadmap for meeting the community's public safety needs over the next five to 10 years.

The 2024 budget includes adding five patrol officers and one sergeant position in the police department. Minnetonka police plan to create a power shift to cover growing call volume during peak hours. The sergeant position is dedicated to ensuring department training meets professional standards.

Also included are three full-time firefighter technicians at Fire Station 2. The firefighters would cover peak times in the northern part of the city to improve emergency response.

"Our police and fire departments recognize community expectations to provide excellent service to all our residents, businesses and visitors," said City Manager Mike Funk. "This budget is a first step in ensuring those services are responsive to our community's ever-evolving needs."

The 2024 budget and levy also look to restore funding to the city's capital improvement program (CIP) to pre-pandemic levels. In recent years, the council has reduced the CIP levy to ease the burden on taxpayers. However, the CIP funds the city's streets improvements and capital equipment, both of which are necessary to maintain city infrastructure.



In September, the city council set its maximum 2024 preliminary tax levy, after this edition of the Minnetonka Memo was printed. The council was considering a 7.75 percent increase – approximately half for public safety and capital improvement expenses. The remaining levy increase is dedicated to normal operations adjustments, such as personnel, inflation and the 2024 presidential election.

In comparison to other metro cities, the projected preliminary levy is below median as many communities consider increasing public safety expenses in 2024. In Minnetonka, the annual goal is to stabilize the levy to ensure the budget not only aligns with the city's strategic priorities, but also minimizes impacts on taxpayers.

"We strive to avoid big fluctuations from year to year," said Finance Director Darin Nelson. "The council has a history of moderate levy increases while maintaining the innovative, responsive and quality city services our residents expect."

PROPERTY TAX IMPACT

In Minnetonka, a median-valued home that increased in value to \$496,500 could see a monthly tax increase of \$10.60 per month. Estimates will be available on the proposed 2024 tax notices to be mailed in November.

November

Property owners will receive proposed 2024 tax notices from Hennepin County

Nov. 20

Council study session to discuss 2024 budget proposal

Dec. 4

Public meeting at 6:30 p.m.; council adopts final levy and budget

Dec. 18

Alternate date for council to adopt the final levy and budget

We want to hear from you!

Visit minnetonkamatters.com/minnetonka-budget to learn more and provide feedback.

Now Hiring **YOU**

Build your career here! Minnetonka Fire offers paid training, hands-on experience and the best team and equipment around.



Learn more and apply at minnetonkamn.gov/fire

Fire Prevention Week focuses on cooking safety

Fire Prevention Week is Oct. 8-14, marking the 101st celebration of the week-long observance. Organized by the National Fire Prevention Agency, Fire Prevention Week is the longest-running public health observance in the US. This year's theme is "Cooking safety starts with YOU. Pay Attention to fire prevention."

"Fire Prevention Week has long provided information about reducing fire risks in a way that's accessible for families and kids," said Deputy Fire Marshal Sara Ahlquist. "They've put together information in a fun way so that the message isn't lost."

Focusing on kitchen fires is an obvious choice; fires from unattended cooking are the leading cause of fires in the nation. "When your food is on the stove or in the oven, make sure you're paying attention to it," Ahlquist said.

Being attentive in the kitchen doesn't just prevent fires; it can reduce injuries to children as well. "We remind folks to turn their pot handles away from the front of the stove," she said. "Kids can grab those handles and pull down hot food, water or grease onto themselves and really get hurt."

Cooking fires, like many others, are entirely preventable, and the Minnetonka Fire Department hopes that by reminding residents to pay attention to fire prevention, those fire incidents will be reduced.



Find activities for Fire Prevention Week at www.nfpa.org/fpw

ELECTION 2023

Direct balloting starts Oct. 20

Minnetonka voters can now cast their ballots for the fall general election. Four ward council seats are on the 2023 ballot, as well as a ballot question regarding ranked choice voting.

Vote absentee in-person

Cast your ballot at city hall M-F from 8-4:30 p.m.

Vote absentee by mail

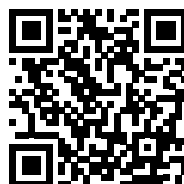
Download a mail-in absentee ballot application at hennepin.us/elections or call 612-348-5151

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 7

Polls will be open from 7 a.m.-8 p.m.



Minnetonka voters will use ranked choice voting in the 2023 election to identify their candidates of preference. Visit the city website to learn more about the voting process.



Police dashboard gives inside look into department's operations

This summer, the Minnetonka Police Department unveiled a new tool to help residents better access crime data in the community.

The public reporting dashboard provides an overview of commonly requested information and the department's major data collection initiatives. The goal is to make it easier for the community to visualize the department's operations.

"Building trust with the community is fundamental to effective policing," says Police Chief Scott Boerboom. "Sharing this data demonstrates our commitment to transparency and accountability."



The dashboard was built by the police department's crime analysis team and includes information related to:

- Arrest data
- Use of force
- Calls for service
- Observed demographic data for selected contacts

Over the coming months, the department plans to add more data tools, including data collected through the mental health unit, automated license plate reader program and traffic unit.

Find a link to the dashboard at minnetonkamn.gov/policedata.

Dog therapy

Minnetonka Police welcome first therapy dog

Meet Sampson, an adorable four-year-old Shollie, who, in his first weeks on the job, is already making quite an impression on his coworkers.

A licensed therapy dog, Sampson lives full-time at the police department, soaking up the attention, pets and treats from department staff.

"He's one of the few dogs that's very in tune with everyone," said trainer Ashley Brotten. "Sampson just loves people."

Given the stressful and sometimes traumatic nature of law enforcement, Sampson provides internal support for department staff. Therapy dogs are trained to identify anxious cues, such as high blood pressure or elevated cortisol levels, and offer help in the form of nuzzle, nudge or a paw on the lap.

Having Sampson live onsite offers support 24/7 to all department staff, whether you are a night-shift officer or daytime officer.

"We felt a facility therapy dog would be a great way to help people connect, relax, regroup and maybe help bridge the gap for those who are hesitant about reaching out for mental health help," Det. Samantha Thompson said.

Minnetonka police also plan to make Sampson available to the community, providing incident or call-based response to help provide comfort after a traumatic event. "Sometimes it's easier for people to open up and be vulnerable when they have something to pet and don't feel it will judge them in any way," Thompson said.

Sampson was gifted to the department through a pilot program with Project Delta, a local nonprofit that pairs veterans with rescue/shelter dogs to create service dog teams. Project Delta CEO Patti Robinson hopes more agencies follow suit, as she believes therapy dogs could be a proactive way of addressing overall mental health wellbeing in law enforcement.



Shollie - a cross between a German Shepherd and Border Collie

Sampson's care, including food and treats, veterinarian bills and wellness, are supported by the Minnetonka Crime Prevention Association, a 501c(3) organization that assists the Minnetonka Police Department's crime prevention and other initiatives. To learn more and help support Sampson and these initiatives, please visit tonkasafe.org.


Report lost and found animals through city website

You can now report lost and found animals through Minnetonka Police's new online reporting tool.

The city uses the information to create a publicly viewable map to help reunite owners with lost pets. Learn more or report a lost or found animal at minnetonkamn.gov/pets.



When it comes to fall clean up, think spring



Fall yard work is crucial to protect plants against the elements of winter and prepare them to thrive next year. Follow these tips to remedy small problems or begin changes that will bear fruit in the future.



Place weeds in bags and deposit in trash



Overseed bare spots



Spot-spray problem areas rather than broadly apply herbicides



Add wire cages around woody plants to protect from wildlife

Rake rather than mow leaves to protect pollinators



Collect and distribute native plant seeds



Add a layer of leaves over planting beds



Cut, don't clear perennials
Bees winter inside dried stems

NATURAL RESOURCES EVENTS

Advance registration is required.

Managing Buckthorn workshop

Thursday, Oct. 5

6:30-8:30 p.m.

Minnetonka Community Center

- Learn about controlling this invasive species

Urban Soils: Challenges and Opportunities walkshop

Saturday, Oct. 7

1-3 p.m.

Minnetonka Community Center

- Take a walk with experts at Civic Center Park to see how soils are impacted by development and steps you can take to build healthier soil.

Volunteer with us!



City of Minnetonka Calendar

- 10** Senior Advisory Board, 10 a.m.
- 10** Fire Dept. & City Open House, 5-8 p.m.
- 11** Park Board, 6:30 p.m.
- 12** Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
- 16** City Council & Economic Development Authority, 6:30 p.m.
- 19** Economic Development Advisory Commission, 6 p.m.
- 23** City Council Study Session, 6:30 p.m.
- 24** Book and Pie Sale, 11 a.m.
- 26** Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
- 27** Burwell Spooktacular, 5-8 p.m.
- 30** City Council & Economic Development Authority, 6:30 p.m.

City meetings are held in person. Visit minnetonkamn.gov/participate to learn how to also take part remotely. Watch meetings live and on-demand at minnetonkamn.gov/tv.

For up-to-date information, visit minnetonkamn.gov/calendar or call 952-939-8200.



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2023 Minnetonka Photo Contest

The photo contest is now open for submissions!

From Sept. 25-Oct. 13, residents may submit one photo that celebrates and promotes Minnetonka. The contest is open to residents only and photos must be taken within city limits.

Choose from four categories:

- Uniquely Minnetonka
- Animals
- Lifestyle
- Landscape

Visit minnetonkamn.gov/photocontest to fill out an entry form and submit your photo. Winners will be announced in November.



Wear your best costume and have a spooktacular time at this annual outdoor event!

- Games • Crafts • Inflatables • Food vendors
- Warm up by the fire • Burwell House tours

Friday, Oct. 27
5-8 p.m.

Burwell House grounds
13209 E. McGinty Road