

MINNETONKA MEMO

A publication from the City of Minnetonka



MEET THE NEW COUNCILMEMBERS

Foster-Bolton, Ramaley join city council

Two new councilmembers join the Minnetonka City Council this month.

Patsy Foster-Bolton, Ward 1



Patsy Foster-Bolton and her husband raised two sons in Minnetonka. She is the manager of the employee fitness program at Methodist Hospital.

While she's lived in Minnetonka for 30 years, she's been an active community organizer recently on

issues related to affordable housing, clean air and a multi-racial democracy with a caring economy for all.

"Because of the organizing, I have a deep understanding of the issues facing this city," she said.

A distance runner, Foster-Bolton is also passionate about the city's parks and nature trails. She says these important assets define what is great about Minnetonka, alongside its shops and local businesses, and what she hopes to preserve for others.

"I am looking forward to working with both the city staff and the city councilmembers," Foster-Bolton said. "I feel I have a great deal to learn from them, and I'm excited to have this opportunity to serve in this amazing city."

Paula Ramaley, Ward 3



Paula Ramaley's roots dig deep in Minnetonka. "My family has lived in the Minnetonka/Wayzata community for five generations. I'm deeply connected to our community's past and care just as deeply about its present and future," she said.

With a master's degree in Russian history, Ramaley has more than 20 years of experience working in the fields of international education and culture. She's an active volunteer with several non-profit organizations that promote diplomacy, bridge partisan political divides and strengthen communities.

Ramaley and her husband raised two children in Minnetonka. In her free time, she enjoys sailing, reading and sustainable gardening. As a councilmember, she has a particular interest in the areas of sustainability, affordability and smart development.

"I want to do my part to help ensure Minnetonka is a vibrant, sustainable and safe community for generations to come," she said. "I'm excited and look forward to this opportunity to serve and give back to our community."

Foster-Bolton and Ramaley will be sworn in at the Jan. 8 council meeting alongside incumbents Rebecca Schack (Ward 2) and Kissy Coakley (Ward 4). All four councilmembers were elected in the November 2023 municipal election and begin serving four-year terms.

Presidential primary

The 2024 election season kicks off this month with absentee voting for Minnesota's presidential nomination primary. Voters will select major-party candidates on Tuesday, March 5. Only major political parties participate and you can request only one party's ballot when you vote.

Other offices with a primary election will be on the ballot in August.

Absentee voting begins Jan. 19

- Apply for an absentee ballot online to vote by mail.
- Vote absentee in-person at city hall, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

More information at minnetonkamn.gov/elections.

Utility rates increases plan for future

Minnetonka continues to plan for the long-term future of its utility system by replacing aging infrastructure.

“Our intention is to make prudent investments that reduce the risk of catastrophic breaks and backups that can cost the city and ratepayers much more in the long run,” said Finance Director Darin Nelson.

In December, the city council approved the following utility rate increases:

- Water variable rate and fixed infrastructure fee: 3.75 percent
- Sanitary sewer variable rate: 11 percent
- Storm water: 3 percent
- Environmental recycling: 4 percent

The increases are in line with the city’s long-term utility rate structure plan. The sewer variable rate increase is a pass-through charge from the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services (MCES), which provides sewer treatment for most of the region.

In total, 2024 rate increases are anticipated to result in a quarterly utility bill increase of \$9.10-\$12.30, for low to average household water usage.

Learn more about the factors driving the utility rate increases at minnetonkamn.gov/news.

New agenda software improves government transparency

Minnetonka recently adopted a new agenda management software to improve access to city meeting agendas, minutes and videos.

The one-stop webpage for meeting materials (minnetonkamn.gov/citymeetings) features mobile-friendly documents and links that make it easier to locate information related to meeting topics. The platform improves transparency and significantly reduces staff time to produce agenda packets.

The city council began using the new platform this fall with boards and commissions moving to the new software in the coming months

In addition, you can now search the city’s records archive online rather than making a trip to city hall. Search the archives to find documents related to city permits, inspections, plans, surveys, council records, resolutions, ordinances and more. Access the archive search via minnetonkamn.gov/records.

Take our water service line survey

Minnetonka needs your help to inventory all service lines connected to the public system.



Take a photo of your pipes and share it through our survey tool. This is a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency requirement to determine which materials exist in public water systems.



Learn more and find out how to identify the materials used on your service line by visiting minnetonkamn.gov/service-line-survey.



Go directly to the survey by scanning this QR Code.

Kickstart your plastic-free journey. Take the

Plastic-Free Challenge



Coming this February



Fire Chief John Vance retires

Vance joined the fire department as its chief in 2013.

It was a call to Saddlewood Lane on a Saturday morning a few months ago that convinced Minnetonka Fire Chief John Vance now is the right time to retire. Vance watched as his crews extinguished a house fire and rescued a woman trapped inside. He says these calls are like the Super Bowl of the fire service where training and execution make all of the difference.



"I knew then it was my time to leave," Vance said. "I think the fire department has gotten to a point, a successful point, and I want to leave on that note."

When Vance arrived a decade ago, the Minnetonka Fire Department had five full-time staff members. Today there are 23. He guided the construction of the new Central Fire Station which opened in 2021.

"I pinch myself when I get to walk in here because I think, 'wow, it's a beautiful place, a beautiful city campus'" Vance said.

Vance won't be away from the fire service for long. He plans to continue his work with an organization that trains fire command staff. Read more about Chief Vance at minnetonkamn.gov/news.

Learn more about Minnetonka's charter commission

Of Minnesota's 855 cities, only 107 are charter cities. With a charter, a city like Minnetonka is able to organize a government and exercise powers that fit the community.

Minnetonka's charter commission is an independent body with members appointed by the chief judge of Hennepin County. It is required to meet at least once a year to study the local charter and government.

Requests for charter changes, such as the recent petition to repeal ranked choice voting, can be generated by a petition, the city council or the commission itself. A city's charter can only address matters of local concern and cannot conflict with state law.

The overall goal of the commission is to promote good governance at the local level. "Minnetonka's tradition of civility, respect and non-partisanship has been very good for the city," said commission chair John Northrup. "As a body, we are always working to uphold that value."

Read more at minnetonkamn.gov/charter.

PLEDGE TO BE SALT SMART



1. Shovel

Clear walkways before snow turns to ice. Apply salt only if needed.



2. Select

Salt doesn't melt ice below 15°F. Use sand for traction when it's too cold, or a different de-icer.



3. Scatter

Use salt only where critical. Aim for three inches of space between salt granules.



4. Sweep

Clean up leftover salt, sand, and de-icer to save and reuse as needed.

Graphics courtesy cleanwatermn.org



Whether you're a new resident or have lived here for years, you can subscribe to city newsletters to learn more about Minnetonka events and services.



City of Minnetonka Calendar

- 1** New Year's Holiday, city offices closed
- 3** Park Board, 6:30 p.m.
- 4** Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
- 8** City Council and Economic Development Authority, 6:30 p.m.
- 9** Senior Advisory Board, 10 a.m.
- 15** Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday, city offices closed
- 16** Sustainability Commission, 6:30 p.m.
- 18** Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
- 20** Fire Department Family Fun Day, 10 a.m.
- 22** City Council Study Session, 6:30 p.m.
- 25** Economic Development Advisory Commission, 6 p.m.
- 29** City Council and 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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SKI at **Glen Lake Golf Course**

Glen Lake Golf's ski trail is a 2.5-kilometer groomed course for all ages and ski levels. Open daily through March 10, weather permitting.

Hours

Glen Lake Golf's ski trail is a 2.5-kilometer groomed course for all ages and ski levels. Open daily through March 10, weather permitting.

Passes

Season (\$35) or daily (\$6 plus tax)
Passes are required and sold on-site

Visit threeriversparkdistrict.org to learn more.

Family Fun Day

at Fire Station 1

- Chili & cider
- Inflatable slide
- Fire truck displays
- Meet a firefighter

Saturday, Jan. 20 • 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
Minnetonka Fire Station 1 • 14550 Minnetonka Blvd.



Save the Date

KIDS' FEST

Sunday, Feb. 4
11 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
Minnetonka Community Center

