

MANAGER'S NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 4, 2019

PUBLIC SAFETY

In the past week, the Police Division responded to 35 complaints. There were no real significant calls for service. New Year's Eve night was a quiet evening.

Officers are continuing to master the new reporting system Zuercher.

In the past week, the Fire Division responded to 8 calls for service.

On Wednesday, monthly training was held for the department. Members in attendance completed their Annual Air Consumption training. Firefighters rotate between 3 levels of exertion (walking, Tool Carry, Running stairs) while in full gear on SCBA air. Members rotate every 3 min. until their low air alarm activates. Once the low air activates, firefighters move to a rest area where they remain until their bottle is completely empty. The purpose of this training to give members a realistic look into how much time they actually have to work in a hazardous environment.

LIBRARY

- Pre-school story times resume on Monday and Wednesday this week, 10:30 AM.
- **NEW DAY AND TIME** for Tiny Tots Tinker Lab – Fridays, 10:30 AM.
- The adult computer class this Tuesday, January 8th, 9:30 AM is on “Google Drive”.
- Friends of the Library Board Meeting is Wednesday, January 9th, 4 PM at the library.
- The Library Board of Trustees Meeting is Thursday, January 10th, 5:30 PM at the library. (This is a new time for these meetings.)

PUBLIC WORKS ACTIVITIES

DPW: STREETS –

- Snow event cleanup!!
- Checked sewers and routine jetting of lines
- Patched potholes
- Installed 2-hour parking sign downtown
- Picking up Christmas trees
- Sanding and salting roads, alleys and parking lots
- Repaired watermain break on Ives Avenue

DPW: PARKS –

- Opening and cleaning of City Hall restroom
- Picked up trash downtown and in parks
- Continued trimming trees
- Continued sanding and painting picnic table boards
- Checked downtown lights
- Took down the remainder of purple ribbons downtown
- Checked sidewalks for salting
- Plowed snow

MAIN MAINTENANCE -

- MISS Digs
- Shut offs/turn ons
- Meter reads, re-reads, final reads
- Meter changeouts

Mark Gifford, City Manager

MANAGER'S NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 11, 2019

LIBRARY

The Going Global Book Club will be discussing "The Rent Collector" at 6 PM, Tuesday, January 15.

Thursday, January 17th, 6:30-8:30 PM is Knit Night at the library. Bring your knitting and crocheting projects to work on and socialize with your neighbors working on their masterpieces.

Mary's Book Club meets this month on Friday, January 18th, at Noon. This month's book is "LaRose".

On their regular schedule, you will find story times at 10:30 AM on Monday (1/14) focused on "Hibernation" and Wednesday's (1/16) topic is "Trucks".

Tuesday's adult technology/computer class is at 9:30-10:30 AM and it's all about the basics of mobile devices (tablets and smartphones primarily). Do you know how these devices should work, and how you can learn to use them more effectively? Bring your device with you if you want for this class.

Tiny Tots Tinker Lab sessions are now Friday at 10:30-11:30 AM. Kids get to play with toys, blocks and more and the adults get to socialize for join in.

The monthly teen book club (YA is Lit) will meet at the high school on Thursday, January 17th.

RECREATION

DADDY DAUGHTER DANCE – Will be held at the Big Rapids Middle School on February 15, 2019 from 7 pm to 9 pm. The cost will be \$7.00 to pre-register and \$10.00 at the door.

Attention - All dads, grandpas and uncles! This is the event you've all been waiting for! Grab your favorite little lady and get ready for a night you'll both remember forever. Enjoy a night of dancing, refreshments, photos, and crafts! Create memories that will last a lifetime for you and the most important girl in your life! All ages welcome.

Winter Activities and Programs are listed on the attached flier.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The Police Division responded to 36 calls for service over the past week. There were no real calls of significance to report.

The Fire Division responded to about 20 calls for service over the past week. Of significance were structure fires on Lawrence Circle and Old Logging Road in Paris and Hersey respectively on Wednesday and Thursday. Both are still under investigation.

The first night of the Mecosta County Fire Academy was last Thursday. It is being held twice a week at the Big Rapids Department of Public Safety. It is attended by all Mecosta County fire departments.

On Saturday, fire personnel attended the county medical Continued Education day hosted by our department. Fire Fighter Kidd covered all needed pediatric topics for the year. Deputy Director Schroeder and Detective Miller made guest appearances for Incident Command Structure and Protecting Evidence at a Medical Scene.

PUBLIC WORKS ACTIVITIES

DIAL-A-RIDE-

403 **Adult Riders** - (\$2.50 Fare)

159 - **Children Riders** - (\$1.25 Fare) no school

690 - (**\$1.25 Fare**) – **Senior (171)** and **Disabled (519)** passengers of which **158** used the wheelchair lift to board

115 - **Free Riders** – (55) **Aides** that ride with disabled passengers and (60) **children** and under with an adult

17 - **No shows**

511 -**Out of City**

0– Ferris Shuttle

Ferris Shuttle is back and the main route on Campus stops at the East Campus Mailbox area, Lot 28 (behind McDonald's), Allied Health, Campus Community Center, Lot 4 (near Travis Circle), Rock Cafe, Lot 50 (next to Granger building) University Center, Arts and Science, 7:30am - 7:00pm (M-F) and 7:30am – 2:00pm Fridays.

0- Safe Riders -(free rides from local establishments to anyone in the community on Friday and Saturday nights 12:00am to 2:30am) **Winter Break**

1,352 - Total Passengers (no shows included in this total)

1,367- Demand Response Only (no-shows not included in this)

DPW: STREETS –

- Checked and jetted sewers
- Miss digs/ Continued meter change out program
- Sanded and salted roads and parking lots
- Trimmed brush from alley right-of-way's
- Installed new sander unit for sanding/salting of parking lots
- Repaired and inventoried several signs around the City
- Assisted Dixon engineering on inspection of State St. water tower
- Patched potholes throughout the City
- Total brake job on sander truck #101
- Maintained Dial-a-Ride buses
- Picked up Christmas trees

DPW: PARKS –

- Opening and cleaning of City Hall restroom
- Picked up trash downtown and in parks
- Took down Christmas tree
- Put Christmas decorations away
- Continued trimming trees
- Continued sanding and painting picnic table boards
- Checked downtown lights
- Checked sidewalks for salting
- Opened ice rink
- Plowed snow

MAIN MAINTENANCE -

- MISS Digs
- Shut offs/turn-ons
- Meter reads, re-reads, final reads
- Meter changeouts

WWTP –

- The plant is operating well, but some aerobic digester settling issues continue.
- Ordered repair parts for one of the STP Moyno Pumps.
- Operators cleaned STP-1 and STP-2 Flowmeters and Jay Norris then calibrated both.
- Jay Norris completed our Aeration Basin D.O. control logic, which is now up and running.
- Operators updated 3 outdoor sodium light fixtures to LED on the Plant Admin. Building.
- Operators finished support bracket work on the new Digester sample port plumbing.

- Received a 275-gallon tote of Polymer from Baileys Street, Ltd.
- Completed weekly Lift Station readings and checks.
- Agile Safety scheduled for Jan 17th to calibrate portable and fixed gas detectors.
- Mic and John working on scheduled IPP Sampling and some visits to local businesses.
- Screw Pump grease hoppers were refilled, and waste jugs emptied.
- Scheduled Project Pre-Construction meetings with F&V, NWK, Isabella and City Staff.
- Presented a summary of our new DEQ Draft NPDES Permit to the B.R. Twp. Board.

Mark Gifford, City Manager

MANAGER'S NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 18, 2019

City Hall will be CLOSED Monday, January 21, 2019 in observance of the Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

HANCHETT CHARRETTE

The City of Big Rapids is hosting a Design Charrette Workshop, Thursday, January 24, 2019 at 3:00 p.m. at the City Hall. Come share your ideas and designs that will help to shape this community regarding the former site of the Hanchett Manufacturing property. Designers from SmithGroup will be present to help pull all the ideas together into visual concepts. Please see the attached flier for more details

LIBRARY

Wednesday, January 23rd, the Friend of the Library's Annual Meeting will host Dr. Dierdre Fagan, noted poet, as their guest speaker. The meeting will be held in the Commission Meeting Room in City Hall at 6:30 PM.

"Open Sew" is starting at the library on Saturday, January 26th, from 9 AM to Noon. Bring your sewing machine and work in progress and join others who will be doing the same. (This is not a class but an opportunity to be with other folks working on their sewing projects. Tables, chairs, outlets are provided by the library; just bring your machine and the materials for your project.) "Open Sew" will be a monthly event scheduled for February 23 and March 30 also.

The library will be closed on Monday, January 21, for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Storytime takes place on Wednesday at 10:30; and Tiny Tots Tinker Lab on Friday at 10:30.

Tuesday's adult computer/tech class will focus on Windows 10; at the library at 9:30-10:30.

RECREATION

DADDY DAUGHTER DANCE – Will be held at the Big Rapids Middle School on February 15, 2019 from 7 pm to 9 pm. The cost will be \$7.00 to pre-register and \$10.00 at the door.
ALL AGES WELCOME.

Along with the dance, are the many winter activities and programs that are listed on the attached flier that will continue throughout the next several weeks.

PUBLIC SAFETY

In the past week, the Police Division responded to 45 complaints. There were no real calls of significance to report.

A collaboration between public safety and public school officials has resulted in praise and recognition from the state.

The Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Commission (GTSAC) is presenting the Big Rapids Department of Public Safety with a 2018 Outstanding Traffic Safety Achievement Award for traffic changes made at Brookside and Riverview Elementary schools.

Big Rapids DPS Director, Jim Eddinger, said "The award will be presented during a special program on March 20".

Representing various state departments and offices, local and state law enforcement and county road commissions, GTSAC honors individuals and groups each year for their special involvement and dedication to traffic safety, according to the letter Eddinger received from the commission.

Nominated for the award, by Ferris State University Department of Public Safety, Director Bruce Borkovich, Eddinger said, "The traffic changes implemented at the two schools prior to the start of academic year helped reduce the risk of children and adults being hurt by traffic in front of the buildings".

In the past week, the Fire Division responded to 29 calls for service.

This week, firefighters continued to assist with the fire academy classes. On Thursday, instructors assisted with Search and Rescue, SCBA inspection and Drags and carries.

PUBLIC WORKS ACTIVITIES

197 -Adult Riders - (\$2.50 Fare)

376 - Children Riders - (\$1.25 Fare)

860 -(\$1.25 Fare) Senior (197) and Disabled (663) passengers of which (188) used the wheelchair lift to board

105 - Free Riders (39) Aides that ride with disabled passengers and (66) children and under with an adult

47 - No shows

557 -Out of City

0 - Ferris Shuttle Winter Break

Ferris Shuttle is back and the main route on Campus stops at the East Campus Mailbox area, Lot 28 (behind McDonald's), Allied Health, Campus Community Center, Lot 4 (near Travis Circle), Rock Cafe, Lot 50 (next to Granger building), University Center, Arts and Science, 7:30am -7:00pm (M-F) and 7:30am – 2:00pm Fridays.

19- Safe Riders -(free rides from local establishments to anyone in the community on Friday and Saturday nights 12:00am to 2:30am)

1,604- Total Passengers (no shows included in this total)

1,538- Demand Response Only (no-shows not included in this)

DPW: STREETS –

- Salted and sanded roads, downtown, parking lots
- Bladed alleys
- Jetted sewers
- Sign maintenance
- Filled potholes on highway

DPW: PARKS –

- Opening and cleaning of City Hall restrooms
- Picked up trash downtown and in parks
- Picked up litter in parking lots
- Continued trimming trees
- Continued sanding and painting picnic table boards
- Salted sidewalks
- Installed Mutt Mitt dispenser above Mitchell Creek Park
- Moved rocks at Northend Park
- Checked downtown lights

MAIN MAINTENANCE -

- MISS Digs
- Shut offs/turn-ons
- Meter reads, re-reads, final reads
- Meter changeouts

Mark Gifford, City Manager

MANAGER'S NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 25, 2019

LIBRARY

The first "True Story Book Club" meets on Friday, January 31st at 6 PM. The book is "She Has Her Mother's Laugh". Copies available to checkout at the library.

The library is celebrating "World Read Aloud Day" Friday, February 1st, all day long. Students from Brookside and Crossroads Charter Academy will be at the library to go through storybook walks at the library, plus they will be listening to books being read to them by various people in our community. Other students will also be reading books aloud. Join us to soak up fun stories, which are sure to make you smile (and maybe remember your childhood days too).

RECREATION

DADDY DAUGHTER DANCE – Will be held at the Big Rapids Middle School on February 15, 2019 from 7 pm to 9 pm. The cost will be \$7.00 to pre-register and \$10.00 at the door.
ALL AGES WELCOME.

Along with the dance, are the many winter activities and programs that are listed on the attached flier that will continue throughout the next several weeks.

A reminder, that the ice-skating rink at Hemlock Park is open during park hours 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Director, Jim Eddinger, would like to thank, the new Director of Neighborhood Services, Paula Priebe, for her hard work in putting together the meeting to discuss the proposed traffic changes at the Charter School. Without needing direction, she saw the problem we were having and took action. The meeting brought about a few changes to Fleis and VandenBrink's suggestions that led to a "buy in" by the citizen that was most upset. She also did an excellent job presenting the new suggestions to the City Commission at the most recent commission meeting this past Tuesday. This affirms the message to our residents, that their concerns will always be considered, and that government works. This is a clear sign of leadership on her part and validation that she was the correct choice for the position. We are impressed by her assistance to our department and her dedication to the city.

In the past week, the Police Division responded to 33 complaints. Of significance was a CSC reported at 120 Locust. Investigators are continuing to follow up on this complaint.

In the past week, the Fire Division responded to 27 calls for service. There were no real calls of significance to report.

On Monday, a Foreign exchange student from Germany, that is a volunteer in Hamburg Germany, spent the day with the Duty crew.

On Thursday crews assisted with Rope's and Knots for the Fire Fighter 1 and 2 class.

PUBLIC WORKS ACTIVITIES

264 - **Adult Riders** - (\$2.50 Fare)

344 - **Children Riders** - (\$1.25 Fare)

797 - **(\$1.25 Fare)** – **Senior**(175) and **Disabled** (622) passengers of which **181** used the wheelchair lift to board

87 - **Free Riders** – (77) Aides that ride with disabled passengers and (10) children and under with an adult

53 - **No shows**

570 - **Out of City**

2,641– **Ferris Shuttle**

Ferris Shuttle is back and the main route on Campus stops at the East Campus Mailbox area, Lot 28 (behind McDonald's), Allied Health, Campus Community Center, Lot 4 (near Travis Circle), Rock Cafe, Lot 50 (next to Granger building), University Center, Arts and Science, 7:30 am -7:00 pm (M-F) and 7:30 am – 2:00 pm Fridays.

37 - **Safe Riders** -(free rides from local establishments to anyone in the community on Friday and Saturday nights 12:00am to 2:30am)

4,186 - **Total Passengers** (no shows included in this total)

1,492 - **Demand Response Only** (no-shows not included in this)

DPW: STREETS –

- Jetted sewers on Escott and Mechanic St.
- Responded to 3 residences with frozen water lines
- Thawed frozen water line on Birch St.
- Plowed and salted streets, parking lots, and alleys
- Checked our routine sewers
- Fixed 2 signs run over during accidents

DPW: PARKS –

- Opening and cleaning of City Hall restrooms
- Picked up trash downtown and in parks
- Continued sanding and painting picnic table boards
- Plowed snow
- Salted sidewalks
- Checked downtown lights

MAIN MAINTENANCE -

- MISS Digs
- Shut offs/turn-ons
- Meter reads, re-reads, final reads
- Meter changeouts

WWTP –

- The plant is operating well, but some digester and cold-weather issues continue.
- Ordered and received repair parts for one of the STP Moyno Pumps.
- Ordered and received 5 replacement light fixture lenses for the WWTP Shop.
- Aeration Basin D.O. control logic has been modified and is now working well.
- Some oil loss was discovered in Digester Blower #4. Professional Pump has been notified and will respond with a recommended course of action.
- A failed belt and an erratic control caused the furnace to fail in the Grease/Grit Bldg.
- Water lines froze in the Grease/Grit Building; Damage repair has been scheduled.
- Acid-soaked and power washed the drum screen on our SDC machine
- Agile Safety repaired and calibrated our portable and fixed gas detectors.
- A leaking Aeration Basin air supply line joint was discovered and tightened.
- Screw Pump grease hoppers were re-filled and waste jugs emptied.
- WWTP Pre-Construction meetings were held with F&V, NWK, Isabella and City Staff.
- Provided Tom Berdinski with an e-copy of our original 2014 Asset Management Plan.
- Windemuller is on-site to perform preliminary electrical work for our WWTP Water Improvements Project.
- Ordered and received a new replacement Micro Clip portable gas detector.
- Cleaned or replaced air filter pads on multiple cooling fans in electrical room.

Mark Gifford, City Manager

MANAGER'S NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 1, 2019

LIBRARY

The Comic Workshop starts on Tuesday, February 5th and will run weekly through February 26th. All ages welcome; anyone under the age of 10 needs to be accompanied by an adult. Workshop starts at 3:30 PM and will involve cartooning and comic books arts, with the last workshop to be “show day” to display the creations.

Thursday, February 7th the Foreign Film Series movie will be “100 Year-Old Man” at 7 PM at the library.

Knit Night is Thursday, February 7th, 6:30-8:30 PM. Everyone is welcome to participate with their projects and share an enjoyable time in front of the fireplace at the library.

Story times are Monday and Wednesday at 10:30 AM, with “Shadows” for Monday’s topic and the fun of “Wear Your Pajamas Day” for Wednesday. Kids and parents can come for Tiny Tots Tinker Lab on Friday, also at 10:30 AM.

Tuesday, February 5th, the adult computer class will be concentrating on “Internet Basic Tools Browsers and Search Engines”. There are always more tips and tricks you can learn about to help you get information from the Internet more quickly and efficiently, and from the best sources.

RECREATION

DADDY DAUGHTER DANCE – Will be held at the Big Rapids Middle School on February 15, 2019 from 7 pm to 9 pm. The cost will be \$7.00 to pre-register and \$10.00 at the door.
ALL AGES WELCOME.

Along with the dance, are the many winter activities and programs that are listed on the attached flier that will continue throughout the next several weeks.

A reminder, that the ice-skating rink at Hemlock Park is open during park hours 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

PUBLIC SAFETY

In the past week, the Police Division responded to 46 complaints. A good number of these were weather related. However, none of these were significant in nature.

In the past week, the Fire Division responded to 23 calls for service.

On Sunday, the department hosted Tactical Emergency Casualty Care (TECC) training for Newaygo and Osceola first responders. Students learned how to respond and triage patients in mass casualty incidents. The class was led by Fire Fighter Kidd. Deputy Director Schroeder, Derek Vincent and Tyler Haynes from the Police Department assisted with the instruction.

If anyone knows a friend or family member who is interested in CPR we have classes coming up in February and March for all levels.

PUBLIC WORKS ACTIVITIES

293 - **Adult Riders** - (\$2.50 Fare) – 17 and up

529 - **Children Riders** - (\$1.25 Fare) - 16 and younger

741 - **Seniors and Disabled** (\$1.25 Fare) – **Senior 60 and up** (147) and **Disabled** (594) passengers of which **160** used the wheelchair lift to board

63 - **Free Riders** – (37) Aides that ride with disabled passengers and (26) children 4 or under riding with an adult

73 - **No shows** – someone who does not show up for a ride when the bus shows up.

490 - **Out of City** – Anyone that rides outside the City Limits, these are included in numbers above

2,223 – **Ferris Shuttle** continues to run the following route. It starts at East Campus Mailbox area, Rock Café, Lot 4 (near Travis Circle), Allied Health, Campus Community Center, Lot 28 (behind McDonald's), Arts and Science, Lot 50 (next to Granger building) and the University Center, 7:30am -7:00pm (M-F) and 7:30am – 2:00pm Fridays.

6 - **Safe Riders** -(free rides from local establishments to anyone in the community on Friday and Saturday nights 12:00am to 2:30am)

3,928 - **Total Passengers (no shows included in this total)**

1,626 - **Demand Response Only (no-shows not included in this)**

DPW: STREETS –

- Plowed snow
- Hauled snow from parking lots
- Checked sewers
- Checked frost levels
- Cleaned catch basins in preparation for rain over the weekend

DPW: PARKS –

- Opening and cleaning of City Hall restrooms
- Picked up trash downtown and in parks
- Plowed snow
- Salted sidewalks
- Continuing education for pesticide licensing

MAIN MAINTENANCE -

- MISS Digs
- Shut offs/turn-ons
- Meter reads, re-reads, final reads
- Meter changeouts

Mark Gifford, City Manager



Manager's Newsletter

8 February 2019

From the Manager's Desk

You will notice that the newsletter has taken a different format that I hope you find to be informative and interesting. The newsletter will no longer be distributed every week, but instead will come out on the Fridays after City Commission meetings. City Commission meetings are the first and third Mondays of every month with a few exceptions for holidays and elections. The goal of updating the newsletter is to create an instrument that the public finds useful for gathering information regarding the City of Big Rapids.

The City has many exciting and challenging projects that are ongoing including Hanchett development, determining the future of the Depot, construction of a fitness park, and more. The newsletter will be one way to keep the public informed and engaged as those decisions are made. Stay tuned!

At the City Commission

On Monday, February 4, the City Commission acted on three points of business, including:

- A traffic order for the streets around Crossroads Charter Academy, in response to a formal Traffic Study and a community meeting about the issue, to help alleviate school traffic during pick-up and drop-off times.
- Appointing five people to City boards and commissions. If you have an interest in serving the community in this fashion, several boards still have vacant seats. Talk to the City Clerk at 231-592-4020 for more information.

The Commission also had a work session to discuss term limits for members of City Commissions and Boards. This conversation will be continued at the next Commission meeting.

Meet and Greet: Heather Bowman, Director of Public Works



Salutations. I'm Heather Bowman, Public Works Director for the City of Big Rapids. I've worked for the City 7 years and have enjoyed meeting all the great people I get to work with and live near.

My exposure to Big Rapids is more than these past 7 years, as I attended Ferris State University and have always enjoyed this community. When the opportunity to work at the City of Big Rapids became available, there was not a doubt in my mind that working, living, and raising my family here would be ideal. My husband and I have two young daughters. We all enjoy attending the boat show each winter, traveling to Florida in the spring, and boating and fishing in the summer.

As the Public Works Director, I find it essential to be of service for all residents and business owners. For example, there are two street projects near completion in the spring of 2019: Warren Avenue and Olaf Street. As the spring construction season gets closer, residences along those streets will receive a preconstruction letter giving them contact information and tentative timelines. It's imperative that the Public Works Department is working with

By the Numbers: 01/27-02/04

Dial-a-Ride Service

Low service numbers due to inclement weather.

- 1,946 Total Passengers
- 908 Demand Response Passengers
- 978 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 215 Adult Riders and 59 Child Riders
- 593 Senior or Disabled Riders

Hanchett Charrette

The City hosted a design charrette on January 24 to discuss ideas for the future of 206 N. State St, former site of Hanchett Manufacturing. Stay tuned for the results of the public input sessions!



Charrette attendees comment on proposed alternative site plans.

Meet and Greet continued.

transparency to give everyone a feeling of trust when working in their front and back yards.



Fall 2018 Warren Avenue Reconstruction

The Public Works Department has multiple projects scheduled for 2019, including:

- a \$2 million grant funded project for Ives Avenue and South Street, which will include watermain replacement and street reconstruction;
- beginning the \$1 million Stormwater, Asset Management and Wastewater (SAW) grant;
- installation of the National Fitness Campaign-Fitness Court near River Street Park, which was obtained after Rotary, Spectrum Health and the City were successful in fundraising \$90,000;
- the annual sidewalk program, which has doubled funding this year, will involve new sidewalks added throughout the City, focusing first near schools and the hospital, then adding connectors where there are sidewalk gaps;
- planting trees in the right-of-way throughout the City will be a focus in the fall;
- Dial-A-Ride will receive a \$250,000 upgrade at their garage and three additional buses are expected to be replaced with State/ Federal funding;
- the Waste Water plant will begin the process to upgrade the Screw Pumps, starting with modification to the Wet Well;
- removing lead goosenecks and identify types of services for reporting purposes required by the DEQ; plus much more.

While all these projects are in the final planning stages, Public Works will continue to prioritize maintaining our City and will always be available to assist our residents and business owners.

Upcoming Events

Daddy Daughter Dance

Dads, grandpas, and uncles, grab your favorite little lady and get ready for a night of dancing, refreshments, photos, and crafts on Friday, Feb 15 from 7:00-9:00 at the Big Rapids Middle School. Call 231-592-4038 to register.

Festival of the Arts

The annual Big Rapids Festival of the Arts is taking place all through the month of February. View the event calendar and learn more at www.brfota.org

Big Rapids Community Library

- Comics Workshop, Feb 12 at 3:30PM
- "Bookish Valentines", Feb 13 at 4:00PM
- Big Rapids Camera Club, Feb 14 at 6:00PM
- Mary's Book Club, Feb 15 at 12:00 noon.
"The Lilac Girls" is the book in discussion.

Check the Library website for more event details.



Manager's Newsletter

22 February 2019

From the Manager's Desk

We have a new Strategic Plan!!!

The City Commission recently completed a strategic planning process, adopting the plan on February 18th. The document can be accessed on the City's website, www.cityofbr.org. This document will guide the City over the next 5 years and provides specific action items for the next 12 months. The City Commission is the author of the Plan and City staff are charged with completing the work.

Exciting aspects of the plan include an increased focus on building new sidewalks, paving gravel streets, improving connection with local business owners, increasing communication between City boards, listing the Hanchett property for sale, and possible acquisition of the Depot property.

At the City Commission

On Monday, February 18, the City Commission heard an audit update and discussed the ongoing project to develop a County Drain for Ives Avenue. They also acted on several points of business, including:

- An engineering proposal from Fleis & VandenBrink for upcoming modifications to the Screw Pump Wet Well at the Wastewater Treatment Plant,
- Adopting the 2020 Strategic Plan, and
- Appointing two people to City Assessment Board of Review. This board still has one vacant seat. Call the City Clerk at 231-592-4020 if you're interested in serving here.

Commission meetings are always open to the public. You are welcome to join on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month at 6:30 PM at City Hall.

Meet and Greet: Cindy Plautz, Neighborhood Services Coordinator

Hi! My name is Cindy Plautz and you can find me in the Neighborhood Services Department at City Hall. I have had the privilege of working for the City for the past 23 years. In 1995, I started work as Receptionist, Police Report Stenographer



and Assistant to the Tax Administrator. I moved on to Administrative Assistant to the City Manager and eventually Neighborhood Services Coordinator. My main responsibilities are Administrator of the Rental Certification Program and Grant Writer/Administrator. I also help with zoning, sign, and fence permits and serve as the Planning Commission Recording Secretary.

Being in a small city, I have had opportunity to be involved in a variety of initiatives. Some of them include administration of a small business loan program through a USDA Rural Development Intermediary Relending Program, administration of a City funded small grant program to help low-income community members with external home maintenance, and coordination of the annual Earth Day City-Wide Clean Up. I also serve on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy of the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission.

Of these various jobs, I am most proud of the millions of grant dollars I have secured for improvements to City infrastructure. Examples include all phases of

By the Numbers: 02/03-02/16

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 8,409 Total Passengers
- 2,956 Demand Response Passengers
- 5,453 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 640 Adult Riders and 725 Child Riders
- 1,591 Senior or Disabled Riders

Public Safety

- Investigators continue to follow up on a drive-by-shooting in the 400 block of Fuller Ave in the morning of Feb 1. Two persons of interest have been arrested. The investigation is ongoing.

Public Works

- Plowed snow. Lots of snow!
- Kept the Water and Wastewater plants running well despite cold weather challenges.

Daddy Daughter Dance!

The Dance was a huge success as almost 650 people attended at the Middle School on the 15th. Fun was had by all: play-doh, making crowns and bracelets, eating cupcakes, and dancing the night away with friends and fathers.



The BRPS Middle School gym during the Daddy Daughter Dance.

Meet and Greet continued.

the Riverwalk through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Trust Fund and, the Vibrant Small City Initiative through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's (MEDC) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program that involved improvements to the downtown streetscape, business facades, wayfinding, and Artworks. I was also responsible for securing and administering a U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration grant for the nearly \$6,000,000 Baldwin Street Bridge Replacement project.



Removal of the old Baldwin St bridge.

I am currently working on a MEDC, Community Development Block Grant for the Big Rapids Water System Improvement Project that will replace the watermain in Ives/South Streets and a block of Clark and Magnolia to improve reliability and flow. I'm also working on a MDNR Recreation Passport Grant to improve the Anna Howard Shaw Memorial Park near the Library. This is a unique project that will include a literacy focus within its proposed playground equipment and walking paths, plus lighting and parking improvements.

Originally from Wisconsin (yes, a Packer Fan!!!), my husband and I moved to St. Charles, MI in 1980 and then to Big Rapids in 1992. We have two adult children of whom we are very proud. Our daughter is a Speech Language Pathologist at a private school in Illinois and our son is an Engineering Technician for General Motors in Warren. We have two grandchildren who are so much fun to spoil!!! Most of our vacation/free time is spent traveling to be with family and enjoying Michigan – Si quaeris penninsulam amoenam circumspecte.

Upcoming Events

Festival of the Arts - Sculpture Presentation

At Artworks on Feb 28 at 5:00PM a new sculpture for the island in the Muskegon River will be unveiled and explained by the artist, Ivan Iler.

Big Rapids Community Library

- Comic Workshops "Show Day" Feb 26 at 3:30PM.
- Author Talk! Elisa M. Camara, author of "Patriot Pup", will give a presentation Mar 5 at 5:00PM. Join us at the Library to hear more about her "bulldog" pup story.

Check the Library website for more event details.



Manager's Newsletter

08 March 2019

From the Manager's Desk

The City's Strategic Plan details a goal of building a more direct connection between the City Commission, the Planning Commission, and the Park and Recreation Board. On March 14th at 6:30PM at City Hall, the City Commission will be meeting jointly with the Park and Recreation Board to discuss the following three topics:

- Future of River Safety Initiative
- 2019 Pool Season
- Marijuana in Public Places/Parks

These are important issues for the community and the hope is that having a larger group discussion will provide a more complete review of the matters. The public is encouraged to attend!

At the City Commission

On Monday March 4th, the City Commission heard a financial and investment report from the Treasurer and learned about Special Assessments from the City Manager. They also acted on several points of business, including:

- Adopting the 2019-2025 Capital Improvements Program, and
- Authorizing a payment to the Mecosta County Drain Commissioner to continue the process toward the Proposed Ives Drain.

A Work Session was held to discuss possibilities for a future Housing Study. The goal is to improve housing in our community, but first we need to gather and analyze data to better understand the current state of housing conditions in Big Rapids.

Commission meetings are always open to the public. You are welcome to join on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month at 6:30 PM at City Hall.

Meet and Greet: Steve Schroeder, Deputy Director of Public Safety and Airport Manager

Greetings, my name is Steve Schroeder, I am the Deputy Director of Public Safety and the Airport Manager for the City of Big Rapids. I have been with the City for 4 ½ years. I am originally from the Big Rapids area and grew up in Rodney. I have always enjoyed the hometown feel and friendliness of Big



Rapids. When I'm not at work I enjoy spending time with my wife and 4 children. The community of Big Rapids is a great place to raise a family.

I started my emergency service career with Mecosta County EMS and the Morton Township Fire Department. I then worked as full-time firefighter paramedic for Delhi Charter Township in the Lansing area for 6 years before wanting to return to serve the residents of my hometown.

As the Deputy Director of Public Safety, my primary responsibilities are overseeing Fire and Rescue operations for the City of Big Rapids. We have committed ourselves to provide a quality of service that the community expects. The Fire Division answered 1,274 calls for service during 2018, a majority being medical related calls. We continue our community outreach programs including our smoke detector program, CPR/ First Aid education, and bleeding control education for the public. The Fire Division also assists with crossing students Michigan Ave to

By the Numbers: 02/17-03/03

Dial-a-Ride Service

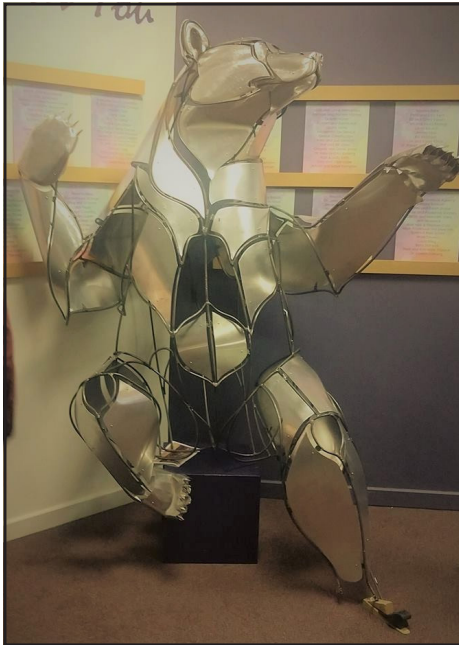
- 9,034 Total Passengers
- 3,657 Demand Response Passengers
- 5,377 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 1,680 Adult Riders and 1,233 Child Riders
- 1,680 Senior or Disabled Riders

Public Safety

- Police Division responded to 82 complaints.
- Charges have been authorized against a 19 year old male for larceny of autos from February 6th.
- Officers received technical training on firearms.
- Fire Division responded to 50 calls for service.
- Fire Division training included a lecture by Consumers Energy about power line safety.

New Sculpture

Artist Ivan Iler unveiled his Black Bear sculpture at a Festival of the Arts event on February 28th. After installation this spring, you'll be able to see the bear from the Riverwalk at his new home on the island in the Muskegon River.



The sculpture unveiling at Artworks

Meet and Greet continued.

get to the middle school. In 2019, we are expecting the delivery of a new fire engine that will assist us to better serve the community for years to come.



Firefighter exercise at the Public Safety Building.

As the Airport Manager I am responsible for the operations at Roben Hood Airport. The airport services both general and corporate (business) aviation. Our goal at the airport is to provide the best possible service and promote airport growth which will benefit the area economy. You would be surprised to know that many planes fly into the airport to visit the area businesses, restaurants, and hotels. The City is currently looking at funding options for a runway extension increasing from 4,300 to 5,000 ft long which would promote larger aircraft and possibly even charter flights. I would like to continue community education on the services and impact the airport provides. We have normal business hours and encourage citizens to stop by and visit. The main terminal building is located on 18 Mile Rd west of Northland Drive.



Directing traffic at the Airport. Photo Credit: Janet Ruf.

I feel lucky to have the opportunity to work with so many likeminded people in a family-friendly community. Its nice to see so many local events and friendly people around town. I have enjoyed the community support and look forward to the future.

Upcoming Events

Big Rapids Community Library

- March is Women's History Month; learn something new in the books on display.
- Special guest readers at Story Time in March.
- March 21 at 6PM special program "Birdwatching vs. Birding" by Greg Bodker.
- "Chickens 101", sponsored by Family Farm & Home, March 26 at 6PM, to learn about chickens and keeping them. Live birds at the Library!
- Library Board of Trustees, March 14 at 6PM at the Library. The public is welcome to attend.

Check the Library website for more event details.



Manager's Newsletter

22 March 2019

From the Manager's Desk

The City is working on a project that will replace the watermain and road on Ives Avenue and South Street from Magnolia Ave to Northland Drive. The project is estimated to cost nearly \$2 million dollars and take 3 months to complete. The original schedule had work occurring from mid-May to early September 2019. The Michigan Economic Development Corporation has committed approximately \$1.8 million to the project and with those resources come approval requirements that have delayed the start date.

Starting later would impinge on FSU's fall semester, so a revised schedule is being developed. The revision will likely involve work being completed in 2 phases, split between Summer 2019 and Summer 2020. The first phase would be from Magnolia to Stadium Drive. Another option is to complete all the work in 2020. Contact Mark Gifford with questions, 231-592-4058.

Overnight parking is again permitted.

FYI: The "All Night Winter Parking" ordinance is in effect between November 15 and March 15.

At the City Commission

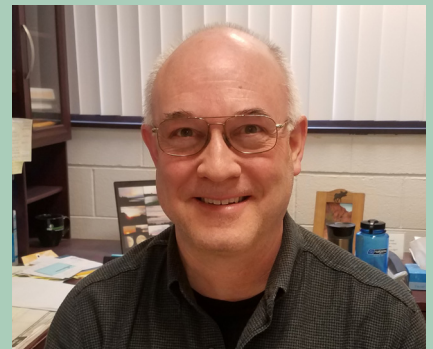
On Monday, March 18 the City Commission recognized two special orders:

- A Life Saving Award to DART driver Janice Bittenbender for administering child CPR and saving the life of a 5-year-old child on her bus on March 1. See the City's Facebook Page for more details.
- A Proclamation was issued to Schuberg's Insurance Agency recognizing them for 70+ years of commitment to the City of Big Rapids.

The Commission also acted on several points of business. See the City's website for more information about past Commission meetings.

Meet and Greet: Dave Cushway, Superintendent of the Wastewater Treatment Plant

Hello, my name is Dave Cushway and I am Superintendent of the Wastewater Treatment Plant. I am currently in my 16th year of City employment and hope to continue



until retirement. I grew up here, attended Big Rapids Public Schools and am a graduate of the HVAC Program at Ferris State University. From 1985-2003, I worked in the engineering department of an HVAC systems manufacturer in Grand Rapids. After 18 years of valuable experience and frequent travel throughout the United States, it was time for a change.

In 2003, I began my employment with the City as a Plant Operator and began learning the wastewater treatment process through continuing education and on-the-job training. After acquiring 10 years of experience and Michigan D, C, and B Wastewater Licenses, the position of Plant Superintendent was offered to me in 2013. Since that time, many capital improvements and process upgrades have been completed, such as: headworks screening system, north plant stairway, entrance gate, automated aeration basins, final clarifier repairs, ferric handling and digester piping. New laboratory equipment includes a water machine, BOD incubators, spectrophotometer and a glassware washer. Current projects include a North State lift station, screw pump wet-well, water system upgrades, sludge storage tank repairs, and a new Waterloo lift station design.

By the Numbers: 03/04-03/17

Dial-a-Ride Service

Low service numbers due to inclement weather.

- 6,273 Total Passengers
- 3,512 Demand Response Passengers
- 2,761 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 561 Adult Riders and 1,059 Child Riders
- 1,892 Senior or Disabled Riders

Public Safety

- Fire Division responded to 36 calls for service.
- Police Division responded to 86 complaints.
- On March 15, officers arrested a 19 year old male in relation to a group of larceny from autos that occurred on March 6.
- Charges have been authorized against two brothers, 23 and 24 years of age, in relation to the drive by shooting of a residence on the 400 block of Fuller on February 1.



Public Works Director Heather Bowman, Public Safety Director Jim Eddinger, and BRPS Superintendent Tim Haist accepted a 2018 Outstanding Traffic Safety Achievement Award in Lansing for work done to improve safety around local elementary schools.

Meet and Greet continued.



Clairfier project from 2018 included sandblasting and painting.



Aeration basins at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Permit requirements have been numerous, as well: Completion of a DEQ-mandated 2-year Ammonia Study, 5-year Headworks Loading Study, User-Charge and Sewer-Use Ordinance updates, and a multi-year WWTP Asset-Management Plan. After a DEQ 2-year application and review process, we were just issued a new 5-Year NPDES Plant Operating Permit last month.

Safety Training and Continuing Education is an ongoing priority to maintain Staff wastewater licenses and a safe work environment. New safety shower and hazardous gas detection equipment has been purchased and installed for employee and community safety. It is personally rewarding to know that the Wastewater Treatment Staff and Plant play a key role in keeping our community and the Muskegon River clean, healthy, and safe.

My wife Penny and I live along the river, north of town. In our free time, we enjoy traveling, camping, motorcycling, kayaking, hiking, and cross-country skiing. Penny is an artist and musician who plays French Horn in the Grand Rapids Symphonic Band and a local brass ensemble, so we regularly participate in fine arts events. We also support and volunteer in the activities of our shared Community of Christ and United Methodist congregations.

Upcoming Events

Spring Leaf Pick Up - April 15-19

The Public Works Department will be conducting leaf pick up from City streets during the week of April 15. Mark that weekend on your calendar and get out your rakes!

Big Rapids Community Library

- Chickens 101 on March 26th at 6:00PM. Learn about raising chickens and ducks, and meet some of them too!
- The Seed Library is open for anyone who wants to start their seedlings inside.

Check the Library website for more event details.



Manager's Newsletter

05 April 2019

From the Manager's Desk

The early onset of winter weather in 2018 has left many City property owners with yards full of leaves. To assist with that issue, the City will be conducting a Spring leaf pick up from April 15th to April 19th. Procedure will be the same as the fall: rake leaves into the street. Please be diligent to work within this timeframe as the street sweeper will be deployed the following week and sweeping is not possible when the streets are full of leaves. Any questions or concerns should be directed to 231-592-4015.

At the City Commission

On Monday, April 01, the City Commission heard Study Sessions on three topics. First, the City Attorney talked about marihuana. State laws have changed and the City is making adjustments in response. If this is a topic you are interested in, stay tuned, as it will come up again in future City Commission and Planning Commission meetings as local regulations are debated and decided.

Other Study session topics were the Annual Report of Planning (which is an update on the planning and zoning decisions made in 2018) and an update on the future of the Hanchett site based on the feedback from the Charrette in January.

General business topics included moving forward with the 2019 Sidewalk Improvement Project, passing amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to permit child care in more districts across the City, and authorizing a grant agreement with the Michigan Economic Development Authority for the watermain and street reconstruction project on Ives Avenue and South Street.

The City Commission meets on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month at 6:30PM in City Hall. We'd love to see you there in the future.

Meet and Greet: Cody Wyman, Engineering Technician

Hello, my name is Cody Wyman, I work in the Engineering Department at City Hall and recently had the privilege of joining the fire department as a part paid firefighter. I have been with the City of Big Rapids for 9 months. I am originally from the Reed City area, growing up in the small town of Hersey. After High School I had the opportunity to play college football and earn an associate degree in Minnesota. Before going back to finish my bachelor's degree, I took a "summer job" on an oil rig and spent 5 years traveling and working in the oil and gas profession. After having my son Landon, who is now 7, I decided



it was time to come home. I finished my bachelor's degree at Ferris State University and have grown to know Big Rapids as home.

Since returning to Michigan in 2016 I have warmed up to the town I formerly called a "rival". What I love about Big Rapids is the people in the community and their acceptance in welcoming newcomers. My first day on the job I felt nervous but was immediately welcomed to the team. The work environment I get to be a part of has become a blessing; I have a wonderful co-worker who took on a mentor role. Having the ability to ask questions and learn as much as possible is something I enjoy and the team I am apart of is always welcoming of questions. Working for the City has given me the ability to meet local community members. After traveling all over the United States I have found that

By the Numbers: 03/17-03/30

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 7,189 Total Passengers
- 2,810 Demand Response Passengers
- 4,283 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 325 Adult Riders and 769 Child Riders
- 1,812 Senior or Disabled Riders

Public Safety

The Police Division responded to 41 complaints. Of significance was a minor hit and run accident on March 29. A 32 year old male has been identified as the driver. Charges will be sought through the County Prosecutor's Office.

On March 22, a 23 year old male was arrested for the February 1st shooting in the 400 block of Fuller. His brother, a 25 year old male is awaiting arraignment for the incident also.

Fire Division responded to 44 calls for service.

Citywide Clean Up!

The annual Citywide Clean Up will be taking place again in 2019. This event usually takes place on or near Earth Day. This year Earth Day is the Monday after Easter weekend, so the event has been rescheduled. Mark your calendars for Saturday May 4 from 9:00 to 11:00 AM and be part of making our City a cleaner and safer place to be. Contact (231)592-4036 for more information.

Upcoming Events

Big Rapids Community Library

- April 13 and 27 from 10:00-12:00 - Gardening Tips from local farmers.
- April 18 - Poem in Your Pocket Day. Stop by to get a poem in honor of National Poetry Month.
- April 25 at 7:00PM - Biking Cross Country with Robert Downes, author and bike tour expert.

Check the Library website for more event details and regularly scheduled programs like Storytime and book clubs.

Recreation

Girls on the Run is starting now. The registration deadline is April 5 at 5:00PM! Practices start next week in preparation for the 5k race on June 8.

The downtown Farmers Market begins May 10.

Meet and Greet continued.

people from the state of Wyoming and the City of Big Rapids have some of the most welcoming citizens who still believe in core family values and principles.

As an engineering technician, my primary responsibilities are gathering field data and transferring that data to maps and files for record keeping. My co-worker and I are responsible for many other duties such as estimating, design, meetings, and most importantly answering community members' questions and concerns. My typical workday starts with a brief department meeting. After that I usually go over emails and get in contact with people we are working with on projects to see what their daily itinerary is and draw up a to-do list for my day. Some of my recent projects include inspecting the new apartments at 830 Water Tower Road, bids for the National Fitness Court, and the 2019 Sidewalk Program. Most recently I've been trying to form a coalition to develop tiny homes for the homeless. Although all projects have their challenges, I would say the most challenging projects are those directly helping someone in our community, because you go over your plan countless times and do all you can to make sure you avoid mistakes and get the job done correctly.



Sanitary sewer improvement project at Hemlock Park

My passion is to give back to troubled youth. While attending Ferris State University I worked at a youth detention facility and found that those I was there to help were helping me which is something I am forever grateful for. This past football season I was able to coach J.V. football at Reed City which was rewarding, and I plan to continue. In my spare time I always enjoy finding a quiet place to fish, hunt, and spend time with my son.



Manager's Newsletter

18 April 2019

From the Manager's Desk

A variety of conditions have changed in the world of recycling that are impacting the recycling service that we enjoy in Big Rapids. Manufacturers are utilizing more lightweight materials and those lightweight materials are not as valuable in the recycling markets. Foreign countries were once the primary destination for recycled materials from the United States and now those same countries are changing how they are handling incoming recycling material. These and other issues are greatly increasing the cost of recycling.

Republic Services provides recycling in the City and they operate under a contract authorized by the City Commission. In November 2018, the Commission granted Republic's request to raise the recycling fee that all property owners pay.

Republic is now asking the City Commission to move away from weekly recycle pick up and have the pickups occur on the second and fourth Mondays of every month. This change will be implemented during the summer of 2019. This cost saving measure would be done to prevent another increase in the rates.



Changes in how recycling is handled and the level of service for Big Rapids property owners will likely be a topic of conversation for the foreseeable future.

If there are questions on this topic please call 231-592-4058.

Meet and Greet: Tamyra Gillis, City Clerk

Hello, my name is Tamyra Gillis, I am the City Clerk for the City of Big Rapids. I first started with the City as the Deputy Clerk in 2005 and became the City Clerk in 2015. I achieved Certified Municipal Clerk, Master Municipal Clerk, and Certified Michigan Municipal Clerk designations. I am a member of the International Institute of Municipal Clerks and the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks.



The Clerk's office conducts and oversees all elections in the City. This year the City will have two elections: the School Election in May and the Municipal Election in November. In 2020 there will be four elections: Presidential Primary, May School Election, August Primary, and November Presidential General Election. Next year will be a very busy and exciting year! The Clerk's Office registers voters and maintains a Qualified Voter File, which retains every voter's history. The State

By the Numbers: 03/31-04/13

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 8,070 Total Passengers
- 3,643 Demand Response Passengers
- 4,427 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 559 Adult Riders and 1,273 Child Riders
- 1,811 Senior or Disabled Riders

At the City Commission

On Monday April 15th, in addition to regular business, the City Commission heard from residents during a Public Input Session regarding ideas for projects to be included in the City Budget for the next fiscal year. Proposed ideas included additional street lighting and decorations on the Baldwin Street Bridge, more resources for the Community Pool, and construction of a Community Recreation Center.

Spring Leaf Pick-Up

The City's Spring Leaf Pick-Up was scheduled for this week, from April 15 through 19. Due to the snow last weekend, leaf pick-up has been extended through next week and will run until April 26. See the City's Facebook page for more details. Questions? Call the Public Works Department at (231) 592-4015.

Instructions for Spring Leaf Pick-Up:

- Rake leaves into piles in the street, about one foot from the curb or edge of the pavement, leaving this space allows storm water to run into the gutter. Wet leaves to prevent blowing, if needed.
- Do not use plastic bags – keep leaves loose. Leaves only please; no rocks, tree limbs, etc.

Upcoming Events

Big Rapids Community Library

- "Biking Cross Country with Robert Downes" on Thursday April 25 at 7:00PM
- Informational session about gardening with local farmers on Saturday April 26 at 10:00AM.

Check the Library website for more event details.

Big Rapids Farmers Market

The Farmers Market starts for the season on Friday May 10. It will run twice a week through the fall on Fridays from 8:00AM-2:00PM and on Tuesdays from 12:00PM-5:00PM.

Meet and Greet continued.

of Michigan has recently purchased new election voting equipment, which many voters have already seen and used. The best part about working in a small community is that you get to know your voters on a first name basis and can easily help them with voting problems.



Voter Assist Terminal and Imagecast Tabulator

As Clerk, I am also the Freedom of Information Coordinator (FOIA). All FOIA's are routed through the Clerk's office and documented. The Clerk's office in Big Rapids deals with approximately 400 FOIA's each year. The Clerk's Office also takes minutes for various charter and non-charter boards including City Commission, Compensation Commission, Election Commission, and the City Manager's Meeting with the Big Rapids Property Owner's Association.

The Clerk's office handles all business licenses and sidewalk permits. All businesses that want to sell door to door must receive a permit from the Clerk's office before soliciting.

The City offers a free Notary Public service to all citizens. The City Clerk and the City Treasurer are both Notary Publics.

I moved to Big Rapids in 1982 and was fortunate enough to be on the Senior Enrichment Committee and a member and treasurer for the Mecosta County CARES for ten years. The most wonderful part of Big Rapids is that you can walk or bike to many parks and engage in many wonderful festivals and activities both summer and winter. There is always something happening in Big Rapids.



Manager's Newsletter

May 10, 2019

From the Manager's Desk

Summer 2019 Construction Plans

The City Commission has placed an emphasis on infrastructure as part of their strategic planning process and staff is preparing for considerable work for the upcoming summer.

- The Ives Avenue road and watermain replacement will begin in June. The \$1.8 million project will begin on Ives near Magnolia.
- Final paving of 300 and 400 blocks of Warren Avenue is planned for the week of May 20th, weather dependent.
- Winter Avenue road and watermain replacement (Cypress to Chestnut) will begin in late summer or early fall.
- Gravel street paving of the last block of Olaf and two blocks of Jefferson will begin in June or July.
- Paving of North Michigan Ave, Bellevue, North Warren (Middle School) will be in July or August before school starts.
- New sidewalk near Riverview School will be installed after school is out in June or July.
- The North/South runway at the airport will be replaced in June or July.
- A portion of the Riverwalk that is in disrepair will be replaced this summer as well.

Investments in infrastructure pay long term dividends to the entire community.

Spring is here and grass is growing.

The City Code of Ordinances states that grass and weeds create a nuisance harmful to the health and well-being of residents. If your grass exceeds 6 inches in height, the City can have it cut and charge you for the cost. Please maintain your lawn and yard.

Meet and Greet: Matt Ruelle, Engineering Technician

My name is Matt Ruelle and I am originally from Howell Michigan, although I have lived in the Big Rapids area since 1981. I graduated from BRHS in 1988 and started working for the City in my current position in 2008. I also worked as a DPW laborer from 2000-2003. I enjoy just



about anything that you can do outdoors, fishing and hunting, kayaking, boating, and 2-tracking in my Jeep to name a few.

My position is Engineering Technician for Public Works. My job is to help identify projects that need to be done for sustainability, when it deals with the City's infrastructure such as watermain, storm sewers, sanitary sewers, streets, sidewalks, and parks. I enjoy being included at the inception of a project, being a part of the Survey team, working on the design, and then actually building the project and adding the as-built drawings to the project files. It is very satisfying to be a part of the whole project from start to finish, which sometimes takes years to complete. For instance, I was a part of the team that designed and built Veterans Memorial Park. We had some great ideas and a good design, and it turned out to be a great addition to the City. I truly enjoy and take pride in seeing people use the facilities that I have been a part of building or maintaining.

By the Numbers: 04/21-05/04

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 10,756 Total Passengers
- 5,160 Demand Response Passengers
- 5,596 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 578 Adult Riders and 1,858 Child Riders
- 2,724 Senior or Disabled Riders

Public Safety

- Fire Division responded to 28 calls for service.
- Police Division continues to work with the Sheriff and US Secret Service to investigate 3 brothers who are being held on uttering and publishing and criminal enterprise charges in relation to counterfeit money passed at businesses in the City and Big Rapids Township in April.
- The Department is excited to help with the upcoming Gus Macker basketball tournament to be held downtown on May 18 and 19.

At the City Commission

The City Commission regularly meets on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month. However, on weeks with an election, one meeting is shifted from the 1st to the 2nd Monday. This means that the Commission will meet this month on May 13 and May 20 at 6:30 PM in the Commission Room of City Hall. The public is always welcome to attend City Commission meetings.

Some items on the agenda for May 13 include a presentation and Public Hearing on the City's 2019/2020 Budget, an update on the production of the new fire truck, and a discussion of the planned infrastructure improvements to Ives Avenue.

Upcoming Events

Big Rapids Community Library

- "Traditional Folksongs of the Great Lakes" concert with Adam Miller. Friday, May 7 at 7PM.
- Presentation on "Michigan Education Trust" Tuesday, May 14 at 6PM.
- This month's book display features Michigan Notable Authors; with topics and settings focused on Michigan.
- Get herbs, vegetables, and flower seeds for your garden from the seed library, now open.

Check the Library website for more event details.

Meet and Greet continued.



South Warren Avenue Reconstruction, October 2018.

Currently, I am a part of the team putting together the Infrastructure Capacity Enhancement (ICE) grant project. The ICE grant project includes replacing nearly a mile of watermain and full street reconstruction on Ives Avenue, beginning at Magnolia Street and running all the way to State Street, and a block of Clark Street from Morrison Avenue to Fuller Avenue. This requires removing the asphalt and undercutting two feet of the clay from the base of the road, backfilling with sand and gravel, and installing an underdrain. The existing watermain was installed in the early fifties and is cast iron, which is prone to breakage in heavy ground. As this project surrounds FSU, there will be time limits and staging for various sections to keep traffic moving and have as little impact on FSU operations as possible. With a project like this, which covers such a large area, there is a lot of planning to do, but I believe that the finished product will be a great asset to the City.



Sidewalk program, summer 2018.

Big Rapids has been the perfect place to raise a family and get an education (I am a 1996 FSU grad). I have lived in other places in other states, but Big Rapids has been the only place to feel like home.



Manager's Newsletter

24 May 2019

From the Manager's Desk

Be Diligent about Protecting your Property

The men and women of the City's Public Safety Department are hard-working, well trained, and care a great deal about the Community. They are on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and are ready to respond to any incident that occurs in the City. They are also very proactive in patrolling our neighborhoods, parks, commercial areas, and the industrial park with the goal of preventing problems before they happen. However, it is the responsibility of every property owner and resident to be diligent about securing their property and belongings. Something as easy as making sure that your home, business, out buildings, and/or vehicles are locked can deter those who may be looking for easy opportunities.

At the City Commission

On Monday, May 20, the City Commission heard updates on the City income tax and progress toward the City Strategic Plan. They also acted on several points of business, including:

- An amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to permit "new economy type businesses" in several of the zoning districts,
- Awarded bids for several maintenance projects around town, and
- Authorized the listing of 906 N. State Street (known as the Hanchett Property) for sale.

Commission meetings are always open to the public. You are welcome to join on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month at 6:30 PM at City Hall.

Road Work on Ives Ave

Work is scheduled to begin in early June on the watermain and road reconstruction project on Ives Avenue. Road closure dates & details coming soon.

Meet and Greet: Carla Staffen, Assistant City Treasurer

My name is Carla Staffen. I was born in Los Alamos, New Mexico, went to kindergarten in Richardson, Texas and first and second grade in Muncie, Indiana. We moved to Big Rapids after Muncie and I have been here ever since. I am a graduate of Ferris State University with a degree in Accounting.

I started with the City on September 12, 1986. This was during the flood of the 1986 and I had to find a different way to town from Clear Lake.



My current position is Assistant City Treasurer. My main duty is processing the City and the Housing Commission payroll biweekly, as well as the ACT 345 Retirees, the part paid fire fighters, and commission/mayor payroll on a monthly basis. Some of my other duties include maintaining city assets and related depreciation schedules. I prepare equipment rental and DPW overhead monthly and submit reports quarterly to MDOT for State trunk line reimbursement. I enjoy balancing monthly bank statements to the

By the Numbers: 05/05-05/19

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 4,420 Total Passengers
- 3,441 Demand Response Passengers
- 979 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 473 Adult Riders and 1,338 Child Riders
- 1,630 Senior or Disabled Riders

Free Zinnias!

The City will give a free flat of zinnias to City residents and businesses to be planted where they can be viewed by the general public.

Flower coupons are available on a first-come, first-serve basis and may be picked up at the Public Works office in City Hall from May 28-30, between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM. There is a limit of one coupon per address.



Coupons can be exchanged for the zinnia flats on Friday, May 31 at the Farmer's Market in front of City Hall between 8:00 AM and 2:00 PM. You must have a coupon to receive free flowers.

Want to Run for City Commission?

City residents interested in running for a position on the City Commission may pick up nominating petitions at the City Clerk's Office. Completed petitions must be filed with the City Clerk by July 23, 2019 at 4:00 PM. Complete election information may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office, by calling 231-592-4020, or on the City website.

Meet and Greet continued.

ledger and other balancing duties. I generate special assessment billings yearly. I also work with the external auditors on a yearly basis to make sure the city's financials are in good working order.

I like working with other departments and helping fellow employees understand how the financials work.

I enjoy spending time with my family and look forward to becoming a grandma in early October. We like to visit our children in Grand Rapids and Traverse City. I also enjoy boating, traveling, watching sports of all kinds, and reading.

Trash and Recycling News

- Pickup on Tuesday, May 28 next week because Monday, May 27 is Memorial Day.
- Starting in June 2019, recycling pickup will only take place on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month. Trash pickup will take place every Monday.



City Hall will be closed on Monday, May 27, 2019 for the Memorial Day holiday. We will be open again at 8:00 AM on Tuesday, May 28. Best wishes to you and your family this Memorial Day.





Manager's Newsletter

07 June 2019

From the Manager's Desk

For many years the City has envisioned a new home for the Farmers Market that would double as an Ice Rink in the winter months. This permanent facility would shelter the vendors and market patrons and provide a refrigerated ice surface free from the unpredictability of Mother Nature. It was previously thought that this plan might happen 5 or 10 years from now, but a call from the State Economic Development Office has greatly expedited the City's plans.

The facility will be located directly across the street from City Hall, immediately north of Bernie's Place. The approximately 90' X 140' pavilion will have public restrooms, food prep area, outdoor fireplace, Zamboni garage, and picnic area. It will accommodate an approximately 70' X 125' ice surface. Along with the Farmers Market and Ice Rink the space will host Downtown events like the Chili Cook Off and could be reserved for private events such as birthday parties and open houses. There are still some approvals pending, but all signs point toward construction starting in the spring of 2020. Thoughts and ideas regarding this project are welcomed, call 231-592-4058 or email mgifford@cityofbr.org.

Meet and Greet: Gail Dolbee, City Assessor

Hello, my name is Gail Dolbee, I am the Assessor for the City of Big Rapids. I began my tenure at the City in 2007 as the Administrative Assistant for the Public Works Department. I moved to the Assessing Department in 2010 as the Assessing Technician.



The next five years were filled with hundreds of hours of education, both on and off the job. The City supported me every step of the way on my journey to become the City Assessor. I was also fortunate enough to have an outstanding mentor, Dan Kirwin, who was the Contract Assessor for the City. Dan bridged the gap between classroom theory and the real life application of mass appraisal principals. I will forever be grateful for Dan's expertise.

In 2015, I achieved my goal of becoming a Michigan Advanced Assessor (MAAO) and subsequently, I was appointed by the City Commission to be the Assessor for the City of Big Rapids. It was an accomplishment that I am very proud of and it has been my pleasure to

At the City Commission

On June 3rd, the City Commission heard updates on the Community Library and a grant program for home renovations on the eastside of the City, and had a work session to discuss required maintenance for one of the runways at Roben-Hood Airport.

Regular business included adoption of the City budget for 2019/2020 and citizen appointments to City Boards and Committees. The City is grateful to have dedicated resident volunteers help the City function smoothly and grow thoughtfully. If you're interested in volunteering on a City board, contact the City Clerk at 231-592-4020.

By the Numbers: 05/20-06/02

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 3,024 Total Passengers
- 3,024 Demand Response Passengers
- 357 Adult Riders and 1,213 Child Riders
- 1,454 Senior or Disabled Riders

Public Safety

- On May 21st, brothers Antonio and Paris Jones pleaded guilty to the shooting at a residence in the 400 block of Fuller on February 1st.
- The U.S. Attorney's Office is believed to be taking over the case of three brothers alleged to have passed counterfeit bills in the area in April. The brothers are held in the Mecosta County Jail.
- On June 3, Ken Rowley was sentenced to 7 to 20 years in prison for the delivery of methamphetamine to multiple people over a week in April 2018.
- The Fire Division responded to 39 calls for service.

Charles E. Fairman Community Pool

The Community Pool will open on June 17th this season and will close on August 16th. Regular programming includes swim lessons, open swim, lap swim, the Basic Water Rescue Course, Lifeguard Training, Handicapped Swim, and Water Babies. For more information, call the pool at 231-796-7798.



Upcoming Events

Big Rapids Community Library

- "The Faygo Book" program, with author Joe Grimm, at 6PM on June 13 to learn about the history and stories of one of Michigan's favorite pop companies.
- Scholastic Book Fair, June 17-21 at the Library.
- "Universe of Stories" is the theme of the 2019 Summer Reading Program which kicks off on Friday June 18.

Check the Library website for more event details.

Big Rapids Farmers Market

The Farmers Market happens twice a week through the fall on Tuesdays from 12 - 5PM and on Fridays from 8AM - 2PM.

Meet and Greet continued.

serve not only the City but also the residents of the Big Rapids community.

Property Tax Administration can be a very complex issue; however, it is my personal philosophy that part of my responsibilities is to help educate individuals if they have questions or concerns about how their property is being valued or what exemptions they may or may not qualify for.

The Michigan General Property Tax Act (Act 206 of the Public Act of 1893) established a basic framework of schedules and procedures for the assessment and collection of property tax. It states: "all property, real and personal, within the jurisdiction of this state, not expressly exempted, shall be subject to taxation". Because statutes, court decisions, opinions of the Attorney General, and rules of administrative agencies all have a bearing on the assessment procedures, assessors must also be familiar with the Michigan Compiled Laws, which include all of the Michigan statutes, as well as those dealing specifically with the taxation of real and personal property.

It is within these statutes where assessors find the rules and guidance to make the multitude of decisions that are necessary for the administration of property tax law. Assessments are to be accurate, uniform and fair. Assessors must follow statute when setting about this task. Taxpayers are encouraged to come into the assessing office or go online to look at their property record card. We are happy to go over the information with taxpayers. Having correct information helps to ensure accurate, uniform, and fair assessments.

Taxpayers also have the right to challenge the value opinion of the assessor. Values are determined each year, taxpayers are given the opportunity to review, and if necessary, challenge those values. Taxpayers can appeal at the local level at the March Board of Review. If they are not satisfied with the decision, they may appeal further to the Michigan Tax Tribunal. Taxpayers have a voice and a right to be heard. Knowing your rights and following the procedures to exercise those rights are fundamental in the assessment process.

I have a passion for my profession, and I feel very fortunate to be able to work in a community as fine as Big Rapids as well as with others at City Hall who care deeply for the community they serve.



Manager's Newsletter

June 21, 2019

From the Public Safety Director's Desk

All too often we hear of a tragic event at a school or workplace where an active assailant acted out a nefarious plot to harm innocent people. We considered if we were doing enough to prepare city employees for the possibility of this type of event. While such an event is unlikely, it is not impossible. Therefore, City Manager Gifford tasked members of my department with completing a vulnerability assessment of City Hall. Officers Lorne Juday and Andre Torres, and Service Officer Andrew Hartung, completed the assessment to identify opportunities to improve the facility and presented it to the City Commission.

The assessment established several areas to improve City Hall which were well received by the Commission. The City Manager has made this a priority and we have begun to making changes to improve the safety and security of City Hall. Additionally, the Public Safety Department provides training to employees and groups to be better prepared for the unthinkable. Research shows that training will help you to react appropriately in stressful situations and could even save lives. - Jim Eddinger, 231-527-0021

At the City Commission

At the regular meeting on Monday, June 17 the City Commission heard about a new State grant program to build affordable modular housing, learned about the process of testing and hauling biosolids from the Wastewater Treatment Plant and awarded a contract for the removal and disposal of biosolids for the next three years, and awarded a bid for a rehabilitation project of Runway 14/32 at the Roben-Hood Airport.

The City Commission also attended the Wednesday, June 19 meeting of the Planning Commission to discuss potential zoning regulations for future marihuana businesses in the City.

Meet and Greet: Danielle Haynes, Deputy Director of Public Safety - Police Division

Greetings, I am Danielle Haynes, the Deputy Director for Public Safety's Police Division. I was hired with the City of Big Rapids in the Fall of 2002 after completing the Michigan Police Corps Academy housed at Ferris State University. I was born and raised in Marquette, Michigan and take every opportunity I can to travel back to the U.P. I met my husband while working in Big Rapids and we have since started our family here.



I began my career with Big Rapids DPS as a patrol officer before being assigned to the multi-jurisdictional drug team (CMET). My experience and training while on that team is ultimately what encouraged me to seek out a position in leadership, first as a field training officer and later as a Sergeant. In November 2018, I was promoted to Deputy Director.

As Deputy Director, I assist the Director in developing plans to improve departmental operations, crime prevention, and personnel development. I develop training plans, oversee the purchase and maintenance of equipment and supplies, and assist in investigations. Daily, I review and process information to ensure the accuracy of reporting crimes to the State and Federal Government.

By the Numbers: 04/21-05/04

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 3,058 Total Passengers
- 3,058 Demand Response Passengers
- 391 Adult Riders and 1,102 Child Riders
- 1,565 Senior or Disabled Riders

Public Safety

- Fire Division responded to 40 calls for service.
- On Saturday, June 8, the Fire Division trained on river rescue along with the Mecosta County Dive Team in Hemlock Park.
- On Monday, June 10, Fire crews assisted the MOCC with 2 vehicle extraction demonstrations. Students were able to operate some of the tools used to remove patients from vehicles after accidents.
- Police Division Officers have been training with their new department-issued handguns.
- A series of larceny from automobiles from June 10 was investigated and a suspect was taken into custody. He is currently lodged at the Mecosta County Jail and has been charged with larceny from an automobile.

Meet and Greet continued.



Recent firearms training with the new Public Safety service weapon.

Area law enforcement have recently migrated to a new records management system which included a "build" process, historical data conversion, and training. Our dispatch center has also migrated to the same system for CAD (computer-aided dispatch) and all our data is now shared in one application. Soon, I plan to begin the capital improvement process of acquiring riot gear in the event of civil unrest.

My favorite annual event in Big Rapids is the Festival of Lights parade. I love to see the community bundled up and excited for the holidays, gathered together along Michigan Ave. awaiting the arrival of Santa in his sleigh. My daughter loves to be outside, regardless of cold temperatures... the candy may have a role in her enjoyment of the parade.



Public Safety Department in the annual Holiday Parade.

Upcoming Events

Big Rapids Community Library

- This Saturday is the annual Friends of the Library Chicken BBQ Fundraiser at the Sawmill Saloon from 4-9PM. Food and music for a good cause.
- Join us Wednesday, June 26 at 11AM for *All Creatures Foundation Presents "Bats!"*
- Summer Reading Kickoff is Friday, June 28 from 11AM-2PM behind the Library in Anna Howard Shaw Memorial Park. Learn about this summer's theme "Universe of Stories" and how to track your reading, attend programs, and enter for prizes. Free hot dogs, music, and much more. Get a photo in a space ship!



Check the Library website for more event details.



Manager's Newsletter

05 July 2019

From the Manager's Desk

Connecting the Community

The City Commission has made the expansion of the City's network of sidewalks a priority for the upcoming year. Some of the work has already begun and much more will happen later this summer and next spring.

Project areas for this sidewalk construction season include the following streets: Division, Escott, Spring, Jefferson, Cherry, Spruce, Magnolia, Lilac, and Chestnut. Priority was given to gaps in the network especially around schools.

Sidewalks increase safety for pedestrians, encourage mobility, and provide for an overall healthier community environment.

The City's hope is to continue to expand sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities such as bike lanes.

At the City Commission

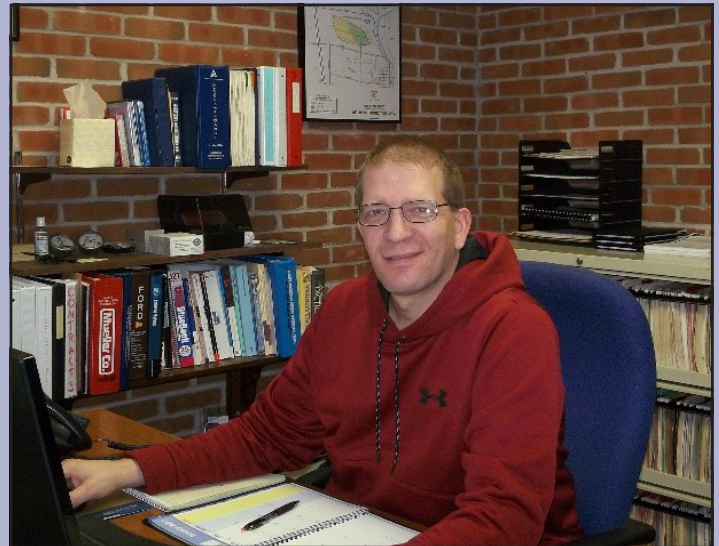
On Monday, July 01, the Mayor provided his annual State of the City address. The City Commission also heard an update on the State of Michigan Fireworks Statute and discussed a potential transit millage. Several points of business were decided including:

- Renaming Centennial Park to Rotary Park,
- Prohibiting smoking at the new Fitness Court in Rotary Park, and
- Authorizing a ballot proposal to amend the City Charter to extend term limits for members of the City Commission from 12 years to 20 years. More information on this issue will be coming as the November election approaches.

Commission meetings are always open to the public. You are welcome to join on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month at 6:30 PM at City Hall.

Meet and Greet: Steve Cook, Superintendent of the Water Treatment Plant

Hello, my name is Steve Cook. I was born and raised here in Big Rapids. My wife and I have three boys that we are very proud of. Our oldest, age nineteen, is currently attending Michigan State University and our younger two boys, ages, fifteen and twelve, are both attending Big Rapids Public Schools. I enjoy spending time with my family, hunting, fishing, bowling, coaching kids in bowling (I am a coach of the Big Rapids Varsity Bowling Team) and playing softball. I especially enjoy softball this year as two of my three boys are on the same team.



I began working for the City of Big Rapids in January of 2008 as a Water Plant Operator. During my tenure as an operator, I studied and took multiple tests in order to obtain my necessary licenses. In March 2016, I became the Superintendent of the Water Treatment Plant.

By the Numbers: 06/17-06/30

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 2,564 Total Passengers
- 2,564 Demand Response Passengers
- 425 Adult Riders and 684 Child Riders
- 1,455 Senior or Disabled Riders

Public Safety

- On Friday June 28th, three brothers were charged in the US District Court in Grand Rapids for passing counterfeit bills in April 2019 after a joint investigation between the BRDPS, MCSO, and the US Secret Service.
- An investigation is ongoing into numerous checks passed to local businesses by a 32-year-old male with insufficient funds. Charges are being sought.
- The Fire Division responded to 37 calls for service.
- A big welcome to new Firefighter David Vogel!

Want to Run for City Commission?

City residents interested in running for a position on the City Commission may pick up nominating petitions at the City Clerk's Office. Completed petitions must be filed with the City Clerk by July 23, 2019 at 4:00 PM. Complete election information may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office, by calling 231-592-4020, or on the City website, www.cityofbr.org.

Upcoming Events

Big Rapids Community Library

- On Monday July 8 from 1-4PM a recruiter will be here to answer questions and help people apply to work on the 2020 Census.
- Come and read with Wilbur the miniature horse on Wednesday July 10 at 11AM.
- Sign up to attend a program from the John Ball Travel Zoo at 2 or 3PM on Thursday July 11.
- The Summer Movie Series starts on Friday July 12 at dusk with a showing of "Spiderman: Into the Spider-Verse." Bring a chair or blanket. Free popcorn provided.
- Summer story times are 10:30AM on Wednesdays at the Library and Fridays at City Hall in conjunction with the Farmer's Market.

Meet and Greet continued.

As the Superintendent of the Water Treatment Plant, I oversee the drinking water for the community. I am blessed to work with a staff that also takes this task very seriously. At the Water Treatment Plant, we sample, test, and treat the water daily. This includes reports for documenting and reporting to the Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and the local health department. In the past few years, all four of the city's water towers have been freshly painted, with the last one (State Street Tower) completed last summer. We are now looking forward to having the two reservoirs located at the plant being painted in the near future.



State Street Water Tower

Currently, we are sampling the distribution system for the presence of lead and copper along with water quality parameters. This task is always quite challenging as laws and regulations are continuously changing.

Being born and raised here in Big Rapids, I love this community and the people. I am grateful to be able to raise my family in such a wonderful community. I feel thankful and proud to be able to serve and give back to this community that has given so much to me and my family.



Manager's Newsletter

July 19, 2019

From the Manager's Desk

Summer Construction Season

The following is an update on projects that are going on through out the City this summer:

- Paving on Olaf St and Speer Ave will be complete by July 26 and Jefferson Street will be paved by the end of August. Both are a part of the initiative by the City Commission to pave all the remaining gravel streets in the City.
- The Ives Ave/South Street project has moved into Phase II and final completion of the project will be accomplished by August 20.
- The new sidewalk program will begin mid-August. This program will add approximately 2,000 feet of new sidewalk throughout the City.
- Smoke Testing will occur July 29 and 30. Notification will be mailed to effected residents, as well as posted on the City's website and Facebook page.
- The new Northend Lift station project is nearing completion with plans to demolish the old lift station early August.

Meet and Greet:

Sean Wethington, Captain with the Public Safety Fire Division

My name is Sean Wethington, I am a Captain with the Department of Public Safety Fire Division. I started my career with the Department in 1999 as a job shadow through the school-to-work program while I was a junior at Big Rapids High School. I decided to make the fire service my career during this opportunity. After graduating high school in 2000, I decided to enlist in the United States Air Force where I was trained as a Crash Rescue Firefighter. While serving my country, I was stationed in Texas and in South Korea, as well as in Oman after September 11th 2001 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.



Captain Wethington with his family.

I was honorably discharged from the service in 2004. When I returned to Big Rapids, I became a member of the part-paid firefighter staff and I enrolled at Ferris State University. After graduating in 2008 from FSU with a degree in Respiratory Therapy, I was offered full-time positions with Big Rapids Hospital and the

At the City Commission

On July 15, the City Commission held a joint informational meeting with the Downtown Development Authority. They heard a presentation about bicycle and pedestrian trails in the region, as well as an update on recent and upcoming programs at the Community Library. Regular business included awarding several bids, including one for new sidewalk construction and another to purchase a new police vehicle. The Commission also appointed several people to local boards and commissions; the City is grateful to the many residents who serve the community in this manner.

By the Numbers: 07/01-07/14

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 2,590 Total Passengers
- 2,590 Demand Response Passengers
- 421 Adult Riders and 587 Child Riders
- 1,582 Senior or Disabled Riders

Public Safety

- On July 15, the Fire and Police Divisions responded to the 800 block of Maple for a complaint of fire and smoke coming from a building. They arrived to find a fire at the back door of the business. Investigators were able to determine that the fire had been intentionally set. A 23-year-old male has been identified as the person setting the fire, which caused a small amount of damage and no injuries. Charges will be sought.
- On July 16, members presented Camp 911 for a group of senior citizens.
- The new fire truck was delivered last week!

Assessment Board of Review Members Needed!

Do you have an accounting or real estate background? Are you interested in property values? If you answered yes, please consider serving on the Assessment Board of Review. This Board reviews the assessment roll and hears assessment appeals. They meet three times a year, and members receive a stipend to their time. To learn more or fill out an Interest Indicator, contact the City Clerk at 231-592-4020 or stop by City Hall.

Upcoming Events

Big Rapids Community Library

- Movie in the Park. Come watch Wall-E on July 19th at the Anna Howard Shaw Park behind the Library. Show begins at dusk. Free popcorn!

Check the Library website for more event details.

Big Rapids Farmers Market

The Farmers Market happens twice a week through the fall on Tuesdays from 12 - 5PM and on Fridays from 8AM - 2PM.

Meet and Greet continued.

BRDPS in the same week. After weighing my options, I knew my calling was in the fire service. I accepted the full-time position with the City of Big Rapids and was also able to accept a part time position with the hospital.

After joining the full-time staff in 2008, I was asked to head the Fire Prevention and Education Program. Each year I visit the area schools and teach the students about fire safety both in their homes and around the community. I am currently our departments' Training Officer. As the Training Officer, I plan for and facilitate instruction of our fire staff in all aspects of fire ground operations. I have also been the Lead Instructor for the Mecosta County Fire Academy for the past 2 years. Four years ago, I developed the CPR Education Program that the Department of Public Safety runs. Currently, with a team of 7 other instructors, we train community members in both CPR and First Aid.



Captain Wethington at a Halloween public outreach event.

I had many opportunities after leaving the service, but I never thought twice: I knew that Big Rapids is where I wanted to return to start my life and find my career. I feel the professionalism and safety our department brings to the community is second to none.

If I'm not on duty at the department I can be found working at the hospital, racing dirt bikes with my son, working out at Crossfit, or relaxing at home. Currently, my wife Amanda and I are raising our 2 children, Barrett and Berkeley, in this community, a community that I am proud to call HOME!



Manager's Newsletter

August 9, 2019

From the City Managers's Desk

East Side Neighborhood Improvements

The City has been awarded a grant from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) to assist qualifying homeowners that live in the City and East of the Muskegon River with improvements to their homes. The grant will also allow the City to purchase new playground equipment for Linden Street Park.

The homeowner grants are available in amounts up to \$7,499 and no portion of the funds need to be paid back to the City or the State. Examples of projects that could be considered are roof and siding repairs, replacement windows, repairs to porches or walkways, landscaping, and other exterior home maintenance projects. To find out more information regarding this exciting opportunity contact Cindy Plautz, Neighborhood Services Coordinator at 231-592-4036.



At the City Commission

At the regular meeting on Monday, August 5, 2019, the City Commission heard an update on the Planning Commission's work on zoning for marihuana businesses and had an opportunity to see the City's new fire truck. The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

- Giving the vacant lot at 1002 Catherine St. to the Housing Commission who have plans to build a new house on the lot in the next few years.
- Authorizing several contracts for Public Works.
- Authorizing an agreement to receive a new bus from the State for the Dial-A-Ride Transit service.

Meet and Greet: Eric Haluska, Information Technology Specialist/ GIS/Facilities

Hello, I am Eric Haluska the City of Big Rapids' Information Technology Specialist. I have been working for the City of Big Rapids for 22 years. I'm originally from Powers, a small town in the Upper Peninsula, which is roughly 23 miles west of Escanaba. I came to Big Rapids to attend Ferris State University.



While attending Ferris, I began working for the City as part-time student help in the Public Works/Engineering Department. Upon Graduation from Ferris in 1999, I continued to work in the Public Works/Engineering Department until July of 2000, when I was hired on to a full-time Engineering Aide position. I was in the position of Engineering Aide until 2007, when I transferred into the Information Technology Department as Information Technology Specialist, which is the role I still occupy.

As Information Technology Specialist I have many duties, some of these duties include: developing and

By the Numbers:

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 3,842 Total Passengers
- 3,842 Demand Response Passengers
- 617 Adult Riders and 844 Child Riders
- 2,381 Senior or Disabled Riders

Public Safety

- On July 26th, a 23 year old male was arrested for the arson of property that occurred on July 15th in the 800 block of Maple St.
- On July 31st, an 18 year old male was arrested for the sexual assault of a 5 year old girl in the 100 block of Second that occurred on July 8th.
- On August 6th, fire crews trained on truck placement at the new apartments at 830 Water Tower Rd. The ladder truck was maneuvered through the complex to check on placement.
- On August 7th, equipment was switched from old Engine 2 to the new Engine 2 which was then put into service.
- On August 6th, the Department of Public Safety hosted the 16th annual National Night Out.

Meet and Greet continued.



New security lighting at City Hall along Pine St.

maintaining the City's Geographic Information System (GIS); installing, configuring, and troubleshooting hardware/software/network/phone issues for City employees; installation of security cameras; and pretty much everything else technical. A couple of the projects I am currently working on this summer are the installation of security cameras at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Water Treatment Plant, the addition of security lighting along the exterior perimeter of City Hall, and supplying wi-fi capability at Northend Riverside Park.

Upcoming Events

Big Rapids Community Library

- A Recruiter for the 2020 Census will be at the Library from 1-4 PM on Monday August 12 and on Wednesday August 21. Come to learn more and apply for a job!
- Story Time at the Library at 10:30 AM on Wednesday August 14 with Mr. Howard.
- Mary's Book Club meets on Friday August 16 at 12 noon for discussion of *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens.
- Today, August 9, is the last day to enter your Summer Reading tasks to be entered for the big prize drawings taking place at 3PM today!

Check the Library website for more event details.



City Staff Fundraiser

City staff held a summer "Pie in the Face" fundraiser. Staff voted with their dollars on which staff member should receive a pie in the face. The pie went to Public Safety Director Jim Eddinger and \$120 were raised for the Our Brothers Keeper shelter.

Staff line up before the pie was thrown.



Pie in the face!





Manager's Newsletter

August 23, 2019

From the Manager's Desk

Construction Update

Ives Avenue, Phase I is complete. Phase II, which will involve South Street from the FSU Rec Center to State Street, will begin in the spring of 2020.

Clark Street, between Fuller and Morrison, will begin construction the week of August 26th. The project involves water main replacement and road reconstruction.

Winter Ave, between Cypress and Chestnut, will begin this fall pending the approval of a State permit. The project includes water main replacement and road reconstruction.

City Hall needs masonry repairs and bids will be accepted on August 26th. Work will be completed this fall weather permitting.

Jefferson Avenue paving will be completed in September.

Questions on any of these projects can be directed to Heather Bowman, Director of Public Works, 231-592-4018.

At the City Commission

On Monday, August 19, the City Commission acted on several points of business including:

- Awarding bids for playground equipment at Linden Street Park, the water main improvement project on Winter Avenue, and improvements to the DART Facility,
- An agreement to accept a new DART Bus from the State of Michigan, and
- A resolution to accept MDOT funds to rehabilitate Runway 14/23 at Robin-Hood Airport.

Commission meetings are always open to the public. You are welcome to join on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month at 6:30 PM at City Hall.

Meet and Greet: Jennifer Rosenogle Administrative Assistant at DART

Hello, I am Jennifer Rosenogle, the Administrative Assistant at Dial-A-Ride Transit (DART). I was born in Ferndale MI. In 1991, we moved to Baldwin MI where I started my family. I moved here to Big Rapids in 2004 and worked as a CeNA (Nursing Assistant). I am the mother of four children, Shania 22, Adriannah 18, Trevin 17, and Xzander 15. I am also a very proud grandma (Nae-Nae) of my little Presley Lynn, who is almost seven months old. I have been in a very happy relationship for 8 years and together we have a dog kennel which keeps all of us very busy outside of work.



In 2005, I was hired by the City as a Dial-a-Ride driver and later was promoted to driver/dispatcher, which are both part-time positions. In February of 2018 I had my biggest promotion to full-time Dispatcher/Administrative Assistant. My job consists of a variety

By the Numbers: 08/05-08/18

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 2,612 Total Passengers
- 2,612 Demand Response Passengers
- 380 Adult Riders and 556 Child Riders
- 1,676 Senior or Disabled Riders

Love Downtown Big Rapids?

Everyone is invited to a Downtown Open House event on September 9, 2019 from 4:00-6:00PM at Artworks. This drop-in event is an opportunity to provide your thoughts on what makes downtown great and how you think it could be improved. This event is the first step in a City effort to establish new zoning regulations for downtown to help encourage new development. Questions? Contact Paula Priebe at 231-592-4035.

Eastside Neighborhood Grant Application Deadline, August 26

The City will be accepting grant applications for the Homeowner Renovation Program through MSHDA until 5:00PM on Monday, August 26. Please visit the City website or contact Cindy Plautz at 231-592-4036 for more information or to apply.

Upcoming Events

Big Rapids Community Library

- On Monday, August 26 from 1:00-4:00PM a Recruiter with the 2020 Census will be present at the Library to answer questions and help people apply to work for the Census.
- The annual Friends of the Library Book Sale will take place over the Labor Day weekend. The sale will take place at the Library on Friday, August 30 from 10AM-5:30PM and Saturday, August 31 from 10AM-2:30PM. The sale will continue on Monday, September 2 from 10AM-4PM at Hemlock Park.
- The Library will be closed on Saturday August 31 and Monday September 2 in honor of the Labor Day holiday. The Library will open again with regular hours on Tuesday, September 3.

Meet and Greet continued.

of tasks. Dispatching is a major part of the role, and it is my favorite part. Additionally, I complete many administrative tasks for DART including different kinds of reports, monthly billings, and other tasks. I am still training to learn all of the reports required. I love learning new ways of using the computer programs and the challenge that comes with some of the administrative tasks.



Jennifer with Sammy the Salmon

My favorite events in Big Rapids would have to be Fall Fest and the Parade of Lights. My children, who are now grown, still love going to these events. Halloween and Christmas are our favorite holidays, which is probably why these are our favorite community events.

City Hall will be closed on Monday, September 2, 2019 for the Labor Day holiday. DART will also be closed. We will be open again at 8:00 AM on Tuesday, August 3. Trash service will run on Tuesday.





Manager's Newsletter

September 6, 2019

From the Manager's Desk

Special Meetings in September

September 9th, 4:00–6:00 at Artworks – Discussion of zoning regulations in and around the Downtown and State Street. What do you want for the future for Big Rapids' Downtown?

September 11th, 6:30 at Public Safety Building – Candidate Forum. There are three candidates running for two seats on the City Commission. Robert Andrews, Jennifer Cochran, and Josh Foor. The session will be moderated by former Mayor Mark Warba. Come hear the candidates' positions on a wide variety of issues.

September 16th, 6:30 at City Hall – Regular City Commission meeting. Coulton Pierce, District Engineer from EGLE will inform the Commission on water quality issues for municipalities.

September 23rd, 6:30 at City Hall – Special Meeting of the City Commission to hold a "Listening Session" on the topic of Medical and Recreational Marihuana. The Commission will not be voting on anything during the meeting, instead they will be listening to the public's thoughts on the issue.

See the City Facebook page for more information.

Meet and Greet:

Tom Paul, Income Tax Administrator

Hello, I am Thomas Paul, the City of Big Rapids' Income Tax Administrator. I have been working for the City of Big Rapids for almost four years. I am originally from Muskegon, the largest populated city on the western shores of Michigan. Upon graduating from high school in 2010, I moved to East Lansing where I attended Michigan State University studying Economics and Accounting. Upon graduating from Michigan State University in 2014 I began working for the Muskegon County Equalization Department where I earned my Michigan Certified Assessing Technician (MCAT) license. I worked there for a year and a half while attending night classes at Grand Valley State University studying in the Masters in Accounting program.



I applied for the Big Rapids Income Tax & Assessing clerk position in October of 2015. Since I had already gained my MCAT license through the Michigan State Tax Commission, and was actively enrolled in the GVSU Masters in Accounting program, I thought this was the perfect opportunity for me to advance my skills in both the assessing and accounting worlds. I would be able to continue my work in assessing while

At the City Commission

At a rare Tuesday City Commission meeting on September 3 (moved due to the Labor Day holiday), the Commission recognized the Sawmill Saloon for 50 years of service to the Community. They also heard a report on a recent zoning decision in response to a citizen complaint. Further, the Commission acted on several points of business including awarding a bid to repair the brick on the City Hall building and amending the Ordinance authorizing the Public Safety Department to utilize Service Officers. The Commission held a work session to check in on the annual Strategic Plan and progress made in 2019.

By the Numbers: 08/19 - 09/01

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 3,776 Total Passengers
- 2,383 Demand Response Passengers
- 1,327 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 365 Adult Riders and 599 Child Riders
- 1,485 Senior or Disabled Riders

Public Safety

- FSU Welcome Back Weekend was August 22-25. It was relatively calm with only a few OWI arrests and MIP citations taking place.
- The Police Division has hired Thomas Tanner for one of the vacant patrol officer positions. Tanner comes to us from the Mecosta County Sheriff Office, where he worked as a deputy for the past five years. He has a tentative start date of September 23rd.
- In the past few weeks the Fire Division responded to 29 calls for service. On August 27, Firefighter Derek Vincent instructed a CPR class for some local professionals.

Meet and Greet continued.

gaining a deep understanding of city income taxes, which was rather new to me at that time.

I was officially hired by the City of Big Rapids in January of 2016 where I worked under the guidance of Gail Dolbee, the City Assessor, and Paul Cole, then the Income Tax Administrator. The amount of knowledge I was able to gain from both Gail and Paul during my time working for them has led me to where I am today.

As the Income Tax Administrator, it is my responsibility to administer all aspects of the City's local income tax. This includes educating and assisting taxpayers; interpreting and enforcing the income tax ordinance; processing and auditing individual, corporate, and partnership returns; and maintaining accurate records as required by the State of Michigan. Other responsibilities I have include collection of personal property taxes and staying up to date and in contact with State/Federal employees regarding tax law changes and current legislation that pertains to Public Act 284 of 1964 (The Uniform City Income Tax Ordinance).

One project that takes up a large part of my time is working with the State of Michigan to identify and contact taxpayers who may not be following the City's local income tax ordinance. By identifying these taxpayers we can contact them and give them the opportunity to get in compliance so any penalties and interest they may owe are minimized. While not everyone leaves my office with a smile, I've made it a top priority to make sure that any taxpayer who comes in my office with questions leaves with a comprehensive understanding of what the local income tax ordinance requires for them to be in compliance.

I purchased my first house here in the City of Big Rapids in 2017 and I am happy to call Big Rapids my home! As someone who loves the outdoors, living in Big Rapids is perfect because of the many outdoor activities available in and around the City. Some of my favorite outdoor activities include mountain biking, kayaking, fishing, and snowboarding.

Please feel free to stop in our office anytime to say hello, ask a question, or offer any input on how we can make the filing process less stressful for all taxpayers. I very much enjoy my position with the City of Big Rapids and would like to thank everyone, including all taxpayers, who have helped me get to where I am today.

MEET AND GREET CITY COMMISSIONER CANDIDATES

Robert Andrews, Jennifer Cochran, and Josh Foor
Two Commission Seats Are Available

Where: Public Safety Community Room

When: September 11, 2019

Time: 6:30 PM

**PUBLIC WELCOME
TO QUESTION AND COMMENT**

Upcoming Events

Big Rapids Community Library

- Story Time is held at 10:30 AM on Mondays and Wednesdays and Tiny Tots Tinker Lab is at 10:30 AM on Fridays. We hope to have you and your little ones join us!
- Celebrate Roald Dahl's Birthday at the Library on September 13 from 3 to 5 PM.
- Mary's Book Club is reading Michelle Obama's *Becoming* and having a discussion of the book on September 20 at noon at the Library.

Check the Library website for more event details.



Manager's Newsletter

September 20, 2019

From the City Managers's Desk

Bike and Pedestrian Plan

In 2012, Ferris State University Architecture Students prepared a Bike and Pedestrian Plan for the City that was adopted and used to guide improvements for the past seven years. The Architecture Students are taking this project on again to update the plan with changes that have happened over time.

That process is underway right now and we would like to hear from the public to gain input on how to improve pedestrian facilities in the City. Please contact Mark Gifford, mgifford@cityofbr.org, 231-592-4058, with your ideas.

Special thanks to the Architecture Students and Professor Chris Cosper for making this happen. Another wonderful benefit of having Ferris State University in our community!

Listening Session on Marihuana Businesses

The City Commission is hosting a Listening Session to hear from the community on the topic of allowing marihuana businesses in the City on Monday, Sept. 23 at 6:30 PM at City Hall.

At the City Commission

At the regular meeting on September 16, 2019, the City Commission heard from EGLE regarding lead and copper pipes in the City and from the City Attorney regarding the consideration of allowing marihuana businesses in the City. The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

- Authorizing the formation of the Roben Hood Airport Advisory Committee,
- Denying a Zoning Map Amendment for 415 N. State Street, and
- Appointing several individuals to serve on local government boards and commissions.

Meet and Greet:

Karen Manoski, Finance/Utility Clerk

Hello , I'm Karen Manoski and I'm often the first face you see when you arrive at City Hall. Two years ago, I began my journey with the City of Big Rapids as the Finance/Utility Clerk. As the person responsible for your utility bill, I've had the privilege of seeing familiar faces and meeting new friends. My husband and I were both born and raised in Big Rapids; we resided in the sunshine state until 2017 when we moved home to the city we love. Florida was a nice place to live but it pales in comparison to our beautiful state!



As the Finance Utility Clerk my job encompasses several responsibilities; accounts receivable, maintaining accounts for ever changing tenants and property owners, and utility billing, water, sewer, and trash service. The City is updating water meters to meters with wireless reporting capability. One benefit of this technology is customers have access to monitor their consumption, and the City can access your account in real time to help determine issues in a timely manner.

By the Numbers:

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 5,885 Total Passengers
- 2,777 Ferris Shuttle Passengers
- 3,108 Demand Response Passengers
- 466 Adult Riders and 1,011 Child Riders
- 1,631 Senior or Disabled Riders

Public Safety

- On September 12, officers took a dozen larceny from auto complaints between Rust and Woodward. In each case, the victim's vehicles were believed to be left unlocked. Mostly small items of little value were taken. No suspect has been identified yet, however the investigation remains open.
- In the past few weeks, the Fire Division has responded to 40 calls for service.
- On 9/11, members of the Fire Division spoke to BRMS students about 9/11 and the Twin Tower beam monument in front of the Department.
- On Saturday, September 14, Fire personnel assisted in the Duck Race fundraiser for the Our Brother's Keeper shelter.

Meet and Greet continued.

I've been setting appointments for the water main team to replace old meters, please call me at 231-592-4005 to schedule your appointment.

As the City's trash liaison, I work closely with Republic Services. In May I was fortunate to attend a group tour of the Republic landfill in Pierson, the Kent County Recycle and Education Center, and the Waste to Energy Facility in Grand Rapids. This tour reinforced our need to educate residents on the importance of recycling, recycling correctly, and reducing landfill waste. We recently partnered with Kent County to put informational stickers on recycle polycarts in Big Rapids. These stickers show what can and cannot be recycled and a reminder of recycle pickups on the second and fourth Monday each month.



City staff and Commissioners at the Recycle Center in Kent County.

Big Rapids is a wonderful place to live! I enjoy the farmer's market and Friday afternoons listening to the band in Pocket Park. Big Rapids is a beautiful city and each season that comes along is my favorite until I get to my truly favorite time and that is Christmas! I so love watching the tree go up downtown and the decorations hung from the light poles around town. The Festival of Lights parade is wonderful, so many bundle up and head downtown to enjoy the holiday season and a great parade. I love Big Rapids and am proud to be a part of this team.

Upcoming Events

Big Rapids Community Library

- A Recruiter for the 2020 Census will be at the Library from 1-4 PM on Monday September 23 and 30 and on Wednesday August 21. Come to learn more and apply for a job!
- Story Time at the Library at 10:30 AM on Wednesday August 14 with Mr. Howard.
- On September 24, the Library is hosting a Voter Registration Drive. Come to the Library to register to vote in the November 5th election.
- Banned Books Week is September 22nd to 28th. Learn about censorship and free expression by visiting the Library.
- September is Library Card Sign Up Month. Take this opportunity to sign up for a library card and find something new to read or watch.

Check the Library website for more event details.



Manager's Newsletter

October 25, 2019

From the Manager's Desk

Airport Advisory Committee

The City Commission has established an Airport Advisory Committee to help guide airport planning and make recommendations to the City Commission on all things involved with airport operations. The goal of the Committee is to hear from users of the airport, therefore several Committee members will be pilots. The City Commission also wants input from City residents, so two seats on the Committee are required to be filled by residents of the City.

If you are someone, or you know of someone, who lives in the City and has an interest or background in aviation please contact Mark Gifford at 231-592-4058 or mgifford@cityofbr.org. The airport is a great resource for the region and the growth and development of the airport is important to the City and surrounding areas.

At the City Commission

On Monday, October 21, the City Commission acted on several points of business including:

- Adopting a new fee schedule for the Neighborhood Services Department,
- Amending the Zoning Ordinance to allow Construction Equipment Sales, Service, and Rental businesses in the Industrial District,
- Signing a two year agreement with Consumers Energy to participate in the Demand Response Program, and
- Approving an addendum to the Wastewater Agreement with Big Rapids Township regarding the Supervisor's Park lift station.

Commission meetings are always open to the public. You are welcome to join on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month at 6:30 PM at City Hall.

Meet and Greet:

Ryan Myers, Sergeant in the Police Division, Department of Public Safety

Hello, I am Ryan Myers, a Sergeant for the Big Rapids Department of Public Safety (BRDPS), Police Division. I am originally from Winchester, Virginia and completed my bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Bluefield College in Virginia. After college, I was hired as a police officer for Vienna, Virginia and worked there for 7 years. During this time, my wife and I had two children and we were consistently visiting family in Big Rapids. In June 2014, I was hired on by BRDPS and we moved to Big Rapids. I was promoted to Sergeant in December of 2018.



As Sergeant for the police division, I am responsible for managing and supervising my shift of officers. These responsibilities include all normal police duties, like any officer, but are augmented with making sure the day to day operation for my shift are completed,

By the Numbers: 10/07-10/20

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 7,348 Total Passengers
- 3,356 Demand Response Passengers
- 548 Adult Riders and 1,119 Child Riders
- 1,689 Senior or Disabled Riders
- 3,992 Ferris Shuttle Riders

Thank you Commissioner Anderson

City Commission Lynn Anderson will be serving in her final Commission Meeting in November. In honor of her many years of dedicated service to the City, a small reception will take place at the City Commission meeting on Monday, November 11 at 6:30PM. Please come and support the City in thanking Commissioner Anderson for her service.

City, Village, and Township Revenue Sharing (CVTRS)

The State of Michigan's CVTRS program requires local governmental units to meet certain criteria in order to qualify for revenue sharing payments. The purpose of the program is to establish a level of accountability and transparency for municipalities. A variety of key operational performance metrics are available on the City's website that provide insight into the City's finances. Documents are available under "Fiscal Accountability and Transparency" on the sidebar of the City home page.

Upcoming Events

Big Rapids Community Library

- Line up at the Library on Oct 26 at 10:30AM for the start of the Fall Fest Costume Parade.
- Celebrate Halloween with a Scavenger Hunt at the Library on October 31, from 11AM-7PM.
- Come to a Board Game Night at the Library in honor of International Games Week. Teens and Adults on Nov 5 from 4-6PM or Family Night on Nov 7 from 4-6PM. Bring your own game or play one of ours!
- Mary's Book Club will be discussing The Library Book by Susan Orlean at noon on Nov 15.

Visit the Library website www.bigrapids.lib.mi.us to learn more or access your Library account.

Meet and Greet continued.

evaluating officer's work performance and handling additional tasks as they are presented. One of my supplemental responsibilities places me in charge of the department's property and evidence room.

The management of the evidence and property room is a daily task due to the intake and outflow of evidence and property. This responsibility has granted me greater access to policy and procedure for BRDPS. I have been able to create new procedures for how evidence and property are handled within the department and have simplified our processes to ensure our officers are working efficiently.

The City of Big Rapids is our home and since we moved here my wife and I have had two more children. We have connected with the community in so many ways and feel that the City of Big Rapids community has a lot to offer. With young children, our family enjoys attending the events across the city and at Ferris State University. One of the my most favorite events for the City is the National Night Out event that BRDPS puts on. This event gives me and our department the chance to interact with the community in a uniquely, fun way.

I would also like to take the opportunity to comment on how much support our community has for our department. Police work has always and will continue to be a great profession, but it is more fulfilling when so many people thank us for protecting and serving. Listening to how our community views our department and how we are held in such high respect is honoring and creates an appreciation in me. Thank you all for the opportunity to serve.

November 5 Election Note

Your polling place may have changed. For this election, all City residents will vote at City Hall. All others, please check with your township Clerk.





Manager's Newsletter

November 8, 2019

From the Manager's Desk

Leaf Pick Up

The early onset of winter weather is forcing the City to potentially adjust leaf removal plans. Unless the weather dramatically changes in the next few weeks, there may be a Spring leaf pick up. If you have already moved leaves to the street the City will remove them if possible. If the weather clears in the near future, please take the opportunity to move leave to the street and they will be removed if possible. Please check the City's website or Facebook page for future updates, or call or email Mark Gifford at 231-592-4058, mgifford@cityofbr.org.

At the City Commission

The City Commission meeting was moved from November 4th to the 11th due to the election on the 5th. The municipal election asked two questions of voters: election of two City Commissioners and a Charter Amendment Proposal to extend term limits from 12 years to 20 years. The Charter Amendment did not pass.

Join us at 6:30PM on Nov. 11th at City Hall for a reception in honor of Commissioner Lynn Anderson who is leaving the Commission after many years of service. The newly elected Commissioners will be sworn in to begin their service.

Meet and Greet:

Lauren Moran, Library Director

My name is Lauren Moran and I am the Library Director at the Big Rapids Community Library. I was born in Mt. Clemens, Michigan. I received a Bachelor's in English Literature and Master of Library and Information Science, MLIS from Wayne State University. I left shortly after graduation to accept a position in the Queens Library in New York City. I worked in the Queens Library system for a little over 12 years in several community libraries in Queens. I happily returned to Michigan to work at the Big Rapids Community Library and to be closer to my mother and family. Outside of work, I enjoy reading, travel, cooking, listening to music, writing, and gardening. I recently adopted an 8-week old terrier puppy from the Animal Recue Coalition (ARC) and named her Maisie (my two cats are not sure about this decision).



Maisie

My job responsibilities as Library Director at the Big Rapids Community Library vary each day, from attending meetings with community partners like Mecosta County Reads and Great Start Collaborative and working on Early Childhood initiatives like Talking is Teaching (<https://talkingisteaching.org/>), to coordinating library programs, and administrative tasks like purchasing materials, publicity and marketing, budgeting, and grant writing. I am also responsible for hiring, scheduling, and supervising library staff. My favorite part of my job is introducing people to the benefits of their library card. Our library has books, movies, knit kits, hammocks, board games, eBooks, audiobooks, digital streaming films, and more, that can be checked out for free with your library card. We have received several grants over the past year, and we continue to seek ways to improve our selection. We were able to provide free books for the Summer Reading Program with the help of Friends of the Library and Reading is Fundamental. Recently, we received a \$1000 grant from the National Library of Medicine for updated books for our health collection.

By the Numbers: 10/21 - 11/03

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 7,870 Total Passengers
- 3,341 Demand Response Passengers
- 4,529 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 602 Adult Riders and 1,039 Child Riders
- 1,700 Senior or Disabled Riders

Winter Parking

City Ordinance states that no vehicles may be parked on City streets between the hours of 2:00AM and 6:00AM from November 15 to and including March 15. This is to allow for the removal of snow and ice from streets during winter months. Please follow this rule, as vehicles parked in violation may be ticketed and/or impounded by the Police.

House Numbers

The City Code Enforcement Office has started a project to ensure that all houses in the City have property address numbers that comply with the City Ordinance. The following regulations for address numbers are being applied:

- Size: at least 3 inches in height;
- Color: in contrast with the building;
- Location: on or near the front door, or over the garage door and at least 3 feet from the ground;
- Numbers must be easily visible from the road.

It is vital to safety and accessibility to Public Safety that houses can be easily identified. If your property is not in compliance, you will be notified by the Code Enforcement Officer.

Properties on alleys are encouraged to also put numbers up on the alleyside of the house.

Upcoming Events

Big Rapids Community Library

- Mary's Book Club is reading *The Library Book* by Susan Orlean for discussion at noon on Nov. 15th.
- Join fellow writers for the Thousand Word Thursday write-in for NaNoWriMo at the Library at 3:30PM on Nov. 14th.
- Family Movie Night featuring *The Good Dinosaur* at 6PM on Nov. 15th. Dinosaur crafts and a giveaway included.

Check the Library website for more event details.

Meet and Greet continued.

Our current key projects are updating policies, materials and services and the Language Artists program in conjunction with Ferris, ArtWorks, and Big Rapids Public Schools 3rd grade classes. Language Artists is a program developed by the Grand Rapids Art Museum that encourages children in 3rd grade to explore art and writing through the lens of viewing and discussing art, creating their own hybrid animal artwork and developing a story around their creation. The Library participated by providing space for the children to gather and do research on animals and habitats for their projects using library books, computers, and electronic resources.



The Children's Room at the Library.

Another ongoing project has been fundraising for the Literacy Playground in Anna Howard Shaw Memorial Park. The park space is currently home to our Community Garden where folks can "check out" a garden plot for a low fee each spring and use our free Seed Library to plant and grow flowers and vegetables. Our hope is to install literacy-themed playground equipment and a permanent StoryWalk in the park, with seasonally rotating stories. The literacy rates in Michigan and all over the country are very low. The park will emphasize the Early Literacy skills: Read, Talk, Sing, Write, Play and incorporate the Talking is Teaching curriculum to improve literacy in Big Rapids by attracting young families to the library. That is also why we have chosen to make children's library cards under the age of 12 overdue fine-free and to offer library cards to all students in the City of Big Rapids, regardless of their residency status. We hope that this encourages people to come in and use the library and increases literacy rates!

I love the sense of community in Big Rapids. I have met so many generous people both at the library and at City Hall that contribute their time, energy, and support to making Big Rapids a special place to live and work. I hope that everyone in Big Rapids will take advantage of the wonderful resources at their local library and use their free library card. Visit us online at www.bigrapidslibrary.org



Manager's Newsletter

December 6, 2019

From the City Managers's Desk

Capital Improvements Program Planning

In preparation for the 2020-2021 City Budget, a process is used to identify large-scale projects and equipment purchases that need to be included in the Budget. City staff and the Planning Commission work on the process, with the final Program being adopted by the City Commission. These Capital Improvements are included in the City's Capital Improvement Program, a six-year planning document which is updated every year. City Staff are currently evaluating the needs of the Community and will be working on this process for the next two months. If any member of the public would like to learn more about the CIP and/or has ideas for items that should be considered, please call Mark Gifford at 231-592-4058 or email mgifford@cityofbr.org.

At the City Commission

At the regular meeting on December 2, 2019, the City Commission heard from FSU Students in the Small Town Studio class about their work updating the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

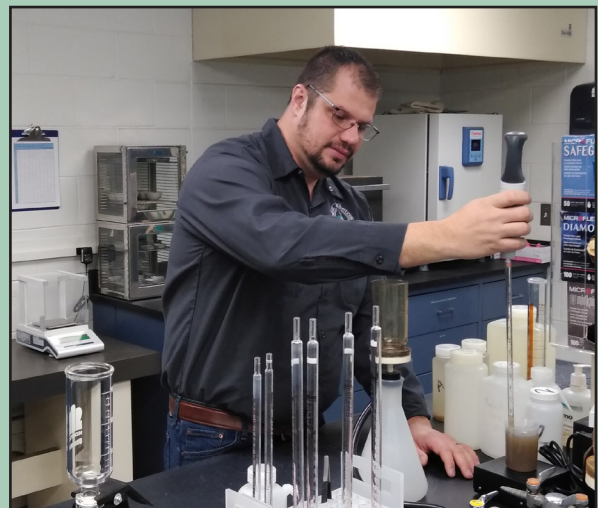
- Awarding a bid to Advance Pool Services for the community pool surface replacement,
- Awarding a bid to LandUseUSA to complete a citywide Housing Study,
- Referring a decision about sale of the property at 906 N. State Street back to the Planning Commission for further review, and
- Authorizing a ballot proposal based on a citizen petition to completely prohibit recreational marihuana establishments within the City of Big Rapids.

Meet and Greet:

Jake Renne,

**Assistant Industrial Pretreatment
Coordinator at the Wastewater
Treatment Plant**

Hello, my name is Jake Renne. I am a Big Rapids native and have lived in the Reed City and Big Rapids areas my entire life. My wife of seventeen years is also native to Big Rapids, our roots run deep in this community. We have three sons that keep us busy with traveling soccer, band activities, and high school athletics. As a family, we enjoy seasonal camping and pontoon boating in the summer months. I like to keep busy with home projects and remodeling. I am always up for a new griddle recipe too!



I have been employed with the City of Big Rapids since January of 2005 holding various positions in the Department of Public Works. I hired into a custodial position maintaining City Hall, Library, and Department of Public Safety buildings. After three

By the Numbers: 11/18 - 12/01

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 5,718 Total Passengers
- 3,128 Ferris Shuttle Passengers
- 2,590 Demand Response Passengers
- 438 Adult Riders and 801 Child Riders
- 1,351 Senior or Disabled Riders

City Chili Cook off Fundraiser

At the annual City Employee Chili Cook off Fundraiser, 13 different chilis were put to the test. Funds were raised to support Angels of Action, in the amount of \$230. Jake Walston, Street Superintendent, was voted "#1 Best Chili". Congrats Jake!



Meet and Greet continued.

years, I transitioned to the Water Treatment Plant as an operator earning EGLE (DEQ) licenses D-4, D-3, and D-2 over the course of eight years. In 2016, I transferred to the Wastewater Treatment plant and currently hold the position of Assistant Industrial Pretreatment Program (IPP) Coordinator. Since moving into the wastewater field, I have acquired EGLE (DEQ) licenses D and C in wastewater treatment. I have also become NPSF certified to support the community pool operations. I spend most of my workday in the lab at the wastewater plant running tests to evaluate the plant output and quality while keeping up reporting required by the State of Michigan. The rest of my day involves pulling samples from the sanitary sewer system, maintaining composite sample pumps, and performing other plant operations and maintenance.



Laboratory at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

An interesting thing I am working on right now is acclimating to the IPP duties. This a relatively new position to me and involves a more extensive sampling and reporting process out in the community with area businesses. I have also recently completed a lab split required by the State that involved working another municipality to run corresponding samples for quality control purposes. This a nice opportunity to work with my peers in our neighboring communities.

I enjoy living and working in a town that is my home. I take pride in the fact that my work impacts my community, my family, and my friends. Big Rapids has plenty of amenities while keeping its small-town feel. You'll love it here!

Upcoming Events

Big Rapids Community Library

- Sign up now at the Library to use our 3D Printer. Perfect for unique Christmas gifts.
- Get into the winter spirit by joining us to create snowflakes during Adult Craft Night. Held on December 10 from 5PM to 7PM. RSVP for this event by calling Sarah at 231-796-5234.
- Visit Santa at the Library on December 17 from 5PM to 7PM. We will also be doing crafts and writing letters to Santa at this time.
- The 2nd annual Solstice Social and Craft Fair will be held on December 21 from 12PM to 5PM. All proceeds benefit the Library Playground. Craft table hosting spots still available.

Check the Library website for more event details.

Recreation

The Winter Recreation Season is upon us and that includes Co-Ed Volleyball season. Registrations are due January 3rd and our first scrimmage will take place on January 12th. For more recreation programs please see https://www.brpr.org/activities/adult_senior.php



Manager's Newsletter

December 20, 2019

From the Manager's Desk

2019 - Almost in the Books

It has been a good year for the City of Big Rapids and that is thanks, in large part, to the many great people who work for the City. These women and men are dedicated professionals who work all year long to keep us safe, keep the roads clear, maintain the parks, staff the library, run our elections, insure we have clean drinking water, protect the environment, operate the airport, pick up and drop off DART patrons, teach kids to swim, balance city accounts, troubleshoot computers, plan for the City's future, and the list goes on.

From all of us at the City, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



At the City Commission

On Monday, December 16, the City Commission heard an update on City investment accounts as well as an update on the Community Library. They also acted on several points of business including:

- Appointing members to the new Airport Advisory Board,
- Passing a resolution to authorize acceptance of the 2020 Urban and Community Forestry Grant, and
- Dedicating land to the Road Right of Way along Pere Marquette Street, after completion of the Baldwin Street Bridge Reconstruction project.

Commission meetings are always open to the public. You are welcome to join on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month at 6:30 PM at City Hall.

Meet and Greet:

Scott Moore, Assistant Street Superintendent/Mechanic

My name is Scott Moore, I have lived in Big Rapids most my life, including going to school here. I joined the military right out of high school and served for 20 years. After that I went to Ferris State University and got an Associate degree in Applied Science while I was working at a local Chevy dealership. I was hired into the City in 2005 as a motor pool mechanic. In 2009, I started in my current role as Assistant Street Superintendent/Mechanic. Outside of work, I recently took on the project of building an "in-law suite" on the end of my house. My wife and I needed to move her father closer to us, due to health issues. In my spare time I have become a landlord/caregiver. Remodeling and tinkering around the house have always been hobbies of mine, so the transition has been very rewarding.



By the Numbers: 12/2 - 12/15

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 7,286 Total Passengers
- 3,733 Demand Response Passengers
- 553 Adult Riders and 1,034 Child Riders
- 2,146 Senior or Disabled Riders
- 3,553 Ferris Shuttle Riders

City Services Holiday Hours

City Hall will be closed on 12/24 and 12/25 for the Christmas holiday as well as 12/31 and 1/1 for the New Years holiday.

There will be no changes to the regular trash pick up service schedule.

Dial-A-Ride will be open from 6:30AM-4:00PM on 12/24 and 12/31, but closed on 12/25 and 1/1.



Upcoming Events

Big Rapids Community Library

- Family Movie Night tonight (12/20) is a sing-a-long version of The Nightmare Before Christmas. Join us at the Library at 6PM.
- The 2nd Annual Solstice Social and Craft Fair will be on Saturday 12/21 from 12PM-5PM.
- The Library has a 3D Printer for December. Sign up sheets for time slots are located at the Circulation and Reference Desks.
- The Library will be closed for the Holidays on 12/24-12/25, 12/31-1/1.

Visit the Library website www.bigrapids.lib.mi.us to learn more or access your Library account.

Recreation

The Winter Recreation Season is upon us! Registrations for Co-Ed Volleyball are due 1/3.

Meet and Greet continued.

My job here at the City is the Assistant Street Superintendent/Mechanic. I supervise the operation of the City's motor pool, assist the Street Superintendent, and direct the operations of the Department of Public Works in his absence. Updating the City's motor pool is an ongoing challenge; every year is something different in regard to accommodating for the needs of the different City departments. This year, I'm trying to refurbish the 17-year-old wheeled loader, which involves removing the cab and repairing the rusted-out floor. Fabricating different equipment is always fun, as we have to come up with ways to improve the effectiveness and durability of the equipment to help employees do their job a little bit easier. There are no boring days in the Motor Pool, as every day has something different going on.



Rebuilding equipment in the Motor Pool.

Big Rapids was a great place to raise my two boys, especially with all the education, sports, and activities available. It was always been easy to find something to do. Now its been exciting to watch the grandchildren in their school activities, such as concerts and weekend soccer and football games. I like getting out on cruise night and for the downtown chili cookoff and getting to know the local people. My wife and I have been big fans of Frisbee golf, the River Walk, and just being lazy while floating down the river. I love it here!