

Manager's Newsletter January 10, 2020

From the Manager's Desk

Festival of the Arts

The Festival of Arts is almost upon us. January 31st will kick off the approximately 90 events that are part of the Festival. There are activities happening every day and they culminate at the closing on March 1st. Festival booklets will be available on January 15th and can be found at Artworks, City Hall, Big Rapids Community Library, and the Welcome Center. Please participate as often as possible in this wonderful series of events. Visit brfota.org for more information.



At the City Commission

On Monday, January 6, the City Commission welcomed new Community Pool Manager, Andrew DeFever. They also heard two study sessions. The first was an update regarding progress on replacing lead and copper water service lines into homes. The second was about potential changes to the 2020 Rules of Procedure for City Commission meetings.

The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

- Adopting the 2020 Commission meeting schedule,
- Authorizing a new street light at E. Bellevue St and Michigan Avenue,
- Extending the City's agreement with Lake and Lodge Realty, and
- Authorizing a deer cull.

Commission meetings are open to the public. Join us at 6:30 PM on the 1st and 3rd Mondays each month.

Meet and Greet: Aaron Kuhn, City Treasurer

My name is Aaron Kuhn. Originally from West Virginia, my family moved to Midland when I was thirteen years old, so I have spent most of my life in Michigan. I have been married to my lovely wife, Sharon, for seven years. Before moving to Big Rapids, I was an auditor of local governments; I traversed the state, conducting audits of townships, villages, fire departments, and libraries. Trying to find some additional work-life balance was what brought us to Big Rapids four years ago. Since moving to Big Rapids, we have had two kids, a daughter, Clara, who is three, and a son, Brian, who is almost two. One of the things I love about living in Big Rapids is the walkability; we live within walking distance of parks, schools, the library, and downtown.



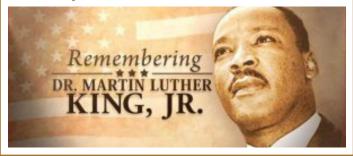
I serve as the City Treasurer, a role I have held for just over four years. Currently, I supervise the operations of the Finance Department which includes the

By the Numbers: 12/16/19-01/05/20

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 2,573 Total Passengers
- 2,573 Demand Response Passengers
- 0 Ferris Shuttle Riders (FSU on break)
- 320 Adult Riders and 593 Child Riders
- 1,660 Senior or Disabled Riders

City Hall will be closed on Monday January 20, 2020.



Electronic Billing: Receive your Utility Bill in your Email Inbox

The City of Big Rapids is pleased to offer electronic billing. By completing an enrollment form you are choosing to receive your City of Big Rapids monthly utility bill electronically and will not receive a bill by mail.

You can sign up at online at the following site: https://cityofbr.seamlessdocs.com/f/waterebill

If you have any questions, please contact Karen Manoski at kmanoski@cityofbr.org or 231-592-4005.

Upcoming Events

Big Rapids Community Library

- Family Movie Night is on January 17th at 6PM. This month we're showing Abominable.
- Join us on January 14th at 6PM for a presentation about <u>Inspirational Snowflakes</u> and a book signing with author Ralph Crew.
- The Library will be closed on Monday, January 20, 2020 in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.
- Many fun and unique activities are planned for this month. Check out the Library website to learn the what and when of Crafting for Kitties and Canines, Sugarcube Igloo Craft Time, and Bubblewrap Appreciation Day.

Check the Library website for more event details.

Meet and Greet continued.

Treasurer's Office, Income Tax, Assessing, and Human Resources. A couple of the main projects I work on include development and maintenance of the City budget, authoring the User Charge Report, and preparing the City for the annual audit. Something I enjoy most about my job is that each day it feels like I am working on different things. There is always a new problem that needs to be solved.



Aaron and his son Brian

Currently, I am in the beginning stages of compiling the annual budget for the 2020/2021 fiscal year which is approximately a six-month process. The Treasurer's Office is working on the ability to accept automatic payment for utility bills, as well as electronic billing. This should dramatically decrease the cost of postage.

Outside of my job, I like to work in the yard and go to the park with my wife and kids. I am also actively involved in my church and several different community organizations. Currently, I serve as Treasurer for the Rotary Club of Big Rapids, the Downtown Business Association, the Open Arms Child Advocacy Center, and am a member of the investment committee at my church.



Manager's Newsletter January 24, 2020

From the City Managers's Desk

<u>Annual Strategic Planning - Underway</u>

The City Commission is about to embark on a second annual Strategic Planning process. The past year's Strategic Plan set goals and priorities for the Commissioners and staff members. Priority projects identified and accomplished through this process last year include upgrades at the Water and Wastewater Treatment Plants, conducting a study of the local housing market, increasing new sidewalks, and paving Olaf and Jefferson Streets.

On Monday, January 27, the City Commission and department head staff will meet to draft the goals and objectives of next year's Strategic Plan. If you have goals or priorities you would like to see the City address in 2020, please contact the City Manager at 231-592-4058 or reach out to any City Commissioner.

At the City Commission

At their meeting on January 21, 2020, the City Commission heard study sessions about recycling pick-up service and about the municipal income tax program. The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

- Adopting the amended Special Assessment Roll for the 2018-2019 Sidewalk Improvement Project,
- Accepting the DNR Passport Grant Agreement for improvements to the Anna Howard Shaw Memorial Park (Library Park),
- Rezoning the city-owned property at 906 N.
 State St from Industrial to R-3 Residential, and
- Voting not to authorize an easement on cityowned land at 201 N. Bronson Ave that was requested by Consumers Energy.

Meet and Greet:

Sarah Welch,

Head of Programs and Services at the Big Rapids Community Library

My name is Sarah Welch. I live in Howard City but grew up in Grant Michigan. I completed my undergrad at Grand Valley State University in 2012 and graduated with my Master's in Library and Information Science degree in 2018. I started my library career at the Newaygo Area District Library before coming to the City of Big Rapids, where I began working at the Big Rapids Community Library in September 2019.



I am an avid reader. I have a habit of checking out more books then I can keep up with which usually means I am reading multiple books at once. I will read almost any genre and love to receive recommendations from other people. Traveling is very important to me as well. I have been lucky to travel outside of the USA a couple of times, but I also love to travel around Michigan.

By the Numbers: 01/06 - 01/19

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 5,452 Total Passengers
- 2,352 Ferris Shuttle Passengers
- 3,100 Demand Response Passengers
- 331 Adult Riders and 978 Child Riders
- 1,791 Senior or Disabled Riders

2020 Daddy Daughter Dance

The annual City of Big Rapids Daddy Daughter Dance is coming up on February 21st. The Dance will take place at Big Rapids Middle School from 7:00 to 9:00 PM. Tickets are \$7 per person in advance and \$10 per person at the door.

Registration flyers and Photo Boutique order forms are available at City Hall and will be distributed to local schools in the next week.

For more information, please call the City of Big Rapids Recreation Department at 231-592-4038.



Upcoming Events

Big Rapids Community Library

- Join us for a Sugar Cube Igloo building contest on Saturday Jan. 25th at 10:00AM.
- Monday, Jan. 27th at 10:00AM, we will be celebrating Bubblewrap Appreciation Day by making bubblewrap crafts.
- Friday, Jan. 31st is Multicultural Children's Book Day. Come to the Library to see the many wonderful childen's books in the collection.
- A new book club will be kicking off on March 18th at 4:00PM. Crime Will Tell: A True Crime Book Club will run every other month. Ask at the Library or contact Kayla at kbrock@bigrapidslibrary.org for more information.



Check the Library website for more event details.

Meet and Greet continued.

One of my life goals is to see as much of the world as possible. My absolute favorite thing to do is to attend concerts. Whether they are in huge venues or small backyard ones. My high school dreams are coming true soon because on Thursday, March 30th I get to see Korn in Grand Rapids.

My job title at the Big Rapids Community Library is Head of Programs and Services. This means that I organize and operate programs for all ages. I will be running the 2020 Summer Reading Program and have been building community outreach programs at the Big Rapids Public Schools. One of my favorite part of my job is processing the new items for our collection. I am able to be one of the first people to see what will be soon available for our patrons. This knowledge helps me be my best at reader's advisory because I know what is on the library shelves. I also work with our current collection by evaluating what we have and making sure it fits the needs of the Big Rapids community.



Sarah reshelving books at the library.

As I said above, I am new to the Big Rapids community, but have discovered that this community cares about one another and is striving to better itself for the future of Big Rapids. I have never felt so welcome in a new job. Thank you.



Manager's Newsletter February 7, 2020

From the Manager's Desk

Capital Improvements Program

The City annually completes a Capital Improvement Program planning process to support each year's budget. Projects are submitted by Departments for not just the current year but looking out six years into the future. The City is currently evaluating projects and building a draft plan.

Projects recommended for inclusion in this year's plan include new gear for the Fire Division, upgrades the the City Hall outdoor bathrooms, building of new sidewalks, purchase of several vehicles, upgrades to equipment at the water and wastewater treatments plants, and many street paving projects.

If any member of the community would like to see and discuss the plan and/or has ideas for projects that should be included, please contact Mark Gifford at 231-592-4058 or mgifford@cityofbr.org.

At the City Commission

On Monday, February 3, the City Commission heard an update from the City's Auditors and learned the timeline for the 2020-2021 Budget process. They also acted on several points of business including:

- Awarding bids and accepting proposals for several Public Works projects,
- Authorizing a resolution to extend the hours of Dial-a-Ride Transit on Saturday until 4:00PM,
- Hosting a work session on the role of and appropriation to the Mecosta County Development Corporation for provision of economic development services.

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: Eric D. Williams, City Attorney

My name is Eric D. Williams, and I have served as the Big Rapids City Attorney since 1986. I prosecute misdemeanor violations of the City Code, which include drunk driving, domestic assault, retail fraud, disturbing the peace, and malicious destruction of property. I advise the Big Rapids City Commission and City Staff on various legal issues involving state law, the City Charter, and the City Code.



The City Attorney prepares or approves all ordinances considered by the City Commission, and approves all contracts for the City. All petitions for a referendum on a City ordinance, or to initiate a City ordinance, must be reviewed and approved by the City Attorney. I advise the City Commission on City Charter amendments and City Charter revisions. I attend meetings to provide legal advice and opinion to the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and other City Boards as needed.

By the Numbers: 01/20 - 02/02

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 7,022 Total Passengers
- 2,981 Demand Response Passengers
- 466 Adult Riders and 935 Child Riders
- 1,580 Senior or Disabled Riders
- 4,041 Ferris Shuttle Riders

Festival of the Arts 2020

The 2020 Festival of the Arts is now underway across Big Rapids. Festival booklets contain information on all of the events and can be found at City Hall, the Community Library, the Welcome Center, Artworks, Three Girls Bakery, and online at brfota.org. The Big Rapids Festival of the Arts Facebook page also contains lots of information about events and schedule changes.

The public art piece for 2020 is going a mural to be installed on the J.C. Penney building on S. Michigan Avenue. Please join us for a presentation about the work on February 29th at Artworks. You will be able to watch the artist paint the actual work this summer.



Upcoming Events

Big Rapids Community Library

- The Library is host to many Festival of the Arts events, including Lego Architecture every Thursday in February at 3:30PM and the FOTA Film Series.
- February is Black History Month. Stop by the Library to check out the book display or to attend the Black History Month Film Series every friday in February at 6:00PM.
- Join us on Monday, February 10 at 10:00AM to Design a Valentine for your sweetheart. Materials provided.

Visit the Library website www.bigrapidslibrary.org to learn more or access your Library account.

Recreation

Don't forget to register for the 2020 Daddy Daughter Dance, held on Friday, February 21st from 7:00 to 9:00PM at the Big Rapids Middle School.

Meet and Greet continued.

I served as president of the Michigan Association of Municipal Attorneys and president of the Governmental Law Section of the Michigan Bar Association. I live in the City of Big Rapids with my wife, Jane, where we raised our eight children. My hobbies include ice fishing, baking bread, gardening, and growing chestnuts. I coached youth hockey for 13 years, girls basketball for 12 years, as well as youth baseball and soccer for 3 or 4 years.



Eric digging potatoes with his grandson Wyatt



Eric's freshly baked, homemade bread.



Manager's Newsletter March 6, 2020

From the Manager's Desk

Public Safety Leadership

Danielle Haynes has been promoted to Chief of Police and Steve Schroeder promoted to Chief of Fire. Both individuals are outstanding examples of hard work and professionalism. Anyone interested in discussing their vision for the Departments is encouraged to reach



out to them at 231-527-0005.

At the City Commission

On Monday, March 2, the City Commission began the meeting with the oaths of office for the new Chief of Police and Chief of Fire. Two study session explained about a new Charter Revision Committee and a recommendation to buy the Depot.

The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

- A resolution to adopt the 2020-2026 Capital Improvements Program.
- A resolution authorizing a Special Land Use Permit for a restaurant at 1294 Perry Ave (Arby's).
- An ordinance to rezone 520 S Third Ave from R-3 Residential to C-3 Commercial.
- A resolution to provide appropriation for the Mecosta County Development Corporation for economic development services.

Commission meetings are open to the public. Join us at 6:30 PM on the 1st and 3rd Mondays each month.

Meet and Greet: Erik Little, Police Officer, BRDPS

My name is Erik Little. I was born in Calumet Michigan in 1964 and lived in Houghton until the age of 5. My family moved to Boulder Colorado in 1969; we actually lived in Marshall Colorado, a very small town just south of Boulder. I grew up playing in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. I grew up playing in the barns of nearby Hogan Ranch, where I developed my passion for the western way of life and the companionship of a good horse.



I attended the Boulder Valley Schools before going on to play college football at Western State University. After a time working in construction, I decided to get into law enforcement. I attended Colorado Mountain College and graduated from the Police Academy in 1987. I went to work for the Boulder County Sheriff's Dept. and eventually the El Paso County Sheriff's Dept. in Colorado Springs where I joined the Mounted Patrol division. I had missed the ranching life and if felt good to get back on the horse; my love for horses and cattle was as strong as ever. However, the cost of living in Colorado was high and owning my own property was not going to be possible on a Deputy's salary.

By the Numbers: 02/17/20-03/01/20

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 7,871 Total Passengers
- 3,194 Demand Response Passengers
- 4,677 Ferris Shuttle RiderS
- 507 Adult Riders and 967 Child Riders
- 1,720 Senior or Disabled Riders

Election Day Reminder

Election day is Tuesday, March 10, 2020. Polls in City of Big Rapids will be open from 7AM to 8PM. Precinct 1 votes at the Public Safety Building, 435 N Michigan Ave; Precinct 2 at City Hall, 226 N Michigan Ave; and Precinct 3 at MOISD, 15830 S Bronson Ave. See a map of the precincts on the City's website.

The ballot this election includes a Proposal asking whether to adopt an ordinance to prohibit recreational marihuana establishments in the City.

- Voters who want to prohibit recreational marihuana businesses in the City will vote YES.
- Voters who want to allow recreational marihuana businesses in the City will vote NO.

Voters can also choose to vote in one of two Party Presidential Primaries. Sample ballots are available on the City website.

The City Clerk's office will be open on Saturday, March 7 from 11AM-3PM and Sunday, March 8 from 9AM-1PM to assist residents with absentee ballots.



Upcoming Events

Big Rapids Community Library

- The Friends of the Big Rapids Community Library will be hosting their monthly used book sale on March 7 from 9:30AM to 12 noon.
- Crime Will Tell: True Crime Book Club begins on March 18th at 5:00PM and will be discussing the book <u>Helter Skelter</u>.
- March is Women's History Month. Stop by the Library for new displays and events.
- Women's History Month Film Series starts on Friday, March 13th with the film Suffragette.

Check the Library website for more event details.

Meet and Greet continued.

As my extended family lives in Michigan, I started to look for property and work here. I have family in the Reed City area and enjoyed the small-town atmosphere. In 1999, I moved to Reed City and began working with Big Rapids DPS, where am now in my 33rd year in law enforcement. I built a small ranch in the Reed City area and started raising and training horses and Dexter cattle.

In 2005, I was able to start a one-horse mounted patrol. I rode Jesse the Percheron horse from 2005-2009. Jesse was a community favorite. Unfortunately, Jesse developed a brain tumor and died in late September of 2009. The outpouring of community support after Jesse's passing was huge; he was loved by all.



Erik and Boomer leading a parade.

Boomer, also a black Percheron, was introduced to the Big Rapids community in 2010 and is still active today. We don't have daily patrols like we did until 2013, but we are active at most community events. The community-at-large enjoys interacting with Boomer.

The Big Rapids community has been very supportive to me and my horses. Hardly a day goes by without some conversation about the good ol' days when Jesse and I patrolled the east side and downtown. The Big Rapids Community is full of good people; they have civic pride and show me everyday with words of encouragement and support.

For the last 5 years, I have volunteered for the Clare County Mounted Division Search and Rescue. We put on two training clinics a year for other Mounted divisions. Iam currently assembling a Mounted division for the Osceola County Sheriff's Dept. Mounted divisions' success has lead to being requested from other communities as mutual aid.



Manager's Newsletter March 20, 2020

From the City Managers's Desk

City Services and COVID-19

Library is closed to the public, but patrons can call 231-796-5234 to arrange curbside pickup between 10:00 and noon and 3:00 and 5:00, Monday through Friday.

City Recreation programming is canceled through April 6th.

City Hall remains open, but staffing is being minimized to the extent possible. Please call ahead if you need to meet with a specific staff member. Payments for utility bills and income tax payments shall be deposited in the box outside of City Hall or in the box in the lobby.

Rental Inspections are canceled through April 6th.

Airport remains open but all regular events such as "Chili Saturdays" are canceled through April 6th.

Department of Public Safety is closed to the public. All parking tickets are to be paid online.

Water plant is still completing samples for the public. Protocol for sampling is altered, it is recommended to call the water plant at 231-796-6231 for direction.

DART continues to run except for the Ferris On-campus Shuttle. Riders will be screened for any symptoms as they call for service. Only 4 passengers are being accepted on the busses at one time, so wait times may vary. Busses are being sanitized a minimum of every 3 hours.

If there are questions on any City issue or service please call 231-592-4058 or email at mgifford@cityofbr.org.

At the City Commission

The City Commission meeting scheduled for Monday, March 16, 2020 was canceled. With no pressing items on the agenda, the meeting was canceled to protect the public health and safety of Commissioners, staff, and the public.

Meet and Greet:

Jeff Hull,

Captain and Fire Marshal with the Big Rapids Fire Department

My name is Jeff Hull, I am a Captain for the City of Big Rapids Fire Department. I grew up in the Bitley area and attended Big Jackson school through 6th grade. In 1980, I graduated from Big Rapids High School.



Jeff and Teri Hull

I worked for Giantway in Big Rapids for 12 years. During that time I started my career in construction; I worked for a local contractor pouring walls and doing flat work, remodeling, and was a supervisor for a local builder for 10 years. In 1990, I began working with the fire service as a part-time firefighter with the Big Rapids Fire Department. I was part-time for 8 years until 1998 when I became full-time with the

Yard Waste Pickup to begin April 6

The City of Big Rapids will begin weekly yard waste pickup on April 6. Yard waste consists of:

- Grass clippings and leaves, bagged in brown "lawn and leaf bags" and labled yard waste, or
- Twigs and small branches no larger than 2" in diameter and no longer than 4' in length, bundled together. Bundles not to exceed 50 lbs. Maximum 4 bundles per week.

Yard waste bags are available for sale in City Hall (5 bags for \$2.25). Stickers to designate a container as "Yard Waste" are available at City Hall at no cost. Yard waste pickup is in the same location as trash. Questions? Contact the Treasurer's Office at 231-592-4005.

Election News

The March 5, 2020 Presidential Primary resulted in a 24% City voter turnout. The marihuana facility proposal failed with 465 Yes and 845 No votes. This means that marihuana facilities will be permitted in the City of Big Rapids.

BREAKING NEWS: The May 5, 2020 School Election will go forward, and will be VOTE BY MAIL ONLY! Applications will be sent to every registered vote in the School District by the Bureau of Elections in the upcoming weeks. More information coming soon.

Library Resources

Big Rapids Community Library
While the Library is currently closed to the public, patrons can explore these options:

- Curbside Pickup. Call 231-796-5234 for more information or to request materials.
- Libby Download this app to access thousands of ebooks and audiobooks directly to your device.
- RBdigital Access audiobooks and eBooks on your desktop or mobile device.
- Kanopy This streaming service has more than 30,000 titles, including classic films, awardwinning documentaries, and much more.



Big Rapids Community Library

Check the Library website for many more resources.

Meet and Greet continued.

Department. My career in the fire service has given me a great opportunity to advance in the fire service with roles such as Captain, Fire Investigator for the City of Big Rapids and for Mecosta County, Fire Marshal, Diver, Rope Rescue team member, and Hovercraft Pilot.



Captain Hull driving the new Fire/Rescue truck.

I am married to a wonderful woman, Teri. Together we have four daughters and eleven grandchildren. Through out the years I have built three homes for our family. We currently live in the Barton Township in Newaygo County.



Captain Hull on the job at an overturned tanker truck.



Manager's Newsletter June 19, 2020

From the Manager's Desk

Summer Projects

Concerns surrounding contractors, financing and logistics have all challenged projects that are planned for Summer 2020, but the City is starting to see more clarity on when things will move forward. South Street and Winter Ave., will have final paving done within the next week. Paving of Bjornson Street, Chestnut and the alley behind the Fairman building was recently approved by the City Commission and will be done in the next 30-45 days. Further paving is planned for late summer and early fall, that includes Locust, Henderson and Clark Street.

The Library Park Grant project was delayed, but now is full speed ahead with hopes of completion in the Fall. Work at the both the Wastewater and Water plants is in the planning stages and projects in both areas will go out to bid soon. For more information on any of these projects call or email Mark Gifford, mgifford@cityofbr.org, 231-592-4058.

At the City Commission

On Monday, June 15, the City Commission heard two special orders of the day: an Arbor Day Proclamation and a Citizen Recognition Award for the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly. They also acted on several points of business including:

- Resolution approving a Class C Liquor License for FSU Katke Golf Course,
- · Ordinances amending the Water and Sewer rates,
- Awarding a bid for street resurfacing work on 100
 S. Michigan Ave Alley, 200 Block of Chestnut St, and Bjornson Street.
- Appointing a new member to the Planning Commission, and other business.

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: Bethany Hamilton, Firefighter

Hi, my name is Bethany Hamilton. I am a firefighter for the City of Big Rapids. I grew up just north of Big Rapids in the town of Paris and I was homeschooled, graduating in 2009. I still live locally and enjoy hunting, fishing, and horseback riding as a few of my main hobbies as well as baking. Often, the fire crews will get treated to cookies, pies, or whatever I happen to bring in that shift.



I was a member of the Big Rapids Department of Public Safety as a part-paid firefighter for almost 3 years before having the privilege of serving as a

Match on Main COVID-19 Response Grant Program

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) recently announced the awardees of almost one million dollars in grants to support small downtown businesses in communities across Michigan. Big Rapids is proud to be one of the 22 communities selected.

Seven businesses in downtown Big Rapids applied, met all the grant criteria, and were selected to be grant recipients. The City's total grant award is \$45,000; to be split among the seven businesses according to their requested amounts and demonstrated need.

The seven selected businesses in Big Rapids are: Bernie's, Blue Cow/Raven Brewing, Earth Wind and Fire Salon, Encounters of Big Rapids, Schuberg's Bar and Grill, Star Shooters Bar and Restaurant, and The Old Pioneer Store and Emporium.

The City is Big Rapids is glad to be able to support our local community businesses during this difficult period.



Upcoming Events

Big Rapids Community Library

- The Library is open for Lobby Pickup Only. Reserve items online or by calling 231-976-5234. Please have your library card number ready when you call. Library staff will check out your items for you and you will receive a notification when you can pick them up in the Lobby.
- Summer Reading began on June 15, but it's not too late to sign up! Visit the Library website to register and log your reading, and you'll be entered into the Final Prize Drawing at the end of August.
- Visit the Library website or Facebook page to access the Online Scholastic Book Fair. Proceeds go to purchasing new books for the Library.

Visit the Library website www.bigrapidslibrary.org to learn more or access your Library account.

Meet and Greet continued.

full-time firefighter. I value having the opportunity to make a difference and serve in the community I grew up in.

As a firefighter, I get to serve by fighting fires that range from small grass fires to large structure fires, with no two days being alike. We also respond to local medical emergencies, car accidents and other disasters that may occur.

Another part of my job is working as one of the fire prevention specialists, which entails partnering with the area elementary schools to run the fire safety program each October, as well as several other community events throughout the year. I enjoy working with the kids and helping make safer homes.

The City of Big Rapids is part of my history as I grew up locally and have grown with it. I enjoy living and working in the area because it provides a diverse range of activities all within a short distance and a small town feel that has a lot to offer.



Photo of Bethany fighting a structure fire.



Manager's Newsletter July 10, 2020

From the Manager's Desk

Participating in City Meetings

The City has an elected board (City Commission) and volunteer boards (Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Board, others) that hold monthly public meetings and perform vital functions for the City.

COVID-19 has brought many challenges including uncertainty in attending meetings and alternatives to in-person meetings. The City has been holding virtual City Commission meetings through the Cisco Webex platform. The meeting agenda is posted on the City's website and has details to join the meeting by phone.

City Staff are working on expanding technology that will allow community members to attend and participate in City meetings from their home. Thoughts and ideas regarding this topic are welcomed: contact Mark at 231-592-4058 or mgifford@cityofbr.org.

Additionally, there are vacancies on several City boards. If you have interest in volunteering or need more information, please call or email at any time.

At the City Commission

On Monday, July 10, the City Commission held a virtual meeting which began with the Mayor's annual State of the City Report. Four study sessions were held and several members of the public shared comments.

The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

- Resolutions which extended contracts and accepted proposals for consulting services on Public Works projects.
- Resolution accepting bid for the sale of a former police vehicle. And other business.

Commission meetings are open to the public. Join us at 6:30 PM on the 1st and 3rd Mondays each month.

Meet and Greet:
Amy Prescott-Ambler,
Assistant Industrial Pretreatment
Program (IPP) Coordinator at the
Wastewater Treatment Plant

My name is Amy Prescott-Ambler. I grew up in Morley with my 3 brothers. My husband, Alex, and I have 4 sons (ages 21, 19, 13 & 4) and 1 daughter (12). We are raising them in Morley. Two of them have graduated from Morley Stanwood Schools, but the other three still keep us very busy with their sports, band, and dance.



My passions are family, kids, and sports. My favorite is when some or all of those are put together. Growing up I played basketball, volleyball and softball at Morley Stanwood. I still play volleyball and softball in a few different leagues. Immediately after graduating high school I started my volunteer coaching career. While in college I coached the Morley Stanwood Color Guard. I then moved on to coaching my cousins, my friends' kids, and eventually my own kids. I have coached Little League (t-ball, peewee, and softball), basketball (AAU and Upward), 5th / 6th grade volleyball, Rocket Football Cheer, and flag football.

By the Numbers: 06/22/20-07/05/20

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 884 Total Passengers
- 884 Demand Response Passengers
- 0 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 139 Adult Riders and 61 Child Riders
- 684 Senior or Disabled Riders

August 4 Election

Michigan's 2020 Primary Election will take place on August 4. Those interested in voting absentee must submit an Application for Absent Voter's Ballot, which may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office or on the City website, or by requesting a ballot in writing and signing the request. The Clerk's Office will mail you a ballot, which must be returned to the Clerk's Office by Election Day to be counted.

This election has a partisan section. You may vote in either party section, regardless of party affiliation, but you cannot "split your ticket". If you choose to vote in either the Republican or Democrat Party Section, you may only vote in that partisan column.

Visit the City Clerk's page of cityofbr.org to learn more or to see a sample ballot.

Upcoming Events

Big Rapids Community Library

- As of Monday, July 6, the Library is open and people are welcomed inside to browse for materials or use the computers. Masks and social distancing are required.
- Contactless pick up remains available. If you request an item online or over the phone, it will be checked out to you and waiting for you in the lobby ready to go.
- MelCat is not yet available, but you can check mel.org for updates.
- In-person programs are still canceled, but online programs are coming soon!
- Online summer reading has begun! Go to bigrapidslibrary.org for more event details.



Meet and Greet continued



Amy coaching youth basketball.

After graduating from Morley Standwood, I attended Ferris State University and received an Associate's in Science Degree. While going to Ferris, I got a job at Independent Bank. I worked there for 12 years before deciding to move on and start with the City of Big Rapids.

I have worked for the City of Big Rapids for six and a half years. I started in the Income Tax Department and then transferred to the Wastewater Treatment Plant in September of 2015. I have acquired the D and C wastewater treatment licenses from the State of Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE, formerly DEQ). My normal day consists of helping wherever needed. Tasks can include pulling samples from the sanitary sewer system, maintaining composite sample pumps, performing other plant operations and maintenance, or running tests in the lab to make sure we are complying with the limits that have been established by the State of Michigan.

My current title is Assistant Industrial Pretreatment Program (IPP) Coordinator. The IPP position is a

relatively new position to me, so I'm still learning the ins and outs. We have monthly, quarterly, biannual, and annual requirements. These requirements involve an extensive sampling and reporting process in the community working closely with area businesses.



Amy with her daughter.



Manager's Newsletter July 24, 2020

From the City Managers's Desk

Revising the City Charter

At the July 20th City Commission meeting, the Commission voted unanimously to put on the May 4th, 2021 ballot the question of whether the City Charter should be revised. The Commission can get it on the ballot, but the City's electorate decides whether it happens or not.

On the same ballot, will be an election of City residents that would review the current Charter language and recommend changes. Tammy Gillis, City Clerk, is looking for individuals that are interested in being a part of that effort. Please call or email her at 231-592-4020 or tgillis@cityofbr.org if you have interest.

The Commission and staff have identified some items of consideration for this process and they include topics such as authorization for the sale or lease of City land, referendum regulations, authorization of virtual meetings, term limits for boards and commissions, and processes for special assessments.

At the City Commission

On Monday, July 20, the City Commission held a virtual meeting which began with a Study Session from Fire Chief Schroeder about the latest ISO Rating Report.

The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

- Three resolutions between the City and the Big Rapids Housing Commission,
- A resolution to authorize the MEDC Match on Main COVID-19 Program grant agreement, and
- Many other pieces of business. For more information, see the City's website.

Commission meetings are open to the public. Join us at 6:30 PM on the 1st and 3rd Mondays each month.

Meet and Greet:

James Bouman, Operator at the Water Treatment Plant and City Pool

My name is James Bouman, I was born and raised in the Big Rapids/Paris area in a very large family, as the third out of eight kids, and have lived in the area my entire life. I grew up on a pig farm and started helping with the family well repair business at a pretty early age. I have been a Water Treatment Plant Operator for about four years now and I have also been working as the city pool operator.



James working on the reservior tanks at the Water Treatment Plant

As a Water Plant Operator my duties include daily and hourly water tests to ensure public safety, there is regular maintenance of all the pumps, motors,

By the Numbers: 07/06/20-07/19/20

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 1,328 Total Passengers
- 1,328 Demand Response Passengers
- 0 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 227 Adult Riders and 90 Child Riders
- 1,011 Senior or Disabled Riders

Primary Election Reminder

Michigan's 2020 Primary Election will take place on August 4. Those interested in voting absentee must submit an Application for Absent Voter's Ballot, which may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office or on the City website, or by requesting a ballot in writing and signing the request. The Clerk's Office will mail you a ballot, which must be returned to the Clerk's Office by Election Day to be counted.

This election has a partisan section. You may vote in either party section, regardless of party affiliation, but you cannot "split your ticket". If you choose to vote in either the Republican or Democrat Party Section, you may only vote in that partisan column.

Visit the City Clerk's page of cityofbr.org to learn more or to see a sample ballot.

Big Rapids Community Library

The Library is open to the public. You are welcome to stop by to browse for materials or access technology. Curbside pickup is also still available for those who prefer to keep their distance. Don't forget about the programs you can use on your computer or mobile device to read ebooks, listen to audiobooks (Libby and RBDigital), or stream movies (Kanopy).

The Library is hosting a Used Book Sale this Saturday (July 25) from 11AM to 2PM. Stop by to pick up some gently used books for your family.

Summer reading is going on now! Check the Library website for many more resources.



Meet and Greet continued.

water lines and buildings throughout our distribution system done daily. As the pool operator, I oversee testing the water chemistry and making sure it is safe to swim, as well as maintaining all the equipment.

Before I was hired as an operator, I worked on an asparagus farm for several years then had a couple part time jobs as a custodian for the BRPS, I also worked as a seasonal worker for the Parks department of the City of Big Rapids. A project that has captured my interest is the new state mandate for Water Quality Parameters. There are several water tests and procedures in the WQP that are new to all operators and I have enjoyed the challenge this has presented. Lab work is definitely one of my favorite duties as an operator and with the additional tests that are now required it is becoming a considerable part of my responsibilities.



James spending time with his niece and nephew.

A few of my hobbies include playing guitar, tennis, and motocross but one of my absolute favorite things to do is spend time with my niece and nephews. My faith and my family are both very important to me and I am blessed to still be extremely close to my parents as well as all of my siblings. One of the things I enjoy the most about the City of Big Rapids is the Riverwalk. Biking along the river is pretty tough to beat when it comes to exercise.



Manager's Newsletter August 7, 2020

From the Public Works Director's Desk

Summer Projects - Update

- The water plant SCADA system improvements are expected to be completed in the next 30 days.
- The waste water lift station located at Waterloo is going to be have substantial completion this week.
- City Commission approved the Lead Service Line replacement project with Gerber Construction to complete the work in the next 30-45 days.
- City staff have been working on improvements on crosswalks near the schools.
- The interior of the Community Pool facility is being painted in preparation of the opening next season.

At the City Commission

Because of the Primary Election held on Tuesday, August 4, 2020, the City Commission meeting was rescheduled from August 3 to August 10.

Next Monday, August 10, the City Commission will hold a virtual meeting, accessible to the public by calling the number on the agenda.

Some items on the August 10, 2020 Agenda include a Study Session about the Tree Inventory and several items of General Business:

- Awarding bids for several projects,
- Accepting two Mecosta County Community Foundation grants for improvements to Hemlock Park and the Riverwalk, and
- Mayoral Appointments to Boards and Commissions, plus several other items.

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 by calling in.

Meet and Greet: Ashley Dunkel, Finance/Account Clerk and Purchasing Agent

Hello! My name is Ashley Dunkel and I am one of the first faces you see when you walk into City Hall. I have worked in the Treasures Office for two and a half years as the Finance/Account Clerk and Purchasing

Agent. My favorite part about working in the Treasure's Office is the interaction I get to have with the community, from greeting liferesidents lona and hearing about how their families are doing while taking their payments or it's meeting a new resident for the first time and getting to share



everything the Big Rapids area has to offer (except my good fishing spots) with them. I purchase supplies for the City, process accounts payable, prepare 1099 income tax forms, keep records of bids, generate bid awards, take payments for various City services at my window, and other various tasks.

Currently, I am in the process of changing the accounts payable system by scanning all vendor information (such as W-9s) to their account online. The City has thousands of vendors and currently we use binders to hold their information. Instead of searching through the binders for which vendors need updated information, I can set up an alert on their online account letting us know when their insurance is about to expire. By upgrading this process, it will save time, money and resources for the City.

By the Numbers: 07/20 - 08/02

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 1,216 Total Passengers
- 1,216 Demand Response Passengers
- 207 Adult Riders and 70 Child Riders
- 939 Senior or Disabled Riders
- 0 Ferris Shuttle Riders

August 4, 2020 Election - Update

The Primary Election held on Tuesday, August 4 looked a bit different than usual, but went well. All three City precincts were open, and had a total of 435 walk in voters. The new Absentee Voter Counting Board processed the 738 returned Absentee Ballots. This is a total of 1,173 votes cast in the City, 23% of registered voters.

City voters overwhelming supported the 911 Surcharge Renewal, with 254 Yes votes to 90 No votes. Brian Miller was the top Sheriff Candidate with 175 votes, to James Taylor's 116 votes, with Solis and Christensen receiving 37 and 22 respectively.

Many thanks to all the poll workers who made this election possible.

Big Rapids Community Library

The Library is open to the public. You are welcome to stop by to browse for materials or access technology. Curbside pickup is also still available for those who prefer to keep their distance. Don't forget about the programs you can use on your computer or mobile device to read ebooks, listen to audiobooks (Libby and RBDigital), or stream movies (Kanopy).

The Friends of the Library will be hosting a Used Book Sale every Saturday in August from 11AM to 2PM. Stop by to pick up some gently used books for your family.

Summer reading is going on now! Check the Library website for many more resources. Visit the Library website www.bigrapidslibrary.org to learn more or access your Library account.



Meet and Greet continued.

I was raised mostly in Paris. Like most kids with divorced parents, I moved around a bit but never too far from home. Once I graduated, I knew I wanted to move back to the Big Rapids area. While attending Ferris State University, I worked as a Park Ranger for Mecosta County Parks. I was a Ranger at Brower Park for three seasons and I still visit frequently. When I'm not at work I am usually fishing. Panfish and bass are my favorite, but I'm happy with anything. Except a dogfish... I'll pass on that. I'm engaged to my high school sweetheart Nick. We recently purchased an 1890's Farmhouse in Hersey and are having fun remodeling. We have a small farm with dreams of expanding in the future.



Ashley and her fiance Nick

Big Rapids has always felt like home with many generations of my family here. My great grandfather, Emery Toth, was the City Manager in 1940! It is an awesome feeling knowing I'm walking down the same halls as he did.



Ashley and a freshly caught bass.



Manager's Newsletter August 21, 2020

From the Manager's Desk

City Street Trees

Recently the City developed a Tree Management Plan that can be found on the City's website on the Public Works page. Big Rapids has over 3,000 trees located in Right-of-Ways and City Parks. Trees improve air quality, reduce storm water run off, and improve property values. Care of this great public resource requires much effort and considerable funding. This care includes the removal of dead trees and the planting of new trees.

The City partners with property owners every year to plant new trees through the Tree Planting Program. Information about that program is available on the City website. The property owner contributes \$75.00 per tree (total cost per tree is over \$200) and can pick from a variety of species. The trees will be bagged and watered for one year. The City is doing a fall planting for 2020 and is looking for partners to continue this effort. For more information on this program and/or to sign up for a tree, please call Trina at 231-592-4015 or email her at tpoulos@cityofbr.org.

At the City Commission

On Monday, August 17, the City Commission held a virtual meeting which began with a Study Session by City Attorney Eric Williams about preparing for the upcoming Charter Revision process.

The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

- A Resolution on an agreement between the City and Ferris State University for a Dial-a-Ride (DART) shuttle bus for campus.
- A Resolution authorizing an agreement with the 2020 CARES Act for Roben Hood Airport, and other business.

Commission meetings are open to the public. Join us at 6:30 PM on the 1st and 3rd Mondays each month.

Meet and Greet: Todd Eichler,

Heavy Equipment Operator and Lead Person for Parks with the Department of Public Works

Hi, my name is Todd Eichler. I am a City of Big Rapids park employee. I grew up on the Muskegon river in Stanwood, where my parents owned Parker's Landing. Summer was always a busy time with houseboat, pontoon, and fishing boat rentals. We also had a party store, campground as well as boat sales and service. In the winter snow season, my dad and I had a snow plowing business. My wife, Melissa, and I have a son Ryan. We live just outside of town. When I am not working, I enjoy grilling, bowling and I golf on a league.



Todd with his family.

I have always enjoyed working outdoors and having a variety of things to do. When my family sold Parker's Landing I started working at the City as seasonal worker watering the flowers. I continued to run the plow business in the winter until a few years ago.

By the Numbers: 08/03/20-08/16/20

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 1,432 Total Passengers
- 1,432 Demand Response Passengers
- 0 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 224 Adult Riders and 124 Child Riders
- 1,084 Senior or Disabled Riders

Absentee Ballot Update

The City of Big Rapids will be sending out Absentee Ballots beginning the week of September 21st. If you believe that you sent in an application for an absentee ballot for the November 3, 2020 election and have not received a ballot by the second week of October, please email voting@cityofbr.org with your name and contact information.

In light of all of the media pertaining to the delivery of absentee ballots, we encourage you to return your absentee ballot using the black Ballot Box outside the front door of City Hall. Please keep in mind that you need to sign the absentee ballot envelope before returning it.

Big Rapids Community Library

- Two exhibits are on view now at the Library to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment and Women's Right to Vote.
- The Library is open and people are welcomed inside to browse for materials or use the computers. Masks and social distancing are required.
- Contactless pick up remains available. If you request an item online or over the phone, it will be checked out to you and waiting for you in the lobby ready to go.
- MelCat service has restarted.
- The online summer reading program ends soon! Go to bigrapidslibrary.org for more event details.



Meet and Greet continued

Now I have the opportunity to work as a full time park employee. Most people I see around town know me from my days watering.



Todd with the downtown flowers this summer.

I have been with the City full time for 5 years. My duties include assisting the seasonal employees with daily assignments, mowing downtown and the park grounds. I also take care of the public safety lawn and maintain the public restrooms. In the winter I plow snow with the front end loader.



Todd's view of downtown from the snowplow.

My favorite part of my job is still the flowers. I work with an excellent team with two other staff to ensure the plants are watered and fed. I like to help with the planting of everything when it comes in the spring. It's rewarding to see the downtown look so great at this time of the year. Everyone who assists in the design and care of the plants does a great job.



Manager's Newsletter November 6, 2020

From the City Managers's Desk

Election Day - Awesome Team Effort!

Congratulations to City Clerk Tamyra Gillis and Deputy Clerk Amanda Vogel, other City Staff Paula Priebe, Melissa Hauger, Karen Manoski, and Ashley Dunkel and the 32 community members that made this past election orderly, safe, professional and a huge success. This team dedicated 558 hours on election day and 160.5 hours in training preparing for election day. On November 3, 2020 the day started at 6:00 a.m. and ended for some at 3:30 a.m. on November 4th!!

2,828 ballots were processed, which means 54% of registered voters chose to vote in this election. 1,368 absentee ballots were counted, which means an amazing 95.4% of the 1,434 AV ballots issued were returned.

On behalf of the entire community, I would like to express our sincere gratitude for your hard work and dedication.

At the City Commission

Due to the Presidential Election held on Tuesday, November 3, 2020, the City Commission meeting was rescheduled from Nov. 2 to Nov. 9.

On Monday, November 9, the City Commission will hold a virtual meeting, accessible to the public by calling the number or using the Zoom meeting link on the meeting agenda.

Commission meeting agendas are always posted to the City Website on the Friday before the meeting. You can find agendas and minutes for these meetings online at www.cityofbr.org/government/ city_commission

Commission meetings are open to the public. Join us at 6:30 PM on the 1st and 3rd Mondays each month.

Meet and Greet: Melissa Hauger, Human Resources Coordinator

Hi, my name is Melissa Hauger. I was born and raised in the Big Rapids area, living here all my life but for 2 years. I couldn't think of a better place to call "home" and to raise a family. My husband, Jeff and I have four children; Alayna, Dryden, Emma and Faith.



When I'm not working, I can usually be found in a gym, at a field or in an auditorium supporting one of the kids. Personally, I have many titles that range from police wife, military wife, military mom, band mom, choir mom, volleyball mom, basketball mom, softball mom and momma Hauger to several "extra" kids through the years. I think I listed them all, but I'm sure one of the kids would say I forgot one. I am known for my vanilla cupcakes and my gooey m&m rice krispie treats. When I have the time, I enjoy spending

By the Numbers: 10/19/20-11/1/20

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 2,149 Total Passengers
- 1,722 Demand Response Passengers
- 427 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 301 Adult Riders and 323 Child Riders
- 1,098 Senior or Disabled Riders

City of Big Rapids Election Results

Are you wondering how Big Rapids residents voted in the 2020 Presidential Election? A summary of vote tallies from several of the key races is below:

Presidential Race:

1,427 votes for Joe Biden & Kamala Harris (D) 1,285 votes for Donald Trump & Mike Pence (R)

Michigan Senate Race:

1,380 votes for Gary Peters (D)

1,321 votes for John James (R)

MI 4th Congressional District Race:

1,321 votes for John Moolenaar (R)

1,248 votes for Jerry Hilliard (D)

MI House of Representatives 102nd District Race:

1,359 votes for Michelle Hoitenga (R)

1,336 votes for Amanda Siggins (D)

County Commissioner District 6 Race:

669 votes for Wendy Nystrom (D)

445 votes for Eric O'Neal (R)

County Commission District 7 Race:

1,097 votes for Bill Routley (R) – unopposed

Big Rapids Community Library

The Library is currently open for Lobby pick up service and by appointment computer use only. Call 231-796-5234 to schedule your computer use time. Please wear a mask when in the lobby or at a computer.

Current Library hours are Monday - Friday from 11AM - 6PM and Saturday from 9AM to 12noon. Digital resources are available online 24/7.

We are running a Short Story Competition for NaNoWriMo. Five Sentence Scary Story due by November 13 and 1,000 Words or Less Story due by November 20. Learn more at bigrapidslibrary.org.

Meet and Greet continued.

time outdoors. I love a good campfire, with smores of course. I'm hoping next year to plant that garden I've always wanted.

I have had the pleasure of working for the City of Big Rapids for almost 23 years. I am currently the Human Resources Coordinator, my fifth role. I started in the Treasurer's Office, moved to the Clerk's Office and now serve as the City's sole HR professional.

I like to believe that my work ethic and my desire to help others, citizens and employees alike, has helped me advance through the years. I can proudly say that I know who all 189 of the City's current employees are and what department they work in. Most think of human resources as a department that manages recruitment and administers employee benefits programs. Those are just a few of the things I do.



There are so many different acronyms to what I do, it's almost like speaking a different language. In addition to the "normal" HR process, I also oversee and administered the City's property and liability insurance.

Despite things being stressful at times, I truly love doing what I do, helping people. There is nothing better than being that person who makes a candidate's day by offering them the job they worked so hard to get or assisting a dedicated employee transition into retirement and all the ups and downs in between. My hope is that my contributions have made the City a better place.



Manager's Newsletter November 20, 2020

From the City Manager's Desk

Deer Cull

The City is contemplating a deer cull for this upcoming winter. The cull has historically occurred in the neighborhood that surrounds the Hospital and that area will likely be a focus again. Residents from other City neighborhoods have asked about potential cull activities around their properties, and that may be an item of consideration for this year.

If you have thoughts or ideas regarding the deer cull the City would like to hear from you. Please write a letter and send to mgifford@cityofbr.org or 226 North Michigan Ave., Attn: Mark Gifford.

At the City Commission

On Monday, November 16, the City Commission held a virtual meeting which began with a Quarterly Investment Report and two Study Sessions, one about the Big Rapids Social Equity Initiative and one about how the City should move forward regarding the Depot property.

The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

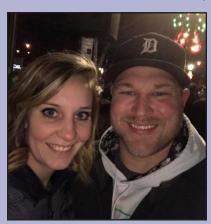
- A resolution approve a Class C Liquor License for B & B Bakery,
- several resolutions for Public Works projects,
- adopting a COVID-19 Workplace Safety Policy,
- And a resolution requesting the Planning Commission to look at the zoning regulations for marihuana businesses in the downtown, among other items.

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 on Zoom.

Meet and Greet: Josh Pyles Recreation Coordinator, DBA Director, and Farmers Market Master

Hello, my name is Josh Pyles. I am the City Recreation Coordinator, Farmers Market Master and Downtown Business Association Director. While I have been with the City of Big Rapids in these roles for three years now, I have lived in Big Rapids for 32 years. I graduated from Big Rapids High School and Ferris State University

where I studied Sport and Recreation M a n a g e m e n t . Outside of work I enjoy getting together with friends and family, traveling with my wife, hunting, golfing, and playing softball.



Josh and his wife Callie.

My job allows for a lot of diversity in each day, which is something I greatly enjoy. Organizing recreation and adult fitness programs for the community is just one aspect of the job. I organize the Farmers Market and make sure that we have different food benefit programs set up so that everyone can enjoy the fresh fruits and produce that our Farmers bring to the market. With the Downtown Business Association (DBA) I get to help our businesses thrive or, in the case of this year, survive. I work with them to market their businesses while also giving them opportunities to get involved in events that we host in our Downtown. Managing the events in our downtown is just another fantastic part of the job that I have. Thanks to several great volunteers and business owners we have

By the Numbers: 11-01/20-11/15/20

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 2,236Total Passengers
- 1,869 Demand Response Passengers
- 367 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 314 Adult Riders and 335 Child Riders
- 1,220 Senior or Disabled Riders

Recycling Changes, Effective Dec. 1st

The recycling pickup schedule is changing, effective December 1, 2020. For recycling collection only, the City of Big Rapids will be separated into two groups, divided by State Street. The east side will be picked up one week, and the west side the next week.

The west side of State Street will be "A" week collection, with pickup beginning December 7. The east side of State Street will be "B" week collection, with pickup the next week, December 14. See the City website or your most recent utility bill for a 2021 Recycling Pickup calendar.

Also, a reminder that the final yard waste pickup of the year will be on Monday, November 30, 2020. See the City's website for more information on local sanitation services.

Big Rapids Community Library

From Nov. 18 to Dec. 9, the Library is only open for lobby pickup services. Request items online or by calling 231-796-5234. Don't forget that online resources for ebooks, audiobooks, and films are available to all library card holders.

Visit the Library's Website or Facebook page to learn about Storytime. Themed Storytimes are put together by Mr. Howard with books, crafts, and songs to enjoy at home.

Take and Make Kits are available for kids, teens, and adults. Call the Library to request then to pick up a fun activity to do at home!

Visit the Library website www.bigrapidslibrary.org to learn more or access your Library account.



Meet and Greet continued.

committees who organize each one so that we can have the most success and bring more people to our beautiful downtown and businesses each year.



Josh at Fall Fest 2019

With Covid-19 hitting us this year, it changed a lot of the focus of my job. Thankfully with some key adjustments to how the programs are offered we were still able to have our Farmers Market and outdoor recreation programs. Now that we are moving into the colder season, we will be adjusting the programs again and most of what we will be offering will be virtual. The DBA is working on some ideas that will allow us to still bring the holiday atmosphere to our Downtown for people to enjoy over a few weeks instead of just in one night, so definitely stay tuned for more details.

One of my favorite things about Big Rapids is the Community. Everyone is willing to help one another to make Big Rapids a great place for our families and kids to grow, learn and play. This type of community creates such a supportive work environment that makes it easy and fun to serve the needs of everyone.



Josh playing softball.



Manager's Newsletter October 23, 2020

From the Manager's Desk

Planning for Capital Projects

Even though it is relatively early in the City's budget year, July 1st to June 30th, this is the time that City Staff is working on Capital Improvement Planning for upcoming years. Staff welcomes input from the community and might not be aware of something that is impacting your home or business, your commute or your visits to City Facilities or Parks.

Roads, bridges, sidewalks, downtown parking lots, city buildings, park equipment, ball diamonds and many other items are reviewed annually for potential improvement. Underground utilities are also a part of this process and you may have direct information that could help in the decision-making process.

The City would like to hear from anyone with thoughts or ideas on how City resources should be invested. Please call or email Mark Gifford at 231-592-4058 or mgifford@cityofbr.org.

At the City Commission

On Monday, October 19, the City Commission held a virtual meeting which began with three Study Sessions: an update on Strategic Plan progress, a Drinking Water Report, and information about amendments to the Open Meetings Act.

The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

- Resolutions for engineers to design the Hemlock Park Improvements, hire Reith Riley for several paving projects, and sell an old piece of equipment, and
- A resolution to sign a Mecosta County Interlocal agreement for County Designated Assessor.

Commission meetings are open to the public. Join us at 6:30 PM on the 1st and 3rd Mondays each month.

Meet and Greet: April Decator, Administrative Assistant for the Public Safety Department

Hello, my name is April Decator, I am the Administrative Assistant for Big Rapids Public Safety, I came to work for the City in January 2017, after leaving Meceola Central Dispatch where I was a 911 dispatcher for almost 15 years. I am currently married to my best friend Dan of 19 years, and we have three sons, Branden (23) who is a Navy veteran, Cayden (16) who is a senior in high school, and Logen (8) who is in 3rd grade this year. They keep us very busy! I am a graduate of Morley Stanwood High School, so I have been in this area all my life. I love Big Rapids and this community and the longer that I live here, the more I realize it's such an amazing group of people.



By the Numbers: 10/05/20-10/18/20

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 2,225 Total Passengers
- 1,789 Demand Response Passengers
- 436 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 204 Adult Riders and 476 Child Riders
- 1,109 Senior or Disabled Riders

November 3, 2020 Election Update

Those who have requested and received Absentee Voter Ballots are encouraged to return them. The

deadline to return them is 8PM on Election Day, but they can be returned at any time. You can utilize the drop boxes at City Hall (the black box outside or the wood box in the lobby) or mail them to City Hall.



All three precincts in Big Rapids will be open from 7AM to 8PM on Tuesday, November 3 for in-person voting. Please check the City Clerk's website for a map of the precincts and to verify your polling location.

For more information, contact the City Clerk at tgillis@cityofbr.org or 231-592-4020.

Big Rapids Community Library

- The Library is open with reduced hours until further notice. Monday - Friday, 11AM - 6PM and Saturday 9AM - 12noon. The Library is open and people are welcomed inside to browse for materials or use the computers. Masks and social distancing are required.
- Contactless pick up remains available. If you request an item online or over the phone, it will be checked out to you and waiting for you in the lobby ready to go.
- A Youth Pumpkin Decorating Contest is ongoing.
 See the Library website for more information or to vote on your favorite.
- Go to bigrapidslibrary.org for event details or to access online materials.



Meet and Greet continued

I oversee many things at Public Safety, my main duty is the records management system. For the last two years we have gone to a new program that has been implemented for 5 agencies. We currently share records with Ferris State DPS, Mecosta County, Osceola County, Wexford County and our agency. I have been assisting with data conversion and implementing state reporting through this new system. This system accesses all police reports since late 2001. I am also the Terminal Access Coordinator for the department and must ensure that all employees and visitors are in compliance with the rules and regulations set forth by the State Police/FBI, with fingerprints, background checks, security awareness training and testing every two years. I am in charge of reporting our crime statistics directly to the state, along with use of force reports for national reporting, juvenile reports, keeping track of parking tickets, crash reports, FOIA requests, filing and archiving reports, along with several other tasks like ordering supplies for the entire department from paper towels to new uniforms for police and firefighters. I also serve as a board member for WISE, and I am a member of 100 Women Who Care of Mecosta County.



April and her family on vacation in the U.P.

In my spare time I love to travel with my family, I have a list of places I want to visit like Scotland, Italy, and Hawaii. I also enjoy playing rec league women's softball, where I have played for 12 years. My husband likes to take me golfing, but I have found I enjoy trying to find lost golf balls more than playing golf. Last time we went I found 18, my personal record!



Manager's Newsletter September 11, 2020

From the City Managers's Desk

Housing in Big Rapids

In December 2019, the City Commission commissioned a study of the Big Rapids housing market. Sharon Woods of LandUseUSA was hired to do the research and analysis. Ms. Woods presented the final report to the City Commission at their regular meeting on Tuesday, September 8.

The final report addresses many facets of the Big Rapids Housing Market and is available on the City's website, on the Community Development page. It is our hope that the results of the report will be used to inform a conversation about policy and regulatory changes to improve housing in Big Rapids.

The Commission and City Staff would like to hear from community members on this topic and will be hosting a community meeting to gather input in the coming weeks. Please contact Mark Gifford at 231-592-4058 or mgifford@cityofbr.org, with questions or comments.

At the City Commission

On Tuesday September 8, the City Commission held a virtual meeting which began with an Investment Report from Treasurer Aaron Kuhn.

The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

- · Awarding bids for two new vehicles,
- Appointing Commissioners Cochran and Eppley to a Committee on Charter Revision, and
- Approving a lease agreement at the Airport.

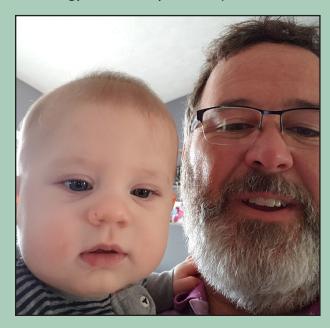
The Commission also had a work session about the recently completed Housing Study. More information about this will be coming soon!

Commission meetings are open to the public. Join us at 6:30 PM on the 1st and 3rd Mondays each month.

Meet and Greet:

Craig Brockette, Information Technology Department Staff

I am Craig Brockette, originally from Grand Rapids, MI, and I have lived in Big Rapids almost 29 years. I moved my young family here to take a position with the Police Department and I officially started January 2nd of 1992. I held many positions and outside assignments with the ever-changing department and moved over to technology which is my current position.



I really don't have a title as our department is jokingly referred to as the "Department of Everything". We are contracted for technology with Mecosta County and provide support services to all Law Enforcement agencies in Mecosta and Osceola County. My primary duties include networking, security, remote connections, level two support to members of our team, installations, infrastructure, and working with outside agencies and vendors for projects. Whether

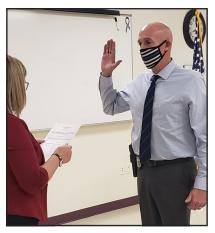
By the Numbers: 08/17/20-09/06/20

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 2,646 Total Passengers
- 2,646 Demand Response Passengers
- 0 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 672 Adult Riders and 404 Child Riders
- 1,570 Senior or Disabled Riders

Detective Sergeant Promotion

"Brian Miller has been important part an of the Big Rapids Department of Public organization Safety for 24 years and has been our dedicated, hardworking Detective for the past 14 years. Thursday morning it gave me great joy to promote Brian to the position of Detective Sergeant, a title he deserved long ago. Brian's immediate family and department family were present as he took his oath of office and was presented with his Sergeant badge." - Chief Haynes





Big Rapids Community Library

September is Library Card Sign-up Month! If you do not have a Library Card, stop by the Library today to get one!

The public is welcome to stop by the Library to browse for materials or access technology. Curbside pickup is also still available for those who prefer to keep their distance. Don't forget about the programs you can use on your computer or mobile device to read ebooks, listen to audiobooks (Libby and RBDigital), or stream movies (Kanopy). Check the Library website for many more resources.

A big congratulations to all of the Summer Reading Program finishers!

Meet and Greet continued.

you know it or not, I am involved in most technology related projects you may have.

Long term projects I have been working on include the virtualization of server infrastructure, failover connections for critical infrastructure, and the never ending wireless and camera projects. Day to day I am assisting my team members, troubleshooting and repair/updates of infrastructure, and addressing requests from the emergency services sectors. I provide compliance oversite for them and work closely with the departments. I am often on call all hours of the day and night, as these are 24-hour operations.



Enough about work. I've enjoyed Big Rapids because it is a good place to raise a family. We have a great parks system that continues to develop, and I have made some great friends here.

Outside of work I enjoy biking, hiking, camping and all the fun stuff that comes with those activities. Gardening is always at the top of my list and I can't wait to get mine in the ground every year.

As our children have grown and moved away, we were travelling regularly to visit them. We were also starting to enjoy travelling back to Scotland where my Grandparents migrated from. This has come to a halt with the current health concerns. Hopefully that improves so we can spend more time away to visit family and get back to vacationing. That is the same wish I have for all of you, so stay healthy!



Manager's Newsletter September 25, 2020

From the City Manager's Desk

Hemlock Park Improvement Project

A very ambitious group of community members, (Jon Coles, Larisa Draves, Patrick McNabb, Jerry Garner, and Kati Ross), are working extremely hard on the Hemlock Park Improvement Project presented by Spectrum Health. This project would pickleball courts, tennis courts, a splash pad, basketball court, and a kayak/canoe launch to Hemlock Park.

Details on the project can be found on the City's website at https://www.brpr.org/other_information/hemlock_park_improvement_project.php or on the project's Facebook page @HemlockParkImprovmentProject.

Please consider being a part of this amazing community effort! Contact information for how to get involved or to donate to this cause is available online, on the project brochure, and by contacting HemlockParkImprovementProject@gmail.com.

At the City Commission

On Monday, September 21, the City Commission held a virtual meeting which began with a Study Session update of COVID-19 Grant Opportunities from City Treasurer Aaron Kuhn.

The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

- A resolution authorizing Fleis&VandenBrink for design engineering services for an upcoming Colburn Avenue Improvement project,
- A resolution accepting an agreement with the Firefighter's Union,
- Mayoral Appointments to Boards and Commissions, plus other items.

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 by calling in.

Meet and Greet: Paula Weipert, Administrative Assistant to the Assessing and Income Tax Division

Hello, my name is Paula Weipert, Administrative Assistant to the Assessing and Income Tax Division for the City of Big Rapids. I have been working for the City for almost 23 years. I began my career here in late 1997 as the City Manager's Secretary. In 1999, I transferred into the Assessing Department as the

Technician. While in that department I studied for and obtained my Level 1 and Personal **Property** Examiner licensure from the State of Michigan and worked there until January 2010. Then I transferred into the Department of Public Works as the Administrative Assistant. During these



while I was in this department, the State was making changes to licensure requirements for Assessors and I could potentially lose my licenses. On my own time, I continued down this educational path and obtained my MCAO (Michigan Certified Assessing Office) Level 2 licensure. In November 2017, the opportunity arose for me to move back to where my heart was calling, the wonderful world of Assessing. A few years earlier, the Income Tax and Assessing divisions had combined into one office, sharing an assistant, which is my current role.

As Administrative Assistant to both Assessing and Income Tax, I have many duties. Some of my duties on the Assessing side are assisting residents and the

Annual Street Tree Planting Program

The Public Works department is looking for property owners for the 2020 Street Tree Planting Program. For just \$75, you can choose a tree to be planted in the public right-of-way in front of your property. Learn more on the City website at cityofbr.org/government/public_works/tree_planting_program. php or on the City's Facebook page, @cityofbr.

Ballots for November 03, 2020

The City of Big Rapids has mailed out 1,106 Absentee Voter Ballots this week. If you have requested an Absentee Voter Ballot, then you should begin receiving your ballot this week and next.

If you have requested an Absentee Voter Ballot and have not received it by October 9, 2020 please call the City Clerk's office at 231-592-4020.



Big Rapids Community Library

Visit the Library's Website or Facebook page to learn about Storytime. Themed Storytimes are put together by Mr. Howard with books, crafts, and songs to enjoy at home.

Take and Make Kits are available for kids, teens, and adults. Stop by the Circulation Desk to pick up a fun activity to do at home!

The public is welcome to browse for materials or access technology. Curbside pickup is also still available for those who prefer to keep their distance. Don't forget about the programs you can use on your computer or mobile device to read ebooks, listen to audiobooks (Libby and RBDigital), or stream movies (Kanopy). Visit the Library website www. bigrapidslibrary.org to learn more or access your Library account.



Meet and Greet continued.

general public with any questions they may have with regards to property, real or personal. I process a wide range of legal documents and state forms; assisting with updating and maintaining the city's records; work closely with the Public Works Department and Assessor in the preparation of the Special Assessment Rolls. I process building permits; visiting properties, verifying information, measuring new construction from porches and decks to new garages and homes; assisting in the valuation of all. On the Income Tax side, some of my duties are assisting anyone with general questions they may have with regards to the City's Income Tax processes and procedures. I assist the Administrator in updating and maintaining the accuracy of the Income Tax program; processing individual income tax returns, W3 reconciliations and receipting in diverse payments. There is always something new to learn each day and I am up for every challenge. I truly enjoy working in both areas for the City and now find them both to be my passion.

I'm originally from Cassopolis, a small town in the southwest corner of our great state of Michigan. When I was about 10 years old, my family moved to Rogers Heights, a small community just south of Big Rapids. My parents purchased and operated a small grocery store there, where I worked throughout my school years. I graduated from Morley Stanwood High School (Go Mohawks!). From there, I attended Ferris State University (College) for 2 years before I hit a crossroads. Not sure of what professional path I wanted to take, I left school and began working at First National Bank, which is now known as TCF Bank. I worked there for about 10 years before I started my journey here at the City.

Growing up in a large family teaches you the importance that family has in one's life. Family is very important to me and I enjoy any time that I can spend with them. Besides spending time with family, I enjoy feeding and watching the many birds that visit my home every day. I also enjoy catching views of the wildlife that pass through my backyard; from turkeys and deer to the sly fox that sneaks through. I tend to my many flower beds and hope to get back to having a garden again someday. I find these as great sources of relaxation and rejuvenation when life can become so hectic and stressful at times. Big Rapids is a wonderful place to live, work and play.