



Manager's Newsletter

January 8, 2021

From the Manager's Desk

Infrastructure

At the January 4 City Commission meeting, the City's engineering firm, Fleis & VandenBrink, presented two Asset Management Plans for the City's Stormwater (rain and snow melt) and Sanitary (water treated at the Wastewater Plant) Sewer Systems. Over the past 3 years, engineers analyzed the condition of the pipes, manholes, and lift stations that comprise the City's system of removing stormwater from roads and parking lots and wastewater from homes and businesses.

This analysis has resulted in plans for improvements to keep the systems operating efficiently. These plans indicate a need for the City to invest over \$10,000,000 in the next 5 years. This is not an issue of neglect but one of aging infrastructure that is going to be a challenge for all of us into the future.

City Staff will be working on solutions to these problems and if any community member would like to see the Asset Management Plans, please contact Mark Gifford at 231-592-4058 or mgifford@cityofbr.org.

At the City Commission

On Monday, January 4, 2021, the City Commission held their first meeting of 2021, a virtual meeting which began with two Study Sessions: a report from Fleis & VandenBrink about the findings of the SAW Grant with the status of our sewer system assets and a presentation of the 2021 Rules of Procedure for the Big Rapids City Commission.

The Commission also acted on several points of business including adopting the 2021 City Commission meeting schedule, authorizing a Deer Cull, and moving the Proposal for Revision of the City Charter to the Nov. 2021 General Election.

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

Meet and Greet: Emily Szymanski, Planning and Zoning Technician

Hi there! My name is Emily Szymanski. I grew up in Macomb, Michigan, moved to Marquette, Michigan and received my Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science at Northern Michigan University, then moved to Kalamazoo, Michigan and received my Master's degree in Geography & Urban Planning at Western Michigan University. I then moved to Big Rapids—I guess you could say that I love Michigan—and started working for the City as the Planning & Zoning Technician as well as the Rental Inspection Coordinator. My dad, being a Ferris State alum, was more than thrilled that I ended up in Big Rapids and loves to visit. Although I've only been working for the City since August 2020, coworkers and community members have welcomed me whole heartedly and I'm happy to call Big Rapids home!

As the Planning & Zoning Technician, I handle all the Zoning, Fence, and Sign Permits for the City. The



Emily and her partner Alec

By the Numbers: 01/01/21-01/07/21

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 849 Total Passengers
- 849 Demand Response Passengers
- 0 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 107 Adult Riders and 230 Child Riders
- 512 Senior or Disabled Riders

Planning Commission to hold Public Forum about Marihuana Businesses

The City of Big Rapids Planning Commission will be holding a Public Forum discussion about the Zoning Ordinance regulations for Marihuana Businesses at their regular meeting on Wednesday, January 20, 2021 at 6:30PM via Zoom. We are a year in to having marihuana businesses open in Big Rapids and this is a good time to evaluate how the Ordinance is functioning and if any changes should be made.

If you want to participate in this conversation, more information and meeting links will be available soon on the City's website and Facebook page.

You are also welcome to contact Community Development Director Paula Priebe to share your comments via phone (231-592-4035) or email ppriebe@cityofbr.org.

Big Rapids Community Library

- The Library is open with contactless pick up only. If you request an item online or over the phone, it will be checked out to you and waiting in the lobby for pickup between 11AM-6PM Monday through Friday and 9AM-12NOON on Saturday.
- Looking for something not in the BRCL Catalog? Let's borrow it from another Michigan library through MelCat, the Michigan eLibrary lending program. Find out more on the BRCL Website.
- At-Home Storytime with Mr. Howard continues; this week is all about Birds!
- Take and Make kits for this month will be available starting January 11th and will be available until supplies run out.
- Go to bigrapidslibrary.org for event details or to access online materials.



Meet and Greet continued

process of approving a permit and seeing that idea come to life is one of my favorite aspects about my role. I've also gotten to work on a few "bigger" projects such as the Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) Certification. This program helps communities plan for new investments or reinvestments to attract and retain businesses throughout the community. Once RRC certified, Big Rapids will have the necessary tools to bring even more investments into the community. While I'm newer to the Big Rapids, I've already seen how my role directly impacts the community, and that's why I wanted to become an urban planner in the first place, to strengthen community and help create a sense of place for people.

Outside of work, I enjoy exploring nature, going on road trips with my boyfriend, Alec, and watching reality T.V. shows with my dog, Baxter. Other passions that are near and dear to my heart include: advocating for Cerebral Palsy and connecting with others that have my same condition, as well as eating plant-based for my health, the environment, and the animals. I also enjoy collecting vinyl's and watching Gilmore Girls on repeat.



Emily, second from Left, with her dog Baxter and her family.

One thing that I'm looking forward to is experiencing my first summer in Big Rapids. While I enjoy the river walk and other trails, I am excited to float in the Muskegon River. Once I accomplish that, I can be an official Big Rapids resident, right? I truly love my job and am excited to get to know more community members along the way!



Manager's Newsletter

January 22, 2021

From the City Managers's Desk

Sidewalk Replacement and Expansion

The City has actively partnered with property owners for over 25 years to replace broken and cracked sidewalks throughout the City. This effort continues every year and we are always looking for property owners who have an interest for such repairs in their neighborhood. The City shares the cost of the work with the property owner.

In 2019, the City Commission expanded the program to include building new sidewalks. The new sidewalk program has focused on high pedestrian areas around schools and connecting gaps in the sidewalk network.

City Staff are always looking for input from residents on how to make this program best serve the community. If you have thoughts or input regarding sidewalk replacement and/or new sidewalk development, please contact Mark Gifford at 231-592-4058 or mgifford@cityofbr.org.

At the City Commission

Due to Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Monday, January 18, 2021, the City Commission meeting was rescheduled from Jan. 18 to Tuesday, Jan. 19.

On Monday, January 19, the City Commission meeting began with Public Safety Recognition Awards and a Proclamation recognizing Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

The meeting included three study session and several points of business including: a resolution adopting the 2021 Rules of Procedure for Conducting Commission business and a resolution on Mayoral Appointments to Boards and Commission, among others.

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

Meet and Greet:

Dawn Fuller, Dial-A-Ride Transit Supervisor

Hi, my name is Dawn Fuller, I was born in Portsmouth Virginia, but my father was in the Navy and we moved to Florida where he worked for the Blue Angels. At age 11 in the Summer of '77 we moved to Big Rapids where his mother was from. I still live in the City of Big Rapids with my husband Steve. We raised our daughter Jessica and our 2 sons Kenny and Shawn here. What a great place to raise a family; family is the most important thing to me. I have 6 grandkids: Ethan, Logan, Kennadi, Chase, Ryder who all live in Big Rapids and Connor who lives in New York. I love watching football and baseball, and I also love to fish and hunt and just hanging out with my family.

On January 16, 1989, I started driving part-time for the City of Big Rapids Public Transportation (Dial-A-Ride), 31 years ago. I was a driver until August of 1990 when I was asked to work in the office and dispatch. Then January 1, 2008 (12 years ago) I was



Dawn with her husband Steve.

By the Numbers: 1/08/21-1/17/21

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 1,175 Total Passengers
- 1,173 Demand Response Passengers
- 2 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 191 Adult Riders and 318 Child Riders
- 664 Senior or Disabled Riders

Have you considered running for local elected office?

The Big Rapids City Commission is a five member board (Mayor + 4 Commissioners) elected to govern our municipality. They are elected at-large from the City to serve four-year terms.

The Mayoral seat and two Commissioner seats will be elected in the November 2021 General Election. These seats are non-partisan. Detailed information about the timeline to run for office will be coming soon; nominating petitions will be due in late summer.

For more information about running for a City Commission seat, visit the City website or contact the City Clerk at 231-592-4020 or the City Manager at 231-592-4058.

Big Rapids Community Library

- The Library is open with contactless pick up only. If you request an item online or over the phone, it will be checked out to you and waiting in the lobby for pickup between 11AM-6PM Monday through Friday and 9AM-12NOON on Saturday.
- The Teen Book Club will meet next on February 18 to discuss "I Am Still Alive" by Kate Alice Marshall. Contact Sarah at swelch@bigrapidslibrary.org to register and get your copy of the book.
- At-Home Storytime with Mr. Howard continues; this week is all about Dragons!
- Take and Make kits for this month will be available starting January 11th and will be available until supplies run out.
- Go to bigrapidslibrary.org for event details or to access online materials.



Big Rapids Community Library

Meet and Greet continued.

hired to my current job as DART Supervisor for Dial-A-Ride under the Public Works Department. Every day I make sure we have enough staff and buses available to accommodate the needs of all our passengers. On a regular year we provide approximately 70,000 on Demand Response rides and an additional 65,000 rides on the Ferris Shuttle.

Currently I am working on the required application for Dial-A-Ride for the state, which requires a state budget and request for Capital Items. This allows us grant funding from the state (39%) and federal funds (18%). My main goals are to stay updated with all the



The DART Garage on N Bronson Ave, with new garage doors

Federal and State laws, like drug testing, ADA laws, Title VI and other policies that are required for Dial-A-Ride to continue to obtain all its funding. This year with COVID-19 some changes were made to follow all state requirements and keeping up on them all was a task. Dial-A-Ride is a much-needed asset, it makes it easier for all to get out and about in the community.

One of my favorite things about Big Rapids is the Riverwalk, I enjoy walking and taking the grandchildren to one of the many parks in town.



Passengers loading a DART Bus.



Manager's Newsletter

February 5, 2021

From the City Manager's Desk

Gravel Street Program

For decades the City has received criticism for having gravel streets within the City limits and more specifically for them almost exclusively being located on the East Side. In 2018, the City Commission made paving of all City streets a priority. In 2018 the City paved one block of Olaf and in 2019 paved an additional block of Olaf completing that street. In 2021 two blocks of Henderson will be paved. In late 2021 or early 2022 the City will pave Jackson Street and North Third Avenue.

In the future the City will look to pave Hanson, Mechanic, and Harrison. That will leave the only gravel street being Monroe which is a shared street with Big Rapids Township. The goal is to have no gravel streets in Big Rapids by 2030, and that could likely happen years earlier.

City Staff is always looking for input from residents on how to best make improvements. If you have thoughts or input what the City should prioritize please contact Mark Gifford at 231-592-4058 or mgifford@cityofbr.org.

City Income Tax Update

With tax season in full swing, please see the City website's Income Tax Office page for full information about paying City income taxes.

A few reminders:

- City income taxes must be filed (and all taxes paid) by April 30, 2021.
- You cannot file City income taxes electronically; they must be printed and mailed with all attachments to our income tax processing center in Eaton Rapids, MI.
- Questions? Contact the Income Tax Office at 231-592-4012.

Meet and Greet: Jake Walston Street Superintendent in the Public Works Department

Hello, my name is Jake Walston and I am the Street Superintendent for the City. I was born and raised in Big Rapids, living most of my life in the area. My wife, Angie, and I have four grown children; Anthony, Jonathan, Danielle, and Josh who we both enjoy watching grow into adults. Outside of work, Angie and I enjoy spending time with family and friends and travelling to our place on Beaver Island. I also love to hunt and spend as much time in the outdoors as possible.



Jake with his family.

I have been employed at the City for almost 27 years. I began my career in the Public Works Department as a laborer and then as Heavy Equipment Operator for 20 years. In my current position as Street Superintendent, I oversee 17 employees in the Street Department, which also includes our Motor Pool mechanics and 2 Main Maintenance employees who oversee our

At the City Commission

On Monday, February 1, the City Commission held a virtual meeting which began with two Study Sessions: an update about how changes to recycling pickup are going and an update on COVID-19 locally from DHD #10.

The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

- A resolution to continue working with the Mecosta County Development Corporation,
- a resolution for a commercial lease at the airport for a flight school, and
- a resolution to purchase the vacant lot at 201 Sanborn Ave, among other business.

The meeting concluded with a work session conversation about potential purchasing of the Depot property from the DNR.

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 continued.

water distribution system. My crew members and I are responsible for the maintenance of all City streets, alleys, sidewalks, parks, all underground water and wastewater infrastructures and, of course, maintaining all of the City's equipment and vehicles.



New fire hydrant fittings.

2020 was definitely a challenging year for all of us, but we did see some completion of a few major projects in town. The final stage of our Ives Avenue and South Street project was finished in which the remaining two blocks of watermain and road resurfacing was renewed. Another project we managed to complete was a new watermain and road resurfacing of a portion of Clark Street, from Perry Avenue to Morrison Street. We have several road and water projects slated to being in the Spring and we cannot wait to get another construction season going!

I am truly blessed to live and work in Big Rapids. The sense of community, our parks system, awesome downtown events, and lifelong friends solidify why my wife and I call this town our home. My goal is to help the City and all its residents and businesses to grow and prosper.

Big Rapids Community Library

- The Library is now open to the public! Come in and browse for new materials. New hours = 11AM-6PM Monday through Friday and 10AM-3PM on Saturday.
- BRCL received a Bookapalooza grant in 2020 from the Association for Library Service to Children and the American Library Association. This means that we now have over 1,300 new childrens and youth materials for you to check out! Stop in today to browse the new items.
- The Teen Book Club will meet next on February 18 to discuss "I Am Still Alive" by Kate Alice Marshall. Contact Sarah at swelch@bigrapidslibrary.org to register and get your copy of the book.
- At-Home Storytime with Mr. Howard continues; this week is all about Groundhogs!
- Go to bigrapidslibrary.org for event details or to access online materials.



By the Numbers: 01/18 - 01/31, 2021

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 2,474 Total Passengers
- 1,942 Demand Response Passengers
- 532 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 299 Adult Riders and 602 Child Riders
- 1,041 Senior or Disabled Riders



Manager's Newsletter

February 19, 2021

From the Manager's Desk

Future of the Depot

The City Commission authorized purchase of nearly two acres of land from the State of Michigan on February 15th. The property is immediately adjacent to the White Pine Trail and just south of the Depot building on Maple Street. The area has historically been used for trail parking but is mostly undeveloped and underutilized.

The City will further pursue the purchase of the Depot itself through the State auction process later in 2021. The City may be successful in purchasing the Depot building but it will also be available to the private sector if there is a business interest in that location.

The plan is to construct a more substantial trailhead at the location that serves trail users in all seasons. Public restrooms, playground, resting area, and an information center are all aspects of what could be constructed if grant funding is secured for the property.

City Staff is always looking for input from residents on how to best make improvements. If you have thoughts or input on the Depot and its development, please contact Mark Gifford at 231-592-4058 or mgifford@cityofbr.org.

Meet and Greet: Beth Ranger, Office Manager at Roben Hood Airport

Happy Friday All! My name is Beth Ranger. I'm a 5th generation local of this great town. After spending 28 years away, I came back to the best spot on the planet.



Doc and Beth.

In 2009, Colt Aviation hired me to run the office at Roben Hood Airport. Office Manager was a loose term as that also involved fueling planes, interacting with all who flew in, baking cookies, shoveling, checking runway conditions, cleaning bathrooms, you name it.

When Mike Lafferty, the owner of Colt Aviation and manager of the airport, passed away in 2017, the City made the decision to operate the airport themselves. Luckily they hired all of us who had worked for Colt and the transition was pretty seamless. Apparently being office manager still has the same job description!

We employees at Roben Hood have worked hard and continue to work hard to promote this airport to

At the City Commission

On Monday, February 15, 2021, the City Commission held a virtual meeting. They acted on several points of business including awarding bids for projects at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and for water service line exploration, authorizing the purchase of land adjacent to the Depot, and approving an agreement for wildlife services at the airport.

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

By the Numbers: 02/01/21-02/14/21

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 2,753 Total Passengers
- 2,161 Demand Response Passengers
- 592 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 418 Adult Riders and 587 Child Riders
- 1,156 Senior or Disabled Riders

Candidate Petition Packets are Ready

While the November election maybe months away, Big Rapids City Clerk Tamyra Gillis is getting ready now. Candidate petition packets are ready to be picked up for one Mayoral seat and two City Commissioner seats, all of which have terms from November 15, 2021 to November 13, 2025.

Interested people must be residents of the City for at least one-year, registered voters, citizens of the U.S., and not in default to the City. Petitions must contain at least 25 and no more than 40 signatures of registered voters of the City of Big Rapids. An affidavit of identity and receipt of filing must be filed at the time the petition is submitted.

Petitions may be picked up starting March 1, 2021 and submitted to the Clerk's office in City Hall and are due by 4:00 p.m. on July 20, 2021.

Big Rapids Community Library

- The Library is open from 11AM-6PM Monday through Friday and 10AM-3PM on Saturday.
- Looking for something not in the BRCL Catalog? Let's borrow it from another Michigan library through MelCat, the Michigan eLibrary lending program. Find out more on the BRCL Website.
- At-Home Storytime with Mr. Howard continues; this week is all about Polar Bears!
- Take and Make kits for February are available now until supplies run out.
- Check out Kanopy, Libby, and the other digital resources available with your library card!
- Go to bigrapidslibrary.org for event details or to access online materials.



Meet and Greet continued

the greater world. Some great examples of outreach would be our "Chili Saturdays" where a volunteer(s) chef makes up a big ol' delicious batch of lunch and pilots from all over Michigan come to partake. (Pilots love good food!) Another would be Operation Good Cheer on the 1st Saturday of December every year. Pilots volunteer their planes, time, and fuel to deliver gifts throughout Michigan to kids in foster care. Roben Hood Airport has the reputation for the best food and friendliest people in the State for this yearly event.

The City and the City Commissioners are to be commended for realizing and understanding the value this airport has to the region. An amazing amount of business happens because there is a decent airport here. Local restaurants (when allowed to be open) have hundreds of people fly in each year just to go to breakfast, lunch, or dinner. FSU parents come and go via air, families get visited, and each of these flights results in promoting Big Rapids a little more.



A hoop house at Ward Vegetables.

Along with my mom and baby brother, Frances, and John Ward, we own and operate Ward Vegetables, a CSA member vegetable farm. Watching this community grab onto the concept of local food has been a real pleasure. We have become a year-round production farm by investing in hoop houses and growing the best plants for our region. Between these two interesting and fun jobs, there really is no time to get in trouble!



Manager's Newsletter

March 05, 2021

From the City Managers's Desk

Community Engagement

At the March 15th City Commission meeting, the Commission will be hosting a work session to discuss ideas and opportunities to better engage residents with City operations. A strong network of volunteers is needed to properly conduct City business.

Recently the Commission has entertained the idea of reviewing the City Charter, as it has been nearly a decade since the last time that happened. That effort has stalled from the lack of volunteers willing to take part in the initiative.

The City needs to do more to interact with the residents and gather input from all sectors of the Community. If you are interested in this topic, please join the Commission on the 15th or contact staff at any time to discuss further. Please contact Mark Gifford at 231-592-4058 or mgifford@cityofbr.org.

At the City Commission

On Monday, March 1, the City Commission held a virtual meeting which began with three Study Sessions, including an update from State Rep. Michele Hoitenga and the Annual Report of Planning and Zoning activities. The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

- A resolution adopting the 2021-2027 Capital Improvement Program,
- a resolution accepting McNally Enterprises and Re/Max Together for Real Estate services, and
- a resolution with Green Township for a Mutual Fire Protection contract, among 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 on Zoom.

Meet and Greet:

Earl Battle, Operator at the Water Treatment Plant

Hi, my name is Earl Battle. I'm from just north of town, where I was raised on my family's farm in rural Paris, MI. I grew up the youngest of six children and I attended Reed City High School and the MOISD Career Center's welding program. I also obtained a degree from the FSU Welding Program here in Big Rapids.



Earl testing water in the Lab.

My job at the City of Big Rapids Water Treatment Plant is about ensuring that the water available for those that live here, work here, or visit is an abundant and safe, dependable source to utilize for their needs. We test the water on an hourly and daily basis, with some parameters performed weekly or monthly, as required by the State's EGLE Department.

Quality Water on Tap – that is what we deliver to our customers at the Water Treatment Plant, located on the north side of town along the bank of the Muskegon River. We used to utilize the River as the

By the Numbers: 02/15-02/28

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 2,556 Total Passengers
- 2,101 Demand Response Passengers
- 455 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 370 Adult Riders and 604 Child Riders
- 1,127 Senior or Disabled Riders

Vacancies on City Boards

The City of Big Rapids needs community-minded City residents to fill vacancies on City board and commissions. Boards that currently need members include the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority, Compensation Commission, DART Local Advisory Council, Property Maintenance Appeals Board and Zoning Board of Appeals.

If you are a resident of the City of Big Rapids, please consider volunteering time to serve on one of the many boards.

If you are interested in serving on any of these City Boards or Commissions, an Interest Indicator is available either on line at the City's website www.cityofbr.org, Document Center – Forms and Permits or from the City Clerk's office in City Hall, 226 N. Michigan Avenue, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Big Rapids Community Library

- The Library is open between 11AM-6PM Monday through Friday and 10AM-3PM on Saturday.
- The Middle Grade Book Club is currently reading *Forgotten City* by Michael Ford. They meet weekly over Zoom to read the book together and discuss it. Contact Sarah at swelch@bigrapidslibrary.org to register and get your copy of the book.
- At-Home Storytime with Mr. Howard continues; this week is all about Dr. Seuss! Mr. Howard is also doing Zoom storytime every Friday at 10AM.
- Take and Make kits for March are available now until supplies run out. Try something new!
- Go to bigrapidslibrary.org for event details or to access online materials.

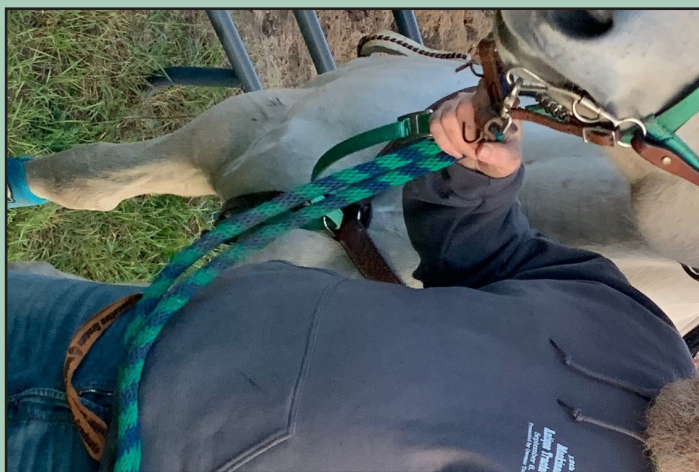


Meet and Greet continued.

water supply for distribution to customers, but now we utilize groundwater pumped from wells. Water treatment and disinfection is among the greatest health achievements of the 20th century, and I'm glad to be part of the team here at the City of Big Rapids. I will have my 5 year work anniversary here in June 2021.

We are currently revitalizing the appearance of the Water Treatment Plant by applying some fresh paint throughout the facility. Recently we also got some new flooring as well. A new 60" monitor was installed with the assistance of the City's IT Department (Thanks Tim and Eric). This new technology will be used for video surveillance within the facility and for technical training. Lewis and Clark would be amazed at the technologies we utilize to adjust flows and parameters from within the control room!

One thing I love about Big Rapids is the murals around town, especially the one on the corner of Michigan Ave. Both of my grandfathers grew up in the era of farming and logging with horses in the area. The stories they told are brought to life with this mural. Paris was said to have seven saloons back in the day. The White Pine Trail was a train track and logs were floated down the Muskegon River from nearby lumber camps to be branded and stamped. This was a booming furniture town, with flooring mills and even furniture factories located here.



My family has participated in local parades my whole life and we still find the time to join local parades either riding horseback or driving a team of horses. We participate to honor those who fought for the freedoms that we as a community all enjoy.



Manager's Newsletter

March 19, 2021

From the City Manager's Desk

Northland Drive - South Street to Arthur Road

MDOT has completed a Road Safety Audit of Northland Drive from South Street to Arthur Road in Big Rapids Township. They have identified many items for potential improvement which include turn lanes at Arthur Rd, a reduction from the current 5 lanes down to 3 lanes improving safety issues throughout with a focus on 14 Mile Road, and a traffic light at Gilbert Drive. In the City, the intersection of Knollview Drive and Northland Drive was a major focus. A variety of options are being discussed, with a roundabout being the preferred safety improvement.

Timing for these changes is unclear at this time. Repaving of this stretch of road is scheduled for 2023. If you have questions or comments regarding this topic, please contact staff at any time to discuss further. Please contact Mark Gifford at 231-592-4058 or mgifford@cityofbr.org.

At the City Commission

On Monday, March 15, the City Commission held a virtual meeting which began with two Study Session presentations: about Bird electric scooters and about citizen redistricting in Michigan.

The Commission also acted on several points of business including: awarding bids for public works projects and firefighter equipment, a resolution to allow for continued virtual meetings due to the pandemic, and a discussion about regulations for marijuana businesses in the downtown.

The meeting concluded with a work session about events in parks which include alcohol.

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: Tim Moslener Director of Technology

Hello, my name is Tim Moslener and I am the Director of Technology for the City of Big Rapids. I lived in Mt. Clemens until the age of 17 when I came to Big Rapids in 1988 to attend Ferris State University. I graduated from Ferris with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and one in Computer Information Systems.



Tim with his girlfriend Joyceann.

About 27 years ago I started working for the City of Big Rapids where I helped create the Information Technology Department – a one person show. That was back in the days of mainframe computers. Major changes to technology have occurred since and our department has grown to include 3 other employees (Craig, Janet and Eric). We have created a consortium of non-profit/governmental agencies that share in our technology goals and achievements.

Mini-Grants Available to Low-income Homeowners in Big Rapids

The City offers the Housing Rehabilitation Mini-Grant Program to help homeowners on a limited budget to make needed repairs to the exterior of their homes. This year, the program may award up to five grants of \$500 to low-income homeowners who live in Big Rapids for qualified projects. Examples of qualified projects include siding repair, exterior painting, sidewalk repair or replacement, and roof, porch, or window repair.

Mini-grants are available on a first-come, first-served basis for owner-occupied properties. The full program guidelines and the Application forms are available on the City website's Community Development page.

Contact Grant Coordinator Suzanne Wiggins at City Hall, by phone at 231-592-4032, or by email at swiggins@cityofbr.org with questions or application assistance.



Big Rapids Community Library

- The Library is now open to the public! Come in and browse for new materials. New hours = 11AM-6PM Monday through Friday and 10AM-3PM on Saturday.
- With spring coming soon, stop by the Seed Library in the BRCL to check out up to 15 packets of seeds per household to start your garden!
- Join us for Mornings with Mr. Howard every Friday at 10AM via zoom, when Mr. Howard reads books based on a weekly theme. Additional book suggestions and weekly craft activities can be found for the theme on the Library website.
- New Special Reader Storytime will take place twice a month on Thursdays at 10AM on zoom!
- Big Rapids has several book clubs, including Mary's Book Club, the Novel Tea Book Club, and the Middle Grade Book Club for ages 9-12. Contact Sarah at swelch@bigrapidslibrary.org to learn more about any of these programs.
- Go to bigrapidslibrary.org for event details or to access online materials.



Meet and Greet continued.

Currently we are working on improving our WIFI presence to our City parks and upgrading our infrastructure to handle the ever-changing needs that new technology presents to us. This year has been challenging for our department since almost overnight everyone went from working in the office to working from home. We had to make changes to our system to allow this transition to happen.

In my spare time, I enjoy cooking, playing golf and especially taking cruises with my parents and girlfriend. We are just getting started exploring the globe by ship. One of our favorite cruises was our last one before the world stopped. We traveled from Barcelona to Miami (a transatlantic cruise) and the experiences we had were memorable.



Travel photo from Seville, Spain.

Coming from a larger City, I wasn't sure how I would handle a smaller environment. Since then, I have come to love smaller City life in Big Rapids and the longer that I live here, the more I realize it is a great place to live.

By the Numbers: 03/01 - 03/14, 2021

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 2,793 Total Passengers
- 2,365 Demand Response Passengers
- 428 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 386 Adult Riders and 720 Child Riders
- 1,259 Senior or Disabled Riders



Manager's Newsletter

April 09, 2021

From the Manager's Desk

Upcoming Public Works Projects

The City's Public Works department is busy preparing for the upcoming construction season and has 26 projects planned from Spring through Fall of 2021.

Spring projects include renovation of the exterior bathrooms at City Hall, re-marcite at the Community Pool, and the annual Sidewalk Repair Program.

Summer projects include local street projects on Locust St, Henderson and Speer Streets, and Colburn Ave; Hemlock Park projects including Phase 1 of the Hemlock Park Improvement Project as well as sewer and water main work; storm sewer repairs on Elm St and Pere Marquette St; painting the reservoirs at the Water Treatment Plant; and a rehabilitation project for the final clarifier at the Waste Water Treatment Plant.

Fall projects include utility upgrades to the Birch Street Alley; two projects at the Dial-a-Ride Bus Garage; street projects on Maple St, Novak Lane, and the Rust Avenue Extension Project; the annual New Sidewalk Program; and two improvement projects at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

One on-going project is the Water Service Line Replacement Program to replace any remaining lead water service lines to residential properties.

At the City Commission

On Monday, April 5, 2021, the City Commission held a virtual meeting. They acted on several points of business including resolutions allowing several Special Events to take place in City Parks, approving Bird Ride to operate a scooter rental business, awarding bids for several Public Works projects, and increasing the number of chickens permitted on residential properties in the City, among others.

Commission meetings are at 6:30 PM on the 1st and 3rd Mondays each month via Zoom.

Meet and Greet: Scott Paquette, Sergeant with the Big Rapids Police Department

Hello, my name is Scott Paquette I am originally from Reed City and attended Ferris State University following graduation from high school, where I earned my degree in criminal justice. Following FSU I attended the first ever Michigan Police Corp Academy where I earned my law enforcement certification. I was hired by the city in the fall of 1999 and have been employed here since then.



Scott with his family.

Over the years I have had several opportunities to serve our city. Shortly after I was hired, I became one of the first officers certified to use a motorcycle on patrol. I also spent three years working narcotics

By the Numbers: 03/15/21-03/28/21

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 2,656 Total Passengers
- 2,251 Demand Response Passengers
- 405 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 390 Adult Riders and 716 Child Riders
- 1,145 Senior or Disabled Riders

Candidate Petition Packets are Ready

While the November election may be months away, Big Rapids City Clerk Tamyra Gillis is getting ready now. Candidate petition packets are ready to be picked up for one Mayoral seat and two City Commissioner seats, all of which have terms from November 15, 2021 to November 13, 2025.

To run for local office you must be a resident of the City for at least one-year, a registered voter, a citizen of the U.S., and not in default to the City. Petitions must contain at least 25 and no more than 40 signatures of registered voters of the City of Big Rapids. An affidavit of identity and receipt of filing must also be submitted.

Petitions are available at the Clerk's Office in City Hall and must be submitted by 4:00PM on July 20, 2021.

Income Tax Filing Deadline Extended to June 01, 2021

The City of Big Rapids income tax due date has been extended from April 30 until June 1.

Taxpayers can defer income tax payments due on April 30 to June 1 without penalties and interest, regardless of the amount owed. All Big Rapids taxpayers now have until June 1 to file. This deferment applies to all taxpayers – including individuals, trusts and estates, corporations and other non-corporate tax filers as well as those who pay self-employment tax. This deferment does not apply to any withholding taxes.

City Income Tax Administrator Thomas Paul says taxpayers do not need to file any additional forms or call the Big Rapids Income Tax Office to qualify for this automatic tax filing and payment relief. Individual taxpayers who need additional time to file beyond the new June 1 deadline, can request a filing extension by completing and submitting the extension form available on the City's website.

Meet and Greet continued

investigations with the Central Michigan Enforcement Team. Following my time with CMET I spent several years as our School Liaison Officer, and became a Field Training Officer, and in October of 2016 I was promoted to my current role of Sergeant.

As a sergeant I am responsible for overseeing the day to day operations of the officers assigned to my shift, as well as, completing monthly audit checks of our Law Enforcement Information Network (LEIN) records, and completing monthly verifications of our PBT units. One of the major projects that the sergeants are working on as a group is updating or departmental policy procedure manuals to meet current standards.

In my free time I enjoy spending time with my family, attending my children's sporting events, boating, reading, and just relaxing with friends and family.

Growing up I always imagined that I would leave the area to work and live. I am thankful every day that was given the opportunity to work for the City of Big Rapids. I could not imagine a better group of people to work with, or a better town to raise a family in.

Big Rapids Community Library

- The Library is open from 11AM-6PM Monday through Friday and 10AM-3PM on Saturday.
- Looking for something not in the BRCL Catalog? Let's borrow it from another Michigan library through MeLCat, the Michigan eLibrary lending program. Find out more on the BRCL Website.
- Check out Mornings with Mr. Howard on Friday's at 10AM via zoom where he reads books on the week's theme, plus craft ideas and more!
- April's plant themed Take and Make kits are available now until supplies run out.
- Check out Kanopy, Libby, and the other digital resources available with your library card!
- Go to bigrapidslibrary.org for event details or to access online materials.





Manager's Newsletter

April 23, 2021

From the City Manager's Desk

Hemlock Park Construction

Due to the outstanding leadership of Jon Coles, Larisa Draves, Jerry Garner, Kati Ross and Patrick McNabb and the overwhelming support of the community, the City will be proceeding with Phase I of the Hemlock Park Improvement Project this Summer. Phase I includes tennis courts, basketball courts, pickleball courts and a kayak/canoe launch.

To accommodate these improvements sewer and water upgrades will be undertaken in the park as well. All this activity will create some closures and alterations to amenities in the park during construction. If you are a frequent park user or are planning activities in the park please contact Mark Gifford at 231-592-4058 or mgifford@cityofbr.org for more information.

At the City Commission

On Monday, April 19, the City Commission held a virtual meeting which began with three Study Sessions, including updates about the Roben-Hood Airport and the upcoming Construction season for City facilities and roads by the Public Works department.

The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

- Several resolutions to work with Fleis & VandenBrink for engineering services,
- an Ordinance to authorize online auction sales of surplus personal property up to \$7,500, and
- a resolution on mayoral appointments to board and commissions, among 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 on Zoom.

Meet and Greet: Suzanne Wiggins, Grant Coordinator

Greetings! My name is Suzanne Wiggins and I work in the Community Development Department as the City of Big Rapids' Grant Coordinator. I grew up in Montrose, a small town located on M-57 just east of Chesaning. After high school, I attended Central Michigan University, working in the campus recreation department until I graduated with a degree in Interpersonal and Public Communication.



Suzanne Wiggins.

My career, prior to arriving at the City of Big Rapids, was spent serving in executive management roles at various nonprofit organizations including the Flint Cultural Center, Cranbrook, Flint Youth Theatre, Paint Creek Center for the Arts, Stagecrafters, Keep Genesee County Beautiful, and the Humane Society of Genesee County. Fundraising and grant writing were always a primary responsibility of every position.

By the Numbers: 04/05-04/15

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 2,695 Total Passengers
- 2,335 Demand Response Passengers
- 360 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 379 Adult Riders and 701 Child Riders
- 1,255 Senior or Disabled Riders

Public Notice

The exterior restrooms at City Hall will be closed for renovation from approximately May 3, 2021 - June, 1, 2021. A Porta-john will be available during this time.



Meet and Greet continued.

As the City's Grant Coordinator I have three primary responsibilities. Obviously, I write and submit grant applications, but I also search for potential funding sources for projects the City wants to complete from tree planting to stormwater and sewer line infrastructure. When the City receives a grant award, I also complete required grant reports, submit payment requests, and maintain all of the City's grant files which is important for monitoring and auditing purposes.

Upon arriving at the City of Big Rapids in October 2020, I got right to work identifying and writing grants for the Hemlock Park Improvement Project. Having a background in parks and recreation, the project is near and dear to my heart. I have been so impressed and inspired by the local group of individuals comprising the Hemlock Park Improvement Project Committee who have worked tirelessly to raise over \$400,000 in private donations towards the planned improvements. It has also been amazing to see the Big Rapids community support the project since community truly makes the difference. I learned that firsthand while working for Keep Genesee County Beautiful. Working with local residents and volunteer groups, I coordinated the cleanup and maintenance of City of Flint parks, including painting aging 1950's playground equipment.



Suzanne with students from Central Michigan University at a park in Flint.

In my free time, I enjoy reading, writing for my blog theactivelisterinc.com, and playing Sudoku. As the weather improves, I hope to hop on my bike, log some major miles on the White Pine Trail and explore the interesting spots and natural beauty Big Rapids has to offer.

Big Rapids Community Library

- The Library is open between 11AM-6PM Monday through Friday and 10AM-3PM on Saturday.
- April is Poetry Month and April 29 is Poem in your Pocket Day. Enjoy the self-guided poetry walk in the Anna Howard Shaw Memorial Park.
- Check out Morning's with Mr. Howard on Friday's at 10AM via Zoom, where he reads books on the week's theme, plus craft ideas and more!
- The Library has a Homebound Program. Whether you are unable to get out due to age, injury, illness, or surgery, we can deliver to you! Call the Library or complete the online application to get involved with this great program.
- Go to bigrapidslibrary.org for event details or to access online materials.





Manager's Newsletter

May 7, 2021

From the City Manager's Desk

Charles E. Fairman Community Pool

The Community Pool is scheduled to open June 7th for registration and evening open swim. Applications for employment at the pool are still being accepted.

There have been great things taking place while the pool was closed in 2020 including a new paint job on the interior of the pool house, remarketing of the shallow and middle sections of the pool, cleaning and sealing benches in both locker rooms, and more.

If there are questions regarding the pool please contact Josh Pyles at 231-592-4038. The City is looking forward to seeing you this summer at the Charles E Fairman Community Pool.

Election Results - May 4, 2021

The first City Commission meeting in May was moved from May 3 to May 10 so as to not interfere with the May election.

On Tuesday, May 4, 2021, a Special Election was held. Big Rapids consolidated the three precincts into one, which voted at City Hall. In total 654 votes were cast which includes 188 in person votes and 466 absentee ballots. For this election, the City of Big Rapids had a voter turnout of 13%.

While it did was not approved across all of Mecosta County, the Mecosta County Parks millage was approved by City voters with 467 in favor and 171 against.

There were two Big Rapids School District millages on the ballot. Among City of Big Rapids voters, the Operating Millage passed with 466 yes votes to 175 no votes and the Sinking Fund Millage passed with 440 yes votes to 201 no votes. Both school millages passed across the District.

Meet and Greet:

Jeff Hauger, Patrol Supervisor for the Public Safety - Police Division

I am Jeff Hauger. I am currently serving as a patrol supervisor for the Department of Public Safety Police Division. I have served the citizens of Big Rapids for 24 years. I grew up in Millington, MI (base of the thumb-Frankenmuth area). I graduated from Ferris State University with a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice. This is where Melissa and I were set up on a blind date, and we now have 4 children: Alayna, Dryden, Emma, and Faith.



Jeff with his wife Melissa.

I am currently serving in the Michigan Army National Guard, assigned as the Command Sergeant Major (CSM) of the 210th Military Police Battalion in Taylor, MI. I have been enlisted in the Army for over 30 years. I enjoy spending time outdoors hunting, fishing, and

Mini-Grants Available to Low-income Homeowners in Big Rapids

The City offers the Housing Rehabilitation Mini-Grant Program to help homeowners on a limited budget to make needed repairs to the exterior of their homes. This year, the program may award up to five grants of \$500 to low-income homeowners who live in Big Rapids for qualified projects. Examples of qualified projects include siding repair, exterior painting, sidewalk repair or replacement, and roof, porch, or window repair.

Mini-grants are available on a first-come, first-served basis for owner-occupied properties. The full program guidelines and the Application forms are available on the City website's Community Development page.

Contact Grant Coordinator Suzanne Wiggins at City Hall, by phone at 231-592-4032, or by email at swiggins@cityofbr.org with questions or application assistance.



Big Rapids Community Library

- The Library is open from 11AM-6PM Monday through Friday and 10AM-3PM on Saturday.
- Construction has begun on the Anna Howard Shaw Memorial Park Early Literacy Playground, behind the library. It will reopen later this year with new sidewalks, benches, landscaping, playground equipment, and a permanent Storywalk along the path.
- Join us for Mornings with Mr. Howard every Friday at 10AM via zoom, when Mr. Howard reads books based on a weekly theme. Additional book suggestions and weekly craft activities can be found for the theme on the Library website.
- New Special Reader Storytime will take place twice a month on Thursdays at 10AM on zoom!
- Big Rapids has several active book clubs. Contact Sarah at swelch@bigrapidslibrary.org to learn more about any of these programs.
- Go to bigrapidslibrary.org for event details or to access online materials.



Meet and Greet continued.

golfing. During the school year, you can find me cheering my kids on in high school sports.



Jeff and Melissa's four children.

I supervise 2 to 3 officers assigned to my shift. I am responsible for reviewing their reports, answering their questions, and responding to calls for service with them. I serve as the department's lead firearms instructor, Field Training Officer Supervisor, and Traffic Crash Investigator. I am currently developing Mobile Field Force (Riot Control) Training for the department. The Mobile Field Force incorporates tactics, techniques, and formations in the event of a riot.

I enjoy Big Rapids because of the small-town atmosphere. The city provides many outdoor activities to enjoy, especially Riverwalk in the fall. I feel Big Rapids gives you the opportunity to see other great areas of Michigan. Big Rapids is close to so much state and federal land and local lakes to enjoy the outdoors.

By the Numbers: 04/19 - 05/02, 2021

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 2,445 Total Passengers
- 2,199 Demand Response Passengers
- 246 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 321 Adult Riders and 709 Child Riders
- 1,169 Senior or Disabled Riders



Manager's Newsletter

May 21, 2021

From the Manager's Desk

City Offers Free Zinnias

The City of Big Rapids will give a free flat of zinnias to City residents, property owners and businesses. The zinnias must be planted in a location within the City limits where they can be viewed by the public.

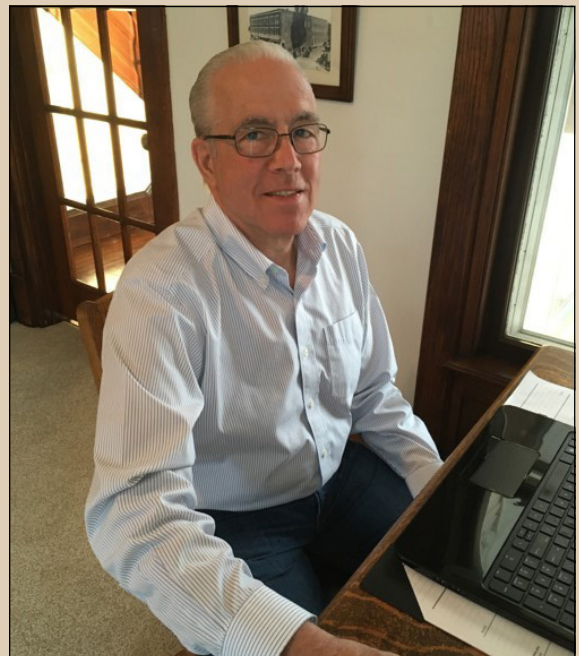
Flats may be picked up at the Farmer's Market June 4, 2021, from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Flowers are available on a first-come, first-serve basis with a limit of one flat per address or parcel.

There will be no coupons given out this year. Please contact Tammy Gillis, 231-592-4020 with any questions.



Meet and Greet: Tom Hogenson, Mayor

My name is Tom Hogenson; currently Mayor of City of Big Rapids. I grew up in Kohler, Wisconsin, and moved to Big Rapids in 1967 when my dad took a job at Ferris State College. I served three and a half terms as City Commissioner and have almost completed a term as mayor. I also chaired the 2011 Charter Commission. I helped found the Good Neighbors Association of Big Rapids which worked to identify community and neighborhood issues from a citizen perspective for several decades. I am a retired Registered Nurse and healthcare community relations director with significant non-profit experience and a member of several area boards and action groups.



As Mayor, I help relate public requests and interests to the operation of our city and assist the community to understand various actions and concepts through direct representation to the administrative staff

At the City Commission

On Monday, May 17, the City Commission held a virtual meeting which began with two Study Sessions; one about water and sewer rate changes and the other about the Assessing department. The Commission held a Public Hearing on the topic of marijuana businesses in the downtown area.

The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

- A resolution to purchase and repair office furniture in the Public Safety Building,
- A resolution on a contract with MDOT for the Roben-Hood Airport, and
- A resolution accepting the Compensation Commission Report for Year 2021.

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.

By the Numbers: 05/03/21-05/16/21

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 2,329 Total Passengers
- 2,329 Demand Response Passengers
- 0 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 348 Adult Riders and 704 Child Riders
- 1,277 Senior or Disabled Riders

City Hall Closed for Memorial Day

The Offices of City Hall will be closed on Monday, May 31, 2021 for the Memorial Day holiday. Dial-a-Ride Transit services will also be closed on Memorial Day.

Trash, recycle, and yard waste for the week of May 31, 2021 will be picked up on Tuesday, June 01, 2021.



Big Rapids Community Library

- The Library is open from 11AM-6PM Monday through Friday and 10AM-3PM on Saturday.
- Looking for something not in the BRCL Catalog? Let's borrow it from another Michigan library through MelCat, the Michigan eLibrary lending program. Find out more on the BRCL Website.
- Check out Mornings with Mr. Howard on Friday's at 10AM via zoom where he reads books on the week's theme, plus craft ideas and more!
- Special Reader Storytime continues on May 27th at 10AM via Zoom with Jessica Helfmann, Vice President of the Big Rapids Fifth Third Bank.
- Check out Kanopy, Libby, and the other digital resources available with your library card!
- Go to bigrapidslibrary.org for event details or to access online materials.



Meet and Greet continued

and to the City Commission itself. I preside over City Commission meetings, meet with citizens and community leaders, and attend various legal and ceremonial functions, issue proclamations that provide linkages between the interests of citizens, government and civic groups. Of course, part of the job involves signing off in an official capacity on all sorts of documents. I also conduct weddings, a role that I never anticipated, but one I have come to value.



The Mayor (far left), with a group from Ferris State University, meeting with the Mexican Ambassador to the United States.

I am proud to serve alongside city employees as part of a coalition of citizens who promote and strengthen social equity for all. The Big Rapid Social Equity Initiative continues to grow in membership and build community effectiveness. Right now, although not directly involved in their efforts, I am most enthusiastic about the planned improvements for Hemlock Park and stand in awe of the citizen leaders raising private funds for the project. There are always new interests and ideas to learn about, and I also enjoy seeing behind the scenes to understand city operations more fully.

I love my role as Mayor and will miss it when my term expires later this year. Working with the many talented and proficient city employees I have met-and understanding the key roles that they play, in tandem with our citizens, has been a valuable and treasured experience I won't forget. Our community's greatest assets? Its instinctive unity of purpose, its willingness to pitch in when important needs are identified, and the kindness and humanity that welcomes all who venture here!



Manager's Newsletter

June 11, 2021

From the City Manager's Desk

Fireworks 2021

The Big Rapids Lions Club has taken over the Fireworks for 2021. It is scheduled for Friday, July 2nd at dusk, at the Fairgrounds. The effort to coordinate the project is still underway and needs donors. If you are interested in donating please contact Dave Hamelund at hamtech@hamtechinc.com.

A big Thank You to Lions Club for their efforts this year and to the Big Rapids Jaycees who have made this project happen for so many years previous.



At the City Commission

On Monday, June 7, the City Commission held a virtual meeting which began with several special orders and study sessions, including an update about the Library and the announcement the Big Rapids was chosen to host a CEDAM Fellow.

The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

- A resolution adopting the 2021-2022 Budget,
- Ordinances amending Water Rates, Sewer Rates, and the Zoning Ordinance provisions for fences,
- as well as several other items of 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 on Zoom.

Meet and Greet:

Becky Curtis, Administrative Assistant in the Treasurer's Office

Hello! I am Becky Curtis and I work for the City of Big Rapids as an administrative assistant in the Treasurer's Office. Prior to coming to work for the City in March 2020, I worked as the Personnel Training Coordinator in the Office of Human Resources at Walmart. I feel grateful to be able to semi-retired and come work with such wonderful people across all departments at City Hall. The best part of my job is the opportunity to provide customer assistance to City residents, many of whom I have known for years. It is also nice to have the opportunity to meet new residents as well.

I am originally from Peoria, Illinois, but moved to Big Rapids at the start of high school. As a child my family visited friends in the Big Rapids area several times a



Becky Curtis

By the Numbers: 05/17-05/31

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 2,298 Total Passengers
- 2,298 Demand Response Passengers
- 0 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 329 Adult Riders and 752 Child Riders
- 1,217 Senior or Disabled Riders

Interested in Running for Office?

City residents interested in running for a position on the City Commission may pick up their nominating petitions at the City Clerk's Office. Completed petitions must be filed with the City Clerk no later than July 20, 2021 at 4:00PM.

Complete election information may be obtained from the City's website, the City Clerk's Office, or by calling 231-592-4020.

Big Rapids Community Library

- The Library is open between 11AM-6PM Monday through Friday and 10AM-3PM on Saturday.
- The 2021 Summer Reading Program is about to begin! Registration is open now and reading begins on June 14th. Complete your reading goals before August 8 and win some great prizes for youth age groups and adults!



- Join Mr. Howard for Storytime at the Park on Fridays from June 11 to August 6 at the Hemlock Park Bandshell. This event is in person and will feature stories, songs, and rhymes!
- The Friends of the Library are hosting a booksale every week at the Friday Farmer's Market. Stop by and buy a book to support the Library!
- Go to bigrapidslibrary.org for event details or to access online materials.



Meet and Greet continued.

year. These visits grew our love for the surrounding area, so my parents finally decided to make Big Rapids our home. After high school, I attended Ferris State University taking courses in the Business Administration.

I love the small town feel and security of Big Rapids. My husband, Jim and I have raised five children here and co-own Curtis Brothers Construction which serves the community. We now have four grandchildren and are expecting our fifth. The Big Rapids area is a great place to raise a family.



Becky and her family.

Probably the most important thing to me is my family but in my spare time I love to do quilting and other crafts. My quilts are very special to me, but I love to give them away as gifts. My husband and I also love to travel in our motor home, camp and spend several weeks in Florida each winter.

Currently, my husband and I are downsizing by building a new home closer to enjoy all the wonderful amenities Big Rapids has to offer. Our current home is now our youngest son's home to raise his family, but before we make our final move, we will be hosting our daughter's wedding on the property.

I feel very fortunate to live, work, and raise a family in such a wonderful community such as the Big Rapids area.



Manager's Newsletter

June 25, 2021

From the City Manager's Desk

Big Rapids Airfest

Saturday, June 26th, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Roben Hood Airport. Weather permitting, this weekend is a great opportunity to stop by the airport to have fun for the whole family. If you have questions regarding the event contact the airport staff at 231-796-5600. The airport is located at 21325 18 Mile Road, Big Rapids.



At the City Commission

On Monday, June 21, the City Commission held a virtual meeting which began with two study sessions, one an update about the Ives Drain project and another about virtual meetings.

The Commission also acted on many points of business including:

- An agreement with the Big Rapids Public Schools for the Hemlock Park Project,
- Several contracts and bid awards,
- Three amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, two of which were not approved,
- as well as several other items of 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 on Zoom.

Meet and Greet:

Lorraine James, City Commissioner

My name is Lorraine James, and I am currently a Big Rapids City Commissioner and the Mayor Pro-Tem. I was born and raised in the Kalamazoo area, and I came to Big Rapids in the fall of 1967 to attend Ferris State University. It is still noticeably clear in my mind when my father drove me to campus for orientation—I thought he was taking me into the wilderness! I graduated from Ferris with two degrees and completed a post-graduate degree at Central, then I worked at Ferris for 11 years.



Commissioner James at her home office.

In 1982, I was hired as the City Treasurer and I served the City in that capacity until July 2007. Previous Mayor Norm Mason is one of the people who interviewed me for the position. One question he asked – where do you see yourself in the future. My response – maybe your job someday. I thoroughly enjoyed my tenure as City Treasurer. I grew with the City as they benefited from my expertise. As the old saying goes – find something you love, and you will never work a day in your life. I ran for a successful seat on the City Commission in 2009. My term is up in November of this year.

By the Numbers: 06/07 - 06/20, 2021

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 1,954 Total Passengers
- 1,954 Demand Response Passengers
- 0 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 343 Adult Riders and 319 Child Riders
- 1,292 Senior or Disabled Riders

Fireworks on July 2, 2021

In honor of the Fourth of July, a fireworks celebration will take place at dusk on Friday, July 2nd at the Mecosta County Fairgrounds. There will also be food vendors on site at the Fairgrounds.

Parking for the event is at the Fairgrounds, with additional parking at the Roben-Hood Airport. Parking for this event is free, however donations will be accepted to help cover the cost of the fireworks event this year and for future years.

The fireworks celebration is hosted by the Big Rapids Lions Club now, having adopted the event from the long-time hosts the Big Rapids Jaycees. Contributions and assistance for the 2021 Fireworks come from the City of Big Rapids; Big Rapids Charter, Green Charter, Mecosta, Grant, and Colfax Townships; as well as Ferris State University, the Big Rapids Downtown Business Association, and the Mecosta County Fairgrounds.

Big Rapids Community Library

- The Library is open between 11AM-6PM Monday through Friday and 10AM-3PM on Saturday.
- The 2021 Summer Reading Program is happening now. Complete your reading goals before August 8 and win some great prizes for youth age groups and adults!



- Join Mr. Howard for Storytime at the Park on Fridays through August 6 at the Hemlock Park Bandshell.
- The Friends of the Library are hosting a booksale every week at the Friday Farmer's Market. Stop by and buy a book to support the Library!
- Go to bigrapidslibrary.org for event details or to access online materials.

Meet and Greet continued.

I met my practice spouse at Ferris; when we divorced – he left and I stayed. My husband Dean and I have been married 36 years this August. Our oldest son John Miedema owns Rogers Jewelers, and our daughter Leigh Ann Hill is a teacher in the Wayland School District. Robert James is a Major in the US Army and stationed in Texas. Larry James is currently out of the service and deciding on what his next step in life will be. Dean and I also adopted seven other children – one is deceased and we have lost contact with the others. When asked if I would do it all over again – absolutely.



Lorraine and Dean with some of their family at a holiday gathering.

I own an Income Tax Business now in it's 45th year. I have a client base of about 700 including many third-generation clients. My hobbies are my grandchildren, reading, baking, playing cards, and relaxing when I have time. Over the years I served as a volunteer on many City organizations and activities.

I hope that my 12 years on the City Commission has benefited the City of Big Rapids. I brought a deep knowledge of the workings of city government and a strong financial background. I have enjoyed working with other members of the Commission, City residents and employees new and old. The City has many wonderful, dedicated employees and I hope all current and future commissions appreciate all of them and the wonderful members of our community.

I have never regretted settling down in Big Rapids after college and raising children here. Big Rapids is one of the best kept secrets in Michigan. I absolutely have loved my role on the City Commission and will miss working with the other members of the Commission and the City staff.



Manager's Newsletter

July 9, 2021

From the Manager's Desk

Gypsy Moths

City Commissioners and City Staff have been asked many questions recently regarding the abundant presence of Gypsy Moths in Big Rapids in 2021. At the July 19th, City Commission meeting, there will be a presentation from Cheryl Nelson from the DNR to provide information to the community on Gypsy Moth life cycles, long term impact to defoliated trees, abatement options, unintended consequences of abatement etc.

If you have questions and/or concerns on this topic, please contact Mark Gifford, at 231-592-4058, or mgifford@cityofbr.org. Also, please attend the July 19th City Commission meeting, to be held virtually via Zoom.

Meet and Greet: Michael Livingston, Firefighter

Hello Big Rapids! I'm Michael Livingston, born and raised in Grand Rapids now preparing to relocate to the Big Rapids area where I've served for the past year as a Firefighter/EMT for the City of Big Rapids Department of Public Safety. My favorite things about the City of Big Rapids are the small town atmosphere as well as the beauty of the landscape and abundance of water. I love boating, kayaking, mountain biking, and camping so I believe this is the place where I'm meant to be.



I thoroughly enjoy the work I get to do in my job as a Firefighter/EMT because of the team element and the fact that there's so much variety in the types of calls we respond to. From urban or rural structure fire suppression operations to wild land fires, medical responses, water rescue, and traffic incidents I never know what the day will bring and that keeps the job interesting. There's also so many facets to this type of work and so many skills that require constant

At the City Commission

On Tuesday, July 6, the City Commission held a virtual meeting which began with the Mayor's annual State of the City Report. Then, the Commission heard two Study Sessions; one about the FSU SEWER Grant testing for COVID-19 and the other about the Public Safety Accreditation Process. The Commission also held a Public Hearing to close the CDBG Grant for the Ives Ave and State St water and street project.

The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

- A resolution to purchase 124 W. Bellevue St, and
- A resolution authorizing an Operating Grant for DART service.

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.

By the Numbers: 06/21-07/04/21

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 1,383 Total Passengers
- 1,383 Demand Response Passengers
- 0 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 255 Adult Riders and 203 Child Riders
- 925 Senior or Disabled Riders

Fellowship Hiring Opportunity

We're excited to announce the Big Rapids has an open fellowship position for 2021-22! Our fellow will work with our team for 15 months on projects that strengthen ties between our residents and improve the quality of life in Big Rapids. Our fellow will work on an Economic Development Strategy and establish a local Trails Committee, among other projects.

This fellowship is managed by the Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM) with support from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). CEDAM works to create vibrant, inclusive spaces for all people to live and work.

This is a full-time, salaried, 15-month position beginning October 2021. The deadline to apply is July 26. See the full job description and steps for how to apply here: cedamichigan.org/fellowship/

Big Rapids Community Library

- The Library is open between 11AM-6PM Monday through Friday and 10AM-3PM on Saturday.
- The 2021 Summer Reading Program is happening now. Complete your reading goals before August 8 and win some great prizes for youth age groups and adults!
- Join Mr. Howard for Storytime at the Park on Fridays through August 6 at the Hemlock Park Bandshell.
- The Friends of the Library are hosting a booksale every week at the Friday Farmer's Market. Stop by and buy a book to support the Library!
- Go to bigrapidslibrary.org for event details or to access online materials.



Meet and Greet continued

development and training so there's always room for improvement. I'm also currently studying to become a Certified Fire Investigator someday.



I'm passionate about personal and professional development as well as human performance optimization because I always want to become ever more capable in all aspects of my life. Furthermore, whenever possible I like to share any skills or knowledge I have with the people around me, so I maintain a small clientele for personal fitness coaching in my free time.



It is a pleasure and an honor to serve as a first responder in the City of Big Rapids and I look forward to what the future may hold for me here. Thanks for taking the time to read my bio and you can always reach me in an emergency by dialing 911.



Manager's Newsletter

July 23, 2021

From the City Manager's Desk

Construction Update

The 100 block of Locust is under construction and upon completion, the 200 and 300 blocks of Locust will begin. This project should be completed by mid-August. The gravel street paving program will begin after Locust; this year Speer Ave and Henderson St will be paved.

Bids were awarded to Crawford Construction to do the Hemlock Park Utility Project. Work should begin by mid-August and be completed in October.

Colburn Avenue paving and watermain project was awarded to Isabella Corp. and will begin in August and be completed by November.

If you have questions about any of these projects, please contact Mark Gifford, at 231-592-4058, or mgifford@cityofbr.org.

At the City Commission

On Monday, July 19, the City Commission held a virtual meeting which began with several special study sessions, including an update about gypsy moths in the area and an update about the Fourth of July fireworks event.

The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

- Several resolutions accepting bids for projects,
- Resolutions accepting agreements with the Patrol Officer's Unit and the Sergeant's Unit,
- A resolution authorizing a bid to purchase the Depot Property through a DNR auction,
- as well as several other items of 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 on Zoom.

Meet and Greet: Jennifer Cochran, City Commissioner

Hello! My name is Jennifer Cochran and I am currently serving as a Big Rapids City Commissioner.

I was born in Chicago, but grew up in northeast Ohio. I attended Indiana University, then worked for several years before returning to graduate school at Ohio State University, where I earned my Master's and Ph.D. An added benefit of my program: I also met and married my husband, Richard! Our jobs took us from Ohio to Vermont to New Jersey, before leading us here to Big Rapids in 1998, when Rich assumed his position as Dean of the Library at FSU and I went to work at Central Michigan University. Never having previously lived in a city this size, I didn't know what to expect when we first arrived here. What we found was a community of people who welcomed us warmly and offered us myriad opportunities to enjoy all this city has to offer.



By the Numbers: 07/05-07/18

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 1,862 Total Passengers
- 1,862 Demand Response Passengers
- 0 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 362 Adult Riders and 251 Child Riders
- 1,249 Senior or Disabled Riders

Survey about City Parks Usage

The City of Big Rapids' Parks and Recreation Department, along with the Community Development Department, are in the process of updating the 5-Year Parks and Recreation Plan and are asking the community to complete a survey.

The survey will provide valuable insight into how the parks are used and future park needs. The responses are confidential and will be used to take a resident-driven approach to guide policy decisions, prioritize park improvements, and identify unmet recreational needs in Big Rapids.

You can find the survey online at <https://cityofbr.seamlessdocs.com/f/ParkRecSurvey> or by contacting Emily Szymanski, Planning and Zoning Technician, at eszymanski@cityofbr.org or 231-592-4036.

Big Rapids Community Library

- The Library is open between 11AM-6PM Monday through Friday and 10AM-3PM on Saturday.
- The 2021 Summer Reading Program is happening now! Complete your reading goals before August 8 and win some great prizes for youth age groups and adults!
- Join Mr. Howard for Storytime at the Park on Fridays through August 6 at the Hemlock Park Bandshell. This event is in person and will feature stories, songs, and rhymes!
- The Friends of the Library are hosting a book sale every week at the Friday Farmer's Market. Stop by and buy a book to support the Library!
- Go to bigrapidslibrary.org for event details or to access online materials.



Meet and Greet continued.

When I retired, I turned my gaze to city government; I volunteered to serve on the Planning Commission, which was a great learning experience. In 2017, I was appointed to fill the City Commission seat vacated by now Mayor Hogenson, and was elected to retain that seat in 2019.

My job as a Commissioner is to work with the other Commissioners, the Mayor, and the City Manager to ensure that the city has the resources and materials it needs to run efficiently and effectively. We also review existing ordinances or propose new ones we feel are needed to respond to changing times and circumstances. Another important aspect of my job is representing citizens' concerns to city staff and working with them toward possible solutions. Recently, we've embarked on two important initiatives designed to strengthen our connections to the community: Community Outreach and the Big Rapids Social Equity Initiative. I am very excited to participate in these, because the more we understand how things work, the better we come to know each other, the greater the opportunities we will have to create stronger government and an even more inclusive, safe, and welcoming community for all who reside here.



Commissioner Cochran (left), with Commissioner Andrews and Terry Ventocilla, at a meeting of the Big Rapids Lions' Club.

After having lived in so many other places, Rich and I have found in Big Rapids a place we are proud to call home, a place where people come together to meet need wherever it exists, a place it is my privilege to serve!



Manager's Newsletter

August 20, 2021

From the City Manager's Desk

Save the Date - Meet the Candidates

On September 16th, at 6:30PM, in the Community Room at the Public Safety building, there will be a forum for the candidates running in the November City election. There are two running for Mayor (Jennifer Cochran and Fred Guenther) and three running for two open City Commissioner seats (Jon Eppley, Amanda Johnson, and Karen Simmon).

This a great opportunity for community members to get to know the candidates and better understand their vision for the City. The candidates will answer a set of prepared questions and then there will be a time for questions from the audience. The session will be moderated by former Mayor Mark Warba.

Questions? Contact Mark Gifford, at 231-592-4058, or mgifford@cityofbr.org.

At the City Commission

On Monday, August 16, the City Commission held a virtual meeting which began with a study session, an update on Tax Appeals.

The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

- A resolution to have a beer tent at Fall Fest,
- Two updated City Staff policies,
- Awarding a bid to purchase two new All-Wheel-Drive, 4-Door Utility Police Vehicles,
- A resolution declaring a Local State of Emergency through December 31, 2021 to allow for continued virtual public meetings,
- as well as several other items of 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 on Zoom.

Meet and Greet:

Jon Eppley, City Commissioner

The slogan on the banners around town reads: "Big Rapids, You'll Love It Here!" It might be a catchy slogan, but it's true! I do love it here! This is a wonderful town and is the place I've lived longest outside of my childhood home.



I grew up in Port Huron, about five blocks from the shores of Lake Huron. Summers were spent on the water swimming, sailing, motor boating, on jet skis, ... you name it. Though I do miss the proximity to one of the largest lakes in the world, I've found something better: A place to call home.

When I moved to Big Rapids in 2010, I planned to gain a couple years' experience as a reporter at the Pioneer and move to a larger market closer to family. Just as I was approaching one year in Big Rapids, something happened that forever changed me. I met someone who is both figuratively and literally a rock star: Megan (Welborn) Eppley.

I saw her band, Your Mom, perform at the Big Rapids Community Library benefit at the Sawmill Saloon. I knew I had to do a story on the band. After several weeks of interviewing, photo shoots, and writing,

By the Numbers: 08/02 - 08/15

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 1,968 Total Passengers
- 1,968 Demand Response Passengers
- 0 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 322 Adult Riders and 278 Child Riders
- 1,368 Senior or Disabled Riders

City Hall and DART Closed for Labor Day

Both City Hall and Dial-A-Ride Transit will be closed on Monday, September 6, 2021 in honor of the Labor Day holiday.

The City Commission meeting will be moved to Tuesday, September 7, 2021 at 6:30PM due to the Monday holiday closure. This meeting will be held remotely via Zoom. Check the City website, cityofbr.org, for more information.

Trash, yard waste, and recycling, will be picked up on Tuesday, September 7, 2021.



Big Rapids Community Library

- The Library is open between 11AM-6PM Monday through Friday and 10AM-3PM on Saturday.
- The 2021 Summer Reading Program has ended. Congrats to all the finishers and prize winners!
- "Storytime with Mr. Howard" returns on September 8th, in person at the Library, on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:00AM to 10:45AM
- "Stories on Saturdays" is a new Family Storytime which will happen on the second Saturday of each month from 10:00 to 10:45AM at the Library.
- Go to bigrapidslibrary.org for to learn about the many new programs for all age groups or to access online materials.



Meet and Greet continued.

the story published in fall 2011. I got to know Megan during those few weeks, and we started dating shortly thereafter. Ten years later, we are still together and just as in love. Together, we have three children Alex (12), Eleanor (2015) and Madeline (4).



Jon with his family.

Working as a reporter, I felt there was this imaginary line that prevented me from running for public office. I was there to report, not to be part of the story.

I left the newspaper business in December 2016, about 11 months before the next Big Rapids City Commission election. The timing was right. In November 2017, you elected me to my first term on the Commission. Thank you! (I am up for reelection this November, and hope you support me on election day!)

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on the commission so far. Several projects that have taken place while I've been on the Commission include the purchase of a new firetruck, expanding sidewalks and paved streets within city limits, supporting the implementation of the Ives Drain, and more! Other goals I'd like to see come to fruition include redevelopment of the old train depot and the former Hanchett site.

In addition to serving as city commissioner, I also chair the Big Rapids Social Equity Initiative's Community Engagement Pillar – I am very proud of the work the BRSEI is doing! Throughout the years, I also have been a member of the Muskegon River Safety Committee, the Mecosta County Area Chamber of Commerce's Ambassador Club, the Big Rapids Jaycees, and the Big Rapids Salvation Army Advisory Board.

Big Rapids truly is a great place to live, work, and play. I have had many great adventures in Big Rapids, and look forward to many more! Thank you for allowing me to serve you on the City Commission!



Manager's Newsletter

September 10, 2021

From the Manager's Desk

Colburn Avenue Construction

Mobilization for construction on Colburn Avenue began on Tuesday, September 7, 2021. The contractor, Isabella Corporation, is starting with the exploration of water services lines to determine if they need to be replaced. Watermain replacement will begin in the next few weeks. The final portion of the project is the replacement of the road. The road will be reduced from four lanes to three lanes with bike lanes. The project will be completed by November 5, 2021, weather permitting.

If you have questions regarding the Colburn Avenue Project, please contact Mark Gifford, at 231-592-4058, or mgifford@cityofbr.org.

At the City Commission

On Tuesday, September 7, the City Commission held a virtual meeting which began with one Study Session - an update about the Act 345 Retirement Program.

The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

- Authorizing acceptance of several grant awards (for DART, for tree planting, and for the Library),
- Accepting two bids for Public Works repairs,
- A resolution declaring City-owned property on W. Madison Ave, west of Highlandview Cemetery, as surplus property, and
- A resolution authorizing a listing agreement for the sale of vacant property on 18 Mile Rd.

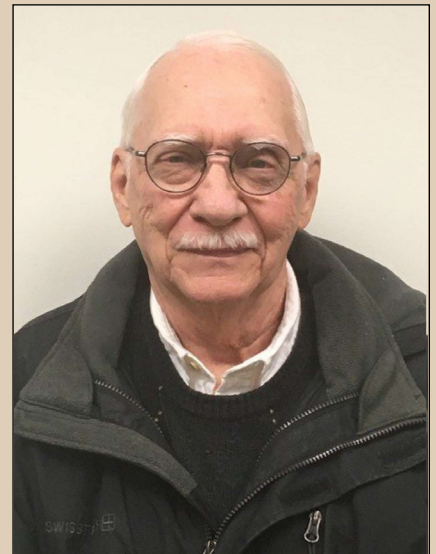
Commission meetings are always open to the public. You are welcome to join on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month at 6:30 PM on Zoom. Visit the City's website, cityofbr.org, for Agendas, login information, and past meeting Minutes.

Meet and Greet:

Robert Andrews, City Commissioner

Hello, my name is Robert J. Andrews and this November I will have served two years as your City Commissioner.

I was born and raised in Big Rapids. Grandfather Walter Andrews purchased the family home site, 214 Woodward Ave, in 1917. My father was a linotype operator at the Pioneer, Cadillac Evening News, Ludington Paper, and Shelly News for 50+ years. My mother boarded



and roomed college students for years. She too was a member of community service clubs and active in her church.

My brother, Morris, and sister, Kay, were a teacher and a registered nurse. All of us were raised to be kind to others, to be honest, and to be hard workers!

I graduated from BRHS in College Prep. I was awarded three Varsity Letters in Track and two in Football. In addition, I was All Conference First Team two years and All State twice in Football. I loved to play sports! In 2010 it was my honor to enter the Mecosta County Sports Hall of Fame.

I graduated in Education from MSU in 1964; EMU MA degree in Special Education in 1968 and from MSU in

Meet the Candidates

On Thursday, September 16 at 6:30PM at the Public Safety Building (435 N. Michigan Ave), both Candidates running for Mayor and all three Candidates running for two open City Commissioner positions will be at a Public Forum. Meet the Candidates and hear their positions on local issues before you vote in the November 2 election.

Grant to Plant new Street Trees

The City of Big Rapids is one of 26 communities across Michigan to share \$92,500 in grant funds to plant trees. The trees, to be planted along streets and in public spaces, come from a program sponsored by the DTE Energy Foundation and administered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and nonprofit ReLeaf Michigan. The City received the maximum grant award of \$4,000 to plant 27 trees throughout the community.



Big Rapids Community Library

- The Library is open between 11AM-6PM Monday through Friday and 10AM-3PM on Saturday.
- "Storytime with Mr. Howard" has returned as of September 8th, in person at the Library, on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:00AM to 10:45AM
- "Stories on Saturdays" is a new Family Storytime which will happen on the second Saturday of each month from 10:00 to 10:45AM at the Library.
- The Friends of the Library's Chicken Barbeque Fundraiser is back! Join us on September 25 between 4PM and 7PM at the Sawmill Saloon for a delicious \$10 dinner among friends.
- Go to bigrapidslibrary.org for event details or to access online materials.



Meet and Greet continued

Educational Specialist in 1982 stressing Curriculum and Career Education.

While employed I was very active in the Jaycees and church committees. While retiring, I have been very involved with the BRHS Alumni Association. In addition, since 2019 I have sang with the "Elm St. Boys" and the regular choir at First United Methodist Church.



Commissioner Andrews at the FSU Legislative Luncheon in Lansing in February 2020.

As a Commissioner it has been my honor to meet many staff members and employees that enjoy and take pride in their work. I attempt to meet our citizens for the feeling regarding living here. Such follow up includes seniors, students, employers, etc.

I keep in touch with our City Manager weekly to maintain an awareness of issues, concerns, community needs, and projects. I have always taken pride in BR: schools, parks, housing status; library; employment outlook; and needs of the general public.

Thank you for your efforts and contributions to our community.

By the Numbers: 08/23-09/05/21

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 3,333 Total Passengers
- 2,925 Demand Response Passengers
- 408 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 529 Adult Riders and 518 Child Riders
- 1,878 Senior or Disabled Riders



Manager's Newsletter

September 24, 2021

From the City Manager's Desk

Library Literacy Park Update

Construction on the Literacy Park at Anna Howard Shaw Memorial Park next to the Library is progressing very well. The playground equipment, walkways and signage are installed. There is a slight delay on the light poles, benches, and trash receptacles, but they will be installed shortly. The public is able to use the facility prior to 100% completion. There will be formal ribbon cutting/grand opening of the park scheduled by Spring 2022

If you have questions regarding the Library Literacy Park, please contact Mark Gifford, at 231-592-4058, or mgifford@cityofbr.org.



At the City Commission

On Monday, September 20, the City Commission held a virtual meeting which began with the introduction of Police Officers Thomas Tanner and Heather Butts. Study sessions including an update about the Community Development Department and holding the November 8 meeting in person.

The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

- A resolution for Water Plant Clarifier Inspections,
- A listing agreement for City-owned property on W Madison St near the cemetery,
- and appointments to boards and commissions,
- as well as other items of 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 on Zoom.

Meet and Greet:

A.J. Herendeen

Operator at the Water Plant

Hello! My name is A.J. Herendeen and I have been a water plant operator at the City of Big Rapids for the past two years. I was born and raised with my two sisters and brother in Warsaw Indiana and attended Indiana University for my undergraduate degree. Although I will always be a Hoosier at heart my wife and I fell in love with the state of Michigan when we moved to Big Rapids four years ago for her to attend optometry school at Ferris State University. If I am not at work, you will most likely find me out fishing. Whether it be on a lake or in a river if it swims, I am out trying to catch it. The access to the many lakes and rivers around the area must be my favorite part about living in Big Rapids.



Write-in Deadline for Mayor and City Commissioner

The November 2nd election is fast approaching, but City residents can still run for a position as Mayor or City Commissioner as a Write-In candidate.

Interested people must be residents of the city for at least one-year, registered voters, citizens of the U.S., and not in default to the City. A declaration of intent must be filed by 4:00 p.m. on October 22, 2021.

Forms must be picked up and submitted to the Clerk's Office in City Hall.

Vote for One

☐ Candidate 1

☐ Candidate 2

☒ **Candidate 3**
OR Write-in on line above

Meet and Greet continued.

There is always something to do here at the water plant. There are four operators at our plant, and we all work together to make sure Big Rapids has all the fresh drinking water it needs. My favorite aspect of working here would have to be in the laboratory. I worked in many biology and chemistry labs while in college, so I already knew I enjoyed working in that type of environment. We run daily tests to make sure mineral concentrations and chemical dosages are right where they need to be, this assures we deliver water of the highest standards to all our customers. We recently drained and cleaned both our one million and half million-gallon reservoirs at the water plant to have them repainted. If you have not been down the Riverwalk this summer, I suggest you walk on by the water plant and check out the newly painted tanks.



Water Plant reservoirs being repainted.

If I had to choose one word to describe our water plant, it would be "teamwork". It requires all of us here at the water plant to keep fresh water coming to our customers taps three hundred sixty-five days a year. I would like to thank all the wonderful employees at the City of Big Rapids who have made me feel welcome over the past two years. It is a pleasure to work for and serve the wonderful city of Big Rapids.

Dial-a-Ride Service: 09/06-09/19

- 2,931 Total Passengers
- 2,124 Demand Response Passengers
- 807 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 369 Adult Riders and 495 Child Riders
- 1,260 Senior or Disabled Riders

Big Rapids Community Library

- The Library is open between 11AM-6PM Monday through Friday and 10AM-3PM on Saturday.
- Programming is back at the Library. All programs, except or the Scavenger Hunt, require registration. To register, call the Library at 231-796-5234 or email Sarah at swelch@bigrapidslibrary.org. Weather permitting, programs are happening outside in the Park.
- The Bookmark Contest ends on September 25th, after which the winning bookmarks will be selected and printed.
- Join Mr. Howard for Storytime at the Library on Mondays and Wednesdays at 10AM in the Community Room now through Dec 22. Join in for stories, songs, arts, and crafts!
- The Library has a new type of take-home kit available: Murder Mystery Kits! Each month, on the third Monday, a new kit filled with witness statements, clues, suspect files, and more can be picked up until supplies run out. This month: a veterinary assistant has been murdered at the zoo -- help the detectives find the killer!
- Go to bigrapidslibrary.org for event details or to access online materials.



Big Rapids Community Library



Manager's Newsletter

October 8, 2021

From the Public Works Director's Desk

Fall Tree Planting Program

The fall tree planting program will be taking place in the next few weeks. The City received grant funds from Consumers Energy and DTE to assist with costs for approximately 50 trees. All recipients will receive notification that their right-of-way has been selected for the program.

If you have not been notified that a new tree will be planted for you but you have interest in participating, there is still time to get a tree this season. To coordinate a tree to be planted in the right-of-way, residents can contact the Department of Public Works at 231-592-4015. The cost is \$75.00 per tree. A variety of species of trees can be selected to be planted and staked. As part of the tree planting program, Public Works will provide tree bags for two years and will water the tree to ensure it grows well.

At the City Commission

On Monday, October 4, the City Commission held a virtual meeting which began with a study session about a new Ordinance to regulate e-scooters.

The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

- Two resolutions to install new street lights at Locust St. and S State St.,
- Authorizing a grant from Consumers Energy for tree planting,
- A resolution in support of completing the paving of the White Pine State Trail,
- as well as several other items of 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 on Zoom.

Meet and Greet:

Dave Vogel, Firefighter/EMT

Hello, my name is Dave Vogel. I have worked for The City of Big Rapids since May of 2019 as a full-time Firefighter/EMT. I was born and raised in Barryton on the East side of the county where I continue to live with my wife of 9 years, Amanda, and our two children Max, who is 8, and Maci, who is 6.



I attended Chippewa Hills and graduated in 2004. After graduating I went to work building woodchippers and worked in all areas through out the process. I also joined the Barryton Community Fire Department that is a paid-on call department in 2004 and where I continue to serve as the Assistant Chief. After the plant I worked at got bought out in 2015 I went to work at Sackett Potatoes as an operator and fabricator, where I continued until I started here.

The best part about my job is that every day is different. I could go from crossing guard to a structure fire to repairing an apparatus then a medical call all in a few hours. I believe another great aspect of my job is having the opportunity to play a key role helping someone in need on their worst day. As well as my normal Firefighter duties, I am a CPR instructor and

Farmer's Market 2021 Ending Soon

The Big Rapids Farmer's Market, which meets in front of City Hall is winding down for the season. The final Tuesday market was on September 28th. Friday markets, from 8:00AM to 2:00PM, will continue through October 29th.

Questions? Contact Public Works at 231-592-4015.

Important Voter Information!

Please note a change in your polling location for the NOVEMBER 2, 2021, ELECTION.

All registered City voters will vote at the following Polling Location: Big Rapids City Hall
226 N. Michigan Avenue
Big Rapids, MI 49307.

Your precinct at this location will be open for voting from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM. If you have any questions, please contact your local City Clerk at 231-592-4020. Absentee ballots may be obtained from your local clerk. All registered voters will be receiving notification by mail of this polling location change.

Big Rapids Community Library

- The Library is open from 11AM-6PM Monday through Friday and 10AM-3PM on Saturday.
- Paranormal University: Ghost Hunting 101. Join the BRCL on Friday, October 22nd at 6:00PM to learn the basics of ghost hunting from our friends at the Michigan Area Paranormal Investigative Team (MAPIT).
- Join Mr. Howard for Storytime at the Library on Mondays and Wednesday from 10AM at the Anna Howard Shaw Memorial Park next to the Library, now through Dec. 22. Join in for stories, songs, arts, and crafts!
- "Stories on Saturdays" is a new Family Storytime which will happen on the second Saturday of each month from 10:00 to 10:45AM at the Library.
- Go to bigrapidslibrary.org for to learn about the many new programs for all age groups or to access online materials.



Meet and Greet continued.

I am currently working on becoming a Certified Fire Instructor.

I believe that family is truly the most important thing in life so most of my hobbies are spent enjoying time with them. In the summers we spend most of our time camping somewhere, from the upper peninsula to all over the lower peninsula. Another hobby we enjoy as a family are our children's sporting events. Max has been playing football and baseball. Maci has been playing t-ball, gymnastics, and cheerleading. The rest of my time is spent finishing up things at our new home that we just built last winter.



Dave with his family.

The group of people that I get to work with have made working here a pleasure and with spending 1/3 of our lives together they are like a family to me as well. My wife and I enjoy the small-town atmosphere of Big Rapids. A few times a summer we come to town as a family to bike on the path along the river.

By the Numbers: 09/20 - 10/03

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 2,662 Total Passengers
- 1,765 Demand Response Passengers
- 897 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 280 Adult Riders and 411 Child Riders
- 1,074 Senior or Disabled Riders



Manager's Newsletter

November 05, 2021

From the Public Works Director's Desk

Construction Season Updates

As the fall season is ending, many of the City construction projects are near completion. Henderson Street was selected to be part of the gravel street program and has been paved with a new watermain installed for those residents. Colburn Avenue watermain has been installed and Isabella Corp. will be paving the road early next week; the road is expected to be open late next week. Another project this year is the Lead Service Line Replacement Program. Gerber Construction has been working with the City and residents to remove and replace galvanized service lines, which the City will plan to begin again next spring. Each improvement has been successful.

Meet and Greet:

Lorne Juday, Police Officer

Hi! My name is Lorne Juday. I have been a police officer for the City of Big Rapids since February of 2015. I grew up and attended high school in Marshall, Michigan, where I played soccer, earned my blackbelt in Tae Kwon Do, was the drum major of the marching band, and most importantly, met my wife, Shallon. I moved to Big Rapids in 2008 to attend FSU, where I earned my Bachelor's in Criminal Justice. Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my wife and kids, working on construction projects around the house, and planning our upcoming house build.



My position is through the Department of Public Safety, where I am a patrol officer. I was the School Resource Officer for 5 years, and I have also been involved with teaching various disciplines including Firearms, CPR, First Aid, Bleeding Control and Active Shooter Response. The part of my job I enjoy the most is that my daily responsibilities are always different and highly variable. During a single shift, I could

Municipal Election Results

The City Commission meeting was moved from November 1 to November 8, due to the Municipal Election held on November 2. The new Mayor and Commissioners will be sworn in at the November 8 meeting. 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. Visit the City's website, cityofbr.org, for Agendas, meeting information, and past meeting Minutes.

The results of the November 2, 2021 Election are as follows:

Mayor	Fred Guenther	456
	Jennifer Cochran	409
City Commissioner	Jonathan Eppley	481
	Karen Simmon	453
	Amanda Johnson	446

Thank you to all who ran and all who voted for making this a good local election.

By the Numbers: 10/18-10/31/21

Dial-a-Ride Service

- 3,293 Total Passengers
- 2,356 Demand Response Passengers
- 937 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 356 Adult Riders and 770 Child Riders
- 1,230 Senior or Disabled Riders

2021 Festival of the Lights Parade

After missing last year, the Big Rapids Downtown Business Association is once again hosting the Festival of the Lights Parade on Saturday, November 20th starting at 6PM. This free-to-attend event will feature the parade, tree lighting, live reindeer, and a special visit from Santa, among other activities.

There is still time to register your organization to participate in the Parade. There is a \$10 fee for entries and all entries must be lighted. Prizes will be awarded for the Most Creative, Most Lights, Largest Group, and Best Winter/Christmas Scene parade entries.

Visit the DBA website, downtownbigrapids.com to learn more or download the entry form.



Meet and Greet continued

handle a simple neighbor dispute, a multiple vehicle crash, serious assault, interrogate a suspect, and help a kid fix his bike, while on the next day there will be completely different calls for service.



Officer Juday as the School Resource Officer in 2016.

I really enjoy working and living in the Big Rapids area. The community atmosphere is a great place to raise a family, and the outdoor recreation opportunities are a big draw as well. The river, lakes, trails, and parks mean there is always something to do, either with the kids or by myself. My hometown of Marshall is a similar size to Big Rapids, but I chose to stick around up here because it is so beautiful, especially in the fall! My family has spent many hours simply jumping in the car and going for a drive, looking at colors and letting the kids pick "Left, right or straight?" at each new intersection. I have gotten to know many great people during my time living in the area, and really consider this to be my "new" hometown. It is an honor to be a part of keeping the city I live in a great and safe community.



Officer Juday with his wife Shallon.

Big Rapids Community Library

- The Library is open between 11AM-6PM Monday through Friday and 10AM-3PM on Saturday.
- November Take & Make kits are available now on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Your library card gives you access to much more than the materials at the BRCL. Check into the many digital resources available, including the Libby app for eBooks and audiobooks and Kanopy for streaming videos.
- Get excited for the Winter Reading Challenge for ages 18 and up, running from December 13 to February 7. Details coming soon.
- Go to bigrapidslibrary.org for event details or to access online materials.



Big Rapids Community Library



Manager's Newsletter

December 10, 2021

From the City Manager's Desk

Deer Removal

The City will be undertaking the removal of approximately 25 deer from within the City in January 2022. USDA Wildlife Services coordinates and executes the removal process, and all of the deer are donated to the Sportsman Against Hunger program. Locations include the neighborhood around the Hospital and the neighborhood between Woodward and Fuller Avenues. Specific dates are not known at this time, but immediately adjacent property owners will be informed of all details.

If you have questions regarding the Deer Removal, please contact Mark Gifford, at 231-592-4058, or mgifford@cityofbr.org.

At the City Commission

On Monday, December 6, the City Commission held a hybrid meeting which began with two Study Sessions including an update about the Ives Drain from County Drain Commissioner Karla Miller and an update about the 2022 User Charge report.

The Commission also acted on several points of business including:

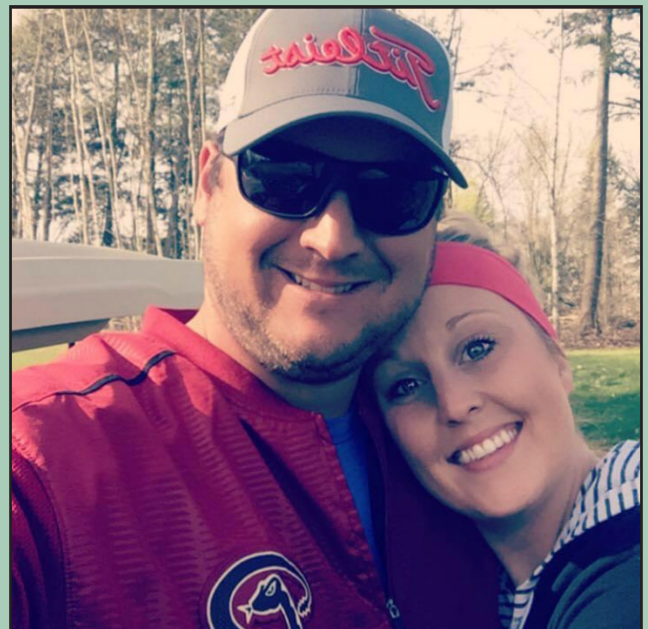
- Appointing Commissioner Eppley as Mayor Pro Tem for this Commission term,
- Authorizing changes to street lighting in front of Brookside Elementary School,
- Naming the land purchased from the DNR near the White Pine Trail as "Depot Park",
- and authorizing a deer cull,
- as well as other items of 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 in person or on Zoom.

Meet and Greet: Dan Horan Heavy Equipment Operator with Public Works

Hello, my name is Dan Horan. I am a Heavy Equipment Operator for the Department of Public Works and began this position in October of 2018. I also worked as a Seasonal Laborer for the City from 2012-2015. I am a Big Rapids native and both my paternal and maternal families are deeply rooted, spanning many generations, in Big Rapids. I attended St. Mary Catholic School from Kindergarten through 8th grade and graduated from Big Rapids High School in 2004.

I played baseball from the age of three through my senior year. After graduating from high school, I coached the Big Rapids High School Baseball team as the Assistant Coach to Head Coach Ben Oleson for 10 years. Through those years I volunteered at many different events, such as doing valet for Friends



Dan with his wife.

Dial-a-Ride Service: 11/15-12/05

- 4,667 Total Passengers
- 3,437 Demand Response Passengers
- 1,230 Ferris Shuttle Riders
- 689 Adult Riders and 912 Child Riders
- 1,836 Senior or Disabled Riders

City Hall Closures during Holidays

Big Rapids City Hall will be closed on Thursday and Friday, December 23 and 24 before the Christmas Day holiday.

City Hall will also be closed on Thursday and Friday, December 30 and 31 before the New Years holiday.

There will be no changes to the regular trash and recycling pick ups on Mondays.



Big Rapids Community Library

- The Library is open between 11AM-6PM Monday through Friday and 10AM-3PM on Saturday.
- The Library will be closed on December 24-25 for the Christmas holiday and on December 31-January 1 for the New Year's holiday.
- December Take & Make kits are available now until supplies run out. This month's kit includes painting supplies to make Mini-Art.
- The Gingerbread Man Decorating Contest is going on now until December 18. Stop by the Library Circulation desk for details and templates.
- Do you love reading but have trouble getting around town? The Library's Homebound Program will deliver books to you! Contact the Library to learn more and sign up.
- Go to bigrapidslibrary.org for event details or to access online materials.



Big Rapids Community Library

Meet and Greet continued.

of Ferris, Chamber of Commerce, and the St. Mary's Gala. I also played in many of the Old Timers' softball games. I have been on the Big Rapids Men's Softball Association Board for 15 years, serving one of those years as the Head Umpire.

Outside of work, I enjoy getting together with my friends and family, spending time with my awesome wife, attending Ferris Football games, golfing, and playing slow pitch softball.

Working in the Department of Public Works, we have many different job duties. Some of these duties, depending on the season, include leaf pick up, sidewalk repairs, sewers, water mains, snow removal, street signs, street lights, and painting streets and parking lots. I enjoy having such a wide variety of work and never having two days that are the same. One day we could be picking up leaves and then the next plowing snow.

I am so fortunate to work for the City and am proud to be part of the everyday operations that go into taking care of Big Rapids. Being from here and getting to see the way things work from the other side in pretty incredible and rewarding.

Big Rapids to Receive Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant

The City of Big Rapids' application to the DNR Land and Water Conservation Fund grant program was recommended for funding this week along with 21 other projects in Michigan. The Land and Water Conservation Fund is supported by revenues from federal gas and oil development from the Gulf of Mexico. Project recommendations must be approved by the federal National Park Service.

The Big Rapids project the grant will help support is the Splash Pad component of the Hemlock Park Improvement Project. The grant award amount is \$238,600.

