



The City of Billings, Missouri

www.billingsmo.com

Jan—March 2021

Greetings,

Happy New Year to one and all as we begin the year 2021. I think we all desire that the new year will bring about a greater sense of normalcy and predictability. This past year has been a challenging one on many levels. The **Covid-19 pandemic** has topped the list. We are all hopeful that this scourge will subside and we can move beyond its grip on our lives and our way of life.

Nonetheless, we have challenging days ahead as we continue to be vigilant in doing all that we can to contain this deadly virus until the effectiveness of the mass vaccination effort can be achieved. Members of the Board of Aldermen and I urge us all to **continue to take the necessary and relatively simple steps** to protect one another while we await the virus' hopeful demise.

I want to **thank all those** who made the special efforts to make the Christmas season as festive and caring as it has been, even in the midst of limitations and restrictions. You have lightened many hearts and brought cheer and special acts of generosity to our community. A special thank you to the **Neighborhood Watch folks** for the special decorations to the "green zone" in front of the mural. You all made our community proud.

The members of your **Board of Aldermen** have had several marathon meetings of late as decisions regarding the Billings community and its future have been made. We have another tight financial year ahead of us in 2021. The budget adopted at the Board's December meeting bears this out. I want to thank the members of the Board of Aldermen for enduring long meetings and making difficult decisions that are required to keep city government working in Billings.

The members of the Board join me paying special tribute to the handful of city employees who are so essential to our community and rarely get the recognition that they deserve. Superintendent of public utilities **Randy Poindexter** and his two able assistants (who also make up our street department), **Tyler Essick** and **Braden Ray**, are a great team together, serving our town in ways which many are not even aware. Our City Hall staff, Clerk/Treasurer **Chris Hopkins**, Water Clerk and receptionist **Gail Steinert** and part-timers **Janice Bluebaum** and **Jan Cox**, all are deeply dedicated to Billings and keep on top of all the administrative tasks at hand. **Terry Danley**, our code inspector has taken a real and personal interest in this community and contributes many extra benefits to us. Last but not least at all are our Police **Chief Bruce Belin** and officers **Justin Braden** and **Ashley Dean** who literally put their lives on the line for us every shift they work, and who are dedicated to serving us with the best principles of "community policing." Many of you are aware that Justin Braden is on leave recovering from an injury resulting from his efforts in saving a person's life.

Before long **water line improvements** will be underway in town. These projects are included in the second phase of a three phase major water and waste water system upgrades. The upgrades, repairs and service expansion efforts have been necessary to make sure we maintain these vital services to the community.

In 2016 the voters approved by public vote a **\$5,545,000 revenue bond** to assure that the needed repairs could be financed and completed. This effort has had a big and expensive price tag and water and sewer rates have had to be increased along the way to make sure the bonds could be paid off as pledged. These rate increases have not been easy on the limited number of customers who make up our local water and sewer rate base.

The **Board has tried diligently** to keep the required rate increases as low as possible to meet the financial obligations of the bond issue. Last year the Board approved rate increases of 3% for water and waste water services. This was down significantly from approved rate increases during the previous three years. In order to meet the financial requirements of the Phase 2 projects the Board concluded that rate increases for 2021 would require a 4% increase. Monthly **trash collection fees** will not increase in 2021. Please keep in mind that we have recycling options in Billings that can help reduce, for some significantly, the amount of trash collected. Recycling bins are available without cost. Please call City Hall to request one or more recycling bins.

A **hopeful sign** in our goal to stabilize water and sewer rates is the number of new homes under construction and the plan for more in the months ahead. Billings is experiencing a long anticipated growth spurt and among other things this growth spurt will increase the number of utility customers and thereby spread the bond issue costs over a growing number of customers.

We need to note that the **improvements** being made with the bond financing **have not** been triggered by the new homes being built. These are costs we would incur regardless. However the new construction will help pay for the bond funded improvements.

There are **nine new homes** currently under construction in Phase 2 of the Whispering Heights Subdivision and final plans for the third and final phase of Whispering Height has gained Board approval with an additional 22 new home sites. Further, there are **two possible new subdivisions** being considered by developers. There are also new homes planned on empty lots within the older areas in the community.

We **should emphasize** that all of the basic and initial infrastructure costs tied to these development plans are paid for by the developers.

Billings City Park News

One of several planned **improvements to the City Park** is currently underway and will soon be finished and useable. This initial improvement is a large concrete pad which will be used as **half court basketball court** when a goal, special surfacing and striping are added.

The addition of a half court basketball court has been a hope of the Park Board in recent years and many in the community have contributed to this project. The completion of this project now without further delay has been made possible through a significant matching contribution from the **Lew and Carol Rauch Perpetual Trust** managed by the Community Foundation of the Ozarks.

Lew and Carol Rauch also have created **two special funds** in the name of the Billings City Park. One is a Trust Fund from which annual proceeds will be available to help support the park and its operations financially. This second special fund is intended to be used by the Park Board in conversation with the donors for special park capital improvements. The initial goal is that this fund will be available for a **grant application** which would match dollar-for-dollar all cash and in-kind contributions toward special improvements for the park.

The Park Board will be the applicant for this matching grant from **Land and Water Conservation Fund** administered by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. Staff members of the Southwest Missouri Council of Governments, of which Billings is a member, are assisting in the application process.

If the grant application is successful the **park will add several improvements**. Anticipated improvements could include large play equipment additions for children from ages 2 -5, and for children ages 5-12; the upgrading of what has served as the girls softball facility, including a new scoreboard; and the addition of a full scale tennis court, along with other possible projects.

Lew Rauch is a **1966 graduate** of the Billings High School. After high school Lew continued his educational pursuits and eventually was awarded a Doctor of Science degree with which he established a highly successful consulting and technical services firm specializing in calibration services.

In addition to the generous contributions to the Billings City Park, Lew and Carol Rauch through their Perpetual Trust are making significant **contributions to the Billings R-IV School District**. The Billings community is deeply appreciative to Lew and Carol for their lasting gifts to Lew's hometown.

City Hall Operating Hours

City Hall is staffed full time Monday through Friday from 8-12 and 1-5, but for the foreseeable future and until the threat of the Covid-19 virus subsides, the offices will be of limited access during business hours.

Almost all business can be processed through the drive thru window, which is actively attended every afternoon, M-F from 1:15 to 5:00. If you need assistance in the morning just call the office and we will be glad to meet you at the drive thru.

If your business needs to be done in the office you can make arrangements by calling and setting up an appointment. All visitors inside the building are kindly asked to wear a mask.

In your service,

David Rauch

Mayor



The City of Billings would like to announce that you can purchase a sign at half the cost and the city will install it at the best location and view to keep our community children safe at play. If you are interested in one of these on your street please call 744-2581 and we can start the process.

The cost will depend on if a signpost is required for installation. Citizen cost would be around \$25-\$30.

Billings Water/Sewer Rates for 2021

Residential:

Water -	
0 - 2,000 gallons	\$24.80
Over 2,000 gallons	\$.52 per 100 gallons
Sewer:	
0 - 2,000 gallons	\$27.60
Over 2,000 gallons	\$ 1.207 per 100 gallons

Commercial:

Water -	
0 - 1,000 gallons	\$24.80
Over 1,000 gallons	\$.5858 per 100 gallons
Sewer:	
0 - 1,000 gallons	\$27.60
Over 1,000 gallons	\$ 1.5213 per 100 gallons

JANUARY

7 Trash Day
7 P and Z Meeting....7pm
12 Library Board Meeting...6:30pm
13 Park Board Meeting...6:30pm
14 Trash Day and Recycle Day
15 *Water Bill Due*
21 Trash Day
21 Board of Aldermen Meeting ...7pm
28 Trash Day

FEBRUARY

4 Trash
4 P and Z Meeting 7PM
9 Library Board Meeting...6:30pm
10 Park Board Meeting...6:30pm
11 Trash and Recycle Day
15 *Water Bill Due*
18 Trash Day
18 Board of Aldermen Meeting ..7pm
25 Trash Day

MARCH

4 Trash Day and Recycle Day
4 P and Z Meeting....7pm
9 Library Board Meeting...6:30pm
10 Park Board Meeting...6:30pm
11 Trash and Recycle Day
15 *Water Bill Due*
18 Board of Aldermen Meeting ..7pm
18 Trash Day
25 Trash Day