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NEWS & Views



3600 Kirchoff Road . Rolling Meadows, IL 60008 . 847-394-8500 . www.cityrm.org

January-February 2010

2010 Budget's Service Reductions Reflect Current Economic Realities

The 2010 budget approved by City Council in December combines cutbacks in many non-emergency services with higher fees, reflecting the stark economic reality facing municipalities across the country, Finance Director Jim Egeberg reports.

"While we may be seeing the beginnings of a national recovery, this has not had an impact on current revenues," he explains. Faced with a combination of lower revenues and increasing costs, City officials had to make some painful decisions in finding the most effective ways to maintain core service levels."

Egeberg explains that the City will spend less in 2010 on daily services than it did three years ago. Excluding police and fire pension funding, General Fund spending for 2010 is budgeted at \$23.4 million. By comparison, it was \$24.1 million in 2007.

This year's budget includes staff cuts, continuing a trend established over the past two years. Full-time staffing has been reduced by 34 positions since 2008. Many of these positions were eliminated last year, when the City transferred its emergency dispatch operations to a regional dispatch center.

The closing of the PNR, and the elimination of the Police Department's community involvement officer (CIO) program, further reduce department personnel to 70 full-and part-time employees, down from 95 in 2009. CIOs have been reassigned to patrol beats.



"While we may be seeing the beginnings of a national recovery, this has not had an impact on current revenues."

—Jim Egeberg

- Reductions in equipment replacement funds;
- Elimination of pay increases for non-union personnel.

Service reductions alone did not yield enough savings to balance the budget. This year's budget raises the City's residential property tax levy by 15.5% to meet police and fire pension funding levels required by state law. Council members reduced what would have been a 28% property tax increase by transferring \$1 million in cash reserves to help fund the pensions.

"Tapping the City's cash reserves reduces the burden on residents somewhat, while still providing sufficient funding for the pensions," Egeberg explains.

The increase will add an additional \$43 per year to a \$2,500 tax bill, \$68 to a \$4,000 bill and \$128 to a \$7,500 bill.

Using existing funds, City officials also limited a staff-proposed 14% water and sewer rate increase to 9%. Effective March 1, the City of Chicago will increase the cost of water sold to Rolling Meadows by 14%. The average resident will pay an additional \$5.42 per month.

Other aspects of the 2010 budget include a 3% (80-cent) increase in the City's monthly refuse rate and a \$5 fee for annual dog licenses. The fee for non-spayed and non-neutered dogs increases to \$10.

Staff reductions in all City departments comprise the remaining personnel cutbacks.

Other reductions in City services, some of which began in 2009, include:

- Shorter office hours for the Finance and Community Development Departments (8 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday-Friday);
- Elimination of residential refuse bag delivery;
- Changing the frequency of the City's newsletter, *News & Views*, from 12 to six times per year;
- Limiting residential brush collection to once per year;

Contact City Officials: City Hall Hours: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday

Mayor: Kenneth Nelson
City Clerk: Lisa Hinman
City Manager: Sarah Phillips

Aldermen

1st Ward: John Pitzaferrro
847-655-1390
2nd Ward: Barb Lusk
847-567-2444

3rd Ward: Lawrence Buske
847-255-9126
4th Ward: Brad Judd
847-902-3248
5th Ward: Glenn Adams
847-259-5875
6th Ward: John D'Astice
847-409-9367
7th Ward: James Larsen
630-244-4228

Services

Fire & Police
Emergency: 911
Fire Department
non-emergency:
847-397-3352
Police non-emergency:
847-255-2416
Public Works: 847-963-0500

Finance/Utility Billing Questions:
847-394-8500
Community Development Dept.:
847-506-6030
TDD: 847-506-0490
Senior Services: 847-394-8500
ComEd — 1-800-EDISON-1
Curfew: Sun.-Thurs. 11 p.m. Fri.
& Sat. Midnight

Look Us Up on the Web at: www.cityrm.org

City Launches 2010 Fitness Initiative To Help Residents 'Stay Active,' Improve Health

BY BARB LUSK, 2ND WARD ALDERMAN, CANCER AWARENESS COMMITTEE CHAIR

Building on the success of Rolling Meadows' yearlong "City of Excellence" initiative in 2009 that promoted cancer awareness and healthy lifestyle choices, the Cancer Awareness Committee this month will launch a community-wide fitness program designed to help residents improve their health and remain active during winter months.

The "Stay Active Challenge," which runs January 10 – May 8, represents an opportunity for residents from all walks of life to make their health a priority in 2010. This Web-based exercise management program will help participants set their own personal fitness goals and log the number of minutes they exercised each day through a link on the City's Website, www.cityrm.org.

Regular physical activity can reduce one's risk of cancer and improve overall health. Whether it's a 30-minute treadmill workout, a walk around the neighborhood, weight lifting or riding a stationary bike, the goal is for residents to increase their physical activity. We want

people to find something they enjoy doing and then keep doing it!

Residents who take part in the Stay Active Challenge will receive periodic email updates to keep them informed of their progress, and the progress of their fellow team members.

Participants will be automatically

enrolled into a raffle drawing for a chance to win front row seating at the City's July 4 fireworks. The Cancer Awareness Committee will provide inflatable couches and refreshments for the drawing's winner.

To register for the Stay Active Challenge, simply complete an online enrollment form available on the City's Website before January 10. I hope you'll join us!

On a final note, the American Cancer Society will present Rolling Meadows with its "City of Excellence Award" during City Council's January 12 meeting. We are just the fourth local community to earn this award, and it wouldn't have been possible without the help of everyone who helped the committee's efforts to promote cancer awareness and healthy lifestyles throughout 2009. Available Through March 1

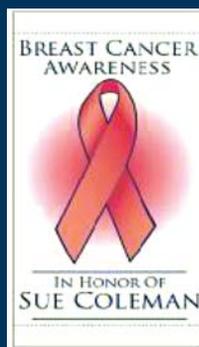
Commemorative Cancer Banners Available Through March 1

The City's program to display commemorative banners that honor cancer survivors and residents who are battling, or have died from, the disease will run through March 1.

Vinyl banners are \$125. Each will feature a colored ribbon to represent one of 18 different forms of cancer – everything from lung and prostate to colon, breast and ovarian cancers. Residents may choose from a variety of phrases and include the name of the person they wish to honor. A portion of all proceeds will go to the American Cancer Society.

Banners will hang in downtown Rolling Meadows from April – October in 2010 and 2011. The City will then present the banners to the families that purchased them.

Order forms are available at City Hall. Residents may also purchase banners through the "Cancer Banners" link on the City's Website, www.cityrm.org.



City Offers Half-Price Vehicle Stickers To New Residents, New Car Purchasers

The City has reduced the price of its 2009-10 vehicle stickers by 50% for new residents and those who have purchased a new vehicle.

Discounted stickers start at \$11 and are available at City Hall. Discounted stickers cannot be purchased online.

The City will send 2010 –11 vehicle sticker applications to all motorists in early June. Sticker costs will remain at \$22 for most cars and trucks.

Funds generated from vehicle sticker sales support Rolling Meadows' ongoing street maintenance activities, which keep City streets in good condition and prevent excessive wear and tear on residents' vehicles.

Holiday Light Recycling Program Ends Jan 22

Rolling Meadows has joined with the Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County (SWANCC) and Elgin Recycling to conduct a holiday light, extension cord and wire recycling program through January 22.

Materials suitable for collection and recycling include holiday lights (all colors and lengths), extension cords, household cords and wiring and computer cords/wires.

A collection box is located at City Hall, 3600 Kirchoff Road.





Al Steinhoff: 1945 – 2009

Al Steinhoff's Toughness, Dedication Produced Results for City Residents

Former Street Maintenance Superintendent Al Steinhoff, who retired from the

Public Works Department in 2008, died November 25. He was 64.

Department colleagues liked and respected Steinhoff, and his toughness and dedication produced results for City residents. Of the many services he oversaw for the Department, he was most proud of Rolling Meadows' snow removal operations. Public Works personnel, operating as a team, reinforced one of Steinhoff's favorite mottos: "We are one family that works together."

"I remember snow storms that were so intense, I couldn't see two feet in front of the plow," he once told *News & Views*. "It doesn't matter. You keep going and let the adrenaline pull you through.

We won't wait until a storm passes or starts to diminish before starting to plow. That is a major inconvenience to residents."

"Al's passing was a shock. Even though he'd been retired for a year-and-a-half, his death leaves a tremendous void," says Assistant Public Works Director Bob Hartnett, who worked with Steinhoff for 32 years. "He had a way of understanding people's needs, was respectful to everyone, and did everything he could to help."

While considering his fellow City employees "one big family," Steinhoff nonetheless demanded excellence and professionalism from himself and those around him. "If he told you to be at a particular job site at 7 a.m., you'd be there 10 minutes early," recalls John Gaddini, who worked with Steinhoff his entire

career. "If you showed up even 30 seconds late, he'd tell you to go home."

Hartnett says Steinhoff's commitment to serving the City made those around him better employees.

"Al's number one priority was to get the job done, and that was contagious," Hartnett explains. "The fact that he was older than most of us, and had a lot more experience, made him a sort of 'father-figure' to us all."

Along with his Public Works duties, Steinhoff was a longtime member of the City's Veterans Committee.

Steinhoff is survived by the love of his life, Maryann Steinhoff, three children (Kelli, Jennifer and Jami), four grandchildren (Alexandra, Jack, Matthew and Lauren), two sisters (Patsy and Gloria), and many nieces, nephews and grandnieces.

Firefighters Equip Engines with Pet Oxygen Masks, Thanks to Meadows Funeral Home Donation

Cats and dogs throughout Rolling Meadows can "breathe a little easier," thanks to Meadows Funeral Home's donation of two sets of pet oxygen masks to the Rolling Meadows Fire Department.



The Department's frontline ambulances were already equipped with oxygen masks for pets. The new masks have been placed on each of Rolling Meadows' main fire engines, enhancing firefighters' ability to provide assistance to residents' four-legged family members. Each set cost roughly \$100.

"Rolling Meadows Fire Department greatly appreciates Meadows Funeral Home's generous donation that supports its animal rescue and resuscitation operations," Lt. Colin Finlay says. "Dogs are similar to adults, in the sense that they usually attempt to escape a burning building. Cats are more like children because they'll try to hide from the flames. In many of the larger fires we've fought over the past several years, we've found a lot of cats that did not survive."

Welcome, New Businesses

Automatic Building Controls (temperature control)

Grant Bevill, 3315 Algonquin Road, # 550, 847-385-8850

Dwell Remodeling, Inc.

Thomas Rataiczuk, Jr., 2202 Campbell Street, 847-577-7836

Fuesco Midwest (fuse block distributor)

Patrick Harre, 2255 Lois Drive, #7, 847-749-4158

Gavel Technologies (computer consulting)

Larry Chan, 3601 Algonquin Road, #812, 847-347-1717

Giuseppe Ristorante

Genadi Dvorkin, 3200 Kirchoff Road, 847-354-5701

Heartland Heating & Air Conditioning

Joseph Pittenger, 2086 Adams, 847-254-1570

Horizon Mechanical (HVAC)

Richard Wagner, 4660 Angeline Court, 847-951-7338

My Insurance Agency, LLC

Claudia I. Romero, 3601 Algonquin Road, #604, 847-690-1285

New Millennium Tours (travel packages to French

Polynesia) Heinz Wesner, 3000 Oaksbury Court, 800-772-9231

True Performance (fitness training)

Robert Rosmis, 3939 Winnetka Avenue, 847-894-5058

Rand Imaginit Technologies, Inc. (software consulting)

George Doherty, 3601 Algonquin Road, #220, 847-303-6460

Ruetschlin Family Pioneers Use of Solar Energy Power

An active community volunteer and Rolling Meadows homeowner has installed 224-watt solar energy panels on his garage roof, with the hope of drawing on the sun, a free energy source, to generate 30-60 percent of the electricity his 2,600-square foot home needs.

Harry Ruetschlin's home on the City's west side near the Manor Care Nursing Home is the first solar power home in Rolling Meadows. Each of the 12 solar panels installed on Ruetschlin's roof measures about 3 by 5 feet and has a microinverter attached to convert the panel's DC power, generated by the sun, to 240 volts AC for electricity.

Using an electronic device that communicates between the panels and the inverters and through the Internet, he'll be able to monitor and measure the output of each panel in real time. The device will also be able to monitor power production on a daily, monthly, and yearly level.

Wires from the inverters form a conduit to a household service panel and connect to the Commonwealth Edison meter. Depending on the home's energy use, the meter will run faster or slower, as it uses energy. During some periods, it will run backwards, when the solar panels generate more power than the Ruetschlin family needs.

The Ruetschlin garage faces south, best for solar generation. In the future, Ruetschlin plans to install additional solar panels on the west side of the main roof of the family's two-story, four-bedroom, 2.5 bath home, hopefully adding enough solar power to generate all the home's electricity.

"What better way to *not* fire up another coal plant or nuclear power plant," Ruetschlin says. "My message is that this is not hard to do. We just need to get more people involved. Illinois is rated fifth best in the nation for solar harvesting. Once we've paid back the cost of our investment, this house will have free electricity for as long as it stands."

Ruetschlin has invested about \$16,000 in the solar power system. He estimates that available state



grants and federal tax credits will pay for a little more than half of that cost, and the family will save enough in energy cost to pay back the investment within 6-10 years.

Ruetschlin has advantages over the average homeowner as a solar power pioneer. He's an electrical engineer who understands the technology and the promises it brings. He's hired a local solar energy expert, Brian Krause at Woodstar Energy, Des Plaines, to help with all phases of the project. Like most families struggling to make ends meet, he sees the value in this investment, not only for his family but also for the environment.

In a way, conversion of the Ruetschlin

home to solar power fulfills a lifelong dream. He did his senior thesis at Southern Illinois University on wind turbines, and traveled to Medicine Bow, Wyoming, to do research. He later searched for knowledge and practical applications while visiting in Colorado, where solar harvesting is prevalent. "I've always had a desire to try to utilize natural energies. Now, with the federal and state government incentives, it's become cost effective," he says.

Ruetschlin, a former member of the Rolling Meadows Police and Fire Commission, now serves on the Police Pension Fund. He acknowledges

that converting to solar power requires a lot of paperwork. He had to provide plans to ComEd, the City's building inspectors, and the state to qualify for grants. This is one area where Woodstar Energy was very helpful. He'll have some additional paperwork to file with his federal income tax return.

"The City's inspection group was instrumental in the success of this installation, their first in Rolling Meadows. They were great to work with and as a result, the installation and operation have gone very smoothly," Ruetschlin says.

His daughter, Hailey, a second grader at St. Colette School, will grow up with an understanding of solar power and an appreciation for the value of conserving natural resources, while also helping the family with their recycling program. After the payback, the family won't pay for a significant portion of their electricity usage. They'll have another reason to sing praises to the sun.

City Launches Community-Wide Emergency Notification System

The City has launched an emergency notification system that allows it to warn residents of pending emergency situations, such as flooding, tornadoes, missing persons, hazardous materials spills, and more, Police Department Sgt. Tony Gaspari reports.

The Everbridge Mass Emergency Notification System is designed to help City officials notify residents of community threats instantly. Should an emergency occur, the system would deliver messages to residents via their preferred communications platform – cell phones, landlines, text messaging, personal data assistants (PDAs), fax or email.

"Residents who sign up for the emergency notification system will not have to purchase any new or additional equipment," Gaspari explains. "The system is designed to let residents

choose how and where they receive emergency information."

The system features every listed landline telephone number culled from existing 911 data. Upon registration, users will select their preferred contact information. Residents will only receive emergency notifications on their landline phones unless they register additional methods of contact.

To register, visit the City's Website, www.cityrm.org, and click on the "Everbridge" icon. Residents without Internet access may sign up at the Rolling Meadows Library, 3110 Martin Lane.

Registration is completely secure. The City will not share or distribute any information residents provide.

For more information, contact the Rolling Meadows Police Department at 847-255-2416.



January 2010

					1 New Year's Day City Hall Closed. Refuse Pickup Delayed one day.	2
3	4	5 Plan Commission cancelled	6 Zoning Board of Appeals cancelled	7	8	9
10	11	12 City Council Meeting, 7:30 p.m., City Hall	13	14 Adjudication Hearing, 1 p.m., City Hall	15	16
17	18 Martin Luther King Day City Hall closed, regular refuse pickup	19 City Council Committee of the Whole, 7:30 p.m., City Hall	20 Water bills due	21 Adjudication Hearing (Red Light), 2 p.m., City Hall	22	23
24	25	26 City Council Meeting, 7:30 p.m., City Hall	27	28	29	30
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February 2010

	1	2 Plan Commission, 7:30 p.m., City Hall	3 Zoning Board of Appeals, 7 p.m., City Hall	4	5	6
7	8	9 City Council Meeting, 7:30 p.m., City Hall	10	11 Adjudication Hearing, 1 p.m., City Hall	12 Lincoln's Birthday	13
14 Valentine's Day	15 Presidents' Day	16 City Council Committee of the Whole, 7:30 p.m., City Hall	17	18 Adjudication (Red Light), 2 p.m., City Hall	19	20
21	22 Washington's Birthday Water bills due	23 City Council Meeting, 7:30 p.m., City Hall	24	25	26	27
28						



Good Bye, Good Riddance to 2009

By Mayor Ken Nelson

Happy New Year, everyone! In

many ways, 2010 could not come soon enough.

2009 was a rough year for a lot of our residents. We saw homes foreclosed, businesses cut staff or even shut their doors, and many of us had to tighten our belts with the hope of riding out the economic recession. We've even had to reduce the frequency of our newsletter to every other month. But there are signs that things will improve in 2010.

Wall Street says the recession has ended and should reach Main Street this year. Many businesses are reporting a slight uptick, although we're still waiting to see what the holiday season brought. The rate of foreclosures has slowed a bit.

From the City's perspective, we're getting interest from developers for some of the projects that have been dormant the past couple of years. Some major businesses have relocated to Rolling Meadows, while others are in the process of doing so.

While I don't expect major improvements during the coming 12 months, I'm hopeful that the trend will turn positive for our City. And my fervent hope is that the same is true for you and your family. May 2010 be a turnaround year for all of us. Happy New Year!

City, Local Businesses 'Plant it Pink'

Mercedes Lamourt (from left), Mary Kay and Doug Gotham, of Christopher B. Burke Engineering, plant tulip bulbs in the shape of an awareness ribbon, as part of the American Cancer Society's "Plant it Pink" Program. Behr Construction, J C Restoration, and Storino, Ramello & Durkin also supported the program, which planted bulbs at locations across the City.



Vote in Illinois Primary, February 2

Voters will head to the polls on February 2 to cast primary ballots for candidates running for offices at the federal, state and township levels. Offices on the ballot include Illinois governor and secretary of state, seats in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, the state legislature, local township committeemen and others. Important dates:

- January 11: First day of early voting.
- January 28: Last day of early voting.
- January 29 – February 1: In-person absentee voting at Cook County Clerk's Chicago office (69 W. Washington Street).
- February 1: Last day for mailed absentee ballots to be post marked.

Visit www.voterinfont.com for more information, or contact the County Clerk's office at 312-603-0906.

Residents 'Valuable Partners' In City's Snow Removal Plans

The Public Works Department sees residents as valuable partners in its snow removal efforts. That is why department personnel remind homeowners and businesses that they play an important role clearing city streets and sidewalks of snow, according to Public Works Director Fred Vogt.

"Our policy of completely clearing the City's roads after winter storms strike is a team effort," Vogt says. "Residents should refrain from shoveling or blowing snow from driveways and sidewalks out into the street. It ends up creating more work for themselves and inadvertently causes hazardous conditions for motorists."

Vogt recommends that residents shovel snow to the right side of the driveway when facing the street, and into yard areas whenever possible. Otherwise, plows will push the snow right back onto the driveway. More importantly, snow that is pushed onto a recently plowed street can be dangerous for drivers.

Residents may want to carve out an extra pocket to the left side of the driveway, since curbside snow will most likely be pushed onto a driveway by passing plows. Other reminders offered to help Public Works' snow removal efforts include:

- **Observe winter parking bans** – Parking on City streets is prohibited for

eight hours following a snowfall at least one inch. This allows plows to access streets without having to avoid parked cars.

- **Keep fire hydrants clear of snow** – Shoveling snow around fire hydrants may save lives. In emergency situations where seconds count, firefighters depend on their ability to easily reach nearby hydrants.

- **Check curbside mailboxes for needed repairs** – Snow and ice plowed from streets can be heavy and cause damage to weakly supported mailboxes.

Mailboxes that have been maintained and are in good condition should withstand the rigors of a typical snow season. The City will only pay for repair to mailboxes hit by plows during snow removal operations. It does not offer reimbursement for the interruption of mail service if a mailbox becomes inaccessible, damaged, knocked over or buried by accumulated snow.

Dave Scanlan Sworn in as Rolling Meadows Police Chief

Mayor Ken Nelson swears in new Rolling Meadows Police Chief David J. Scanlan in December. Chief Scanlan, a 27-year veteran of the department, began his career in Rolling

Meadows as a patrol officer. He succeeds Steve Williams, who led the Police Department for 11 years.

