

CAPITAL CONNECTION

Official Newsletter of Bismarck, N.D.

BOARD APPROVES RECONSTRUCTION PLAN 43rd Avenue Improvement Continues

At the Feb. 23 City Commission Meeting, the board received recommendations for the 43rd Ave. reconstruction project. The proposed improvements include modifications to the intersections of State St. and N. 26th St. and N. 19th St. from 43rd Ave. to North Valley Loop. These changes would aid in accommodating the increase of traffic in the area.

Currently, this section of 43rd Ave. does not have turn lanes, traffic signals or a space for pedestrians to safely cross. The City's Engineer Gabe Schell has expressed concerns of the high volume of traffic accidents at the intersections. The 43rd Ave. corridor experienced more than 120 crashes over the last five-year period. "When utilizing roundabouts, 90 percent of fatal crashes are prevented. If we have options to put something safe out there, I will recommend it every time," said Schell about the proposed improvements.

Engineering staff offered several different options for the board to consider, but advised implementing Alternative B, with a four-lane roadway, two roundabouts, one at the intersection of N. 26th St. and the other at the intersection of N. 19th St. All changes would maintain access to 15th St. and the frontage road. These recommendations were developed after the Engineering Department worked closely with KLJ and a public input opportunity took place.

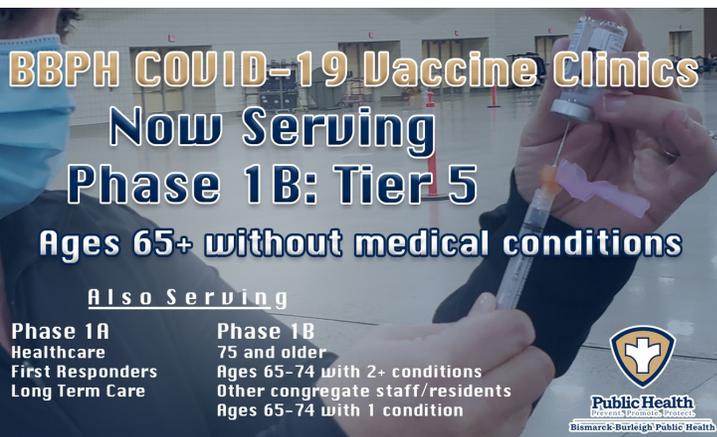
The Commission approved each of these recommendations. The improvements are estimated to cost up to \$21,290,000. Federal reimbursement and funding from the ½ cent sales tax increase voted on in 2018 will assist in budgeting for the project. Construction for the improvements is expected to begin in the Spring of 2022. We will continue to provide updates on this project.



On Feb. 23, the City Commission approved two roundabouts, one at N. 19 St. and the other 26th St.



BBPH VACCINE CLINICS OPEN FOR INDIVIDUALS AGES 65 AND UP



BBPH COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics
Now Serving
Phase 1B: Tier 5
Ages 65+ without medical conditions

Also Serving

Phase 1A Healthcare First Responders Long Term Care	Phase 1B 75 and older Ages 65-74 with 2+ conditions Other congregate staff/residents Ages 65-74 with 1 condition
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Public Health
Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health

Individuals aged 65 and older may now register for the COVID-19 vaccine at clinics conducted by Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health (BBPH).

If you are interested, register through the online [COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Form](#). Once the form is completed, you will be contacted about setting up an appointment to receive the vaccine. For more info visit: <https://www.bismarcknd.gov/95/Public-Health>.

If you are unable to register online, you can call Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health at [355-1540](tel:355-1540) and select **Option 1** to speak with a representative that will assist with scheduling vaccine appointments.

The vaccination is now available for anyone in Phase 1A (healthcare workers, first responders, long-term care residents and staff), as well as the following tiers in Phase 1B. **This includes those 65 and older without underlying health conditions.**

EOC OPENS DOORS FOR FUTURE RESPONSE

As Public Health continues their vaccine efforts, more people are reaching out to the department with questions and concerns relating to COVID-19. To better serve the public, the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has set up a COVID-19 Call Center. This partial activation for pandemic response, is just one of the many ways the EOC will be utilized after opening its doors this fall.

In the Spring of 2018, Bismarck/Burleigh County voters approved a \$0.50 increase in the local 911 fee to purchase, lease or build a new facility for Central Dakota Communications (CenCom), the city/county's dispatch center. Although, CenCom is a separate entity from the City's Emergency Management and the EOC, the services work together in a state of emergency and are located in the same building.

After the measure was approved, the City and CenCom worked with Dakota Carrier Network (DCN) to find/build an adequate location to meet all the needs of the three entities, and in the summer of 2019, DCN broke ground on the facility.

Space was a critical component for both CenCom and Emergency Management. Both had outgrown their locations and were looking for additional space for training and planning purposes and to better accommodate staff. The new facility serves all of these needs.

The space is leased by both entities with CenCom's portion paid for with the help of the 911 fee.



COVID call center employees on a Zoom conference call. Public Health's call center continues to answer hundreds of COVID/vaccine related calls daily.

PATTY RATH RETIRES



Patty Rath pictured at her second home, Station 1.

In early February, Patty Rath, the head Administrative Coordinator for the Fire Department, announced her retirement.

Rath began her career with the City, in 1984, in the Community Development Department as a secretary. At the time, she was one of four in that department, now the City's Community Development Department has more than 20 people in it. A year later, Rath moved to the Administration Department where she worked as an accounting clerk processing special assessments.

Then in 1989, she moved to the place she would call home for more than 30 years, the Fire Department, off of Central Ave., also known as Station 1. At the time, Rath estimates she worked with 58 firefighters. The City was making big changes too. The Fire Department was just transitioning to using computers. Rath had to learn the new system right along with the firefighters.

"I felt immediately at home," she said. "I loved all the firefighters."

Over the years, Rath has stayed busy scheduling trainings, public education and engagements, managed records and permits and many more administrative duties within the department. In addition, she also assisted in putting the tests for new firefighters together and administering them.

"[The Fire Department] is one big family. When the firefighters open those doors and the trucks go out, each firefighter knows the other and has their back. I felt that same feeling working in the office," she said.

Patty's last day was Feb. 12.

Scroll to Page 6 for a full list of City employees that have retired in 2021.

MEETING SCHEDULE

BISMARCK CITY COMMISSION

MARCH 9 & 23, 5:15 P.M.

BISMARCK-MANDAN

MPO TAC

MARCH 15, 10 A.M.

BISMARCK-MANDAN MPO

POLICY BOARD

MARCH 16, 1:30 P.M.

BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

MARCH 4, 5 P.M.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION
COMMISSION

MARCH 17 3:30 P.M.

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

MARCH 15, 5:15 P.M.

PARKING AUTHORITY

MARCH 11, 9 A.M.

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

MARCH 24, 5 P.M.

RENAISSANCE ZONE AUTHORITY

MARCH 11, 4 P.M.

Dakota | **MEDIA** | **Access**

As always, live meeting coverage on Government Access Channels 2 & 602HD, Listen to Radio Access 102.5 FM, or stream FreeTV.org.

Agendas and minutes can be found online at:

www.bismarcknd.gov/agendacenter.

CAPITAL CONNECTION



The Bismarck Human Relations Committee wants to acknowledge those who inspire, encourage and recognize the value of diversity in our community with their Humanitarian Award.

If you know of an individual, business or non-profit

whose work reflects leadership qualities in humanitarian practice, nominate them today. Nominations will be accepted until March 15, 2021.

The HRC is also sponsoring an essay/poetry contest to heighten awareness of human rights among 4th-8th grade students in the community.

- Grades 4th-5th: Write an essay or poem about a person or idea that fosters respect for Human Rights.
- Grades 6th-8th: Write an essay or poem about your concept of leadership for Human Rights.

Outstanding entries will be recognized by the Mayor and displayed on our website.

All entries must be received by 5 p.m. on April 16, 2021.

Participants in the poetry/essay contest or individuals looking to submit a nominee for the Humanitarian Award, can send their entries to:

City of Bismarck/Administration

Attention: Human Relations Committee

221 N 5th St.

Bismarck, N.D. 58501

bismarckadmin@bismarcknd.gov

For more information on the Human Relations Committee visit our [website](#).

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

House Bill 1419

The Bill that would allow cities to collect an infrastructure fee on utility bills to replace street maintenance special assessments made another great leap last week. House Bill 1419 passed the House vote on Feb. 23 and will move on to the Senate.

The City has been working towards replacing street maintenance special assessments, which fund a majority of our sewer, water and pavement projects. While in process of developing a fee to replace these types of special assessments, it was discovered that North Dakota Century Code does not provide the City the authority to collect a street utility fee. House Bill 1419, would give all cities within the State the freedom to charge the fee.

After the Bill was drafted, our City Administrator provided testimony before Legislators. The Bill was then moved to the House Political Subdivision Subcommittee and then the House of Representatives.

If the Bill is passed by the Senate, the fee would be placed on the ballot for Bismarck voters, at the earliest in June 2022.



 KX News

City Commission Discussion and Review

This is the ninth week of the Legislative Session, and more than 500 Bills are in the process of being voted on in the House and Senate. Although the City does not create, vote on or decide the outcome of the Bills and policies, our Commissioners have taken position on about 20 of these Bills that could potentially affect Bismarck.

The City Administrator provides the Commission an update at each City Commission Meeting until the session is completed at the end of April. These updates can be found in each meeting's agenda packet. For more information on the City's Legislative process, visit our [website](#).

HOW DO WE DO IT?

We've experienced some of the coldest temperatures of the year in the last few weeks. In order to provide running water when temperatures sink below zero, our Public Works Utility Operations Department has a routine to ensure the stored water in our water towers and reservoirs doesn't freeze.

The amount of water Bismarck residents' use changes with the season. Typically, in the warmer months, more water is used and less is used in the winter. This requires our Public Works Department to change the water levels inside the towers or reservoirs to meet the demand. In the winter, when the need isn't as great, the Department will allow the levels to get lower before refilling the tower or reservoir. This prevents freezing inside the tank because the water isn't standing for an extended amount of time to turn to ice.



Small towns will often use a similar method to prevent their water towers from freezing. However, in cities with smaller populations, a pump is often used to help keep the water moving. Since our population is higher, there is no need for a pump as the tank is refilled more often to meet the City's needs.

CITY RECEIVES "REDISTRIBUTION OF KINDNESS"

The City received a vintage collector's item from a Stockton, C.A. resident.

Lowell Joerg is in his 90's, and has been sending what he calls his "redistribution of kindness," letters and historic memorabilia all over the county.

Joerg mailed a letter with an envelope from 1939, celebrating North Dakota's 50 years of statehood to the Administration Office.

The envelope and Joerg's letter will be taken good care of by our Assistant City Administrator who collects historical Bismarck relics.

Cass County also received a letter from Joerg with a vintage postcard from 1906 of the Cass County Courthouse. WDAY News in Fargo featured the story about the "redistribution of kindness" on Feb. 18, you can find it right [here](#).

IF I WERE MAYOR ESSAY CONTEST



Does your child have some fun ideas on how to make Bismarck better? Have they ever dreamed of one day being the Mayor of Bismarck? If so, the North Dakota League of Cities wants to hear all about it through their "If I Were Mayor" essay contest.

Each spring, the League of Cities sponsors the statewide contest for 3rd and 7th graders. The competition is designed to get kids thinking about local government, public service and community leadership.

Contest winners will have their essay featured in the League of Cities' publication CITYScan and receive a \$150 cash prize. Winners will be announced during City Government Week April 5-9, 2021.

For more information and directions for submitting your entry visit:
<https://www.ndlc.org/161/If-I-Were-MayorEssay-Contest>

All essays must be submitted before March 12, 2021.

CITY RETIREES

To date the following employees have announced their retirement in 2021:

Bruce Brandner, Public Works
Ross Dettmann, Assessing
Anthony Dietz, Public Works
Patty Maier, Finance
Vern Mastel, Library
Rose Paulson, HR
Patty Rath, Fire
Steve Schumaker, Engineering
Linda Smestad, Engineering
Andy Zachmeier, PD

