



# Cottage Grove Reports

## City Council Fills Key Leadership Roles to Close 2018

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### Gwen Martin Named New CGPD Captain



The City Council has approved the promotion of Detective Sergeant Gwen Martin to the position of Deputy Director of Public Safety/Police Captain. Martin began her career with the Department as a paramedic in 2000. She will focus on Emergency Management in her new role. She is one of three Police Captains in the CGPD.



### New City Council Member Wayne Butt

On December 19, City Council Members and Mayor Bailey selected Wayne Butt to fill Cottage Grove's vacant council seat during a special, open meeting in the Council Chamber. Ten well-qualified candidates, with a wide range of experience and professional skills, applied for the position. Each candidate was given three minutes to speak about his or her qualifications before the three-round vote.

New Council Member Wayne Butt will serve on the council through November 2019, when voters will choose a permanent representative in a special election. Council Member Butt will have the opportunity to run for the seat alongside all other interested candidates.

The seat was vacated in late November after Wayne Johnson was elected to the Washington County Board of Commissioners. State law requires the Mayor and Council to

fill the vacancy, by appointment, until the next special election occurs.

On the same evening, the Mayor and Council Members also unanimously approved the employment agreement for new City Administrator Jennifer Levitt. Levitt had been serving in an interim capacity for the past couple of months. She has worked for the City for more than 14 years as a professional engineer, City Engineer and Community Development Director. She will now be responsible for all six City departments (Administration, Community Development, Finance, Parks and Recreation, Public Safety and Public Works) which includes approximately 250 full-time and part-time employees.

Jennifer Levitt will lead city staff members through Cottage Grove's Strategic Plan focusing on the city's business environment, organizational culture and quality of life.



### New City Administrator Jennifer Levitt

## Please Clear Snow Away from Hydrants



Did you know there are approximately 1,700 fire hydrants in our city? Firefighters need to access them when responding to fires so they'd like to issue a friendly reminder to keep three feet of clear space around them (per MN Fire Code section 507.5.5). Please remove any snow that might surround a hydrant on your property!

### Now Hiring Seasonal Workers

Applications now being accepted for:

- Six-month, full-time positions in Parks and Utilities maintenance
- Three-month, full-time positions in Parks and Streets maintenance
- Three month internships in Landscape and Forestry

Wages range from \$12.00 to \$14.00 per hour. Applications will be accepted until the positions are filled. First review of applicants will be on **March 8**. Visit [www.cottagegrovemn.gov](http://www.cottagegrovemn.gov) for complete job descriptions and application packets. You can also pick up packets at City Hall or Public Works.

\*Must be 18 years of age with a valid driver's license and high school diploma to be considered.

## Long Overdue Ice Arena Upgrade on the Way



Since the early 70s, the old R-22 refrigeration system serving the North and South rinks at the Ice Arena has been chugging away. While this long-time workhorse has served our community well for more than three decades, it has finally reached the end of its storied run.

The new refrigeration system will run on ammonia, which is exponentially less expensive when compared with R-22. In addition, R-22 will no longer be produced or imported starting in 2020.

Starting in Mid-March of this year, Ice Arena staff will be shutting down both the North and South rinks to accommodate crews from St. Paul Park's Total Mechanical, who will install the

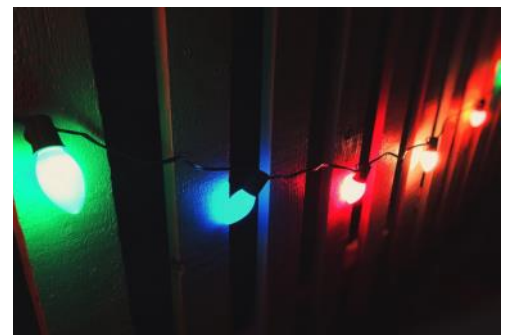
new refrigeration system, add a concrete floor to the north rink and a dehumidifier unit to the south rink. The concrete, which replaces a sand base, will allow the north rink to become a multi-use facility. The dehumidifier will lower the refrigeration system load, lower utility costs and improve customer experience.

The West Rink will remain open throughout construction. The turf our crews usually put down in the North Rink will now be placed in the Armory on Belden Boulevard for our residents and teams to enjoy starting in January.

The entire refrigeration project should be complete by October 1, just in time to start another exciting season of skating in Cottage Grove.

### Don't Throw Your Holiday Lights in the Trash

Broken strands of holiday lights do not belong in the garbage or recycling bins! Lights that end up in single-stream recycling facilities cause problems for sorting machines and processing. Please drop off your unwanted lights at the Washington County Environmental Center for proper disposal.



Location and Hours: [www.co.washington.mn.us/envirocenter](http://www.co.washington.mn.us/envirocenter)

# 2019 Budget: What You Need to Know

Over the past year, the strategic goal to position the City for growth has been the priority of the Council and City staff. It is reflected in the 2019 budget through staffing and capital improvement projects. Long term planning and fiscal conservatism has situated Cottage Grove with strong fund balances and cash reserves. This solid base provides the City with the ability to face economic challenges and also gives Cottage Grove the wherewithal to take advantage of economic development opportunities. Staff members continually evaluate systems and operations to discover efficiencies and improve the delivery of services.

## Key Numbers for 2019

- ◇ The 2019 levy represents a 3% increase over the 2018 levy
- ◇ Approved 2019 property tax levy totals \$15.7 million
- ◇ The City’s total taxable value will increase by 9% in 2019
- ◇ It is important to note that while the total tax base grew 9%, the change in median home value was 6.5%. The other 2.5% in tax base growth is attributed to new businesses and housing in Cottage Grove, an example of positioning for growth.

## What do my City taxes pay for in 2019?



2019 Median Value Property  
\$867 Annual City Tax of \$78.50/month

|                |         |                                |        |
|----------------|---------|--------------------------------|--------|
| Police Service | \$25.05 | Parks & Rec.                   | \$6.74 |
| General Govt.  | \$17.79 | Fire Service                   | \$4.62 |
| Public Works   | \$11.13 | Capital Eqpt.                  | \$3.37 |
| Debt           | \$9.18  | Economic Development Authority | \$0.62 |

### General Fund by Department (2019)



**Public Safety 46%**



**Public Works 19%**



**Parks & Rec 11%**



**Comm. Development 11%**



**General Govt. 10%**



**Transfers 3%**

### IMPACT ON TAXPAYERS

For an owner of a median valued home in Cottage Grove at **\$240,000**, which increased by 6.5%, the estimated annual property tax bill will increase by \$24 to \$867 per year.

However, **83% of residential taxpayers** will see increases of 5% or less in their valuation, resulting in **no increase in the amount of taxes paid.**



*“The City continues to strive for fiscal stability. Like the nine budgets before it, the 2019 budget was created in concert with a draft 2020 budget to see the impact initiatives have on the long term budget, assuring that current initiatives did not create future budget imbalances.”*

*-Cottage Grove City Finance Director Robin Roland*

# Ice Arena

8020 80th Street S.  
Phone: 651-458-3400

Looking to rent ice? [www.rinkfinder.com](http://www.rinkfinder.com) or 651-458-3400

Advertise at the Ice Arena

Call 651-458-3415

## Cottage Grove Ice Skating School Lessons

Winter Sessions—Thru February 10, 2019 (call for details)  
*New this year \$2 skate rentals. Limited quantity available.*  
Register online at [www.cottagegovemn.gov](http://www.cottagegovemn.gov) or call the Ice Arena Office at 651-458-3400.

## Public Skating Sessions—\$5.00

These sessions are a chance for your family to get some exercise, practice skating and have fun. There are skating aids (buckets) for those just learning to skate. Session times vary so please check our website for updated schedules. Cost—\$5 or one punch on your Public Skate Punch Card. Rental skates are available for \$4 per pair.

## Adult Open Hockey—\$5.00

As with all of the public sessions, please call ahead because some sessions may be cancelled or changed to accommodate special events. Skaters are required to provide their own equipment and helmets are mandatory!

*Ages—18+*

*Days—Mondays*

*Time—Please check Monthly Calendar on website*

## Stick and Puck—\$5.00

These sessions are for hockey skaters of any age to come skate with **Sticks and Pucks!** Work on your skating skills, drills and stick handling. **Helmets are mandatory for skaters under 18 years old!**

*Time—Please check Monthly Calendar on website*

# WARMING HOUSES OPEN

Hamlet, 8883 Hamlet Ave. S  
M/W 5-8 p.m. & Sat Noon-8 p.m.

Highlands, 6975 Idsen Ave. S  
M-F 4-8 p.m. & Sat/Sun Noon-8 p.m.

Pine Tree Valley, 8431 Indian Blvd.  
M-F 4-8 p.m. & Sat/Sun Noon-8 p.m.

Hearthside, 8245 Hearthside Rd. S  
T/Th 5-8 p.m. & Sun Noon-8 p.m.

Peter Thompson, 6327 Highland Hills Blvd.  
M-F 4-8 p.m. & Sat/Sun Noon-8 p.m.

Woodridge, 9000 90th Street S  
M-F 4-8 p.m. & Sat/Sun Noon-8 p.m.



## River Oaks Event Center

Let us help you plan your wedding or event. We can accommodate groups from 20 to 225 people. We'll help you customize our space to make your event perfect. Call [651-458-2121](tel:651-458-2121) for more information.

## Eagles Bar & Grill

Open every *Friday and Saturday night* from 3 to 9 p.m. featuring Fish Fry on Fridays and Prime Rib on Saturdays.

## Calendar of Events

- Jan. 19: Beer Tasting from 6 to 9 p.m.
- Jan. 25: Beer Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
- Feb. 22: Spirits Dinner w/ Tattersall Distilling at 6:30 p.m.

\*Pre-registration required for events

**Golf Club:** Memberships are now available. More information on 2019 golf leagues and lessons coming soon!

[www.riveroaksmunigolf.com](http://www.riveroaksmunigolf.com)

