

# City of North Bonneville Newsletter

## A Message from the Mayor's Desk

"Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans" has been one of my favorite quotes since I was a child. It really captures the fact that all the planning in the world doesn't mean things will actually turn out the way we expect.

As I sit down to write my last message for our newsletter, I am reminded of the unwavering accuracy of this quote by the current, and ongoing, issues with our utility billing.

As many of you will remember, we tackled the utility billing issue over several City Council meetings back in 2011, with the help of a gentleman named Skip Rand with the Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC). One of the recommendations that came out of these meetings was to change to a calculated sewer usage charge based on water consumption over the winter months. Those months were recommended due to the minimal outdoor water usage over the winter months when we don't water our yards or wash our vehicles.

This approach made a lot of sense but once implemented, the reality did not live up to our expectations and the formulas used to derive the sewer usage numbers became more cumbersome and arcane as the annual increases and continuing need for calculations made what should have been a more straightforward system become increasingly convoluted. The bottom line is our utility billing system has not been as accurate or understandable as we had hoped.

As I mentioned in last month's letter we have changed to a flat rate for sewer charges going forward and we have budgeted \$10,000 for a third-party audit of the billing system to be conducted in 2018. I want to make clear that the errors in utility bills are a result of the sewer usage calculations, not our metered water system. I have heard complaints that our Public Works staff doesn't really read the meters as long as I've lived here and want to assure you that our water meters do get read every other month. The only exceptions are when access to a meter is blocked by a vehicle or other obstacle or we have an ice storm of biblical proportions.

The good news is the audit will identify which accounts have been overcharged and which have been undercharged (we anticipate the majority will have been overcharged) and once accurate numbers are available, each account holder will be notified of the status of their account and given the option to have the credit or debit applied to their account or, in the case of a credit, receive a check for the amount overpaid. (continued on back)

## December 2017



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### City Council Meetings

December 12th

6:30 PM - Workshop

7 PM - Council Meeting

### Planning Meeting

December 5th & 19th at 6 PM

Email: [don@northbonneville.net](mailto:don@northbonneville.net)

This is certainly not how I envisioned my final newsletter, but one of my primary goals throughout my time as mayor has been to be as honest and open as possible at all times and this issue will not be treated differently.

Mayor-Elect Brian Sabo is being kept updated on this situation and I am quite confident he will ensure the audit is conducted properly and results in a satisfactory resolution for our city and residents. I am incredibly sorry to see this problem extend beyond my time in office, but life really does just keep happening regardless of our plans.

I want to sincerely thank everyone in the community for their support over the past 8 years. Our city has gone through a lot since 2008, some good and some bad, but we're still here and I still believe North Bonneville is a wonderful place to live and has a bright future.

During my time in office, I have personally witnessed more acts of kindness and seen our residents come together in tough times to support one another than I can count. I will always remember standing side by side with my fellow residents in knee deep water cleaning storm water drains in the middle of a driving rainstorm. Not a lot of fun at the time, but the kind of thing that recharges one's faith in humanity.

Thank you all and best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

As always, we welcome your input and ideas. City Hall is open from 8:00am to 5:00pm, Monday through Friday. Our phone number is 427-8182 and my email address is [don@northbonneville.net](mailto:don@northbonneville.net) until December 31<sup>st</sup>.