

# CITY OF NEWTON WEEKLY REPORT

Week of March 2, 2018

## FROM THE DESK OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR...



At the Monday, February 26 Special City Council Meeting, City Council adopted the Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Annual Budget by a vote of 5-0. The budget showed the Newton is growing with an \$11 million increase in assessed valuation. With the effect of the rollback and property tax reform, that growth in total assessed value did not translate into a growth in taxable valuation. The growth in employee benefits also posed the major challenge to this year's budget. In recognition of the need for sustainable budgets into the future, the City Council increased the general fund reserves budget from 23.8% to 25% of general fund revenues. No positions were eliminated as part of this budget. With the expected resignation of two employees during the current fiscal year, a police officer position (who recently resigned)

and the fire marshal position, City staff recommended that the two positions be left open until stronger growth is confirmed in future budget processes. All economic indicators are positive with both commercial and residential growth currently underway. The City Council adopted a fiscally responsible budget which maintains the current property tax levy at \$17.14/thousands of taxable value into the next fiscal year.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- Project AWAKE's Spring Gardening Series: Successful Small Fruit on March 6, 2018, 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM @ Newton Arboretum; Learn how to grow strawberries and raspberries in the home garden. ISU Extension and Outreach and Project AWAKE have partnered to offer a spring gardening series on March 6, 20, and 27 at the Newton Arboretum and Botanical Gardens' Krumm Center
- Newton Job & Career Fair on March 8, 2018, 4:30 PM - 6:30 PM @ DMACC Newton Campus; Newton Development Corporation (NDC), Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC), Iowa State University Extension & Outreach, and the Goodwill Career Connection Center would like to invite area businesses to the 2018 FREE Job/Career Fair scheduled from 4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 8, 2018.
- MAME presented by Newton Community Theatre on March 9, 2018, 7:30 PM - 10:30 PM @ Newton Community Theatre; Based on the Novel by Patrick Dennis and the play AUNTIE MAME and directed by Wanda Blount & Rachel Faidley. For reservations, call our Box Office at 641-792-1230. The box office is staffed weekdays, starting Feb 26, from 11:00 am - 1:00 pm and 6:30-8:00 pm, and one hour before each performance.

Find more events at [www.newtongov.org/communitycalendar](http://www.newtongov.org/communitycalendar)

**CONTINUE READING THE CITY OF NEWTON WEEKLY REPORT TO LEARN WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.**

## TOP 10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE FISCAL YEAR 2019 CITY BUDGET

10. There will be no increase to the tax levy. It will remain at last year's levels of \$17.14/thousand, and the budgeted percentage of general fund reserves would increase from 23.8% in 2018 to 25% of revenues in 2019.
9. Despite increasing our total assessed property value by over \$11 million in the last year, the City's taxable valuations decreased by 2.8% due to the effects of the rollback and property tax reform. The City will therefore receive \$185,865 less in property taxes in Fiscal Year 2019 than it received in Fiscal Year 2018.
8. The City saw an increase of 16% in employee benefits since last year. Employee benefit costs (health insurance, pension, worker's comp, and employment taxes) account for \$6.00 of the \$17.14 property tax levy.
7. During 2017, the City Council proactively reorganized the City, eliminating over \$150,000 in employee salaries and the corresponding employee benefit costs through attrition. In order to further control employee benefit costs, the City is not planning to rehire two positions which are expected to be vacated in the current year – the fire marshal position and a police officer position.
6. The City will be utilizing federal and state road funding, as well as Road Use Tax funds (the gas tax), to complete many important road projects including a concrete overlay of Iowa Speedway Drive from Walmart to Manatts and asphalt overlays of some streets located in all four Council wards.
5. Asphalt overlays of the streets on the west, north and east sides of the Square will be completed for the first time since 1985.
4. Critical public safety equipment in the budget include an ambulance, a cardiac monitor, two police cars, new radios for police and fire, and body cameras for police officers.
3. A new snowplow and the addition of seasonal employees during the winter will enhance the City's snow removal efforts by 66%, by allowing five snow removal crews to respond to winter events instead of three.
2. The City Council will continue to invest in our parks by completing a rehabilitation of both slides at the Maytag Pool and the purchase of a park trailer, a golf greens mower, a park debris blower, a park utility truck, a zero-turn mower for our cemeteries and a new mower for parks.
1. While this year's budget proposal required the City to tighten our belt, there are several indicators of future growth including the following:
  - Major businesses have selected Newton and local businesses have announced plans to expand in the last 12 months including TPI's bus body manufacturing plant, Global Fiberglass, Newton Elite Properties (who bought the Newton Manufacturing building), and Gates (Atlas Hydraulics).
  - The Hotel Maytag Project, along with 2nd story grants, façade grants, and the renewal of the SSMID will drive growth of retail, restaurants and services in the downtown area.
  - D&D efforts in the City will continue to enhance our curb appeal and property valuations.
  - Two new subdivisions are developing (Fairmeadows North and Cardinal Ridge) and there is interest from developers in building new multi-family, executive, and downtown housing.
  - New retail and restaurants are coming to Newton including Hardees and Kwik Star.

# ADMINISTRATION

## GETTING THE WORD OUT ON BUDGET

City Administrator Matt Muckler met with eleven different small groups of City employees in all areas of the organization to talk with them about the budget. There was plenty of good conversation and suggestions made by City staff on how the City can continue to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars while continuing to provide a high level of services to our residents. Muckler also appeared on the Proud to Know Newton radio show this week to talk about the Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Budget and was also interviewed by KCOB 1280AM News Director Randy Van for the Featurescope show which will air this weekend.

## CITY TOUR FOR NEWEST CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

Councilman Mark Hallam took an all-day, city-wide tour this week. Councilperson Hallam met with City staff from every department and division on Wednesday in a whirlwind tour that also included brief meetings with representatives from the Newton Development Corporation (NDC), the Newton Housing Development Corporation (NHDC), the Newton Chamber of Commerce and Newton Main Street. Facility tours included the Newton Landfill, the Water Pollution Control Plant, Westwood Golf Course, Maytag Park, the Public Works Building and the Newton Public Library. City staff meetings included the Community Services and Economic Development Divisions, the Planning and Zoning Department, the Police Department, the Fire Department and Public Works.

## ECIC MEETING

Mayor Mike Hansen and several members of the City Council and City staff participated in the East Central Iowa Coalition of Municipalities (ECIC) meeting that took place in Pella earlier this week. John Danos, Bond Counsel with Dorsey & Whitney presented the latest trends in economic development. Mr. Danos also discussed home rule, the recent history of economic development law in the State of Iowa, and some background on public-private partnerships. ECIC is a regional group that is sponsored by the Iowa League of Cities.

## FIREWORKS TOWN HALL MEETING ON MARCH 12TH

The City of Newton's elected officials will hold a town hall meeting on fireworks at the DMACC Newton Campus Auditorium beginning at 7 p.m. on Monday, March 12th. This is an opportunity for Newton residents to share their thoughts, opinions and concerns regarding fireworks.

The town hall meeting will include a presentation on the current fireworks ordinance. The presentation will be followed by information from City staff including recommended potential changes to the ordinance and legislative updates.

Residents and business owners will then be given the opportunity to provide feedback to elected officials on their policy preferences. Individuals who wish to provide feedback will be asked to introduce themselves, state their address and provide up to three minutes of feedback.

Currently, the discharge of Fireworks is limited to the hours of 9 a.m. and 11 p.m. on July 4 and 9

a.m. on December 31 to 12:30 a.m. on January 1 (City of Newton Code, § 135.05/Ordinance 2301). The sale of fireworks is also limited to permanent structures or buildings between June 1 and July 8 and from December 10 until January 3; and in temporary structures between June 13 and July 8 (City of Newton Code, § 135.03/Ordinance 2301).

## RAGBRAI UPDATE

Organization and early planning for RAGBRAI XLVI's overnight stop in Newton has started. An advisory board consisting of Mayor Mike Hansen, Councilman Steve Mullan, Dan Goetz (Newton Daily News), Tanya Michener (NDC), Doug Cupples (Jasper County), Bob Callaghan (Newton Community School District and Kim Didier (DMACC Business Resources) has helped to appoint the following Executive Committee.

Coordinators: **Danielle Rogers** and **Amanda Price**

Recording Secretary: **Katrina Davis**

Co-Treasurers: **Jenni Patty & Kelly Bowen**  
(Budget subcommittee)

Executive Committee Chairs:

**Nick & Kristi Cummins**

(Housing, Campgrounds, Showers/Sanitation/Recycling, Ride Right subcommittees)

**Chantelle Lundberg & Vicki Wade**  
(Publicity, Hospitality, Web & Social Media, Information Center, Volunteers subcommittees)

**Liz Dodd, Joe & Linda Coen and Bob Van Arkel**

(Food & Vendors, Electrical, Beverage Garden, Entertainment/Special Events subcommittees) |

**Jarrold Wellik**

(Public Safety, Law Enforcement, Medical, Communications and Transportation subcommittees)

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## UPDATE ON HOTEL MAYTAG

The Parking Space Lease for Hotel Maytag was pre-approved by the Iowa Finance Authority in consideration of IFA's requirement for one designated parking space per unit. City Council members approved a Resolution authorizing the Parking Space Lease at the special Council meeting on February 26th. A copy of the signed Lease was forwarded to IFA prior to their February 28th deadline. Asbestos remediation and demolition work begins in early March, with construction still on the schedule for May.

## FOUNTAIN HILLS ESTATES

In a February 26th Public Hearing, City Council accepted Venture Homes' offer to purchase Lot 12 in the subdivision. Another spec home is slated to break ground in late March and, judging by the market response so far, will likely sell before it's completed. A Jasper County builder has also expressed interest in Fountain Hills lots, but will be focusing on the lots being replatted on the east side of E 22nd Street S.

## CARDINAL RIDGE

Both the spec single family and duplex townhomes are nearing exterior completion and are on target for a spring grand opening. The custom twin-home will be started in March and, as weather improves, should be completed by summer. Interest in the subdivision remains very high.

## NEWTON DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION UPDATES

- Job Fair is March 8th with 37 companies participating. This year HIRTA is offering Free Rides to the job fair. Call 1.877.689.0029 to schedule.
- March 14th marks our first of six Human Resources Professional Series. Contact Holly Poort: 515.745.2186/ [holly.poort@manpowerdm.com](mailto:holly.poort@manpowerdm.com).
- Efforts are still being explored to gather data about child care needs in Newton. HR Professionals can be a great resource for understanding demand.
- The Leadership Class is wrapping up the Real Colors Personality Profile and will be touring and learning about Law Enforcement & Crisis Management next week.
- Phoenix Investors are continuing to get the space at Plant Two ready for TPI to start building the bus bodies. The 100,000 square foot space that TPI will occupy changes daily.
- Global Fiberglass continues to haul in decommissioned wind turbines to their site at Plant Two. They have not started grinding them yet.

## NEWTON HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION UPDATES

- Fairmeadows North Plat 8 - Closed on lot 5 on Feb. 23 and will close on lot 10 on March 2. The remaining 4 sold lots will close before the middle of March. Two other lots have "Right of Refusal" offers on them, which means all the lots touching Agnes Patterson Park are spoken for.

- Barton Land (70.7 acres) - Survey and topo map work ordered by Bolton and Menk. Purchase transaction is scheduled to close on March 20th.
- Attended both the Home and Remodeling Show and the Home and Garden Show in Des Moines. Builders had lots of questions about new construction activity in Newton and we have identified at least two good prospects.
- The Apartment Complex List has been updated and is available to anyone who would like a copy. Email your request to [nhdcdirector@gmail.com](mailto:nhdcdirector@gmail.com).
- The spec home built by Teck Builders in Bradford Estates has been sold and they will be building another spec home this spring.
- The last Jewel Tea Court condo was sold and recently closed. Congratulations to Rob Kahn and Nathan Van Maanen for closing out a very successful development!
- Together with representatives from the City, NDC and Newton Main Street, met with the owners of the Jewel Apartments to discuss options for completing the 14 units under construction.

## DMACC GREENSPACE UPDATE

The DMACC Greenspace Committee met with OPN architect Jack Topp and, via videoconferencing, the other project consultants on Monday, Feb. 26. The scope and timeline of the design project were presented in detail, as well as a critical examination of the ISU design students' concepts for the greenspace and surrounding buildings.