

# The Arlington Report

## ELECTED OFFICIALS

Jim Kreft -- Mayor  
Curt Reetz -- Council Member  
Mike Vrklan -- Council Member  
Galen Wills -- Council Member  
John Griep -- Council Member  
Gregg Borchert -- Council Member

## APPOINTED OFFICIALS

Matt Jaunich -- City Administrator  
Dennis Schultz -- EDA Director  
Lisa Tesch -- Deputy Clerk  
Vicki Pomplun -- Admin. Ass't  
Lana Woehler -- Community Center Coordinator  
Dan Thomes -- Streets/Parks Supt.  
Bruce Rovinsky -- Chief of Police  
Scott Bennett -- Police Officer

## CONTRACTED SERVICES

Ross Arneson -- City Attorney  
Cynthia Smith-Strack -- Planning & Zoning Consultant  
Darin Haslip -- Building Inspector  
People Service -- Water/Wastewater  
Joel Hawbaker (Bolton & Menk) -- City Engineer

## PHONE NUMBERS

City Hall: 964-2378  
Fax Line: 964-5973  
After-Hours On-Call:  
507-327-6601  
Fire Garage: 964-2279  
Police Dept: 964-5200  
Library: 964-2490  
Hospital: 964-2271  
S.E. School: 964-2292  
Post Office: 964-5503

## OTHER SERVICES

Water/Sewer/Electric Services  
City of Arlington (964-2378)  
Gas Service  
CenterPoint Energy (800-245-2377)  
Cable Service  
Mediacom (800-332-0245)  
Internet/Phone Service  
Frontier (800-435-1504)  
Garbage Services  
Waste Management (800-422-5785)  
Tidy Disposal (952-873-2636)  
Evergreen Sanitation (877-601-4467)

## 3 CITY COUNCIL POSITIONS UP FOR RE-ELECTION THIS FALL

Come January of 2009, the Arlington City Council could look very different. This November, three City Council positions will be up for re-election. The terms for council members John Griep, Galen Wills and Gregory Borchert all expire at the end of December and neither one has officially stated whether or not they will be running in this year's election. All three positions are four-year terms. Terms for council members Curt Reetz and Mike Vrklan, along with Mayor Jim Kreft, all expire in December of 2010. Filing for the City Council positions open at 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday, August 26th. Filing closes at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 9th with candidates having until Thursday, September 11th to withdraw their name from consideration. The filing fee is \$2 and you must be a resident of Arlington to run for an elected position. The Primary Election is Tuesday, September 9th and the General Election will take place on Tuesday, November 4th.

## RESIDENTS ENCOURAGED TO FILL OUT PARK VISIONING SURVEY

Enclosed with this month's utility bill is a Park Visioning Survey that residents are encouraged to fill out. The survey was put together by the City's Planning and Zoning Consultant, Cynthia Smith-Strack, and will be used in conjunction with the Parks, Trails, & Open Space portion of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the survey is to get feedback from residents on the current system of parks and trails, and an idea of where the community would like to see the park/trail system by the year 2030. Completed surveys should be mailed or dropped off at the Arlington City Offices, 204 Shamrock Drive by September 1st.

## CITY ASKING RESIDENTS TO PICK UP AFTER DOGS

In recent months, Arlington city staff have received complaints from residents on dogs pooping in city parks. Residents should be aware that City Ordinance 206 regulates the keeping of animals within city limits. Ordinance 206 states that dogs should be restrained from conducting bowel movements on public boulevards, parks and playgrounds. If the dog cannot be prevented from doing so, said dog owners are required to immediately pick up after their dog and disposed of the bowel movement properly (garbage can). City Staff is asking dog owners to be watchful of their

dogs and pick up after them. We all must share the parks with community residents, many of whom are not dog owners and do not wish to walk or play in dog poop. If you see a dog go and their owner does not, politely ask them to clean it up.

## NEW LAWS EFFECTIVE IN AUGUST

New laws passed by the 2008 Legislature take effect starting August 1st. A sampling of some of those laws and how they may affect you are as follows: *Dangerous Dogs* -- A new law requires that all dangerous dogs be sterilized, and that owners must notify animal control authorities if the dog is moved to a new location. The law also prohibits dog ownership for anyone who has repeatedly been convicted of crimes involving dangerous dogs. *Delinquent Utility Bills* -- A new law allows tenants to restore utility service by paying outstanding utility charges that would otherwise be the responsibility of the landlord. *Foreclosure Notice* -- A new law requires that rental property owners under foreclosure must give a notice of a mortgage foreclosure to a prospective renter. If the property is transferred to a new owner following the foreclosure and the new owner seeks to evict an existing renter, they must be given at least a two month's written notice to vacate. *Employment Protection* -- Families of service members are now afforded some employment protection when their loved one is being deployed or honored. Under a new provision, an employer cannot fire or take employment action against any employee, or keep them from attending certain events relating to military service of a spouse, parent or child to which the employee is invited. *Tinting Windows* -- A new law states that consumers will now need a doctor's prescription from within the last two years to have certain vehicle windows tinted. *Driver's Licenses* -- A new law requires that during the first 6 months of provisional licensure, a licensee cannot operate a vehicle carrying more than one passenger under the age of 20 who is not a member of their immediate family. That increases to 3 passengers the following 6 months. The law also states that a person under 18 is prohibited from driving between midnight and 5 a.m. with exceptions. *Text Messaging* -- It is now illegal to text message when driving a vehicle that is in motion or a part of traffic. *"Good Faith"* *Insurance Law* -- A new law allows a policyholder to sue their insurance company for not settling a claim in "good faith," meaning they can prove that the insurance company did not have a reasonable basis for denying a claim. For a complete summary of all laws passed during the 2008 legislative session, go to <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinfo/newlaws2008-0.asp>.

## 2008 STATE OF THE CITIES REPORT

### City of Arlington, Sibley County

Contact us at:  
204 Shamrock Drive  
Arlington, MN 55307

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*A Beautiful City Growing in Unity*



The share of Minnesota cities reporting improved fiscal conditions in 2007 dropped sharply from more than half in 2006 to 40 percent, according to the 2008 State of the Cities Report released in late June by the League of Minnesota Cities. That is the smallest share of cities better able to meet financial needs since 2004—the second year that the survey was administered and the year following a 25 percent cut in state aid to cities.

The fiscal conditions survey included questions asking city officials to indicate whether or not they were better or less able to meet financial needs in the current year than in the previous year, and to predict whether they will be better or less able to meet those needs in the future. The survey was sent to 830 League of Minnesota Cities members, and generated a 56 percent response rate. Cities identified increases in the following budget pressures most often in 2007: infrastructure needs; the cost of employee pensions; and prices, cost of living, and inflation. Cities reporting increasing spending needs in a number of those areas were more likely to also report being less likely to meet financial needs.

The study also explores how the recent housing foreclosure crisis and the pursuit of energy efficiency affect city fiscal conditions. Eight-two (82) percent of the cities responding to the survey identified one or more negative effects of foreclosures on their communities including delinquent utility fees and taxes, problems collecting delinquent utilities, property maintenance issues, and delinquent property taxes. Half of those cities reported at least five distinct foreclosure issues.

Additionally, the report noted that about 58 percent of Minnesota cities that responded to the survey have implemented at least one initiative to increase energy efficiency. The most frequently cited initiatives by Minnesota Cities were: replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent ones (56 percent), controlling temperatures with programmable thermostats (47 percent), using high-efficiency operating systems (39 percent), and installing water-efficient fixtures (24 percent).

The report also features case studies highlighting a range of energy efficiency initiatives employed by seven Minnesota Cities, including Anoka, Apple Valley, Elk River, Minneapolis, Northfield, Rushford Village, and Wells. To view a complete copy of the State of Cities Report 2008, visit [www.lmc.org](http://www.lmc.org).

The League of Minnesota Cities is a non-profit, membership organization dedicated to helping cities throughout Minnesota build quality communities through effective advocacy, expert analysis, trusted guidance, and collective action. The League serves its more than 800 members through advocacy, education and training, policy development, risk management and other services.

## MEETINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Recently, there has been some confusion on the type of meetings a city council can hold. To help with this confusion, residents should be aware of the fact that all meetings of the Arlington City Council are governed by the Minnesota Open Meeting Law. The Open Meeting Law serves three purposes: 1) The law prohibits actions being taken at a secret meeting where it is impossible for the interested public to become fully informed about a public board's decision or to detect improper influences. 2) It assures the public's right to be informed. 3) The law affords the public an opportunity to present its views to the public body. In general, there are three types of meetings that a City Council conducts. The three are open meetings, closed meetings, and public hearings.

**Open Meetings** -- Most meetings of the Arlington City Council are open to the public. There are two different types of open meetings - regular and special. The Arlington City Council conducts two regular open meetings a month; the 1st and 3rd Mondays at 6:30 p.m. These regular meetings are used to discuss, decide or receive information on matters over which the council has authority. Simply, the day to day policy decisions of the City are decided at the semi-monthly regular meetings. Special meetings are meetings held at times or places that are different from the regularly scheduled meetings. These are often scheduled to deal with specific items that need to be addressed before the next regular meeting. Any person may observe a regular or special meeting of the Council. However, what most people do not understand is that although anyone can attend an open meeting, they are not guaranteed the opportunity to speak or otherwise participate in any discussion at the meeting. Generally, open meetings provide the opportunity for the public to witness the actions of the City Council. On certain occasions, the Mayor or City Council can recognize

someone from the public to comment on a specific action item. The City Council provides, at their regular meetings, a "Citizens Addressing the Council" portion of the agenda for residents to comment on non-agenda items. Citizens looking for a specific action from the Council should ask to be placed on the agenda in advance of the meeting.

**Closed Meetings** -- Under certain circumstances, some meetings of the City Council may or must be closed to the public. Meetings that *may* be closed revolve around labor negotiations, performance evaluations, and attorney-client privileges. Meetings that *must* be closed are meetings that deal with discussion on data that is considered private under state law, and for preliminary consideration of allegations or charges against an individual subject to the public body's authority. In the case that the City is dealing with an allegation or charge against an individual; the individual in question may ask, and the city must grant, that the closed meeting be made open to the public for *viewing* purposes.

**Public Hearings** -- A public hearing is a meeting that is held where members of the public get to express their opinions on a particular item. The Council is there to regulate the hearing and make sure that people who want to speak on the issue get the opportunity. The council does not deliberate or discuss matters at the public hearing, but instead listen to formulate an opinion on the matter at hand. Certain issues like special assessments and zoning/ordinance amendments require, by law, a public hearing. From time to time, the City Council will hold a public hearing, even if they are not required to do so by law, for the purpose of allowing the public to comment on a specific issue.