

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.
 Keith Doetkott -- Maint. Worker
 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)

EDA OFFERS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

In early 2007, the City of Arlington, in cooperation with the City of Gaylord, was awarded the Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) grant. The SCDP grant is a federally funded rehabilitation and revitalization program that provides financial assistance to communities like Arlington to improve their housing and commercial environment. Specific to Arlington's application is targeted areas in both the low to moderate housing and commercial sectors that were identified by the grant administrators. Eligible housing rehabilitation projects are funded proportionately by the grant, local governments and home owners. Project loans to the homeowners are forgiven after a period of 7 years after the project is completed. Housing projects may include lead abatement, energy conservation measures and safety issue corrections in addition to numerous other projects to be eligible. Commercial eligibility is also related to the target area and the type and scope of the projects proposed. Possible eligible commercial projects could be electrical updating, energy savings modifications and structural improvements among many others. Proportionate funding participation is also available for the Commercial portion of the program. For applications and additional information please contact Denny Schultz, Arlington EDA Director at 964-2378 or dschultz@arlingtonmn.com.

CITY COUNCIL APPROVES FIRST STAGE OF CITY-WIDE ENERGY AUDIT

In an effort to reduce costs city-wide, the City Council recently entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Johnson Controls to authorize a city-wide preliminary energy audit. The goal of the energy audit is to show energy use as costs, and to recommend cost-effective energy options through an action plan. The audit will consist of an inspection of all city facilities and infrastructure. The goal of this first step is to provide the City Council with a potential list of opportunities for energy savings. The preliminary audit is free of charge to the City. If the preliminary audit shows potential for savings through improvements, the Council may enter into an agreement for a detailed audit. The detailed audit will provide a plan for reducing energy consumption & costs throughout the City. The expected savings in energy costs should pay for any needed improvements. As a part of the agreement, Johnson Controls guarantees long-term performance and savings.

CITY BOARD OF APPEAL & EQUALIZATION HEARING SET FOR APRIL 8th

The Board of Appeal and Equalization for the City of Arlington will meet by appointment at the Office of the Sibley County Assessor, from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, April 8th. The purpose of the meeting is to review and correct any aggrieved property assessments (values) for Arlington property owners for the year 2008. All persons considering themselves aggrieved by said assessments, or who wish to complain that the property of another is assessed too low, are hereby notified to appear at said meeting and show cause of having such assessments corrected. Want to know why your house/business is valued at what it is? Want a better understanding of the valuation process? This is the meeting to attend.

REVISTING THE COLD WEATHER RULE

Recently, the City had the unfortunate task of having to disconnect electricity due to unpaid outstanding balances. The first comment that might come to mind is how can the City do that during the Cold Weather Rule period? For those not familiar with the Cold Weather Rule, the Rule states that residential energy customers (gas/electricity) are protected from service disconnection from October 15 through April 15, provided the disconnection would affect the customer's primary heating source. What most residents may not know, is that your heat can still be shut off in the winter unless you take steps to protect yourself. This is true for all residential customers including households with young children, senior citizens and/or medical conditions in the home. The City offers three payment plans to protect you from a shut-off. The "Inability to Pay" plan is for low income customers who make and keep a payment plan for the rest of the heating season. The "Ten Percent Plan" is for low income customers who pay up to 10% of the household's monthly income, or the full amount of the current month's bill, which ever is less. Lastly, the City offers a "Payment Schedule" for customers at any income level. Payments don't have to be the same each month and can be negotiated with the City. Payment plans that are not followed will be a cause for immediate disconnect. To avoid shut-offs, residents should contact City Hall immediately after receiving a notice for disconnect. Most shut-offs would be avoided if the resident had acted promptly to the City's notice of a disconnection and filled out the proper Cold Weather Rule paperwork. If you know you're going to have trouble paying your heating bills, please contact City Hall and we will be more than willing to work with you.

City of Arlington, Sibley County

Contact us at:
204 Shamrock Drive
Arlington, MN 55307

Phone: 507-964-2378
Fax: 507-964-5973
E-mail: cityhall@arlingtonmn.com



A Beautiful City Growing in Unity



THE MAYOR'S CORNER

Historically, we as Arlington residents have supported a municipal government that is very inclusive and dependent upon dedicated citizen involvement. At the annual organizational meeting of the City Council in January, a list of mayoral appointments was approved. The list included names of almost 80 citizen volunteers willing to serve on standing committees or task forces. These appointees are passionate for the cause for which they serve, knowledgeable of the subject material, and prepared to share their founded opinions in a public forum. As a community, we should take pride in and offer gratitude for the enthusiasm, commitment, and selflessness of these citizens and all who have served the City of Arlington in the past.

Generally, the city council has three types of advisory, recommending boards.

There are six council committees, each exclusively consisting of two City Council members. These committees, while serving as sounding boards for city staff and consultants, review technical issues in areas such as utilities, finance, streets, employee relations, public buildings, and others. The council committees' recommendations are passed to the entire council for approval.

Another type of advisory group to the council is the standing, citizen committee, of which we boast seven. These committees, comprised almost entirely of volunteers, have one or two city council representatives who serve as liaisons between the respective committee and the city council. The sizes of the committees range from five to nine, with terms ranging from one to five years in length. The Park, Cemetery, Police, and Library Committees have recently written, and the City Council has approved enabling ordinances that define the role, mission, and size of each group. Each of these citizen committees, representing individual city departments, is charged with responsibilities of departmental planning, budget oversight, and collaboration with respective city staff. After reviewing an issue or idea, each committee must make a recommendation to the City Council for final approval.

The Sibley Medical Center Board of Directors, because of the medical center's municipal ownership, is a committee of the City Council, but is fundamentally different from others in its virtual autonomy. SMC has a budget separate from the City's, and the Board of Directors is solely accountable for its management. Nevertheless, in areas of

bonding, significant facility additions, and long-term affiliations, Board decisions are subject to approval by the City Council.

A third variety of advisory group is the task force or commission. These groups are ephemeral, are specifically created to review a single issue, and have no city department or budget. A past, hugely successful example of this type of group is the Sesquicentennial Committee; current examples include the Charter Commission and the Comprehensive Plan Task Force. Task forces and commissions, similar to standing committees, make recommendations to the City Council for approval.

Our broad committee structure of government, as might be imagined, has the potential to be cumbersome. However, as our past performance has proven, this inclusive style of governance can be an extremely effective, and when based on trust, honesty, and respect can be equally efficient. — Mayor Jim Kreft

WIND POWER AND HOW IT MAY AFFECT ARLINGTON

While arguments can be made on the affordability of wind energy, the fact still remains that the Governor and Legislature of the State of Minnesota have placed a state-wide mandate on renewable energy. On February 22, 2007, Governor Tim Pawlenty signed into law the Minnesota Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). The RPS received overwhelming bipartisan support in both the House and Senate. The House passed the bill with a vote of 123-10 and the Senate passed the bill 61-4. The RPS is one of the strongest renewable energy standards in the nation requiring that 25% of the state's electricity comes from renewable power sources by 2025. Xcel Energy, which delivers half of Minnesota's electricity, would have to meet a 30% renewables benchmark by 2020. Currently, half of Minnesota's power is coal-generated with renewables accounting for about 5% of the state's energy. When passed, this law made Minnesota the 22nd state in the nation to enact a renewable energy law. So what does this have to do with Arlington you may ask? Arlington is a member of, and is provided electricity by, the Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (MMPA). The MMPA is an electrical co-op of eleven municipal cities throughout Minnesota. The RPS signed into law last year will significantly affect MMPA and its member utilities. The RPS will require all Minnesota Utility Companies to provide 7% renewable energy by 2010, 12% by 2012, 17% by 2016, 20% by 2020 and 25% by 2025. To meet these new standards, the MMPA will provide renewable power by utilizing the natural resources found in our state. A large part of the renewable generation will come from wind power. The MMPA is currently looking at the possibility of being the first Agency in the state to develop wind

projects in each of its eleven member cities. If it is determined that the project is economically feasible, its anticipated that each wind turbine could produce 1.5 MW of power. The wind project in Arlington could potentially account for 29% of the City's annual energy use and all of the member cities' wind energy could account for over 3% of MMPA's annual total energy use. Currently, Arlington officials are actively involved in the process by searching for a location to place the wind turbine. The wind turbines are quite large and would change the "skyline" of the City. The tower would be owned and maintained by the MMPA. Only a half an acre to an acre is needed for the tower. The turbine, likely to be placed somewhere within city limits, is expected to have a tower height of 220 feet with each blade being 130 feet in length. The size would be similar to the turbine on the St. Olaf campus in Northfield. The tower would need a minimum wind speed of 7.8 mph to produce electricity and a wind speed of 29 mph to produce maximum output. Tests in the area have shown this to be possible. To finance the proposed eleven 1.5 MW wind facilities, the MMPA applied for and received over \$23 million in Clean Renewable Energy Bonds (CREBs) allocated from the IRS. CREBs are zero interest bonds for which the Federal Government pays the interest to the bondholder in the form of tax credits. These bonds are part of a national program to fund alternative, renewable energy projects. Ideally, construction on the wind towers could begin sometime next year. For additional information on wind power and how it would affect Arlington, contact the City Administrator's office at 964-2378.