



STAFF REPORT

DATE: November 8, 2023
CONSENT

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

AGENDA ITEM: Approve Summer Newsletter

SUBMITTED BY: Julie Johnson, City Clerk

BACKGROUND:

A draft of the bi-annual City newsletter has been put together for distribution. If Council approves the draft and authorizes the printing and distribution of *The Source*, it will be mailed as soon as possible once it is printed and prepared for mailing.

ISSUE BEFORE COUNCIL:

Should the City approve and distribute the Winter 2023 edition of *The Source*?

PROPOSAL DETAILS/ANALYSIS:

Staff recommends that the attached draft is approved, and it is authorized to be printed and distributed.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The estimated cost of the printing, preparation, and mailing of each edition of *The Source* is approximately \$2,700.

RECOMMENDATION:

If removed from the consent agenda:

“Move to approve the attached draft and to authorize the printing and distribution of *The Source* newsletter for the winter of 2023.”

ATTACHMENTS:

- Draft of *The Source* for winter 2023

Winter 2023



www.lakeelmo.org

THE SOURCE

Your source for City news and information

2024 Budget and Tax Levy

2024 Budget: On September 19, 2023, the City Council adopted a 2024 Preliminary Property Tax Levy of \$8,922,042 which is an increase of \$1,123,639 or 14.4% over 2023. The City's estimated tax rate for 2024 is 24.545% which is a 2% increase over the 2023 tax rate of 24.064%.

2024 Preliminary General Fund Budget : The operating budget for expenditures for 2024 has an overall increase of \$418,701 or 5.423% over 2023. The increase is due to a number of factors. Some organization-wide increases come as the city's staffing implementations continue. No new internal positions will be added in 2024, but a number of positions that were budgeted for just a portion of 2023 will be full-year in 2024. The new City Center will increase expenses for a number of departments, and insurance expenses are expected to increase, as well. The city will be incorporating an additional Deputy into the contract with Washington County Sheriff's Office in 2024. The Fire Dept. will be incorporating additional Paid-On-Call hours for training and duty crews.

Non-tax revenue is expected to decrease in 2024 as development shifts to multi-family and permit and review fees decrease. This decrease in non-tax revenue creates a gap that must be filled with additional tax revenue – the General Fund Levy -- in order to balance the budget. The preliminary General Fund levy was set at \$5,998,212, an increase of \$876,947 or 17.1%.

2024 Debt Levy: The overall City levy is made up of the General Fund levy and the Debt levies. The table to the right shows the 2023 Debt levy and the proposed 2024 Debt levy. Debt levies are increasing by \$246,692 or 9.2%.

Debt Levies	2023	2024	Change	% Change
2010B	206,656	205,884	-772	
2014A	200,091	103,597	-96,494	
2016A	193,409	187,529	-5,880	
2017A	342,660	340,954	-1,706	
2018A	123,569	125,984	2,415	
2019A	297,138	298,661	1,523	
2021A	1,025,930	1,025,510	-420	
2022A	287,685	283,998	-3,687	
2023A	0	351,713	351,713	
Total Debt Levies	\$ 2,677,138	\$ 2,923,830	\$ 246,692	9.2%

(Budget & Tax Levy Continued to Page 2)

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THE SOURCE Winter 2023

2024 Preliminary City Property Tax Rate: The tax rate is calculated using the City’s Local Taxable Capacity divided by the total levy. The total levy is made up of the general fund levy and debt levies on its outstanding bonds. The City’s estimated tax rate for 2024 is 24.545% which is a 2% increase over the 2023 tax rate of 24.064%. Tax impacts on a home are due to both the change in tax rate and the change in home value. The table below shows the city tax using the estimated 2024 tax rate on various home values in the City.

Public Hearing: A public hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall. After the hearing the City Council will consider adoption of the final budget and tax levy for 2024.

Tax Impact Examples: The example City Tax calculations below are based on the city’s median estimated home value increase of 3.9%. Estimated City Tax for each property will be available in the truth-in-taxation notice sent to properties in November.

	2023	2024
Home Value	\$ 350,000	\$ 363,650 (3.9% incr.)
Tax Rate	City Taxes Due	
24.064% (2023)	\$ 828.52	\$ 864.14
24.545% (proposed 2024)	\$ 854.08	\$ 881.41
		\$ 52.89 increase

	2023	2024
Home Value	\$ 500,000	\$ 519,500 (3.9% incr.)
Tax Rate	City Taxes Due	
24.064% (2023)	\$ 1,203.20	\$ 1,261.86
24.545% (proposed 2024)	\$ 1,227.25	\$ 1,287.08
		\$ 83.88 increase

	2023	2024
Home Value	\$ 650,000	\$ 675,350 (3.9% incr.)
Tax Rate	City Taxes Due	
24.064% (2023)	\$ 1,654.40	\$ 1,730.80
24.545% (proposed 2024)	\$ 1,687.47	\$ 1,765.40
		\$ 111 increase

	2023	2024
Home Value	\$ 900,000	\$ 935,100 (3.9% incr.)
Tax Rate	City Taxes Due	
24.064% (2023)	\$ 2,406.40	\$ 2,511.98
24.545% (proposed 2024)	\$ 2,454.50	\$ 2,562.19
		\$ 156 increase

Snow Plowing in Lake Elmo

Winter weather is never a popular subject, especially for plow operators who are trying to keep roads clear and safe for traffic. The following are a few tips and information that will hopefully make winter a little easier for everyone.

- Do not deposit or push snow across any street (MN State Statute 160.2715)
- Please keep garbage and recycling containers off the roadway.
- Make sure your mailbox is at its legal height and properly secured. The city will only replace mailboxes that are physically hit by city plows.
- Priority will be given to roads with higher amounts of traffic. Roads serving residential areas and cul-de-sacs will be plowed secondary.
- Depending on snowfall timing, crews will begin operations between 2:00 AM and 4:00 AM.

- Please leave plenty of room when following plows. These units do frequent turning and backing. Remember, "If you cannot see their mirrors, they cannot see you!"



Where To Place Your Garbage Can

Please do not place garbage cans on the street. We realize this area is an enticing location to place garbage cans, but it creates a hazard as it narrows the travel lanes creating safety concerns. The cans could get hit by vehicles or create visibility issues. Most garbage trucks are equipped with a hydraulic extending arm that grasps garbage cans. It is recommended that garbage cans be placed at least 3 to 5 feet off the edge of pavement, into your driveway, so they are out of the way of traffic and maintenance vehicles.



Retrieve your garbage cans soon after collection. Garbage cans often sit at the roadside on collection day until the evening. Empty cans are vulnerable to winds and road maintenance operations and could cause a hazard if knocked into the roadway. Prompt removal of empty containers is recommended.

These tips can make garbage collection day safer and easier for all of us

Water Tower #3

The new 1 million gallon water tower construction is scheduled to be on-line the end of November. The additional water storage will complement the existing 1 million gallon tank on Inwood Ave and the 750,000 gallon tank on Ideal Ave. The additional water storage will provide additional domestic water and fire protection in the south east quarter of the city.

The tank itself is made of welded steel and is elevated roughly 100 feet in the air. The tank is set on top of a reinforced concrete support tower that contains equipment to operate the water tower. Water is held in the steel tank and is filled by existing city wells located in the northeast quarter of the city. A centralized data collection and control system operated by the city monitors the water level in the tank and communicates with the wells to turn on (fill the tank) or off (tank is full). Once the water tower is in operation it will undergo routine maintenance inspections and projects as necessary to keep it functioning for years to come.



Parks Master Plan

The City of Lake Elmo is developing a new Master Parks Plan. This new long range plan will replace the existing parks plan that was adopted in 2009. The long range plan is an extension of the 2030 Comp plan which was recently updated in 2021. The master plan follows the growth and development of our city and provides a short a long term outline of our park system that is clear, flexible and implementable. This plan will serve as the framework to guide the parks commission and city council on park additions and improvement decisions over the next decade.



During the preparation of the Parks Master Plan, the community will have several opportunities to review, and provide input on the future of Lake Elmo's Parks Master Plan.

Lake Elmo Public Safety

Fire Prevention



This year's focus is on cooking safety. Your Lake Elmo Fire Department is committed to educating the public about simple but important steps you can take to help reduce the risk of fire when cooking at home.

According to the National Fire Prevention Association, (NFPA) cooking is the leading cause of home fires, with nearly half (49 percent) of all home fires involving cooking equipment; cooking is also the leading cause of home fire injuries. Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home cooking fires and related deaths. In addition, NFPA data shows that cooking is the only major cause of fire that resulted in more fires and fire deaths.

Cooking safety starts with YOU! Pay attention to fire prevention and use these helpful tips when in the kitchen:

- Always keep a close eye on what you're cooking. For foods with longer cook times, such as those that are simmering or baking, set a timer to help monitor them carefully.
- Clear the cooking area of combustible items and keep anything that can burn, such as dish towels, oven mitts, food packaging, and paper towels. Do not use your oven as a storage place when it's not in use.
- Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove. Keep a lid nearby when cooking. If a small grease fire starts, slide the lid over the pan and turn off the burner.
- Create a "kid and pet free zone" of at least three feet around the cooking area and anywhere else hot food or drink is prepared or carried.

Working smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms save lives! Test your smoke and CO alarms monthly, including the installation date and replacing batteries every six months. Replace any defective alarm and alarms over ten years of age.

Recreational Fires and Open Burning Permits

Recreational fires continue to be a great way to gather and enjoy the fall weather in Lake Elmo. Hosting a recreational fire on your property comes with a certain level of responsibility. Be a good neighbor and consider the wind speed and direction of smoke before starting the fire. Consider knocking on your neighbor's door to let them know ahead of time that you will be burning. This drastically reduces the number of nuisance calls made to 911 regarding smoke.

Keep the size of the fire to a limited 3x3x3. Three feet wide, three feet tall, and nothing smaller than three inches in diameter is to be burned. Remember, recreational fires do not include burning leaves, sticks, or yard waste! If the fire gets out of hand don't wait or hesitate, call 911 immediately.

Open burning permits are required for large scale burning. Permits are issued only after an inspection is performed on site to ensure safe practices are being followed. City Ordinance only permits the burning of dead/disease vegetation, bee hives, ground thawing, and prairie restoration. A variance can be issued for special burning, such as storm debris.

More information can be found on the City of Lake Elmo website, under Public Safety > Fire Department > Open Burning.

Water Rebate Program



The City of Lake Elmo, in partnership with the Metropolitan Council, is offering rebates for new installations of water saving devices. With numerous water supply issues, there has never been a better time to improve our water conservation efforts.

Water utility customers in Lake Elmo are eligible for up to \$150 for the replacement of washing machines and up to \$100 per EPA WaterSense toilet. Purchase and install a qualifying device and submit a completed rebate form with a copy of your receipt. Upon approval, a credit will be applied to your water account. Applications and additional information are available on the City's website.



New City Staff

The City has welcomed five new staff members in the past few months.
Please join us in welcoming them to Lake Elmo!



Ashley Monterusso – Planning Assistant. Ashley had over 15 years' experience in the hospitality sector before going back to school for a master's degree in urban and Regional Planning. Rooted in a hospitality mindset, she approaches her work at the city with a commitment to service, relationship-building, and community engagement.



Tim Anders - Firefighter
Tim joined the department in August. He also serves with the Woodbury Fire Department.



Peter Haveman - Firefighter
Peter has been with the department since 2019 as a paid-on-call firefighter. He was promoted in August. He also serves with the Woodbury Fire



Michael Ohrt - Firefighter
Michael joined the department in August. He also serves with the Woodbury Fire Department.



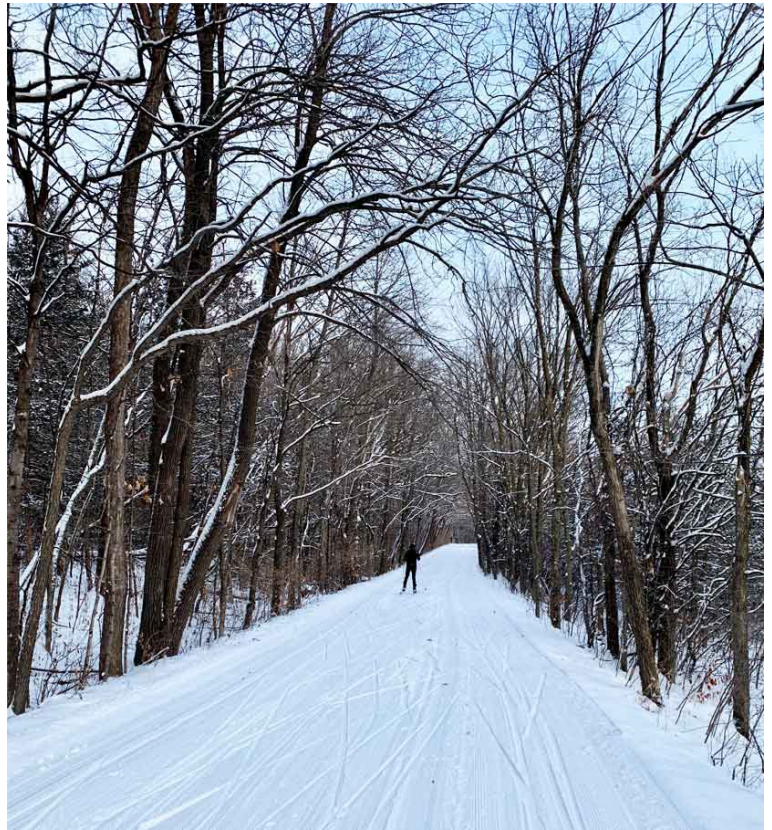
Bill Redman - Firefighter
Bill joined the department in September. He also serves with the Red Wing Fire Department.



Winter activities in Lake Elmo Parks

Are you looking for something to do outdoors this winter? Below are a few activities you can enjoy doing in Lake Elmo City Parks.

- Ice Skating – Lion's Park has a Hockey and Pleasure Rink along with a Warming House. The rinks will open once the weather becomes cold enough to sustain hard ice. Warming House hours are 3-9pm Monday-Friday and 12-9pm Saturday-Sunday and days when school is out.
- Cross Country Skiing/Hiking/Sledding – Sunfish Lake Park has groomed trails for those that enjoy skiing, snow shoeing and hiking. You can also enjoy the sledding hill located in the park.
- Sledding – Tablyn Park boasts a sledding hill that is a popular spot for many to come and test their skills at downhill sledding





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Public Works Contact Info:

Public Works: 651-747-3941

Emergency:

Monday – Friday: 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

City Hall: 651-747-3900

All other hours and weekends,

Washington County Dispatch: 651-439-9381

The City is on Nextdoor!

In an effort to reach as much of the community as possible we've joined Nextdoor to post important updates for residents.

nextdoor

Subscribe to the Fresh!

The Fresh is a weekly newsletter delivered by email to subscribers. Information on upcoming city meetings and events is included as well as helpful information for residents. A link to subscribe can be found on the city's website under the "Residents" tab.

fresh 
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Your weekly source for City news and information

THE SOURCE

A publication of the City of Lake Elmo
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