



NEWS

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3600 Kirchoff Road . Rolling Meadows, IL 60008 . 847-394-8500 . www.cityrm.org

Moody's Rating Upgrade Confirms City's Strong Financial Health

Moody's Investors Service in November upgraded Rolling Meadows' general obligation (GO) bond rating to Aa3, reflecting the agency's confidence in the City's overall financial health, City Manager Barry Krumstok reports.

The Moody's report cited a "substantial increase in the City's reserve levels," as well as its modest debt burden and "record of strong operating results" as reasons for the upgrade from Rolling Meadows' previous A1 rating.

"Moody's and other ratings agencies continue to view Rolling Meadows as an excellent investment," Krumstok says. "Stronger ratings allow the City to issue bonds for economic development and other purposes at lower interest rates. That helps us save taxpayers considerable sums of money – potentially hundreds of thousands of dollars – when paying off those bonds."

The improved Aa3 rating reflects the City's "strong credit" and "strong capacity to meet financial obligations," the Moody's report states. Despite Rolling Meadows' moderate size, its financial rating places the City on the same level as many of its larger neighbors, including Arlington Heights and Palatine.

MOODY'S INVESTORS SERVICE

"The city's financial operations will likely remain sound, given the maintenance of healthy reserve levels and an actively engaged financial management team," the Moody's report continues, adding that Rolling Meadows has experienced "a natural growth in annual sales tax revenues as the local economy continues to recover."

It marks the second time in 12 months that the City was recognized by ratings agencies for its financial flexibility and overall economic health. Standard & Poor's Rating Services (S&P) upgraded the City's rating in December 2013 from A+ to AA+.

City's 60th Anniversary to Begin with February 26 Birthday Party



Lori Ciezak

Assistant to the City Manager.

A community-wide birthday celebration in February will kick off a series of planned activities and events to commemorate Rolling Meadows' 60th Anniversary, reports Lori Ciezak,

venience for cake and light refreshments, while enjoying live music by local high school or area groups.



"The February 26 event will offer an opportunity for everyone to come together and celebrate this important milestone in the City's history," Ciezak explains. "We will also be honoring 60-year residents and local veterans, all of

whom have helped make Rolling Meadows a great place to call home."

The party is being organized by members of the City's ad-hoc 60th Anniversary Committee. The Committee is planning other events and activities to celebrate Rolling Meadows' 60th anniversary, including:

- Partnering with the Rotary Club of Rolling Meadows for its annual St. Patrick's Day Dinner and Raffle (Saturday, March 14). *See article on page 5 for more information.*

- Offering commemorative 60th ...continued on page 2

Contact City Officials: City Hall Hours: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday

MAYOR and CITY COUNCIL

Mayor: *Tom Rooney* 847-392-2254
1st Ward Alderman: *Mike Cannon* 847-925-8919
2nd Ward Alderman: *Len Prejna* 847-776-9442
3rd Ward Alderman: *Laura Majikes* 847-577-3746
4th Ward Alderman: *Brad Judd* 847-902-3248
5th Ward Alderman: *Rob Banger, Jr.* 847-818-1663
6th Ward Alderman: *John D'Astice* 847-409-9367
7th Ward Alderman: *Tim Veenbaas* 847-385-1425
City Manager: *Barry Krumstok* 847-394-8500

SERVICES

Fire & Police Emergency 911
Fire Non-emergency 847-397-3352
Police Non-emergency 847-255-2416
Public Works 847-963-0500
Finance/Utility Billing Questions 847-394-8500
Community Development 847-506-6030
Senior Handyman Program 847-506-6030
ComEd 1-800-EDISON-1
Curfew . . . Sun. – Thurs. 11 p.m.; Fri. & Sat. Midnight



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www.cityrm.org

Approved Budget Freezes Property Tax Levy, Refuse Collection Rates

The Fiscal Year 2015 Budget approved by City Council on December 9 contains no increase in the City's property tax levy or monthly refuse rates, allowing residents to keep more of their money as the economy continues its slow recovery, Finance Director Melissa Gallagher reports.

Gallagher says the freeze in the City's share of residents' property tax bills was made possible by officials' ongoing com-

mitment to conservative budgeting and an emphasis on rebuilding Rolling Meadows' fund balances.

"One of the Council's parameters for this year's budget was to avoid additional property tax burdens on our residents to fund services," she says. "For the past several years, City staff and Council members have worked closely to control spending, strengthen Rolling Meadows' overall financial position and fully fund our pension obligations.

"Those past efforts allow us to offer some property tax relief to our residents – even though the economy still is not in full recovery," she adds.

Along with no estimated change in the City's share of homeowners' property tax bills, refuse customers will see no change in their monthly rate for collection services (\$29.95).

Council also revised the City's Code of Ordinances to eliminate dog licenses,

Utility Fee Breakdown

- Storm Water Management Fee: *Increases 19 cents to \$3.90 per month.*
 - Sewer Rates*: Increase 14 cents to \$2.98 (Tier 1 – up to 15,000 gallons) and 17 cents to \$10.78 (Tier 2 – over 15,000 gallons).
 - Water Rates*: Increase 66 cents to \$9.42 (Tier 1 – up to 15,000 gallons) and \$10.78 (Tier 2 – over 15,000 gallons).
- *per 1,000 gallons

which "helps streamline operations and reduce costs," Gallagher says.

The budget includes slight increases in the City's storm water management fee, sewer rates and water rates. These will cost customers an additional \$6.63 per month, on average.

The approved 2015 budget is posted on the City's Website, www.cityrm.org.

Estimated Share of Property Tax Bill – 2015*

Total Tax Bill	City Share	Change from 2014
\$2,500	\$388	\$0
\$3,000	\$465	\$0
\$5,000	\$775	-\$1
\$7,500	\$1,163	-\$1

*The City's portion of residents' property tax bills is approximately 15%, or 15 cents per dollar (three township average)

A/V Upgrades to Help City Improve, Expand Channel 6 Broadcasts



Justin Chiappetta

Upgrades now being made to City Hall's audio and visual broadcasting equipment will improve the City's ability to televise Council meetings on Channel 6 and expand programming to help keep residents informed, Rolling Meadows' Information Technology (IT) Coordinator Justin Chiappetta reports.

New technology, including high-definition (HD) cameras and advanced computer systems, is replacing equipment that is more than 20 years old. The project, which began in mid-December, will be completed in time to broadcast City Council's January 13 meeting.

"We are literally replacing VHS-era machines with high-definition systems that are capable of delivering more – and better – programming," Chiappetta explains. "Modernizing our equipment will also improve overall operations by significantly reducing our maintenance costs."

Chiappetta explains that outdated equipment is more expensive to maintain because replacement parts are often no longer manufactured. These must be located from specialized vendors, who are able to charge high prices because of limited supply.

New equipment also means expanded opportunities for diverse programming produced by the City, as well as local schools and community groups.

"Harnessing new technologies helps make it easier for residents to access information and keep informed about what's happening in their community," Chiappetta adds. "That's the overriding goal."

The \$170,000 investment in the City's A/V capabilities is part of a broader IT program that includes a redesigned City Website that will debut later this year. The updated Website will eventually allow residents to stream City Council meetings online from their computers, tablets and other mobile devices.

Community Center to Host City's 60th Birthday Party, February 26 ...continued from page 1

Anniversary banners for purchase by residents and businesses. Banners will be displayed downtown and in other locations throughout the year. Committee members will provide more information as it becomes available.

- Establishing a design competition for school-aged children to submit original designs for a 60th Anniversary commemorative

vehicle sticker.

The Committee meets regularly to discuss possible ways to celebrate the City's 60th birthday. Residents who would like to serve on the Committee or an event sub-committee, offer ideas, or volunteer their time and talents, may contact Ciezak at ciezakl@cityrm.org or 847-394-8500.

Builder Opens Downtown Sales Office for New 54-Unit 'Lexington Crossing' Townhome Development on Kirchoff Road



Chicago-based Lexington Homes has established a Rolling Meadows sales office at the site of a planned 54-unit townhome development on Kirchoff Road, where the AMF Bowling Center operated for more than 50 years until closing in 2012.

Known as Lexington Crossing, the new development will feature a mix of two- and three-bedroom townhomes, Lexington Homes' co-principal Jeff Benach explains.

"We are very excited to be part of the Rolling Meadows community and, in particular, its downtown area," he says. "The site is a fantastic location. Its proximity to Route 53 offers tremendous convenience for residents, who will also

live within walking distance of downtown businesses."

The company has submitted architectural plans to the Community Development Department for review. Benach says that the development should be complete within two years, once construction begins.

City officials expect the project will boost the downtown area's residential population, and create opportunities for current and future downtown businesses.

For more information on Lexington Crossing, contact Sandie Kosinski, Lexington Crossing's sales manager, at 847-299-0500.

Residents, Businesses Contribute \$30,000+ To City's Community Events Foundation

Tax-deductible contributions by residents and local businesses have helped the Rolling Meadows Community Events Foundation raise \$31,616 since its founding in 2012.

The Foundation's mission is to support City-sponsored activities held throughout the year. Donations help offset the costs of staging community events such as the Memorial Day observance, annual veterans' dinner, Independence Day festivities, National Night Out and holiday tree lighting. It also supports ongoing maintenance for the Rolling Meadows Historical Museum.



Members of the Rolling Meadows High School Marching Band participate in last year's Memorial Day parade.



The City's annual Holiday Tree lighting has always been a popular community event.

City officials encourage continued support from community members to ensure events funding is available for years to come. Residents and businesses who would like to contribute should make checks payable to *Rolling Meadows Community Events Foundation* and submit them to:

City of Rolling Meadows
Community Events Foundation
3600 Kirchoff Road
Rolling Meadows, IL 60008



Rolling Meadows Historical Museum

Historical Museum to Host January 11 Open House

The Rolling Meadows Historical Society will host its annual Holiday Open House Sunday, January 11, 1–4 p.m., at the Rolling Meadows Historical Museum (3100 Central Road). Enjoy refreshments and guided tours of the museum – a replica of an original Kimball Hill home – which is adorned with vintage décor that helps display traditions of holidays past.

The museum is open Sundays, 1–4 p.m., during its regular winter hours. For information on museum tours or Historical Society activities, call 847-577-7086 or visit www.cityrm.org/HTML/historical_museum.htm.

January 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		Christmas Tree Disposal Public Works will collect Christmas trees for disposal January 5–16. Remove all decorations and place trees at the curb (cut end facing the street) on regular refuse day.		New Year's Day 1 City offices closed. Thursday and Friday refuse pick-up delayed one day.	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Historical Museum Open House , 1–4 pm, (3100 Central Road) 11	Board of Fire & Police Commissioners , 9 am, City Hall 12	Crime Stoppers , 5:30 pm City Council Meeting , 7:30 pm, both at City Hall 13	14	Fire Pension Board , 8:30 am Adjudication Hearing , 1 pm, both at City Hall 15	16	17
18	Dr. Martin Luther King Day City offices closed. Regular refuse pick-up. 19	Water bills due 20 City Council Committee of the Whole , 7:30 pm, City Hall	21	Adjudication Hearing 22 (Red Light), 2 pm, City Hall	23	24
25	Police Pension Board , 3:30 pm, City Hall 26	City Council Meeting , 7:30 pm, City Hall 27	28	29	30	31

February 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	Economic Development Committee , 6 pm Environmental Committee , 7 pm Plan Commission , 7:30 pm, all at City Hall 3	Zoning Board of Appeals , 7:30 pm, City Hall 4	Adjudication Hearing 5 (Parking), 2 pm, City Hall	6	7
8	Board of Fire & Police Commissioners , 9 am, City Hall 9	Crime Stoppers , 5:30 pm City Council Meeting , 7:30 pm, both at City Hall 10	11	Adjudication Hearing , 12 1 pm, City Hall Abraham Lincoln's Birthday	13	14 Valentine's Day
15	16 President's Day	City Council Committee of the Whole , 7:30 pm, City Hall 17	18	Adjudication Hearing 19 (Red Light), 2 pm, City Hall	Water bills due 20	21
22 George Washington's Birthday	23	City Council Meeting , 7:30 pm, City Hall 24	25	City's 60th Anniversary Celebration , 6:30–8:30 pm, Community Center (3705 Pheasant Drive). Happy Birthday, Rolling Meadows! 26	Blood Drive , 12–6 pm, 27 Neuckranz Fire Station (2455 Plum Grove Road). Call 847-397-3352 to donate.	28
		Keep updated on City news with Rolling Meadows' electronic newsletter, E-News & Views , published in February, April, June, August, October and December. Each newsletter is archived on the City's Website, www.cityrm.org .				

Assistant Public Works Director Bob Hartnett To Retire in January After 38 Years of Service

It can be difficult to accurately summarize the career of someone who devotes 38 years of professional service to their home community, but Assistant Public Works Director Bob Hartnett gave an accurate, concise answer when asked how he wants to be remembered following his January 9 retirement.

“I always tried to look at things from a different perspective and find ways to improve services for our residents,” he says, recalling a career that began with the Department’s Street Maintenance Division in 1977. “It’s easy to keep doing the same thing all the time, but I have always believed that if you can find a better way, you owe it to yourself to do it.”

In fact, Hartnett was looking for ways to “do things better” on behalf of Rolling Meadows residents even before he went to work for the City.

Years ago, while pursuing his Associates Degree in Public Administration at Harper College (he later earned his Bachelor’s degree from Roosevelt University), Hartnett was assigned a final project that required him to identify possible traffic flow improvements at the intersection of Kirchoff and Wilke Roads. He scheduled a meeting with then-Assistant Public Works Director Denny York to discuss his ideas.

“Denny looked at my plans and said they were very similar to what the City had been developing,” Hartnett recalls, adding that the eventual improvements were quite different from what he had designed.

Perhaps it is fitting, then, that Hartnett was hired by Public Works shortly after applying.

Another example of Hartnett’s ability to find ways to improve services and save taxpayers money came several years later, while reviewing vehicle specifications for a dump truck the Department was preparing to purchase.

After asking the manufacturer’s representative why vehicle steering wheels were always so large, he learned that it was an optional feature that increased the vehicle’s total cost.

“Before power steering, drivers preferred larger wheels to operate the vehicles,” Hartnett explains. “Once we had that information, it was an easy decision to go with the standard option – a smaller steering wheel – and deliver a better value for our residents.”

He calls it a perfect illustration of how Department employees are constantly searching for ways to work more effectively on behalf of Rolling Meadows residents.

“I have always admired Bob’s knowledge of Department operations and his ability to help our employees find ways to do their jobs better,” says Public Works Director Fred Vogt, who later promoted Hartnett to Internal Services Superintendent and then Assistant Director. “His priority has always been to help Department personnel provide the best-possible services to Rolling Meadows residents and businesses. On



Assistant Public Works Director Bob Hartnett will retire January 9, after a 38-year career at Public Works.

behalf of the entire Public Works Department, I wish Bob a very happy retirement, and a lot of health and happiness.”

Hartnett views the establishment of the Department’s nationally-recognized Citizens Training Academy as one of his professional highlights. “I am so proud to have worked with a fantastic team to create a program where residents could learn more about what we do,” he says.

But nothing makes him prouder than the fact that he was able to serve his hometown community for so many years. A Rolling Meadows High School graduate, Bob and his wife, Lin, have two married children, Matt and Aimee, and one grandchild.

“It has been incredibly rewarding to work with so many dedicated employees over the years,” Hartnett says. “Together, we built one of the best Public Works departments in the northwest suburbs: one that is able to adapt new technologies and cost-saving strategies to better serve residents.”

Rotary’s St. Patrick’s Day Dinner to Feature \$2,500 Grand Prize ‘Pot of Gold,’ March 14

A traditional Irish/American dinner of corned beef, cabbage and chicken; an open bar featuring beer, wine and soft drinks; Irish music and dancing; and a grand prize “Pot of Gold” worth a possible \$2,500 await guests during the Rotary Club of Rolling Meadows’ 15th annual St. Patrick’s Day Dinner and Auction, Saturday, March 14.

The event, supported in part by the City’s 60th Anniversary Committee, will be held at the Community Center (3705 Pheasant Drive), from 6–10 p.m. Tickets

are \$30 per person. Proceeds will help Rotary support programs that benefit the entire Rolling Meadows community.

Ticket sales will determine the total worth of the grand prize raffle. The club’s goal is to sell 100 tickets by March 9.

For more information or to purchase tickets, contact Rolling Meadows Park District Director Amy Charlesworth (acharlesworth@rmparks.org or 847-818-3220) or Public Works Director Fred Vogt (vogt@cityrm.org or 847-963-0500).



Report Coyote Sightings to Police

Residents who occasionally spot coyotes along Salt Creek or other areas of Rolling Meadows should not be alarmed. In fact, coyotes have become the top carnivore in a number of U.S. metropolitan areas – including Chicago. Residents have little to fear, but should report suspected coyote sightings to the RMPD at 847-255-2416.

2015 Budget Allows Council, Staff to Take Foot off the Gas

by Mayor Tom Rooney

The recent recession had a major impact on the City budget and put Rolling Meadows in an extremely uncomfortable financial position. Our financial reserves were the lowest they had been in decades and our cash position was embarrassingly low.

Three years ago, the Council, staff, and I presented residents with these unfortunate facts. We raised the property tax and cut back the annual raises that had become standard over the previous decade.

In short, we did what was necessary to ensure the City's continued financial viability. And we have made remarkable progress.

This fall, the City received more good news from the Council's and staff's handling of the budget. The second of the three major rating agencies has upgraded the City's credit rating. Our reserves are at 23% of our annual

budget, and our cash position has increased six-fold.

Because of this dramatic improvement in Rolling Meadows' financial situation, the Council approved a 2015 budget with no increase in the City's property tax levy and a 1.3% increase in the (much smaller) share of the property tax that is levied for the library.

We bit the bullet before when a property tax increase was necessary, but the Council and staff have worked hard to return us to a position where increasing the property tax was not necessary for this year's budget.

Residents were willing to accept our foot on the accelerator three years ago when it was required. As the City's financial position continues to improve, I think it's just as important to let everyone know that we've taken our foot off the gas.



Recycle Holiday Lights, Cords at City Hall Through February 13

Residents looking to dispose of old holiday lights may drop them off at City Hall until February 13, through a recycling program developed by the Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County (SWANCC) and Elgin Recycling.

The program let residents recycle holiday lights of all colors and lengths, extension cords, household cords/wiring, and computer wires/cords. Drop boxes are located near City Hall's entrance.

For more information, visit www.elginrecycling.com or www.swancc.org.

Plans Underway for Expanded Farmers & Food Trucks Series; Friday Evening Event Added to Summer 2015 Schedule

Rolling Meadows may currently be locked in winter's grasp, but City officials are already preparing the ingredients for another summer of food and fun, with an expanded Farmers & Food Trucks program series that will begin Saturday, May 23.



Food trucks have proven to be a big draw for guests over the past two seasons.

The monthly program series will again take place the fourth Saturday of each month (May – September) in the City Hall parking lot, with an additional Friday evening event confirmed for June 19, 5 – 8 p.m., at Community Church of Rolling Meadows (2720 Kirchoff Road).

At each event, guests will enjoy a variety of fresh, locally-grown produce, savory dishes prepared by onsite food trucks, handmade crafts for sale by local artisans, and much more. Additional information on each event will be featured in upcoming issues of *News & Views*.

Residents who wish to volunteer for this year's program may contact Lori Ciezak, Assistant to the City Manager, at 847-394-8500 or ciezakl@cityrm.org.

Vendors who are interested in joining this year's Farmers & Food Trucks roster will

find additional information and registration forms on the City's Website, www.cityrm.org.

Farmers & Food Trucks 2015 Schedule*

Saturday, May 23
Friday, June 19**
Saturday, June 27
Saturday, July 25
Saturday, August 22
Saturday, September 26

*Saturday events to be held 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., in the City Hall parking lot (3600 Kirchoff Road)

**Friday program will take place 5 – 8 p.m., at Community Church (2720 Kirchoff Road)