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CITY GOALS:



Agnew and Risser Elected to City Council Council to Bid Farewell to Anderson and Staunton Dec. 20



Kate Agnew (submitted photo)



Julie Risser (submitted photo)

BY DEBBIE TOWNSEND

Two new faces will join the Edina City Council in 2023 as voters chose Kate Agnew and Julie Risser in the Nov. 8 election.

"I'm excited to bring the perspective of a parent with young children to the Council," said Agnew, an Edina Planning Commissioner who is also part of the Cahill District Plan working group.

"Residents want to be heard as Edina positions itself to excel over the coming decades, and I look forward to working hand in hand with them as we advance as a community."

Risser also has Planning Commission experience and seven years on the Energy & Environment Commission. "Across the political spectrum, Edina residents care about clear process and transparency," Risser said. "Many are concerned about overdevelopment, rising taxes, traffic safety and congestion. These resident concerns will be my top priorities."

Agnew will step down from her Planning Commission duties, and she and Risser will be sworn into City Council Jan. 3. They will replace two-term member Kevin Staunton,

who chose not to run, and first-term member Ron Anderson. Carolyn Jackson, James Pierce and Mayor Jim Hovland make up the rest of the five-member council, which will bid farewell to the outgoing members at the Dec. 20 meeting.

Staunton will end 17 years of public service to Edina, having served three terms on Planning Commission prior to City Council. He called his time on the City Council both a labor of love and a wild ride. As for his legacy: "I hope that the notion that you can be thoughtful and measured and listen to people and choose the right thing can be fashionable."

Hovland praised Staunton for his decades of loyalty and commitment to Edina to build a better tomorrow. "He is a man of remarkable talents and abilities that is always thinking of what is best for our community and its residents," Hovland said. "Our town has been blessed to have his counsel and I have been fortunate in all my years of public service to have served with him as he has provided guidance to all of us in the most gentle of ways."

For more information about City Council, visit EdinaMN.gov.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, Dec. 3, 10 a.m.

Holiday Craft & Book Bazaar, Edina Senior Center

Tuesday, Dec. 6, 7 p.m.

City Council meeting, Edina City Hall

Wednesday, Dec. 7, 6 p.m.

Family Full Moon Snowshoe, Braemar Golf Course

Thursday, Dec. 8, 7:30 a.m.

Housing & Redevelopment Authority meeting, Edina City Hall

Friday, Dec. 9, 5:30 p.m.

Family Movie Night, "Sing 2," Edinborough Park

Saturday, Dec. 10, 10 a.m.

Holiday Ornaments, Edina Art Center

Saturday, Dec. 10, 4 p.m.

Holiday Winter Wonderland, Centennial Lakes Park

Sunday, Dec. 18

Hanukkah

Tuesday, Dec. 20, 7 p.m.

City Council meeting, Edina City Hall

Sunday, Dec. 25

Christmas Day, City offices and facilities closed

Monday, Dec. 26

Christmas observed, City offices closed

Monday, Dec. 26

Kwanzaa

Saturday, Dec. 31,

9 a.m.-Noon or 3-6 p.m.

Family New Year's Eve Party, Edinborough Park

For a complete listing of meetings and events, visit EdinaMN.gov.

Watch City Council, Housing & Redevelopment Authority and Planning Commission meetings live:

- Edina TV (Comcast Channels 813 or 16)
- [Facebook.com/EdinaMN](https://www.facebook.com/EdinaMN)
- "Watch a Meeting" web page at EdinaMN.gov/LiveMeetings

Edina Voters Approve Sales Tax Referendum to Invest \$39.3 Million in Local Parks

Half-Percent Sales Tax Will Fund Improvements at Fred Richards Park and Braemar Park and Arena



Braemar Arena and Park + Fred Richards Projects

Edina residents approved a half-percent sales tax referendum Tuesday, Nov. 8, that will allow the City to invest \$39.3 million in major improvements at Fred Richards Park and Braemar Park and Arena.

Under the plan, Braemar and Fred Richards parks will receive a wide range of amenities and improvements, including new courts, trails, playgrounds, natural habitat restoration and more. Additionally, Braemar Area will receive critical repairs and upgrades that will help ensure it remains fully operational and more accessible for many years to come.

The parks and arena investment plan was presented in two ballot questions. Question One requested \$21.6 million to invest in a variety of updates at Braemar Park and critical repairs at Braemar Arena.

Question Two sought \$17.7 million to convert the shuttered Fred Richards Executive Golf Course into a multi-faceted park.

Question One was approved by 16,646 votes to 11,435 votes and Question Two was approved by 14,605 votes to 13,224 votes.

“We’re excited to move forward with these projects to provide more recreation opportunities and enhance the quality of life for Edina residents,” said City Manager Scott Neal.

The sales tax will spread the tax impact of the investment among residents and nonresidents who make purchases in Edina. Approximately 54 percent of the sales tax increase will be paid by nonresidents, according to a newly updated analysis by the University of Minnesota.

City leaders began gathering input from residents in 2016 regarding the needs of Fred Richards and Braemar parks. Feedback from community meetings and surveys helped shape the investment plan, and the City successfully received

legislative approval in 2021 to propose a half-percent sales tax to voters to finance it.

“This is the result of lots of hard work by Edina residents to design and invest in a plan to expand and improve our parks and recreation system,” said Parks & Recreation Director Perry Vetter. “I appreciate everyone who participated in this process.”

The sales tax takes effect in 2023 and will expire in 19 years. If the bonds for the projects are paid off before then, the sales tax will expire earlier. Design work for the parks projects will begin in the coming weeks and months.

In 2023, the City plans to seek legislative approval to use the same 19-year, half-percent sales tax to fund an additional \$25.3 million for the expansion of Braemar Arena. The expansion would demolish the South Rink and build two new ice rinks, resulting in four indoor rinks and one outdoor seasonal rink. The expansion would also include a safe drop-off and pick-up area, a larger lobby and more parking.


For more information, visit EdinaAtPlay.org.



– COMPILED BY JENNIFER BENNEROTTE

BY THE NUMBERS

Winter Snow Removal

The City of Edina Public Works Department is ready for snow! The department has a full fleet of snow removal vehicles and a commitment to safeguarding the environment by continuing its salt reduction practices! 



PUBLIC WORKS



67

Miles of sidewalk plowed by the City of Edina

30%

Reduction of salt use by the City of Edina over the past five years



230

Miles of center-lane highway plowed in the City of Edina

7.5

Average number of hours it takes to clear a four-inch snowfall



– COMPILED BY AMY KYLLO

Utility Fee and Rate Changes Proposed For 2023

Changes Will Promote Conservation, More Equitable Billing, Pay for Reinvestment

BY BRITTANY BADER

Do you know how many gallons of water your household uses in a year? It is likely around 76,000 gallons, which has been the average consumption of an Edina single-family residential property. Come Jan. 1, 2023, proposed utility fee and rate changes will provide an incentive for many Edina residents and businesses to monitor their water consumption further.

The proposed fee and rate changes result from a utility rate study initiated by the City and conducted by the City's financial advisor, Ehlers, to meet the following goals:

- Promote water conservation, a key Climate Action Plan goal
- Pay for reinvestment in the aging utility system and system capacity expansion
- Make water and sewer more affordable for lower-volume customers

The changes include price adjustments to water, sewer, stormwater, connection fees and meter charges. But the most significant change is adjusting the water tiered rate structure for many property types, which is how the price per unit of 1,000 gallons of water is calculated. The result is that depending on your property type, your quarterly bills may decrease from 2022 to 2023 if you are a low-volume consumer of water or increase if you are a medium- or high-volume consumer.

"Pumping, treating and transferring water is expensive, and even more so during times of drought when the system works its hardest to deliver. The proposed rate structure for 2023 is more equitable because it assigns the higher costs associated with maintaining and operating the aging utility system to the higher-volume users, and those who consume less water can benefit from lower prices," said Finance Director Alisha McAndrews. "We are also being responsive to concerns we've heard about how sewer is billed and have made modifications that should provide some customers with a cost reduction."

Part of the City's Climate Action Plan is to promote increased water conservation

citywide with a targeted reduction of 7.5% from 2019 numbers by 2030. Implementing these rate structure changes is an action step in achieving that goal.

For single-family residential accounts outside of the Morningside Neighborhood, the number of gallons in each of the three tiers is being reduced by about half. In addition, the first-tier fee will be reduced while second- and third-tier fees will be increased.

As a result, according to the utility rate study, about 42% of single-family residential properties are expected to see a price reduction on their quarterly bill based on low-volume water consumption (for consuming 12,000 gallons or less per quarter). On the other hand, if consumption behaviors stay the same, it is estimated that about 58% of single-family residential properties will see a price increase for medium- to high-volume consumption (for consuming more than 12,000 gallons per quarter).

Like residential properties, the city's commercial and industrial customers outside of Morningside will also see adjustments to the water tiered rate structure, although with different gallon limits.

"Many properties that have medium- or high-volume water consumption will receive a price signal as a result of the changes," said McAndrews. "The increase in price will serve as a signal to consumers to reduce consumption if they want to lessen their quarterly costs. For example, higher-volume water consumption is frequently due to irrigation. When looking at the goal of water conservation, irrigation is a place where we could potentially see a significant reduction."

In addition to promoting conservation and providing more equitable billing, McAndrews says the changes ensure necessary funding for future projects approved in the City's Capital Improvement Plan to support the aging utility system, such as construction of a new water treatment plant, sanitary sewer linings, capacity expansions, storm infrastructure improvements, lift station and well rehabilitations, and utility work associated with roadway reconstruction. Even when utility rates increase, the



The proposed fee and rate changes will promote water conservation, a key Climate Action Plan goal.

City does not generate a profit from utility billing. Rates are set and approved by the City Council annually to recover the costs of operating, maintaining and investing in the utility system's capital infrastructure needs.

It is important to know not all customers will be affected by the proposed changes in the same way. For example, Morningside Neighborhood customers – both residential and commercial/industrial – who receive their water from the City of Minneapolis will continue to be charged a flat rate per unit of 1,000 gallons. And multifamily residential properties will actually move from a water tiered rate structure to a flat rate per 1,000 gallons.

"These changes will affect everyone a little bit differently depending on your property type and consumption volume," said McAndrews.

Proposed 2023 rates and examples of costs are listed on the Utility Billing section of the City's website. The City Council is scheduled to take action on the proposed changes at its Dec. 6 meeting.

For more information about the proposed utility billing changes, visit EdinaMN.gov/UtilityBilling2023 or contact Utility Billing at 952-826-0373 or utilbilling@EdinaMN.gov. To learn more about ways to reduce your water consumption and, as a result, save money on your utility bill, visit EdinaMN.gov/WaterSewerStormwater.

While unrelated to the proposed utility fee and rate changes, the City plans to begin using new billing software in early 2023, resulting in changes to how utility bills look. 🌱🏠

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Escanee este código para ver en

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Debra Fields Set to Retire from South Metro Public Safety Training Facility

Fields Brings 15 Years of Passion to Public Safety Training

BY AMY KYLLO

Debra Fields will soon retire as Facilities Director of the South Metro Public Safety Training Facility after 15 years.

For Fields, the position has been much more than a job — it has been participation in something greater.

The South Metro Public Safety Training Facility, 7525 Braemar Blvd., works with first responders in the southern metro area. It is jointly owned by the cities of Bloomington, Edina and Eden Prairie and the Metropolitan Airport Police. The facility also has contracts with the City of Minnetonka, the Veterans Administration, U.S. Border Protection and several other federal agencies. The facility is set up with two indoor shooting ranges, a defensive tactics gym, four classrooms, a fire tower with residential and commercial aspects, simulators, vehicles to practice rescues and a canine agility field.

The facility has been used to train as many as 200 first responders at the same time. Public programs are also offered, including open shooting, gun safety, permit to carry, personal instruction and Krav Maga self-defense classes.

As Facilities Director, Fields oversees operations of the facility. Her work includes overseeing maintenance needs; safety checks; OSHA regulations; contracting;

finances; supervision of 10 employees; and working with board members, department directors and training coordinators.

Fields loves her work and the first responders who benefit from it. She said, “What happens here on a day-to-day basis is my passion.” She feels deeply that it is a privilege to watch the training. As she has gotten to know the first responders personally, she describes them as hardworking, funny and dedicated.

Fields’ journey to the South Metro Public Safety Training Facility started as a worker at a preschool. From there, she transitioned to a learning center that was a remedial school for children in shelters. This center focused on giving children skills they would need before attending public school. This experience qualified Fields to take a position with the City of Minneapolis in youth crime prevention where she spent 10 years. She eventually moved over to the Minneapolis Police Department training unit before finally landing at the South Metro Public Safety Training Facility.

Fields appreciates working for the City of Edina, the fiscal agent for the facility. She mentioned the “really good people” who have been a part of City staff and specifically how those in the Fire, Finance, Information Technology and Public Works departments have “bent over backwards” to help her in her work.



Debra Fields will retire Dec. 30 from her leadership position at the South Metro Public Safety Training Facility. (Photo by Scott Denfeld)

Others in the organization appreciate her, too. Fire Training and Safety Chief Shaun White said, “Deb Fields has been an icon of the South Metro Public Safety Training Facility for 15 years. Her dedication to the facility and those it serves has been unparalleled.”

For Fields, one of the most difficult things about retirement is saying goodbye to coworkers. “It’s like family,” she said. “You feel protective; you feel appreciative. I don’t even want to think about leaving them.”

Fields has already purchased personalized gifts for all her staff, a small window into just how much they mean to her. Though retiring from the South Metro Public Safety Training Facility, she still plans to work for several years. She has four grandchildren who will also continue to be a big part of her life.

Fields’ last day at the South Metro Public Safety Training Facility will be Dec. 2. The Edina Fire Department is working to fill her position with the assistance and guidance of the facility’s partnering agencies.

For more information on the South Metro Public Safety Training Facility, visit policeandfire.training. 