

# Gem Lake News

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## Upcoming Recycling Dates:

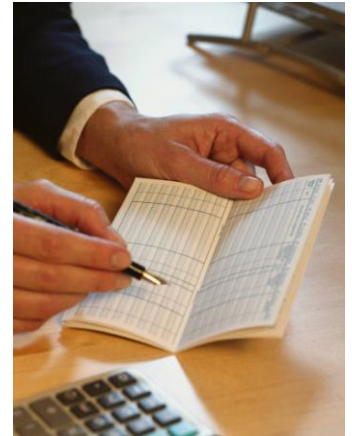
- December 11
- December 26

## Final Budget for 2014 Approved

The City Council approved a final 2014 budget for Gem Lake at the council meeting on November 19.

The budget includes \$419,376 in total budgeted expenditures for all funds, which is a 24.77% decrease over 2013. The general fund budget, which covers the day-to-day operations of the city, is \$316,133, a increase of 1.54% over 2013.

The total property tax levy for 2014 will be \$224,825, which amounts to yet another decrease from the previous year, this time to the tune of 10.18%. These final budget figures represent major refinement from the preliminary budget, submitted to the Ramsey County in September.  
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## Welcome New Residents: Ben and Sherri Johnson

The quiet, natural setting of Gem Lake attracted the attention of the Johnson family last summer. They were looking for a home with character, a larger lot size and proximity to Minneapolis and St. Paul, via interstates.

Ben and Sherri Johnson purchased a home on Daniels Farm Road that previously belonged to the Narayan family. They moved into Gem Lake in June with their two year old daughter. The couple also has a golden retriever and a beagle, who both love the larger yard.

The Johnson moved from the Phalen Heights Park neighborhood on St. Paul's east side.

"So far, we love it!" says Sherri. "We are getting settled into our new home and our immediate neighborhood is full of some really fantastic families. We are looking forward to doing some bike rides and Ben is also excited to visit the Gem Lake Hills Golf Course."

Ben and Sherri are Minnesota natives and love the outdoors. Welcome to Gem Lake!



# Final Budget for 2014 Approved

(continued from page one)

## Preliminary versus Final Budgets

State law requires cities to submit preliminary budgets to their county well before the end of the year, so preliminary notices can be sent to residents, outlining what their property taxes might be for the year ahead. Because the final budgets cannot, by state law, go any higher than the preliminary budget submitted, most cities have to plan in a little "wiggle room" as they finalize figures for the year ahead.

It is not uncommon, especially in Gem Lake, for the final budget to be smaller than the preliminary one. For instance, the preliminary budget for Gem Lake for the year ahead called for a General Fund Budget that was significantly higher.

The reductions between the preliminary and the final budget resulted when it became possible to get more accurate information on things like the fire and police contracts for the year ahead. However, the reductions in the tax levy request and the total budget have come as a result of two reasons. First, there was "a careful process involved in refining all the budget numbers between preliminary and final budgets, in most cases resulting in lower numbers," according to Gem Lake Mayor Bob Uzpen. "We have worked hard to keep the budget in line and the expenses as low as possible." The second reason the final budget and tax levy request is lower than the preliminary is that Gem Lake is funding a certain amount of next year's operating expenses from reserves that it has on hand. This is called deficit budgeting and will result in \$84,117 being taken out of Gem Lake reserves and used to fund general operations of the city.

## Budget Categories

The main categories of the Gem Lake budget are the Debt Service Fund, the Capital Improvement Budget, the Enterprise Fund, and the General Operating Fund.

The Debt Service Fund pays for the bond on Heritage Hall. The budget for this fund \$48,505, virtually unchanged from 2013. This fund pays for the outstanding bond on Heritage Hall. The Capital Improvement Budget covers road and infrastructure improvements needed in the year ahead



For 2014, the budget in this category will be \$0. No improvements are planned for the year ahead.

The largest portion of the budget is the General Operating Fund, which accounts for the operation of the city, such as public safety, public works and general government. Due to tight budgeting and careful financial management, all categories within the general fund will stay virtually the same as the 2013 final budget, with only a 1.54% increase, as stated earlier in the article.

The following information is a break down each sub-category within the General Operating Fund, and how it compares to last year. The general government category of expenses is increasing 2.84% over last year, and amounts to \$162,491. The public safety category is going down by .80% over last year, and is expected to amount to \$111,092.

The public works portion of the General Fund Budget is decreasing by 2.9% as compared to 2013 and is expected to amount to \$42,550.

In terms of expenditures in the total budget, 55.5% goes to General Fund expense, 9.15% is Enterprise Fund expense, 8.07% is Capital Improvement and 26.93% is Debt Service.

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## Sheriff Spots Trends, Discusses New Programs

Ramsey County Sheriff Matt Bostrom was a featured presenter at the Gem Lake City Council Meeting on November 19. Bostrom brought attendees up to date on several important programs being sponsored by the Sheriff's Department.

### On-line Warrant Services

Recently, the Department launched an on-line warrant service. This is to handle individuals who want to check and see if there is a warrant out for their arrest and take steps to turn themselves in to get the matter cleared up. There is now a "Safe Surrender" program for people who want to get the problem settled without the drama of an arrest during a traffic stop or having an unexpected visit from the Sheriff's Department. These type of arrests are often extremely problematic, if, for instance, you have your children at home with no other caretaker available, or you have to have your car towed, says Bostrom.

At any particular time there are up to 9,000 active warrants out in Ramsey County. The on-line service allows individuals to check on their status at any time day or night. It is especially helpful when a matter is in the process of being cleared up and a person wants to check and be sure the matter is completely settled. For more information on the "Safe Surrender" program go the Ramsey County Sheriff's Department website. At any one time, there are between 350-450 people included in the county's inmate population. Bostrom would prefer you are not one of them.

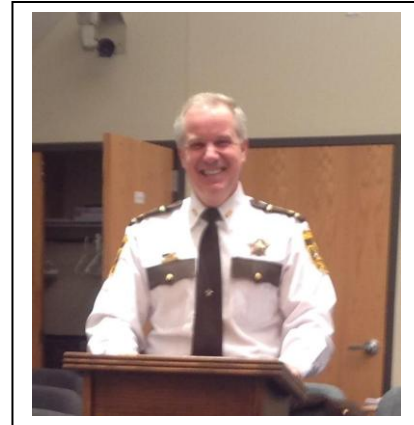
### Code Red Alerts

Recently, the Sheriff's Department utilized their community alert system to let people in the northern part of the county know there was an elderly woman missing. You may remember the call, as it had to go out quite late at night. The system utilizes available land lines in a defined area to alert the community to an emergency situation. In this case, an elderly person had wandered away at night.

As a result of the alert, a significant number of people helped quickly with a neighborhood search and the woman was found unharmed. This was a perfect example of how the system can be used successfully to quickly get results, said Bostrom, even though the call was instituted late in the evening.

### New Patrol Cars

More and more of the police vehicles used in the country are going to a black and white model as



they cycle new cars into their fleets. This is because the standard "black and white" is almost a catch phrase for a police car. It is more recognizable as a law enforcement vehicle. With this in mind, the Ramsey County Sheriff's Department is replacing older vehicles with the newer cars that are going to be painted black and white, instead of the current color scheme. (White and brown)

Another consideration that lead to the change is sheer visibility, said Bostrom. Far more law enforcement officers in this country are injured or killed in traffic accidents that other altercations. The idea is that going to a black and white fleet will make the vehicles much more visible. Within about a year, all vehicles will be black and whites and will probably be almost all Ford Explorer or Ford Taurus models, each with all wheel drive.

### Prescription Drug Turn In Program

Bostrom says there has been a spike in the use of Heroin in the area. One of the reasons is the epidemic in the use of prescription pain killers in this country. Once the prescription has run out, some people are turning to Heroin or to stealing prescription drugs from unsuspecting family or friends. In order to cut down on this, the Sheriff has instituted a Prescription Drug Turn In Program. This allows you to safely turn in prescription drugs you don't need in a manner that won't add to someone's addiction problem or pollute the environment. You can drop your items off during business hours at the station located at Hamline Avenue and Highway 96 in Arden Hills. See the web-site for more information.

## City News Page

### Ramsey County Traffic Initiatives Net Results

The White Bear Lake Police Department hosted a high-visibility DWI Saturation project on October 26 from 8:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m. Officers focused on the Highway 61, Highway 96, Interstate 35E and White Bear Avenue.

The DWI saturation yielded the following results:

\*126 traffic stops

\*8 people arrested and brought to jail

\*7 DWI arrests

\*6 drivers cited for Driving After Revocation or Suspension

\*7 vehicles towed

During the traffic event, there were numerous cell phone calls regarding a wrong way driver on 694 through Vadnais Heights and White Bear that ended with a serious head on crash. The driver turned out to be seriously impaired.

### Door to Door Sales People Bothering You?

Recently, several tree service companies were making the rounds in our fair city trying to sell their services door to door. I received one of these visits myself.

Making no judgments about the legitimacy of any of these companies, please note that people posing as door to door sales people are sometimes not what they seem. Because of this type of solicitation sometimes leads to crime, bad service or outright fraud, Gem Lake, like most cities around us, has a requirement that these folks obtain a peddler's license.

If you are being bothered by someone and you suspect a crime is about to be committed, please don't hesitate to call 911. If you think the situation is nothing more than really annoying, you can always direct them up to Heritage Hall, where they can learn more about the license requirement and maybe say hello to any Sheriffs Deputies that might be at the sub-station at that moment. Tee hee. Oh, by the way, putting out that nice sign that says NO SOLICITORS will also help, maybe.

### Fee Schedule Approved

The 2014 Fee Schedule for Gem Lake was approved by the city council at their meeting on November 19. The fee schedule covers such things as costs for building permits, land development requests and excavation.

Most fees remained similar to the previous year, with the exception of signage costs for new businesses and other very minor changes. A copy of the complete fee schedule is available on line or at Heritage Hall.

### Comprehensive Plan Changes Approved

The Gem Lake City Council and the Metropolitan Council have approved changes in the City's 2008 Comprehensive Plan. These changes involve bringing a zoning map up to date so that the three categories of residential zoning spelled out in Gem Lake's zoning ordinance agree in every detail with the information in the Comprehensive Plan. Work will begin on the next comprehensive plan soon. Can't wait.

### Black Sea Restaurant: Gem Lakes Newest Gem!

Stop in at our newest Gem Lake business! The Black Sea Restaurant is now open on County Road E near Enterprise Rental Car. The popular Turkish restaurant named the Black Sea recently open its second branch in our city. .

The restaurant serves authentic Turkish food such as falafel, kebabs, hummus and other Mediterranean fare. The Gem Lake restaurant is located at 1581 E. County Road E, next to Vera Auto Sales.



## Final 2014 Budget Approved for Gem Lake

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When it comes to revenues by category, it breaks down as follows: 77.63 % comes from property taxes; 8.58% comes from licenses and permits; 3.38% comes from intergovernmental sources; 0.79 comes from charges for services; 0.86% comes from fines and forfeitures; and, 8.65% comes from miscellaneous sources.

As a result of aggressive cost savings and tight budgeting, at least some Gem Lake residents , if not most, may see their property tax bill decrease a bit. Determining the impact of the city's budget on your budget is, for most folks, the only thing that really matters.

### **So What? How Does This Affect Me?**

While some would argue that calculating your tax bill this year requires a degree in finance, it can be done. Read on for all the information on how Ramsey County determines market values.

The median residential value of a home in the county is now \$200,800, which is a decrease of 11.97% over last year, when the median value was \$228,100. In 2012 the median value \$247,000. This was a decrease of 7.7% from 2011.

Property class rates are established by the State of Minnesota. Class rates applied to market value establishes what is called tax capacity. Each city's tax levy is divided by the tax capacity value to determine the tax rate. Are you lost yet? If you aren't, you will be.

Your relevant tax capacity is now calculated by reducing the estimated market value of your home by the "homestead market value exclusion." The result, which is called your taxable market value, is then multiplied by the property class rate to arrive at the "taxable tax capacity. The taxable tax capacity is then multiplied by the tax rate to arrive a the net property tax. Okay, we aren't even close to the answer yet. Then you have to calculate your tax capacity. You do so by multiplying the first \$76,000 of estimated market value by 40%. Then you multiply any estimated market value above \$76,000 by 9%.



Then you deduct the result of Step 2 from Step 1. This is your property's Homestead Market Value Exclusion. (Cleverly known as your HMVE) Now you deduct your property's HMVE from its estimated market value. This is your taxable market value. Take all that data and multiply the taxable market value by the property class rate for you type of property. The result is your taxable tax capacity. Clear?

To calculate the city portion of your property taxes you would take the taxable market value of your home. Then you would multiply the first \$500,000 of taxable market value by 1%. If necessary multiply any taxable market value above \$500,000 by 1.25%. Add the two together for your property's city taxable tax capacity. Multiply the tax capacity by 27.430%, which is Gem Lake's established tax rate for 2014. This equals the city portion of your property tax bill.

Or, you could just wait for your statement to arrive in March....

## The City of Gem Lake

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We're on the Web!

See us at:  
[www.gemlakemn.org](http://www.gemlakemn.org)

## Meetings: December 2013 to January 2014

The following Gem Lake Meetings will be held at Heritage Hall for the next few months:

### December 17, 2013

City Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

### January 21, 2014

City Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

### January 7, 2014

Planning Commission at 7:00 p.m.

### December 3, 2013

Planning Commission at 7:00 p.m.

### December 9, 2013

City Council Workshop at 7:00 p.m.

### January 13, 2014

City Council Workshop at 7:00 p.m.

## Your Gem Lake City Council

### Bob Uzpen-Mayor

Phone: 651-492-5083

### Jim Lindner

Phone: 651-429-7597

news section.

### City Council Members:

#### Gretchen Artig-Swomley

Phone: 651-260-9742

For more information on meetings, city ordinances, recent events, permit procedures, etc. please consult the Gem Lake web-site. The address is [www.gemlakemn.org](http://www.gemlakemn.org)

Please email your ideas, comments and suggestions. See box at left for detailed contact information.

#### Rick Bosak

651-426-9695

#### Faith Kuny

Phone: 612-718-4316

Each Gem Lake Newsletter is also posted on the web-site under the

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