

2018

Year in Review



CITY OF
Bloomington
ILLINOIS

A Message From the City Manager

It is a great honor and pleasure to have become the City Manager of the City of Bloomington in July 2018. This is a great opportunity for me and my family. We have enjoyed settling into the community and look forward to a bright future here.

I chose this community for many reasons. When I look back on the City's projects and activities in 2018, I am proud of what the City has accomplished and know 2019 will be even better. The City is not without its challenges. However, the upside of challenge is opportunity. Bloomington has the ability to make strides in areas such as economic development, fiscal sustainability, infrastructure, and more. We will do this as a community which also includes our partners in the region. Together the "wins" will be even greater.

Please join me in reviewing with pride the accomplishments of 2018 and looking forward with excitement to the future.

Sincerely,



Tim Gleason





Administration

- Following a nationwide recruitment effort, the Bloomington City Council hired City Manager Tim Gleason.
- The Finance Director's Report, presented monthly, was instituted to increase transparency and provide frequent updates on the City's budget.
- Cost was reduced and staff efficiency increased through consolidation of the Water department into the Public Works department.
- The process began of upgrading the City's internal technology to increase efficiency and improve customer service through the development of a virtual City Hall.
- The City's credit rating is solid with a AA+ rating by Fitch and an Aa2 rating by Moody's.
- The City of Bloomington was named one of "The Greenest Cities" by Insurify.



City Clerk

- The Clerk's Office trained Open Meetings Act (OMA) liaisons on OMA. The City continues to comply with the online training requirement of the Attorney General's Office regarding OMA and FOIA.
- The Council packet was updated to include a condensed Info Cover Sheet to replace the first three pages of the packet to provide additional information to the public.
- The Records and Licensing Specialist position was filled and has begun training to become a Certified Records Manager.
- Procurement procedures necessary for completion of Bloomington Municipal Code codification in FY2020 were finished.
- All applications for the department were updated ensuring the process is efficient and customer friendly.
- The office uploaded all current applications of license holders into Munis software for ease of use internally, as well as increased capabilities of assisting the public.

*The Clerk's Office
processed 1,488
Freedom of
Information (FOIA)
requests in 2018.*



Community Development

- City Council approved the establishment of the Downtown East Washington Street TIF District, encouraging economic development in the area.

- City Council and Illinois Wesleyan University approved a MOU for the joint marketing of the properties located in the 800 block of N. Main (former site of Mennonite Hospital/Electrolux).

- Community events in Downtown were expanded, including a significant increase in participation in the Cogs and Corsets/Steampunk Event, coordination for support of the new Castle Theater Concert Series, support for the Bistro 30th Anniversary and inaugural Pride Festival Event, and inaugural North Main Bar Owners Octoberfest.

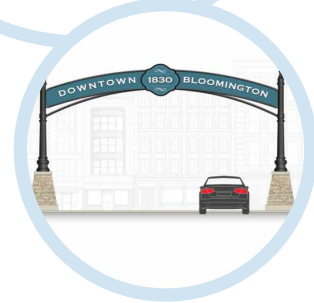
- The department provided support for the reinvigoration of the Cultural Commission.

2,235 building permits were issued in 2018.

- The department coordinated with Legal on a major amendment to the Administrative Adjudication provisions of the municipal code to enhance enforcement efforts for chronic property owners.

- The department assumed oversight of the John M. Scott Health Care Commission.

Downtown wayfinding signage will be installed in 2019 as a result of work by City departments, the Signage Committee, and the Council.



Finance

- The department refinanced nearly \$11.8M in debt which will save the City over \$1M over the term.

- Finance began the implementation of an Accounts Payable credit card program whereby the City can pay vendors via a City credit card. This provides additional options to City vendors and an opportunity to realize revenue share dollars.

- Areas for opportunities for automation were reviewed, creating more efficiency.

- The Water Cashiers were absorbed into Finance as part of assuming the entire Utility Billing function.

- The City received the GFOA Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the FY2018 Budget.

- The department increased collaboration with the McLean County Health Department which immediately improved its ability to efficiently notify businesses of Food & Beverage Tax reporting/remittance requirements.

- Finance reviewed payment processing methods, implementing new procedures for Electronic Funds Transfer and Electronic Bill Collection, resulting in time savings for staff.



Fire

- Fire implemented a new Record Management System, which allows for information sharing with Normal and enhanced reporting capabilities.
- The department purchased a second set of turnout gear for all Firefighters, increasing employee safety.

• Nine new Firefighter/Paramedics were hired and fifteen trained to the Basic Operations Firefighter level. The department is very close to full staffing and will be able to begin placing the second Ambulance in service at Headquarters in 2019.

• The Fire Service Memorial at Miller Park was completed and a dedication ceremony held with the community and local politicians.

• The department promoted a new Deputy Chief of Administration, Jeff Flairty, and a new Battalion Chief, Gary Smith.

• The Outdoor Warning Siren Activation system was upgraded with a new Motorola Radio System.



Human Resources

• A new PPO with Health Savings Account medical insurance plan option was implemented, giving employees an additional plan option.

• The City realized an over 10% reduction in medical insurance benefit premium amounts due to positive claim experience, decrease in dependent enrollment amounts, and ongoing membership in IPBC.

• HR designated an American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator and procedures for employees requesting a reasonable accommodation to assist in performing essential job functions.

• The City maintained a Time-to-Hire Metric of approximately 43 days from date job posted to date job filled, excluding seasonals.

• HR implemented a Diversity Enhancement Group initiative to focus on ways to improve diversity recruitment across the City.

• The City of Bloomington was recognized by the American Heart Association for achieving Silver level status for the Workplace Health Achievement Index.

Information Services



- IS implemented a new, online help desk solution. The new help desk allows end users to submit requests for service via website, email, or phone and track the status of their service ticket.

- IS worked with the Fire and Public Works departments to design and implement an entirely new and updated approach to providing mobile access to City data resources.

- IS worked to analyze, design, and implement a new, updated Parks and Recreation management and Point of Sale solution.

- IS staff worked with Police and Fire personnel, along with the vendor, Tyler Technologies, to upgrade the Computer Aided Dispatch public safety call management system.

- IS staff worked with operational departments, along with the vendor, in analysis, design, and implementation of a new timekeeping, benefits accrual, and advanced scheduling solution.

IS designed and implemented the City's Microsoft Azure Cloud environment and migrated the City to Office 365. During the project, over 3.6M emails and 170,000 calendar entries were migrated, totaling over 768GB of data.



Legal



- Legal successfully integrated Procurement into the department, streamlining several processes.

- Legal integrated a Contract Administrator into the organization and department, providing additional review and oversight.

- In Administrative Court, 243 new housing cases were filed. 147 were closed through the Administrative Court process. With the newly adopted fine structure, Inspectors have reported increased compliance with housing violations.

- The department is working to further revamp and improve the City's collection efforts on unpaid City taxes and is pursuing various tax collections, including through the State of Illinois debt collection program.

- Legal helped draft contracts and negotiated agreements to address legacy and outstanding development issues and policies.



Library

- The Library Board passed a resolution to pursue Library expansion in the existing location. The City Council and Golden Prairie Public Library District, contracting with Bloomington Public Library for library services, passed supporting resolutions.
- The Illinois Prairie Community Foundation awarded the Library with a \$500 grant for a Bingo for Books program, gifting a free book to low income students served by Western Avenue Community Center.
- The Library increased vocabulary, improved focus, and inspired more active imaginations by encouraging reading during its annual Summer Reading Program. 3,411 children, 544 teens, and 584 adults completed the program, an increase over 2017.
- The Library continued its partnership with both local school districts to offer cards to every public school student residing in Bloomington. 2018 was the first full year of partnership with Unit 5 and the second full year of partnership with District 87.
- The Bloomington Public Library Foundation contributed funds donated by State Farm to replace flooring, paint, and shelving in the Library's Movies, Music, and Audiobooks section.



Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts

- Prairie Vista Golf Course 18th Hole reopened the 18th hole back to a par 4.
- With federal funding received from Community Development, Woodbury Park was designed and built by PRCA.
- Miller Park Zoo received Association of Zoos & Aquariums Accreditation for another cycle, showing that the Miller Park Zoo is meeting the highest standards of a zoological institution.
- The department celebrated its 50th anniversary.
- The Friends of the BCPA MOU was approved by City Council, paving the way for a 501(c)3 fundraising entity for the Creativity Center and BCPA.
- The department began development of Harmony Park, the City's first playground for people of all abilities.
- Focusing on the guests on the autism spectrum, Zoo staff completed training to become the first zoo in Illinois to become Sensory Inclusive Certified.
- The City sold part of Sunnyside Park to the Boys and Girls Club for \$1 for a new Club facility.

North American River Otters rarely reproduce in zoos and aquariums. There were only four litters across 110 institutions accredited by the AZA this year (one litter at Miller Park Zoo!).





Police

•The Public Safety and Community Relations Board conducted regular meetings throughout 2018. The PSCRB did not receive any requests from the public to review a completed citizen complaint investigation during the year.

•In April 2018, 85 body worn cameras were deployed to all uniformed officers. By year end, the cameras accounted for the generation of over 25,000 pieces of digital evidence. The use of body worn cameras both strengthens cases and increases departmental accountability.

•During 2018, the department made a concerted effort to increase social media followership. The department's online presence has also greatly enhanced the speed of our investigations.

•The 11th annual Guns and Hoses event, a charity hockey game between City's Police Officers and Firefighters, was held at the Grossinger Motors Arena. This caring and dedicated group of officers raised \$20,800 in 2018, double what was raised two years ago.

•Police officers worked alongside members of the Boys & Girls Club of Bloomington-Normal to complete a variety of craft projects with 143 local youth.



Public Works

•Staff proposed eliminating a \$1.1M subsidy from the General Fund to the Solid Waste Fund with solid waste fee and service changes, that Council ultimately approved.

•Public Service Division employees revitalized and refurbished the Citizen Convenience Center to create a more inviting atmosphere and provide educational materials to the public.

•Staff established a train horn quiet zone at three Union Pacific/Amtrak at-grade railroad crossings.

•The City continued to make progress on maintaining streets, ramps, sidewalks, and curbs.

•The Engineering Division began testing drones to use them for design development of engineering projects.

•Engineering Division staff signalized the intersection of Streid Dr. and Ireland Grove Rd. with an innovative, cost-effective span wire system.

•The department partnered with McLean County to reduce congestion and crashes at the intersection of Towanda Barnes Rd. and Ireland Grove Rd.

•Staff used WaterGEMS to model the water distribution system to allow for planning and prioritization.

The City has approximately 800 lane miles of roads.



The image features a dark blue background with a blurred, bokeh effect of light spots. The text is centered and rendered in a bold, white, sans-serif font with a subtle drop shadow.

**Far more to come
in 2019!**