



## MESSAGE FROM THE FINANCE DIRECTOR :::

The Finance Department administers the City's finance activities, including the coordination and planning of all city financial information.

The department provides cost effective services to the City Council, city departments, and other government units. In addition, finance staff members provide accounting, financial, and utility billing services to other governmental units through shared services agreements.

### MISSION STATEMENT

*Ensure that City resources and assets are managed effectively to provide residents with the city services desired and to sustain the city's infrastructure for current and future residents.*

In 2023 there were many finance department staffing changes. Fortunately, some of these changes were planned retirements with overlap for training and continuity of service. Previous Finance Director Shelly Rueckert is in the process of transitioning to retirement after 12 years of highly accomplished service, and has been assisting new director, Deborah Maloney, in acclimating to her role.

Additionally, after 18 years of gracious and loyal service to St. Anthony's Finance Department, Phuongmai Dang trained Angelo Salas to be her patient and competent replacement in utility billing, licenses & permits. Angelo was well prepared to assume his new role when Phuongmai moved south.

After 26 years of devoted service handling accounts payable and other general office duties, Sandy Simon also retired, Sandy's friendly, sunny disposition will be missed. Chris Carroll was hired as our new accounting clerk at the end of 2023, we look forward to working with Chris.

We are thankful for the support our department receives from the City Council, City Manager, and all city departments.

## FINANCE OVERVIEW :::

Finance staff supports City Council meetings and work sessions throughout the year to provide financial information and make recommendations for Council approval. The finance staff also attends similar meetings of the governmental units served through shared services agreements.

**9** Council meetings attended

**8** Council work sessions attended

**68** Council information submissions

**20** MWMO Board information submissions and meetings attended

**2** Birchwood Utility Committee work sessions

612-782-3316

deborah.maloney@savmn.com

3301 Silver Lake Rd, St. Anthony, 55418

[savmn.com/finance](http://savmn.com/finance)

## CORE ACCOUNTING FUNCTIONS :::

### UTILITY BILLING

Calculation of water and sewer charges, issue quarterly billing statements and manages payments. In 2023, an average of 889,302 gallons of water was used daily.

### ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Ensures prompt and accurate payment of invoices from vendors and contractor 2,939 checks were issued in 2023.

### PAYROLL

Issues biweekly payment and assists in managing benefits and deductions for an average of 130 full and part-time employees.

### INSURANCE

Maintains appropriate levels of Property/Liability & Workers' Compensation insurance policies to safeguard public assets and protect employees.

### GRANTS

Tracks and assists with managing non-property tax funding opportunities to provide services without raising taxes.

### LICENSES / PERMITS

Manages necessary licenses and permits to ensure compliance with laws and regulations, protecting public health and safety and enabling legal operation of businesses within the City.

### ANNUAL BUDGET AND LEVY

Collaborates with departments to determine the cost of city services and establish a levy to collect necessary resources. 2023's levy increase was 5.80%.

### FINANCIAL REPORTING - INTERNAL

Finance staff provides monthly General Fund and Liquor Operation financial statements, and investment activity reporting to the City Council.

### FINANCIAL REPORTING - EXTERNAL

The finance department is responsible for reporting financial information to numerous outside agencies through the year including but not limited to those displayed below.



## 2023 FINANCE ACTIVITY :::



The most significant change in 2023 was the transition to retirement of Finance Director Shelly Rueckert after 12 years of service. Shelly's leadership will be missed. Some of her many accomplishments include:

- Fostered a culture of collaboration by establishing contracted financial services for MWMO, City of Birchwood Village, and Nine North, a large part of the City's collaborations with other governed agencies, contributing to being awarded the City of Excellence award in 2019.
- Expanded the use of technology in the City's accounting processes, allowing for more efficient workflow and online tools for the City's residents and businesses.
- Created a 15-year capital budget program and successfully phased in levy support.
- Partnered with City engineers to establish a long-term street replacement program, aimed at mitigating the impact of street construction on the tax levy. As a result, the program has not affected the levy's growth for the past five years.
- Participated in addressing the City's response to the discovery of 1,4 Dioxin in the aquifer, Negotiations with the Army resulted in a \$10 million treatment plant expansion and securing over \$500,000 for lost revenues and expenses.
- Enjoyed serving on multiple Met Council Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) task forces. Outcomes shaped policies to mitigate the I&I impacts metro-wide.



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# LONG-TERM FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The St. Anthony Facilities Building Assessment Report by Oertel Architects served as a cornerstone for long-term planning, prioritizing facilities maintenance within Oertel's Facilities Maintenance report. Immediate maintenance concerns were promptly addressed or scheduled for the near future. Collaborating with Public Works, we identified items suitable for in-house handling and accounted for associated costs. Staff will gather cost estimates for large-scale future maintenance items, integrating them into the capital plan. Discussions regarding a long-term funding plan are forthcoming.

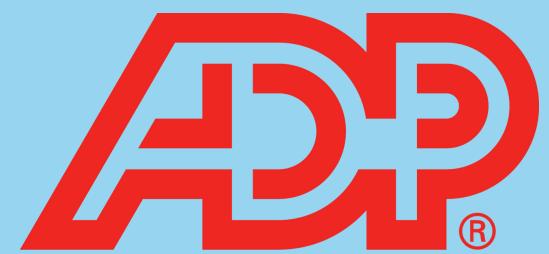


A modified street improvement program was implemented, which means that road reconstruction is now occurring two out of every three years instead of every year. The modified pace of improvements reduces reliance on bond financing and transitions to levy support. In 2023 the shift to Infrastructure took place for the 2024 levy. 2023 was an off year where no street improvement project took place.

- Cumulative debt will decrease significantly between 2024-2037.
- Infrastructure levy used 100% to support street cost; debt levy must support bonding costs and interest costs in addition to street costs.
- 2027-2030 combined levy increases will be less than the existing plan.
- The city will now have more flexibility to adjust if other levy demands occur.

## TECHNOLOGY

In 2023, Finance staff assisted Human Resources in implementing a paperless Open Enrollment process through ADP. The process was previously heavy paper form based and is now successfully handled through the ADP portal as part of the city goal of Environmental Responsibility.



The finance team consistently seeks ways to optimize operations by leveraging financial software, aiming to enhance efficiency while reducing paper usage.

They meticulously assess the benefits of each streamlined process, carefully balancing them against potential security vulnerabilities.

Ultimately, the team prioritizes processes with the highest level of security, ensuring the safeguarding of sensitive financial information.



## COLLABORATIONS

### Birchwood Village

- Finance worked with Birchwood's new Mayor in reviewing prior budgets and current financial reporting to gain a working knowledge of the City's finances.
- Assisted Birchwood with the recruitment of Administrative/Finance part-time staff.
- Prepared a three-year analysis of water and sewer financial operations, resulting in 2023 utility rate adjustments that ensure fund balances are at sustainable levels.
- Provided guidance in applying for grant to assist with lead service line testing.

### Nine North

- In 2023 the financial reporting process benefited from being on the same software platform for the entire year. Issuing monthly financial reports is now routinely timely and involves less number crunching!
- Also during 2023 Nine North became a PERA eligible employer, The ADP payroll records and processes were updated to include the appropriate employee deductions and employer contributions.

### Mississippi Water Management Organization

- Finance Director's involvement in the Upper Harbor Terminal REOA agreement negotiations continued into spring of 2023.
- Immediately following the agreement's finalization, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board began their portion of the project which features the restoring the riverbank shoreline to its natural state.
- Finance worked with the MWMO's new Executive director in current financial operations to gain a working knowledge of the organization's finances. This prompted further discussions on refinement financial reporting.



## 2023 FINANCE ANNUAL REPORT

### Path to the 2024 Tax Levy

