



City of Westminster, Maryland

News and Notes

July 2020 Issue

Mailing Address:

56 West Main Street
Suite 1
Westminster, MD
21157

Important Phone Numbers:

Police
410-848-4646

Finance/Billing
410-848-3255

Recreation & Parks
410-751-5501



[Westminster, Maryland](#): Holiday schedule changes, inclement weather and emergency information

[City of Westminster Recreation & Parks Department](#): Events, parade information, fitness classes, park openings

[Downtown Westminster, Maryland](#): News about Downtown Westminster, from business openings and specials to events and business news

[Westminster Fiber Network](#): Keep up to date with the WFN

Mayor and Common Council Adopt Fiscal Year 2021 Budget

On June 8, 2020 the Mayor and Common Council adopted the fiscal year (FY) 2021 budget. The City's new fiscal year began July 1, 2020 and ends June 30, 2021.

During the budget review process, the Mayor and Common Council had extensive discussions regarding the Westminster Family Fitness Center, which has consistently operated at a deficit in recent years. The Mayor and Common Council charged the Recreation and Parks Director with developing a plan to make the Fitness Center self-supporting. The adopted FY 2021 budget incorporates the provisions of that plan, which include a new Fitness Center membership fee structure and staffing changes to reduce operating costs.

A major focus in crafting the FY 2021 budget was the continued implementation of the Compensation and Classification Study results. The City undertook this assessment of its salary and benefit structure in early FY 2018 to ensure its ability to attract and retain a quality workforce. The Study results were implemented in three phases, with FY 2021 marking the third year of that process.

For the eighth year in a row, the City's real property tax rate will remain at \$0.56 per \$100 of assessed valuation; the City will receive more revenue due to higher property values in FY 2021. Personal property tax rates will also remain unchanged. Water and sewer rates will be adjusted based on the multi-year rate plan adopted two years ago.

Combined expenditures for all funds in FY 2021 total approximately \$64.5 million. The budget provides funding to advance several initiatives included in the City's Strategic Plan, adopted by the Mayor and Common Council in February 2018. These initiatives include ongoing efforts to reduce inflow and infiltration into the City's sewer system; minimizing inflow and infiltration will restore sewer treatment capacity, which is critical to Westminster's continued economic growth. Water Fund expenditures include continued work on the City's water re-use initiative, one of several projects underway to identify new water sources.

In FY 2021, the City anticipates completion of renovations to the 45 West Main Street property (formerly occupied by BB&T Bank), which will serve as the future home of the City's administrative offices. Work will also continue on the multi-year ENR/Biosolids Upgrade Project at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Bond financing in the amount of \$1,225,000 will be used to pay for repairs to the main pool of the Westminster Municipal Pool Complex and the installation of new plumbing and filtration equipment.

Everyone Counts: Please Respond to 2020 Census Mailing

There is still time to respond to the 2020 United States Census. The City of Westminster is asking all community members to do their part to meet the goal of counting everyone once – and only once – in the right place. Please take a few minutes to complete the Census questionnaire you received. Your personal information is legally protected and confidential, and you may respond online, by phone, or by mail.



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City Services and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Westminster government is moving forward with its efforts to bring City services closer to pre-coronavirus pandemic conditions. Provided below is information on the current status of City facilities, as well as public meetings.

- With the approval of the Health Officer for Carroll County, the City has re-opened virtually all of its outdoor recreational facilities. They include parks; park pavilions; playgrounds; basketball, tennis, and pickleball courts; and, the Skate Park. Users are encouraged to practice proper hygiene and follow the recommended 6-foot physical distancing guideline. Park pavilions and playground equipment should be used at your own risk; the City cannot sanitize equipment. Always wash hands after using park equipment. Please note that public bathroom facilities remain closed at this time.
- The Westminster Fitness Center re-opened at 50% capacity on June 22, with safety measures in place to protect guests and employees. As required by the State, entrants will be monitored until 50% capacity is reached. Masks are strongly suggested upon entry, in locker rooms and when exiting, but are not required when working out.
- The Westminster Municipal Pool will remain closed for the entirety of the 2020 season. This decision was based on a variety of factors, including uncertainty surrounding when the State would allow such facilities to open and challenges associated with State-mandated capacity restrictions and lifeguard certification.
- Meetings of the Mayor and Common Council, as well as those of City boards/commissions, are continuing to be held virtually. The meetings are being live-streamed through the City's Facebook page and available to view by visiting www.facebook.com/WestminsterMD. Those wishing to submit testimony for public hearings or to offer comments under the Citizen Comments portion of the Mayor and Common Council meeting agenda can send an email to City Clerk Shannon Visocsky at Comments@westgov.com.
- City offices and the Police Department lobby remain closed to the public.
- Staff members who can productively work remotely are continuing to do so, to limit the number of employees in City offices. The City has taken measures to ensure physical distancing, including staggered work schedules and lunch breaks, to protect employees working onsite.
- To maintain the health of its employees and to ensure the continuity of our most important government services during the pandemic, the City has implemented new staffing procedures in the Street Department. As a result, the City has had to temporarily scale back large item and yard waste collection. Impacted services include curbside collection of tree branches and brush, metal, yard waste, and large item collections such as furniture. Please refer to page 4 of this newsletter for more information.

The City is continuing to monitor developments related to the Governor's Roadmap to Recovery and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Future changes in City operations will continue to prioritize employee well-being while also minimizing health risks. Please check the City website and Facebook page for the most current information on City meetings, Westminster government's operational status, and event cancellations.



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Department Director Recruitments

The City retained The Novak Consulting Group to assist with the recruitment processes for both the Director of Finance and Director of Human Resources. Novak continues to accept applications for the Director of Finance position. The position is open until filled, with first review of applications occurring on July 6. Late last week, job announcements were placed for the Director of Human Resources position. The position will be open until filled, with first review of applications on July 31.

Community Planning and Development

By State law, the City's restaurants and other businesses are only allowed to operate at reduced capacity. The Community Planning and Development staff continues to work - with the business community on alternative ways to serve their customers in light of these restrictions. As part of that effort, the City has approved a number of applications for expanded outdoor dining in an effort to assist local restaurants.

On June 11, 2020, the Planning and Zoning Commission conditionally approved a site plan application for Mission BBQ at the former Friendly's Restaurant location on Route 140. The site plan application for the 7-Eleven at Route 140 and North Center Street was also conditionally approved and includes gas pumps and new signage.

The City's annual Arbor Day Celebration, scheduled for April 24, was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Westminster Tree Commission plans to conduct a digital celebration on October 24 that will include tree plantings at City Hall. As details become available, information will be posted on the City's website and Facebook page.

A Message from the Westminster Police Department

Chief Thomas Ledwell wishes to share with the Westminster community that the Westminster Police Department (WPD) unequivocally condemns the actions of the former Minneapolis police officers and found them to be deeply disturbing and unacceptable. The treatment of Mr. Floyd, through the technique and indifference used and displayed by these officers, is in no way consistent with the training and policy of the WPD. The WPD trains, and its policy is to immediately discontinue any level of force when the level of threat or resistance no longer justifies it, to place the person in a "recovery position," and immediately summon emergency medical services when requested or warranted.

The WPD will continue to work hard to create a culture of community-oriented policing; to ensure that we treat all people who we encounter with dignity and respect; and, to consistently seek out and provide training to our personnel that results in the appropriate application of police techniques and use of force. We also provide our personnel with the insight and skill sets regarding important issues, such as implicit bias, de-escalation, mental health first aid, autism awareness, and other important topics.

Last year, the WPD sought out important programs and lesson plans to bring to our department and to teach our staff. During fall 2019 in-service training sessions, instructors taught evidence-based de-escalation, cultural diversity, and implicit bias blocks of instruction.

This will be an ongoing process, and the WPD will continue to look at its policies and training curriculum to ensure that we remain current with best practices, and consider options that best ensure the safety of all members of our community.



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Scheduled Yard Waste and Bulk Trash Collections to Resume in July

Weekly curbside collection of yard waste will begin on July 8 and continue every Wednesday. Yard waste must be in paper bags or bushel containers, and pickups must be scheduled to ensure collection.

Bi-weekly curbside collection of tree limbs and brush, metal and tires, and other bulk trash will resume the week of July 13. Pickup requests must be scheduled in order to guarantee collection on the appropriate date.

To schedule a pickup request, please call:

410-848-9077



City Phone Lines Now Automated

As part of its ongoing commitment to providing the highest quality service, the City of Westminster is enhancing its phone system capabilities.

Effective July 1, 2020, the City will be going live with the new automated phone system. When calling 410-848-9000, callers will be able to utilize the menu to reach their desired department or a dial-by-name directory.

Direct-dial phone numbers for each department are available by visiting the City's website at www.WestminsterMD.gov.

