



News & Notes

MEET YOUR MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

ELECTION RESULTS, CITY PRIORITIES

At its Jan. 6, 2025 meeting, the City of Cologne officially welcomed its new City Council members who were elected in the Nov. 3, 2024 election. New councilors are Jeri Bowers (4-year term) and Selmer Olson (2-year term). Mayor Matt Lein (2-year term) and council member Sarah Bruss (4-year term) were re-elected to their roles. Rounding out the City of Cologne elected leadership is Carol Szaroletta (2 years remaining in her term). Thank you to outgoing council members Nathan Kells and Maria Samuelson for your service to Cologne.

IN THIS ISSUE

This issue of *News & Notes* includes introductions of the City of Cologne elected leaders and the priorities they have identified for the City. They were invited to answer several questions, and excerpts of their responses are included in this newsletter issue (as space has allowed).

To read their complete responses – as well as City meeting agendas, minutes and helpful resources – visit www.colognemn.com



Pictured from left to right (front): Selmer Olson, Sarah Bruss; (back): Carol Szaroletta, Matt Lein, Jeri Bowers.

Mayor Matt Lein: Lived in Cologne for 23 years. Served as Mayor for 11 years; served 4 years on the City Council, 6 years on the Planning Commission.

Cologne's greatest strength; need/opportunity: Strength: The same reason today as it was when I moved to this City, the "small town feel," a sense of pride living in Cologne. Our greatest need would have to be new volunteers.

Top strategic priorities for Cologne? My goal has always been to "fix Cologne." We had a real issue with most of our infrastructure. From the tools that City staff were using down to the sewer lines running under our deteriorating roads needed help. The last thing on the agenda is a wastewater plant redesign. Our capacity has almost been reached with our current system. If Cologne wants to grow, this will need to be addressed. The final design is being completed and then we need to go out for bids. With a project this size, we will need help to offset the cost. Cologne is too small to afford the upgrade but won't grow without it. After that, we will need to plan on how to grow Cologne in a responsible way as to not diminish the "small town feel."

Informing/engaging residents: On the City website are a phone number and an email that I can be reached directly. I have a Mayor page on Facebook that goes into detail about many issues in Cologne. I can also be messaged there.

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If you have a bigger issue, then staff can do some research into your issue before you address the Council. The best way to be informed is to sit in on our regular meetings, even if you don't have anything to say. I am also always available if you see me out, feel free to walk up to me and say "Hi." I am happy to help.

Sarah Bruss: Lived in Cologne for 11 years; beginning third term (ninth year) on the Council. Also serves as Acting Mayor and on the City's Personnel Committee.

Greatest strength; need/opportunity: Greatest strength is the sense of community. Need: Expanding infrastructure and resources to support our growing population while preserving the small-town charm and close-knit community spirit that makes Cologne unique.

Top strategic priorities: Infrastructure development – Enhancing roads, utilities and public spaces to accommodate growth and improve quality of life.

1. Economic growth: Attracting new businesses and supporting local entrepreneurs to strengthen the local economy. 2. Community engagement: Promoting programs and events that foster civic pride and inclusivity.

Informing/engaging residents: Attend City Council and committee meetings to stay informed about decisions affecting the community. Access online resources: Utilize the City website, social media platforms and newsletters for updates on projects, budgets and initiatives. Engage with leaders: Reach out to City Council members and participate in public forums to share concerns and ideas. Volunteer for committees: Join City committees or taskforces to contribute directly to planning and implementation efforts. Participate in surveys: Provide feedback through surveys and community discussions to help shape the City's priorities.

Jeri Bowers, City Council:

Lived in Cologne just shy of 10 years, 31 years in Carver County. Newly elected to the Council, 1 year on the Planning Commission.

Greatest strength; need/opportunity: Strength: Acceptance. Need: We need to rejuvenate Main Street.

Top strategic priorities? Wastewater treatment plant, re-service some of the streets.

Informing/engaging residents? Website, newsletter to residents.

Selmer Olson: Lived in Cologne for almost 19 years; elected to the City Council in November 2024. I have not served in any other roles for the City of Cologne.

Greatest strength; need/opportunity: Strength: We are a growing small town on the rise. Need: A strategy for future growth – what do we want Cologne to look like?

Top strategic priorities: Work with the Mayor and other council members to not only look to the future growth/expansion, but to develop a long-term plan for reinvesting in our current infrastructure and amenities to continue to provide quality services to all residents.

Informing/engaging residents: Get involved, no one person or group has all the answers; join a group, attend meetings, ask questions. I have a lot of pride in Cologne and I know I'm not alone. I look forward to serving the residents.

Carol Szaroletta: Council member for 10 years (2 years remaining); Planning Commission for 10 years (1 year remaining).

Greatest strength; need/opportunity: Cologne's greatest strength is its community-minded people. Need: land to build our City upon, to be able to attract companies and businesses.

Top strategic priorities? As part of the City's strategic planning, we repaired the City streets/sewers for future growth. We have worked with the State Legislature to help fund our expansion of our Waste Treatment Plant. We are already working on a strategic plan to revitalize our downtown area. The Planning Commission has begun to locate buildings that need addressing.

Informing/engaging residents: We have done a better job of keeping citizens informed over the last year. We have an up-to-date website and the new newsletter. Our Mayor and City Administrator have kept the Council informed on what they are working on from week to week so we can pass that information to citizens. It must be working because more citizens are attending Council/Planning meetings and our citywide functions are well attended. It's nice to see more citizens becoming involved.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Carver County Parks

Visit bit.ly/CCPprograms and bit.ly/CCPevents or scan the QR codes for information about winter programs and special events – including snowshoe hikes, Candlelit Nights at Baylor Park, Maple Syrup Festival and more.



Central Public Schools:

Feb. 17 **Child & Babysitter Safety**, 8:30 a.m. – Noon, Central Elementary School

Visit isd108.ce.eleyo.com for programs, events, classes, sports options and more for children and adults.

Cologne Academy: 1221 S. Village Parkway

March 7-9 **Theatre Club Musical, “The Little Mermaid, Jr.”**; March 7-8 at 7 p.m.; March 9 at 2 p.m.

Zion Lutheran Church & School: 14735 Co. Road 153

March 7 **Annual Fish Fry, 3:30-8 p.m.** (until supply lasts)

April 27 **Annual Silent Auction, 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m.** (live auction at 12 p.m.). Silent and live auctions, food trucks, carnival games and more.

Cologne Community Center BIRTHDAY PARTY PACKAGE

This includes our large gym space and serving kitchen for 3 hours of party time.
Tables, chairs, basketballs, volleyballs, pickleball, rock climbing wall.
Get out of the heat or rain, away from the bugs and don't worry about cleaning your house.

It's the perfect space for your children and all of their friends to celebrate and be active.

Call today to book your party: 952.466.2064

(\$100 for City residents, \$125 non-resident +taxes & refundable damage deposit: valid for children's party 17yrs and under)

DRIVERS NEEDED:

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Volunteers are needed to drive residents of Cologne and the broader community who do not have transportation to medical appointments, shopping, etc. Contact WeCAB Coordinator Shirley Spraguer at 612-567-1673 for more information.

For the most current schedule and activities at the Cologne Community Center, visit www.cologne.mn.com and click on the Digital Bulletin Board.

February 2025

M T W T F

Cologne Community Center

3 Winter Walkers Pickleball Open Gym	4 Winter Walkers Open Gym	5 Winter Walkers Open Gym Open Gym 7-9pm	6 Winter Walker Open Gym	7 Winter Walkers Pickleball Open Gym
10 Winter Walkers Pickleball Open Gym	11 Winter Walkers Open Gym	12 Winter Walkers Open Gym Open Gym 7-9pm	13 Winter Walkers Open Gym	14 Winter Walkers Pickleball Open Gym
17. GYM CLOSED PRIVATE PARTY	18. Winter Walkers Open Gym	19. Winter Walkers Open Gym Open Gym 7-9pm	20. Winter Walkers Open Gym	21. WinterWalkers Pickleball Open Gym
24. Winter Walkers Pickleball Open Gym	25. Winter Walkers Open Gym	26. Winter Walkers Open Gym Open Gym 7-9pm	27. Winter Walkers Open Gym	28. Winter Walkers Pickleball Open Gym
3. Winter Walkers Pickleball Open Gym	4. Winter Walkers Open Gym	5. Winter Walkers Open Gym	6. Winter Walkers Open Gym	7. Winter Walkers Pickleball Open Gym

Notes

Cologne Academy rents our gym on days with a windchill of negative temperatures for recess. These days are not scheduled in advance due to the weather being unpredictable. If temperatures drop know students will be in the gym from 10:45am-2:00pm.

Use of gym is \$1 per person. This helps support the heating of the building. Please pay at front desk so we can continue to offer this space at a low & affordable cost for all.

Community cards & games:
located in the community room
1st & 3rd Tuesday
12:30pm-3:30pm

Winter Walkers: Weekdays 8:00-10:00am

Pickleball: Mondays & Fridays 9:00-11:00am

Week day open gym 9:00-4:00pm

Wednesday open gym 7:00-9:00pm

Sunday Open Gym 3:00-7:00pm

Gym is available to rent Saturdays and Sundays. Please contact City Office at 952.466.2064 to book your event. Athletics, birthdays, anniversary, holiday, celebrations of life, weddings, etc.

1211 Village Parkway
PO Box 120, Cologne, MN 55322



Leadership Team

Diane Davis, ddavis@co.carver.mn.us
Lona Hendricks, lona.j.hendricks@gmail.com
Patrick Stieg, pstieg@co.carver.mn.us
Email colognecommunitiesofbelonging@gmail.com

To foster connection and conversation, the Cologne Communities of Belonging team is planning a series of 'Community Conversations' in 2025. Watch the City website, emails and News & Notes for details.



City of Cologne

1211 Village Parkway, PO Box 120, Cologne, MN 55322
Phone: 952-466-2064
Emergency/after-hours public works: 952-466-5601 and leave a voice mail message.

Email: info@colognemn.com

Website: www.colognemn.com

City Office is open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday-Friday
City Hall holiday closures – Feb. 17 (President's Day)

City Administrator: Michelle Morrison
Utility Billing Clerk: Jenna McInnis
Cologne City Council: Mayor Matt Lein, Sarah Bruss, Carol Szaroletta, Jeri Bowers, Selmer Olson
The City Council meets on the 1st and 3rd Mondays, 7 p.m.
Planning Commission meets on the 1st Wednesday, 6 p.m.
Citizens are welcome to attend meetings and learn about City Council work.

Sign-up for announcements from the City of Cologne, including meeting notices, office closures and more at
<https://www.colognemn.com/residents/email-alerts/>

BENTON LAKE BASH FEB. 8, 2025

ICE CRIBBAGE, FOOD, FAMILY FUN & MORE ON BENTON LAKE 11 a.m.

Looking for a great way to celebrate Cologne and enjoy winter fun? Bring your family, neighbors and friends to the annual Benton Lake Bash on Feb. 8, 2025 – featuring a cribbage tournament, silent auction, raffle, food, beverages and several free on-the-ice activities for people of all ages. All proceeds support initiatives to improve the quality of Benton Lake so that all may enjoy this natural resource in Cologne. This event and lake restoration activities are hosted by the volunteer-led Benton Lake Watershed Conservancy (BLWC). Follow @ICECRIBBAGE on Facebook.

ICE CRIBBAGE TOURNAMENT
On Benton Lake - Cologne, MN

**SATURDAY
FEB 8, 2025
COLOGNE, MN
ON THE LAKE**

**RAFFLE: 3 PM
DOOR PRIZES
SILENT AUCTION**

**CRIBBAGE
REGISTRATION: 11 AM
CRIBBAGE PLAY: 12 PM
\$20 TO PLAY CRIBBAGE**

**CUSTOM CRIBBAGE
BOARD: 1st PLACE
(Courtesy of Jim Storms)**

**CRIBBAGE CASH PRIZES
1st \$150 • 2nd \$100
3rd \$75 • 4th \$50
5th \$50**

**BENTON LAKE
BASH**
ICE CRIBBAGE TOURNAMENT

**BLWC
BENTON LAKE
WATERSHED CONSERVANCY**

EVENT HOSTED BY BLWC

Prize List / Info [@ICECRIBBAGE](#)