



Employee Spotlight

Doug Oakley is the Streets and Fleet Department Supervisor. He has worked for the City of La Vergne for the last ten years. He first started working part-time in the Parks and Recreation Department before going to work full time as a laborer in the Street Department. He was quickly promoted to coordinator and then supervisor.

When asked what he likes the most about working in the street department he passed all the praise on to his team. "The guys I work with really make this job enjoyable," says Oakley. "I have to give them all the credit. They're the one's who go out there every day and get the job done. They're all really great guys and great workers."

Oakley says he's "been in the city since 1979. I like what the city does and always wanted to get a job with the city." He's an avid hunter and particularly enjoys deer hunting. If he could work any other job he would like to work for the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. "I love the outdoors. There's nothing like being out in nature."

He's a huge UT football fan and always cheers on the Titans. Oakley has been married for 42 years and the top thing on his bucket list would be to take his wife wherever she would like to go.



Doug Oakley

Fire Chief praises changes in 2019

It has been one year since Chris Clark was officially installed as La Vergne's second fire chief and since then there have been many internal and external changes he believes will help the department succeed.

The department has been able to find a more cost-effective way to make repairs to fire apparatus. The city's two fleet department personnel have made an effort to learn more about fire equipment like rescue trucks and fire engines so they are able to make repairs locally rather than find a contractor to fix various problems. The changes have effectively saved the department more than \$150,000 that can be utilized in other ways. Not only does this program save money but also decreases time out of service, fuel and manpower.

The administration department was reorganized to eliminate the position of assistant fire chief so that they could restructure the department's leadership. They also raised pay levels for battalion chiefs and expanded the pay grades between positions to encourage firefighters to move up their career ladder. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen was also able to create a new life safety officer position due to the change.

In 2018, firefighters conducted complimentary fire inspections for commercial businesses and found 98% failed the inspection. In 2019, that number decreased to 52%.

There has been a push for increased training among firefighters in the department. "We don't only respond to fires anymore," says Chief Clark. "Firefighters are encouraged to attend EMT and fire officer school to improve their skills and knowledge. Firefighters also undergo other training exercises to best prepare them when they're called to a fire or rescue incidents.

Medical calls make up 76% of the call volume for the department. Clark says right now "the biggest thing for us is to bring a new culture to the fire service. We often are called to assist with medical calls. These medical calls range from delivery of babies, heart attacks, strokes, overdoses, and others. We have to have an all-hazards approach and diversify our training more than ever before."

Recently, there has been an update to dispatch protocol and standard operating guidelines. This allows for quicker 911 response times. The department has also continued to improve upon its personnel protective equipment (PPE). Each firefighter is now equipped with bullet-resistant vests and helmets. They have also received new medical packs for when they respond to highly volatile or active scenes. They have also implemented a new PPE inspection program to make sure their equipment is up to date and in compliance with safety regulations.

New plans have been drawn up for the new Station 41 which will be located on Old Nashville Highway where the current Fire Administration building is. This new fire station will replace the station on Stones River Road and will also serve as the new administration offices for the fire department. It will also serve as an emergency communications center in the event of severe weather or large scale incidents.

Clark was officially installed as fire chief on January 2, 2019. "I'm blessed to be here and in this position," says Chief Clark. "I'm grateful to those who work in our department and for those who truly make my job very easy."

You can read more online at lavergetn.gov or by going to <http://bit.ly/36HfUFK>.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

- February 1 - Winter Formal: Father-Daughter Dance
- February 12-25 - Early Voting: Presidential & County Primary

NEW EMPLOYEES

- Nicole Crawley - CSR
- Timothy Kosinski - Fire Fighter
- Robert Rayburn - Events Coordinator

CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Workshops (6:30 pm) | Meetings (7:00 pm) |
| January 30 | February 4 |
| February 27 | March 5 |

CITY DEPARTMENTS

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| City Court | 615-287-8630 |
| City Hall | 615-793-6295 |
| Codes Department | 615-213-2624 |
| Economic Development | 615-793-6295 |
| Finance Department | 615-287-8629 |
| Fire Department | 615-287-5832 |
| Human Resources | 615-287-8622 |
| Parks and Recreation | 615-793-3224 |
| Police Department | 615-793-7744 |
| Public Library | 615-793-7303 |
| Public Relations | 615-287-8690 |
| Public Works | 615-793-9891 |
| Tax Department | 615-793-3388 |
| Water & Sewer Billing | 615-793-5932 |

CITY COUNCIL

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Mayor Jason Cole | 615-308-3565 |
| Vice-Mayor Melisa Brown | 615-653-0787 |
| Alderman Matt Church | 615-499-2731 |
| Alderman Calvin Jones | 615-653-8075 |
| Alderman Steve Noe | 615-490-4602 |

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA





Martin Luther King, Jr. Remembrance Ceremony



Dr. Sidney A. McPhee



Dr. Gloria L. Bonner



Mayor Jason Cole

Property Taxes due February 29

With the New Year comes a new way for La Vergne residents to pay their property taxes.

Property owners can now use a debit or credit card when making their property tax payments. The Tax Department will accept all Visa, Mastercard and Discover cards. There is a convenience fee that comes with using a debit or credit card to pay property taxes. Card payments come with a 2.95% convenience fee and there is a \$2.95 fee for using an e-check.

Payments can be made over the phone or online at <https://ipn2.paymentus.com/rotp/clvp>. To pay online you will need to have the account number and exact amount due for the property in addition to the card number, expiration date and security code. The property tax account number can be found on courtesy bills that were sent out in October. Residents can also contact Tax Department Specialist Becci Steed to get account numbers by calling (615) 793-3388 or by emailing bsteed@lavergetn.gov.

Property taxes are due by February 29, 2020. Payments will be accepted through Monday, March 2 without any late fees because the due date falls on a weekend. Taxes paid after that date will be charged 1.5% interest each month they are late. Taxes can also be paid by cash, check or money order at City Hall, located at La Vergne City Hall, 5093 Murfreesboro Road, La Vergne, TN 37086. Checks and money orders may be left in the drop box to the left of City Hall's back entrance.

Board and Committee Applications

Are you interested in giving back to the community? You may be interested in serving on one of our various boards or committees! Click the link to get the application (<http://bit.ly/2nW8xKv>). Applications can be returned to City Hall or emailed to brichardson@lavergetn.gov.

Currently, there are available seats on the Historical Preservation Advisory Committee, Construction Board of Adjustment and Appeals, and Stormwater Appeals and Advisory Board.

Newest K-9 Officer Sworn In

The newest police officer in the City of La Vergne is itching to "sniff" out crime!

K-9 officer Bora was sworn in on January 30 with the help of her handler, Officer Larry Holladay. Bora is a year and a half old Dutch Shepard, the first female dog and second of her breed in the department's history. Bora and Officer Holladay are part of the Crime Suppression Unit. She is training in drugs detection and patrol work which includes tracking and apprehension just like the other K-9's in the department, Mike and Sjaak (pronounced: Jacques).

"Bora's a very social, loving puppy," says Officer Holladay. "She still has a lot of puppy in her but when it's time to get to work she's always ready to work." Bora is a very inquisitive dog and always checks everything out that she's unfamiliar with.

Officer Holladay met Bora for a five-week training period at US K-9 in Abbeville, LA before she could officially be certified as a K-9 officer. Officer Holladay was one of many in the department who applied to be a handler for the new K-9 and was selected after applicants went through a physical agility test and interview process.



Veterans Memorial Park playground renovations

The playground at Veterans Memorial Park will be closed until early March for renovations.

The old playground equipment was installed in the 90's and was in desperate need of repair. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen approved in the Fiscal Year 2019-20 budget for \$200,000 of repairs to be done to the play structure.

"We are so excited about the changes coming to Veterans Memorial Park and can't thank the Board members enough for their willingness to provide us with the funds to improve the park playground," says Parks and Rec Director David McGowen. "This will make our play area more safe and inclusive for the kids who come to play at the park."

Demolition started on Monday, December 30. Parks and Recreation crews began tearing up the old playground equipment and solid rubber surface. New play structures will be installed by the contracted company and the surface will be replaced with engineered wood fiber mulch.



"These are not your traditional playground structures," says McGowen. There will be two new structures for 2-5 year olds and 5-12 year olds. In addition to the traditional slides and swings there will be a 19 foot tall rope climber, a 40 foot zip line and an all-inclusive merry go round that will be easily accessible to kids with disabilities.

Veterans Memorial Park will remain open during the renovations but the play structure area will be closed. It will take several weeks for the structures to be installed and for the new mulch to be spread.

Follow La Vergne Parks and Recreation on Facebook for regular updates to the renovations. Parks Director McGowen expects to hold a grand reopening ceremony in late February or early March.

Message from the Mayor

I hope and wish that everyone had a great holiday season and brought in 2020 with optimism. The City of La Vergne started 2018 with a new board that is aware of our challenges and remains committed to forward thinking.

The City has begun working on the fiscal year 2020-21 budget process earlier than ever. The Board will have this year's first Planning Retreat with city staff in the following weeks and progressing to the first Budget Workshop in April where we discuss the City's current financial situation and economic outlook. There are several key projects that the City must address in the next several years. This year's top priorities are public

safety, infrastructure, affordable housing and updating aging buildings. City Council is not only evaluating all revenue sources available but will also address expenses to ensure that the tax payer's dollars are being spent in the most beneficial way for the city and its residents.

As we move forward budget process I encourage all of you to stay engaged with your board members and your local government. Stay connected via the City's website at LaVergneTN.gov where we post the meeting agendas, minutes, videos and audio. We promise to be transparent every step of the way with everything facing us going forward.

Mayor Jason Cole