

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

Monday, November 2, 2020 | 8 pages | Volume 4 • Issue 199



www.pencitycurrent.com

City to set franchise tax hearings

CITY COUNCIL: Resolutions on Monday agenda to get public input Nov. 17

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – City officials will consider two resolutions for public hearings to grant new franchise taxes on electric and gas services in the city.

The Fort Madison City Council will consider the action Monday at 5:30 p.m. instead of the usual Tuesday meeting time due to the general election.

The original City Council meeting schedule accommodated for polling at City Hall on Tuesday. The polling has since been moved due to COVID-19 prevalence in Lee County, however the meeting date was kept at Monday.

The City Council will consider setting public hearings to repeal the city's current franchise agreement with Interstate Power and Light Company, a subsidiary of Alliant Energy, and issue new agreements under which a franchise fee will be assessed. The council will consider the same resolution with MidAmerican Energy on natural gas consumption.

The city is facing opposition from industrial and economic development officials on the utility tax citing current economic hardships, and internal and external competition.

City officials are projecting budget deficits over the next five years and beyond if additional revenues are identified.

See COUNCIL, page 8

EMPTY NEST

By Curt Swarm



Shingles sequel now playing at Empty Nest

I had the shingles 10 years ago, plus the shingles' vaccination. I should be good to go, right? Evidently not.

The skin on my right side started burning and tingling. I took a look and did not like what I saw. The red bumps looked exactly like the shingles I'd had previously. How could this be?

It was Saturday morning. I showed Ginnie, and she just about lost her breakfast. I called Quick Care and found out their hours. Because of COVID, you have to have an appointment now. Fortunately, they could get me right in.

The doctor didn't mince words, "Shingles."

Ironically, a couple of days before, I'd been visiting with a friend who had the shingles across his face, very close to his eye. He was one miserable dude. I told the doctor this.

"No," she said. "Shingles are not contagious."

"Power of suggestion?" I asked.

"Perhaps. The mind is a powerful thing. Stress can do it, too."

"I just ran a practice half-marathon (13.1 miles) a couple of days ago. I was physically stressed," I told her. (We're holding a half-marathon here at the Empty Nest Farm, on November 3, which is election day, and also the anniversary of my 31st year of sobriety. I wanted to be ready.)

"That could do it," she said.

Great.

She prescribed an anti-viral medication and I went home knowing what I was in for. There were lots of ups and downs with alternating periods of zero discomfort to almost intolerable pain, like a knife stabbing me in the side. But, "It is what it is," a saying Ginnie despises. I just had to tough it out, and take comfort in that the shingles weren't on my face (or

See SWARM, page 8

2020 State Cross-Country recap

Miller, Gilpin make top 40 at State

Central Lee senior Amanda Gilpin rounds the second turn in front of a line of runners at Saturday morning's Class 2A girls state cross-country run in Fort Dodge's Kennedy Park. Gilpin finished 38th overall in her first-ever trip to the meet. See Sports inside for her full story.



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT DODGE – The call it a kick when you increase your speed at certain points in a foot race.

Fort Madison's Austin Miller used his kick to wipe out 15 other runners in the last half mile at Friday's Iowa High School Athletic Association Cross Country state meet in Fort Dodge.

Miller used that kick to finish with a time of 17:11.4 good enough for 35th in

his first ever state meet appearance.

Miller joined classmate Will Gager at the meet. Gager finished at 18:00.6 (103rd), battling what appeared to be a leg issue.

"It's fine. My leg is fine," Gager said after the meet.

"I'm just happy I got to come up here and run. I didn't think we would get the season in."

Miller who came on strong in the second half of the season, was running at 51st with just over a mile left and

then used what he had saved up to make a dash around the last corner on the southeast hill at Lakeside Municipal Golf Course.

The last stretch of about 400 meters is slightly down hill with the wind behind the runners on a sunny, breezy 48 degree evening.

The 3A boys run was the last run of the day Friday. The 2A and 1A boys and girls featuring Central Lee's Amanda

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WEATHER

MON 02 Nov.....	Scattered Clouds, 57° F/ 30° F
TUE 03 Nov.....	Clear Skies, 66° F/ 42° F
WED 04 Nov.....	Overcast, 68° F/ 49° F

IOWA LOTTERY

LOTTO AMERICA 10/31.....	5 6 24 29 40, Star Ball: 9, All Star Bonus: 2
LUCKY FOR LIFE 10/29.....	2 11 32 44 47, Lucky Ball: 10
MEGA MILLIONS 10/30.....	14 19 34 39 59, Mega Ball: 11 Megaplier: 2
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PICK 3 10/29, 10/30, 10/31 EVENING.....	2 8 0, 3 1 8, 7 0 6
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PICK 4 10/29, 10/30, 10/31 EVENING.....	1 4 5 9, 1 2 6 9, 1 7 5 9
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Obituaries

BERTHA C. WITTE

Bertha C. Witte, 93, of the West Point Care Center, formerly of Salem, Iowa, passed away at 3:00 p.m. Friday, October 30, 2020 at the West Point Care Center.

She was born on June 10, 1927 in St. Paul, Iowa, the daughter of Herman and Bernadine (Mueller) Dingman. On October 6, 1947, she married Ignatius J. Witte at St. James the Less Catholic Church in St. Paul, Iowa. They shared sixty years of marriage before his death on December 6, 2007.



WITTE

Survivors include her three daughters: Kathy Boeding of West Point, Iowa; Pat (Joe) Hackett of Kingsley, Iowa and Sue Myers of Donnellson, Iowa; three sons: John (Linda Sue) Witte, of Bluffton, South Carolina, Gary (Cathy) Witte of Mt. Pleasant, Iowa and Jim (Michelle) Witte of Pearland, Texas; fourteen grandchildren; twenty-four great grandchildren and four great – great grandchildren. Also surviving are several nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her husband; parents; three brothers: Adolph, Ernest and Andrew Dingman; three sisters: Adelaide Dingman, Barbara Kruse and Pauline Fedler and two sons-in-law: Don Boeding and Dan Myers.

Bertha was a graduate of St. Mary's High School in West Point, Iowa. She was a member of St. James the Less Catholic Church in St. Paul, Iowa, the former Madonna Circle of the Daughters of Isabella, St. James Quilters, West Point American Legion Auxiliary and Boots and Umbrellas Card Club. She was a devoted wife and mother, helping her husband on their farm north of St. Paul, where they raised their six children. She had a large garden, enjoyed cooking, baking and sewing for her family. In her retirement years, she enjoyed tending to her flowers, traveling, quilting, playing cards and fishing. She especially loved her grandchildren, attending their activities and watching their families grow. Her happier moments were when she was surrounded by all of her family members.

Friends may call from 12:00 noon to 7:00 p.m. Monday, November 2, 2020, at Schmitz Funeral Home in West Point.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, November 3, 2020, at St. James the Less Catholic Church in St. Paul with Father Dan Dorau as celebrant. Those attending are required to wear a mask and social distance.

Burial will be at St. James Cemetery in St. Paul. A memorial has been established in her memory for St. James Cemetery.

Schmitz Funeral Home of West Point is assisting the family with arrangements. Online condolences may be made to the family at www.schmitzfuneralhomes.com.

Pen City Current obituary policy

The Current runs obituaries one time at no charge to funeral homes and they run the day they are submitted in most cases. They are also run as submitted by the funeral homes.

RICHARD D. LANFRANCO

Richard D. Lanfranco, 80, of Fort Madison, IA, passed away on Saturday, October 31, 2020 at 12:35 AM at the Great River Hospice House.

He was born on September 21, 1940 in California to Anthony Robert and Irma Brower Lanfranco. Richard was a meat cutter and then worked at Mt. Pleasant Mental Health Institute and retired after 25 years of service. He met Judy Francek in 2005 and she became the love of his life. Richard and Judy owned and operated L & F trading in the Westland Mall. Together they had stands at Old Thresher's, Spoon River Drive, the Pigeon Show and various other venues. He enjoyed traveling and playing Santa. Richard loved people, especially children. He could talk to anyone and always put a smile on people's faces. Richard loved spending time with his family, especially his grandchildren.



LANFRANCO

Survivors include his companion and love of his life, Judy Francek of Ft. Madison; three daughters, Vicky Nissen, Sharon Corron and Kathy Lanfranco all of Mt. Pleasant; six grandchildren, Ryan Walton, Jessi Lanfranco, Reed and Robin Walton, Randy Walton and Devon Nissen; five great grandchildren and one brother, Robert Lanfranco of California. Also surviving are Judy's sons, Roger Johnson of Ft. Madison and Delbert Craig of Dallas City and her grandchildren, Jarad Craig, Erin Craig, Clayton Craig, Sammy Craig, Ophelia Craig and Josh Johnson. He was preceded in death by his parents.

Cremation has been entrusted to King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. Per his wishes there will be no services at this time and a graveside service will be held at a later date in Sheridan Cemetery, Mt. Union.

A memorial has been established in his memory and online condolences may be left at www.kinglynk.com.

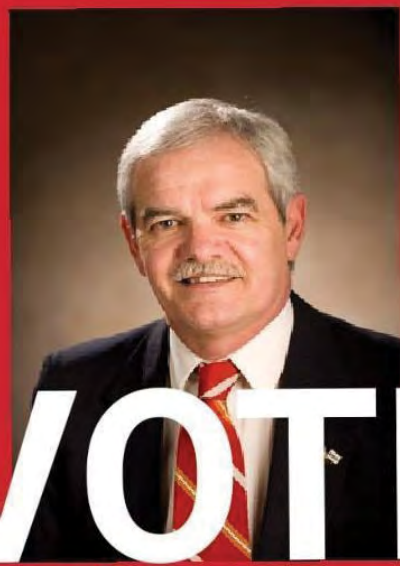
TERRY K. TODD

Terry Kay Todd, age 65, of Lomax, Illinois, passed away Thursday October 29, 2020 at Great River Medical Center in West Burlington. She was born September 20, 1955 in Washington, Iowa, the daughter of Charles and Dorothy Walton



TODD

Curtis. On October 5, 1979, she married Danny Todd in Lomax. He survives. Terry was a graduate of Winfield High School. She was employed for several years at Methode Corporation in Carthage, Illinois. She enjoyed cooking and baking, and especially loved spending time with her family and her cats. Survivors include her husband, two daughters, Stacey Knapp of Stronghurst, IL, Nikki (Brandon Dixon) Jackson of Burlington, IA, four sons, Josh Todd of LaHarpe, IL, Jeremy (Tina) Todd of Dallas City, IL, Jason Todd of Lomax, IL, Justin (Aleta) Todd of Hamilton, IL, eighteen grandchildren, twelve great grandchildren, and one brother, Rodney (Vicki) Curtis of Blakesburg, IA. She was preceded in death by her parents and one brother, Doug Curtis. The family will receive friends from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Monday at Banks & Beals Funeral Home in Dallas City. Due to the pandemic, the family requests all persons attending wear masks and observe social distancing. A private family funeral service will be held at 10:00 a.m. Tuesday, November 3, 2020 at Banks & Beals in Dallas City, followed by burial in the Crawfordsville, Iowa Cemetery. Memorials have been established for the Cystic Fibrosis foundation and the Iowa Donor Network.



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Obituaries

JAREN W. HASEK

Jared Walton Hasek, 43 years, of Montrose, Iowa died unexpectedly as a result of an automobile accident Thursday, October 29, 2020 near Galesburg, Illinois. He was born October 27, 1977 at Houston, Texas, a son of John and Constance (Simons) Hasek. On February 26, 2010, he married Ashley Rae Slee at Las Vegas, Nevada. She survives.



HASEK

Jared was a 1996 graduate of Nauvoo-Colusa High School. He had his CDL and drove a dump truck and semi. For more than 10 years he worked for WL Miller in Hamilton, Illinois as a truck driver and most recently as a dispatcher/supervisor. Prior to that he drove a dump truck for an additional 10 years for Meller Escavating, Fort Madison, Iowa. He loved the outdoors and mountains, he hunted, and traveled all over riding trails on his side by side. He was a NASCAR fan and loved doing burnouts. He loved his dogs, Oscar and Dixie and spending time with his four cows: Bridgette, Gus, Wilber, and Lucy. Jared was gentle and kind hearted, and he would have been the first to do anything for anyone!

He is survived by his wife, Ashley Hasek of Montrose; his parents, John and Constance Hasek of Nauvoo, Illinois; father and mother-in-law, Stan and Bev Slee of Wever, Iowa; nine siblings: Eric (Sonia) Hasek of Lafayette, Indiana; Craig (Dannette) Hasek of Cumming, Georgia; Ann (Mark) Maeser of Lindon, Utah; Carolyn (Mike) Filetti of Blountville, Tennessee; Barant (Kim) Hasek of Donnellson, Iowa; Laura (Jason) Skog of Nauvoo, Illinois; Mary Hasek (Jon Whibley), Warsaw, Illinois;

Sarah Marez of Ankeny, Iowa; and Mark (Beth) Hasek of St. George, Utah; one brother-in-law, Wade (Bonnie) Slee of Fort Madison; many nieces, nephews, and friends. He was preceded in death by his grandparents.

A graveside service and burial will be at 1:00 pm Monday, November 2, 2020 at Montrose Cemetery, Montrose, Iowa, officiated by Jonathan Robbins, Branch President of the Fort Madison Branch of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with the grave dedication by John Hasek, his father. Masks and social distancing are requested by the family. In lieu of flowers, a memorial has been established. Contributions may be sent to the Barr Memorial Chapel, 1919 Ave F, Fort Madison, Iowa 52627. Barr Memorial Chapel is honored to serve the Hasek family and an online guest book may be found at www.barrmemorialchapel.com.

CAROLYN V. TRELSTAD

Carolyn Vivian Trelstad, 85, of Montrose, IA, passed away at 10:55 p.m. on Friday, October 30, 2020 at the West Point Care Center. She was born on December 28, 1934 in Chisholm, MN to John & Vivian Turnquist. She married Arlen V. Trelstad on June 14, 1958. He preceded her in death on August 29, 2018. She was a school cook for 22 years at Central Lee Middle School and was a member of the Montrose United Methodist Church. She enjoyed collecting lighthouses.



TRELSTAD

Carolyn is survived by: 5-sons: Kenneth Trelstad of Montrose, IA, Greg (Dawn) Trelstad of Burlington, IA, Tim (Julie) Trelstad of LeClaire, IA, Tom Trelstad of Kansas City, MO & Rick Trelstad of Fort Madison, IA; 3-grandchildren; 5-great grandchildren & 1-brother: Jack (Sharon) Turnquist. She was preceded in death by her parents and husband.

Cremation has been entrusted to the care of King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. A private family burial will take place at Montrose Cemetery. Online condolences to the Trelstad family may be left at the King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory website: www.kinglynk.com.

CHRISTOPHER M. WOLFSKILL

Christopher M. Wolfskill, 49, of Fort Madison, IA, passed away unexpectedly at 12:58 p.m. on Saturday, October 10, 2020 at Fort Madison Community Hospital. He was born on December 30, 1970 in Columbia, MO to Roy & Judy McCollum Wolfskill. He formerly worked at DuPont and was going to work for a new company in the sales department. He enjoyed all sports, but especially softball.



WOLFSKILL

Chris is survived by: his father: Roy Wolfskill of Rogersville, MO; 1-step brother: Jeff (Carmen) O'Dell of Marceline, MO; 2-half brothers: Scott (Michelle) Wolfskill of Rogersville, MO & Jonathan Zemlicka of Fort Madison, IA; 1-half sister: Julie (DeVon Johnson) Wolfskill of Brumssum, The Netherlands; several aunts, uncles & cousins. He was preceded in death by his mother.

Cremation has been entrusted to the care of King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. A public visitation will be held from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. on Friday, November 6, 2020 at King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. A memorial has been established in his memory. Online condolences to his family may be left at www.kinglynk.com.

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—Leslie Brown, Keokuk

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With my experience in government, business, and public service, I understand that public input, availability, and enthusiasm is essential for creating quality representative government.

"I will continue working hard to maintain county services for all Lee County residents, continue updating security measures in our buildings, and protecting citizen's property rights while continuing to support our hospitals so they are able to provide services needed for our industries and citizens. In addition, I will be working to attract new economic development and expand our industrial base and I will support expanding rural broadband, identifying under-served areas and trying to find grants to remedy the situation."

Contact Gary at
gfollo@gmail.com or (319)795-1348

Paid for by Friends to Elect Gary Folluo, Bill Mitchell Treasurer

State Cross Country

Runners battle tough winds in 2A X-country races

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT DODGE – It was a windy morning at the Class 2A girls state cross country run Saturday morning.

But Central Lee’s Amanda Gilpin said she’s used to running in adverse conditions.

The senior Hawk raced to a 21:20.7 mark good enough for 38th place in her first-ever run at Lakeside Municipal Golf Course in Fort Dodge.

“I’ve ran in worst weather than this,” Gilpin said as she waited for the field to finish the run Saturday morning.

“I did a 5K in Iowa City before and it was snowing and blowing a little bit, so this didn’t bother me much.”

Gilpin, who started in the first block on the inside of the 133 runner field, was in the top 12 after the second turn at the southeast corner of the course into the wind.

At the half way point she had slipped back into the 30 group with a slight down hill course to the northwest

side. She said her focus was to keep a stay steady and then pick things up at the end.

“My goal was to keep a steady pace and not worry about all the other girls. Then just do my own thing,” she said.

“I told myself when I saw the finish line I would go on a dead sprint. I did that when I got to the orange fencing and passed a couple people. That’s where I kicked it in.”

Mid Prairie freshman Danielle Hostettler won the meet with a time of 19:08.9. Mid Prairie also won the team competition with a score of 45 having four of the top nine runners. Danville-New London’s Addison Parrott was second with a 19:33.3.

Gilpin said she’s been offered a scholarship with Southeastern Community College and is planning on taking that opportunity to continue her running career.

Holy Trinity junior Mitchell Pothitakis will run in the Boys 1A meet at 4 p.m. Saturday, the last event of the meet.



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Gilpin (472) looks ahead as runners pass the halfway point on a windy Saturday morning. Gilpin finished 38th in the run.

Fort Madison’s Austin Miller finished 35th in the 3A boys run Friday afternoon. The Bloodhounds Will Gage finished 103rd.

Speed at the start was surprising to Miller

STATE - Continued from Page 1

Gilpin and Holy Trinity Catholic’s Mitchell Pothitakis, run on Saturday.

The IHSAA split the event into two days this year to all for smaller crowds at the event hoping to help keep the spread of the coronavirus to a minimum.

Miller said he wasn’t expecting the start he saw.

“I was not expecting the first mile to be that fast,” he said. “I think that kinda killed me.”

Miller qualified with the 36th fastest time in the qualifiers last week, so he made up some ground in Friday’s run.

He said he doesn’t try to think too much during the run.

“I just try and get out in some space and enjoy the run,” he said. “I do look at someone out in front of me and try to keep pace then use whatever’s left at the end.”

Miller’s time was 1:43 off the pace set by ADM Adel’s Nate Mueller who raced around the course in 15:28.7. Washington’s Lance Sobaski took 27th with a time of 17:03.9. Sobaski was the only other Southeast Conference runner ahead of Miller.

Miller said he got stepped on in the cluster out of the gate and actually had a whole in the side of his shoe where a spike got him.



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Fort Madison’s Will Gager offers up a high-five to teammate and classmate Austin Miller prior to the Class 3A state cross-country race at Lakeside Municipal Golf Course Friday afternoon. Miller finished 35th in his first-ever trip to the run in Fort Dodge.

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Paid for by Lee County Democratic Party

State Cross Country

Pothitakis wraps up fun run season in Fort Dodge

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT DODGE – Making the state Class 1A boys cross country meet wasn't on Mitchell Pothitakis' radar at the beginning of the season.

He ran cross country for the social benefits.

At the end of Saturday's Class 1A boys state cross country meet Pothitakis ended up just about where he thought he would after a nice kick over the last 400 meters to take 105th place out of 152 runners with a time of 19:14.1

As with others who have run their first time at Lakeside Municipal Golf Course in Kennedy Park north of Fort Dodge, Pothitakis was overwhelmed with the speed off the gun.

"I'm not used to that all," Pothitakis said. "There are so many fast guys out there, I immediately fell to the back of the pack. I was probably in the last 10.

But over the first half of the 3-mile run, Pothitakis raced past more than 30 runners to settle in the top 100 where he moved back and forth over the final half of the race.

At the 1.5 mile mark Pothitakis started making a move to a group of about 25 runners bunched up on a turn to the northwest. He stayed there across the golf course back as the runners moved back to the southeast corner, and final turn to the last quarter mile to the finish line.

Coming down the hill off the turn, Pothitakis came close to a sprint and picked off a couple runners as he moved between the orange fencing to the timekeeper.

Pothitakis said he didn't have a strategy different than other meets – just have fun.

"I'm just glad I got the opportunity to be here," the Crusader said. "I knew I wouldn't do unbelievable, so I just decided to have some fun with it.

"I didn't have too much of a strategy, I just wanted to get out and enjoy the race."

Bellevue senior Brady Griebel won the event at 15:52.2.

Wapello's Tristan Kaufman was 51 at 18:03.7. Mediapolis freshman Soloman Zuagg was 66th at 18:19.9 to highlight area runners.



HTC junior Mitchell Pothitakis takes a look back at the field as he closes in on the finish line in the Class 1A boys state cross country run Saturday in Fort Dodge.

Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC



HTC junior Mitchell Pothitakis works up to sprint down the final 100 meters in Saturday afternoon's final race of the year.



Thank you to all our customers who worked to reduce their environmental footprint last year. We look forward to helping you continue your efforts and to educating our communities on more ways to help this year.

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Classifieds/Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE
Lee County Board of Supervisors Meeting
Tue, Nov 3, 2020
9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
(CDT)
AGENDA

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- #6, this will mute your phone.
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Approve Agenda
- Public Input
- Consider Approval of October 27, 2020 Board Minutes
- Consider Approval of Claims
- Receive Lee County Conservation Annual Report and Updates
- Consider Approval to Award & Approve Contract for Project No. BROSCHBP-C056(107)-NC-56
- Discussion on Bonding for Digital Radios
- Consider Approval of 28E Agreement with Burlington Fire Department for Billing Services For Ambulance
- Consider Approval of Class E Liquor License for Garner One Stop, Montrose
- Consider Approval of Class C Beer Permit for Denmark Jet Stop
- Consider Approval of Tax Abatement Resolutions (5)
- Report:
 - A. Manure Management Annual Update for

Sandy Bottom Swine in Des Moines Township
 Commission or Committee Reports
 Adjourn

Workshop to Follow

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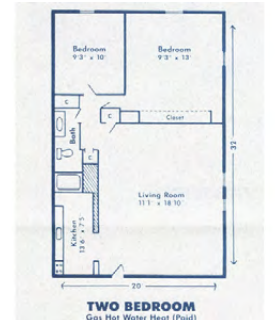
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From the Front

Council to work up letter to board on county ambulance plans

COUNCIL - Continued from Page 1

Several local officials including Fort Madison Economic Development Corporation President Bob Huffman said the city needs to take a harder look at its operating budget to see if there are other ways of easing financial pressure.

According to the resolutions in the councilmembers packets, the franchise fee would be 1.5% of the gross revenue generated from sales of electricity and within the corporate limits of the city. The resolution for the gas franchise action was not included in the packet.

The public hearing is set for Tuesday, Nov. 17 at 5:30 p.m.

The city would be required to generate a revenue purpose statement outlining the purpose for col-

lecting the revenue at the increased rate.

In an unrelated issue, the council will vote to approve a letter to the Lee County Board of Supervisors concerning the county's new proposed ambulance service. City officials have expressed concerns about the growing costs of acquiring the service and the level of service being provided.

The county is planning to take over the Lee County Ambulance Service effective July 1, 2021. Final budget numbers, equipment, training, software and acquisition costs are still being hammered out by a committee overseeing the acquisition. Fort Madison Fire Chief Joey Herren sits on that committee.

The copy of the letter was not included in the packet. As of Sunday afternoon, city clerk Melinda Blind was still waiting on any final changes in the wording of the letter.

In other action, the council is set to:

- consider the first reading of an ordinance to eliminate parking on the south side of Avenue E from 2nd to 26th streets.

- consider approving a \$62,359 change order to the parking lot at Avenue F and 8th Street. The city is redoing the parking lot with permeable pavers as part of stormwater improvement project financed by a reimbursement of interest paid on waste water treatment plant improvement loans.

Author gets shingles to go with cold and flu season

SWARM - Continued from Page 1

eye).

Of course, the shingles spread to the front side of my chest, which didn't surprise me. They are so predictable (now that I'm a pro). I'm thinking that the cold and flu season which we are entering, not to mention COVID, has something to do with the shingles. After all, there are all these little viruses running around. And I had chicken pox as a child, which is supposed to be the root cause. But I had taken the precaution of getting the vaccination. I put my trust in science. Sometimes life isn't fair. But, still, I can take solace in the fact that I don't have COVID, and I'm not all that discombobulated. It's just more of a major nuisance, which I can handle. I'm alive and sober, and Ginnie is still baking cookies. It could be worse. The shingles, which are caused by the varicella-zoster virus, can take a hike.

As with the first time I had them, I still don't understand why they are called "shingles," except that maybe it's because they feel like they are shingled to your body. Both of my parents had the shingles. My father had the hives followed by the shingles. Poor guy.

I'm wondering if I should get the newer shingles shot. The last thing I want is to have these devils a third time. I had such a bad reaction to the pneumonia shot once, so I'm vaccine leery. It's a good question for my doctor.

In the mean time, the sun is in the sky, I have a day of making art, and Ginnie still loves me. What more could I want?

A banana cream pie, that would do it.

Have a good story? Call or text Curt Swarm in Mt. Pleasant at 319-217-0526, email him at curtswarm@yahoo.com or visit his website at www.empty-nest-words-photos-and-frames.com



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