# PEN CITY CUR

It's Black & White and Read all over

Friday, February 4, 2022 | 8 pages | Volume 6 • Issue 33









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# Kern funeral set for Saturday

**SATURDAY:** Public funeral for Capt. Kern to be held at 10 a.m. at FMHS

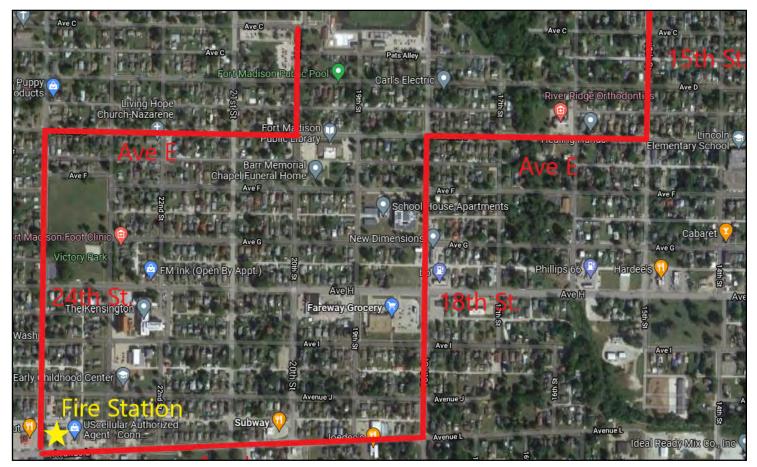


Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

The public is invited to participate in a funeral and processional for the late Capt. Eric Kern of the Fort Madison Fire Department on Saturday morning at 10 a.m at Fort Madison High School with the processional according to the map above. The family is requesting a private burial and the public is asked to proceed down Avenue E east or up 15th Street to the Hwy. 61 bypass.

### **BUDGET TALKS**

## Police chief wants to add a detective to force

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG

FORT MADISON - City officials had little discussion around a \$7 million budget proposal for the next fiscal year.

The council discussed the budget for nearly two hours in a special session Thursday afternoon and City Manager David Varley said the city is getting back to a healthier general fund balance.

"It's a balanced budget with a slight positive net cash flow. And we're not proposing any increase in the property tax levy," Varley said.

He said the franchise tax fee on natural gas will be about \$90,000 less that the city had anticipated even with the increase in gas costs.

"The estimate we got from the gas company originally was just off. They gave us an estimate and they've apologized so it's coming in at a lot less than what we estimated and budgeted."



ROHLOFF

An additional detective position was requested for the Fort Madison Police Depart-

Fort Madison Police Chief Mark Rohloff said he doesn't come asking for an additional position lightly and understands that it has an impact on future budgets as well.

He said the city supported the department's request for a detective position last year and a community services officer, as well as introducing sergeants positions.

"Today this additional position is for law enforcement purposes only. Typically a department this size should have two detectives to handle calls," Rohloff said.

He said currently the department has a 33% closure rate on criminal cases, which is a rate the department hasn't seen because of the detective.

The department's detective in 2021 was David Doyle, who's

See **BUDGET**, page 8

### **CORONAVIRUS**

## Reynolds to end health proclamation next week

LCHD's Ross says county needs to stick to CDC guidelines

> BY CHUCK VANDENBERG PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - Health officials in Lee County are continuing to urge residents to stay masked when out and home when ill as Omicron numbers continue to

Positive test numbers this week aren't

even the highest this year, but in confirmed lab cases 15.2% of those tested in the past seven days are positive and 16.9% of those tested in the past two weeks were positive.



County residents ages 5 and up that are fully vaccinated are just over half the population at 50.2%

Lee County Health Department Administrator Michele Ross said that positive tests countywide are 86.4% Omicron variant and 13.6% are Delta for January. Statewide those numbers are 92.2% and 7.8%.

Ross said those positivity rates are most likely underestimations as home testing is not always included in the data.

"We are still considered a high transmission community and should continue to take necessary precautions to reduce transmission risks as we should for any contagious viruses," Ross said.

"We hope to see our positive test numbers trend downward, but that all depends on everyone working together to mitigate transmission risks which means staying home when ill when you have an infectious virus, seeking testing to rule out COVID-19 if suspected or have been

See **VIRUS**, page 8

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### WEATHER

<u>OpenWeatherMap</u> Cold and Clear, 28° F/ 4° F SAT 05 Feb ... ......Partly Cloudy, 30° F/18° F 🛮 🗢

## SUN 06 Feb.

LOTTO AMERICA 02/02 ......2 8 18 25 31, Star Ball: 2, All Star Bonus: 5 PICK 3 02/02 MIDDAY..... PICK 4 02/02 MIDDAY ......5788 **PICK 4 02/02 EVENING....** 0 5 3 5

POWERBALL 02/02......18 29 33 62 63, Powerball: 15, Power Play: 3

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### **Obituaries**

#### **OBITUARIES**

## RUSTY DUFFY

Rusty Duffy, 55, of Dallas City, Illinois, passed away at 11:00 p.m. Friday, January 28, 2022 after a short battle with cancer at the University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics, Iowa

Rusty was born February 23, 1966 in Fort Madison, Iowa, the son of Jerry W. and Mary

R. (Kuntz) Duffy.



Rusty was a 1984 graduate of Dallas City High School. Following high school he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps, serving with the Gulf 2/7 First Marine Division, until his Honorable Discharge in 1988. He worked for Cessford Construction Company before beginning a 25 year career with BNSF. He was a member of the Dallas City Fire Department for many years.

Rusty was a gun fanatic and a lifetime member of the NRA. He enjoyed

working on Hotrods. He also enjoyed reading and collecting gun magazines and cooking, especially steaks and fried chicken. Rusty had a heart of gold and was the best brother, uncle, and friend.

Survivors include one brother: Mike Duffy of Dallas City, Illinois; one sister: Jamie (Matt Wilhelm) Williams of Dallas City; three nieces: Michaela, Mackenzie and Brittany; one nephew: Michael; several extended family

He was preceded in death by his parents.

members, friends and his railroad friends.

The family plans to host a Celebration of Life at a later date. A memorial fund has been established in his memory. Cards and donations may be sent to the Rusty Duffy Memorial Fund, c/o Jamie Williams, 1126 West Fifth Street, Dallas City, Illinois 62330.

To leave a condolence for the family, please visit Rusty's obituary at <u>banksandbeals.com</u>.

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#### **OBITUARIES**

#### SHARON L. LORENTZEN

Sharon Lee Lorentzen, 81, of Alexandria, MO died Monday, January 31, 2022 at the Aspire Nursing and Rehabilitation Center of Donnellson in Donnellson, IA.

She was born May 23, 1940 in Keokuk, IA the daughter of John and Marie Ketha Haage. Sharon graduated from Keokuk High School with the class of 1958.



Sharon was united in marriage to Ralph Lorentzen in 1965 in Kahoka, MO. He preceded her in death on May 28, 2014.

Sharon had been employed by the Keokuk Community School District as a teacher's aide and later became the secretary at Wells Carey Elementary School until her retirement in 2001.

She was a social member of the VFW Post #4342 and also a member LORENTZEN of the Southside Boat Club in Keokuk.

Sharon loved spending time outdoors bird watching, especially cardinals, trail riding, camping, and mowing grass. She looked forward to attending the Clark County Mule Festival in Kahoka every year. She was an avid St. Louis Cardinals baseball fan and a Seattle Seahawks and Kansas City Chiefs fan.

She is survived by one son, Brian Lorentzen (Miriam) of Keokuk, one daughter, Karla Lorentzen Wixom (Carl) of Kahoka, MO, three grandchildren, Jared Leggett, Corinne Lorentzen and Sarah Lorentzen (Brian Long) and three great-grandchildren, Tristan Fry, Braden Fry and Jailyn Leggett.

A funeral service will be held at 11:00 a.m., Saturday at the Vigen Memorial Home in Kahoka, MO with Pastor Shawn McAfee officiating. Burial will be held in the Kahoka Cemetery.

Visitation will be held prior to the service on Saturday, from 10:00-11:00 a.m., at the funeral home with family meeting with friends at that time.

Memorials may be made to the Clark County Mule Festival or the VFW Post #4342 in Kahoka.

Online condolences may be sent to the family at www.vigenmemorialhome.com.

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## **Obituaries**

#### **OBITUARIES**

## GAIL M. SIX

Gail Marlene Six, 58, of Keokuk, IA passed away Saturday, January 29, 2022 at her home.

Gail was born on April 12, 1963 in Keokuk, IA the daughter of Ernest Edward and Josephine Rosemary (Humphrey) Summers, Jr. She graduated from Keokuk High

School with the Class of 1981.



SIX

On June 23, 1984 Gail was united in marriage to Earl Dean Six at the Presbyterian Church in Keokuk, IA. He survives.

She is also survived by her daughter, Savanna Jo McGreevey (Gaige) of Palo, IA, her son, Bobby Lee Six of Warsaw, IL, two grandchildren, Colton Michael Six of Palo and Mackenzie Grace Six of Warsaw, one brother, Bruce Edward Summers (Debbie) of Hamilton, IL, one sister, Cynthia Louise Wilson of Keokuk, one step-sister, Jaquelin Renee

Dunn Bowman of Texas and one step-brother Jeffrey Allen Dunn of North Carolina. She was preceded in death by her father, Ernest Edward Summers, Jr, her mother, Josephine Rosemary Dunn, and one brother, Gregory Alan Summers.

Gail was a member of the First Christian Church in Keokuk.

Gail loved life and enjoyed many activities including, camping, pinball machines, racing, rock hunting, playing bingo, going to garage sales and listening to country music. She also enjoyed watching the redbirds and hunting robins with her mom. She also loved talking on the phone, Spoon River Drive with her mom and aunt Louise, playing with her grandchildren and going to church. Most of all, Gail was devoted to her husband and family and loved spending time with them.

A memorial service will be held at 1:30 p.m., Friday at the Vigen Memorial Home in Keokuk with Reverend Deb Marlin officiating. Burial will be in the Oakland Cemetery.

Visitation will be held after 1 p.m., Thursday at the funeral home with the family meeting with friends from 6 – 8 p.m.

Memorials may be made to the American Cancer Society.

Online condolences may be sent to the family at <a href="https://www.vigenmemorialhome.com">www.vigenmemorialhome.com</a>.

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#### **OBITUARIES**

## RICHARD W. WAGNER, SR.

Richard W. "Dick" Wagner, Sr., 74, Donnellson, Iowa died Tuesday, February 1, 2022 at the Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center, West Burlington, Iowa. He was born November 17, 1947, a son of LeRoy and Elizabeth (Merschbrock) Wagner. In 1967, he married Luretta "Sue" Spoor, they had three children: Richard "Rick" Jr,

Stacey, and Bryan. They later divorced.

Dick was a 1966 graduate of Fort Madison High School. He worked for Dupont for 36 years. He was a member of the Tri-State Gun Club and the New Boston Posse. He loved to hunt, fish, play cards, watch Nascar, drink Miller Lite, and spend time with his family. There wasn't a person he didn't know and he was loved by many.

WAGNER

He is survived by three children: Richard "Rick" Wagner Jr of Pinellas Park, Florida, Stacey (Ryan) Robinson of Montrose, Iowa,

and Bryan Wagner of Fort Madison, Iowa; eight siblings: Robert (Phyllis) Wagner of Donnellson; Beverly (Bill) McGregor, Betty Sokolik, Karen Huffman, Nancy Cangus, Steven "Toby" (Tracy) Wagner, and Cindy (Clint) Hocker, all of Fort Madison, and LeRoy "Junior" (Angie) Wagner of Waukee, Iowa; five grandchildren: Katie (Tyler) Cale; Trenton (Miranda) Hawk; Branden (Julia) Wagner, Gracie Wagner, and Jessica (John)Thompson; two step grandchildren, Ashton and Adelyn Robinson; eight great great grandchildren: Tessa, Teagan, Kenzi, Aniyah, Elise, Henley, Kaden, and Leighton, aunts, uncles, numerous nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, three siblings: Ronald, Dale, and Janet.

Visitation will be held from 2:00 – 5:00 pm Sunday, February 6, 2022 at the Barr Memorial Chapel. A private family burial will be at Sacred Heart Cemetery, Fort Madison at a later date. A Celebration of Life will be held at the Tri-State Gun Club at a later date. A memorial has been established, contributions may be left at or mailed to Barr Memorial Chapel, 1919 Ave F, Fort Madison, Iowa 52627. Barr Memorial Chapel is honored to serve the Wagner family and an online guest book may be found at www.barrmemorialchapel.com.

### Pen City Current obituary policy

Pen City 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. Reposting of obituaries due to changes can only be requested by the submitting funeral home and will be assessed a \$15 reposting fee.



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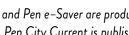
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## Sports/Iowa News

# Bloodhounds win "Top Dog" trophy at BHS



Bloodhound junior Daniel Sokolik lands on top of Julian Perez-Hall after a throw in the first period. Sokolik would convert the move into a pin to start the Burlington-Fort Madison dual with a 6-0 win.

## Sokolik kickstarts Hounds win with dramatic win at 220

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Things were iffy for Bloodhound junior Daniel Sokolik in the first match of the night at a rowdy, packed Clark Field House Thursday night.

Sokolik trailed 4-0 after a couple takedowns by Burlington's Julian Perez-Hall. But the junior was able to work an escape with about a minute left in the first period. The two then bellied up and Sokolik executed a vertical throw to get Perez-Hall on his back and smothered him for the pin to give Fort Madison a quick 6-0 lead and bring the crowd immediately into the match.

"That's one of their better kids at 220. Daniel wrestled him Saturday in Fairfield and came out on fire and didn't get in any danger. Tonight he got in some danger and dug a hole, but went back to his stuff and was aggressive and got the pin," Smith said.

"And that was important because it was kind of the heart of their lineup and we knew we had some tough matches coming and we didn't want to have to dig out of hole. That hole would have been much bigger."

The Hounds and BHS were playing for a newly crafted "Top Dog" traveling trophy that Burlington students built with a plaque that shows the winner of the annual



Photos by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Fort Madison's Emmett Kruse gets a leg and the advantage over Burlington's Titus Counterman. Kruse would score a 7-2 decision over Counterman

dual meet.

Head Coach Ryan Smith said Burlington created a "fun" environment by holding the event in the smaller field house and by creating the new traveling trophy. BHS even brought the prep band to the event and two referees for each match.

"That's definitely louder than the other gym. It was fun with the band and it was something different, gets the crowd excited and the kids excited."

After Sokolik's win, Fort Madison lost three straight at heavyweight, 106, and 113 before Ayshan Mammadova won by forfeit at 120 for the Bloodhounds to make the score 16-12 BHS.

Emmett Kruse then battled to a 7-2 decision over Titus Counterman to close the gap to one at 16-15. Kruse scored a takedown in each of the first two periods and a near fall in the third for the win.

Nolan Riddle then put Fort Madison up with a first period fall over Burlington's Blaze Dochterman at 1:05. After a Grayhound forfeit at 138, the Hounds recorded falls in the next four matches, highlighted by Teague Smith's 25-second pin at 160. Jakob McGowan worked a 9-1 decision at 182 and Ike Thacher wrapped things up with a 1:38 pin over Moise Cordero at 195.

The win gives Fort Madison its fourth straight Southeast Conference title.

"The conference championship is something that we strive for as a team. It's a team goal."

Fort Madison is off now until Class 3A District 4 action at Iowa City High February 12th. The top two wrestlers at each weight class advance to the state wrestling tournament in Des Moines.



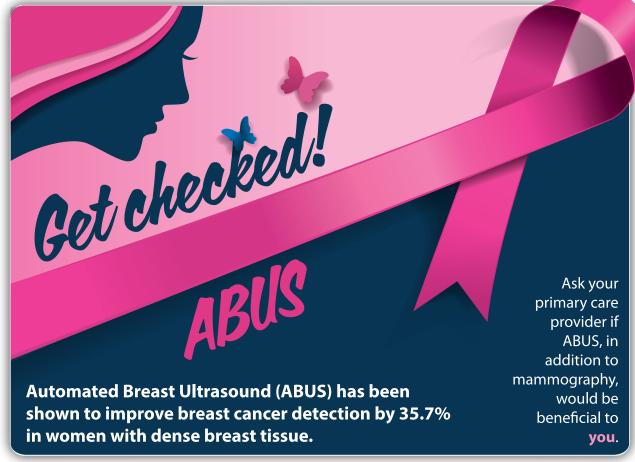
# Future Ready Iowa has internships available

DES MOINES – Governor Kim Reynolds
Tuesday announced the opening of another round of funding opportunities for employers, nonprofits, educational and community groups seeking to provide high school youth with internship opportunities.

Now available for the fourth consecutive year, Future Ready Iowa's Summer Youth Internship Project grants are designed to help youth explore and prepare for high-demand careers while gaining work experience and developing the personal attributes necessary to succeed in the workplace.

A total of \$250,000 will be available for programs this summer. Applications must be submitted through www.Iowa-Grants.gov by March 2, 2022.

Priority for funding will be given to programs that provide internships to high school youth who are at risk of not graduating, from low-income households, from communities under-represented in the Iowa workforce, or who otherwise face barriers to success and upward mobility in the labor market.





## Classifieds/Public Notices



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### **PUBLIC NOTICES**

# PUBLIC NOTICE LEE COUNTY CONFERENCE BOARD PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Lee County Conference Board Chairman, Matt Pflug, has scheduled a public hearing to adopt the Assessor's budget for the fiscal year 2022-2023. The public hearing will be held in person or electronically February 24, 2022 at 6:00p.m. at the North Lee County Board Room, 933 Ave H, Fort Madison, lowa. Please enter thru east door.

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

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#### **AGENDA**

- 1. Roll call
- 2. Approve agenda
- 3. Approval of January 27, 2022 Conference Board Meeting Minutes
- 4. Chairman open public Hearing
- 5. Motion to close public Hearing
- 6. Roll call
- 7. Adoption of the approved 2022-2023 Assessor's budget
- 8. Roll call vote
- 9. Adjourn Enclosed:
- 1. Copy of January 27, 2022 minutes
- 2. Copy of Approved 2022-2023 Assessor's budget
- 3. Copy of the DOM Assessor's budget

PUBLIC NOTICE KEOKUK CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES JANUARY 6, 2022 501 Main Street 6:30 P.M.

The City Council of

the City of Keokuk met in regular session on January 6, 2022 at 501 Main Street. Mayor Kathie Mahoney called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. There were nine council members present, none absent. Carissa Crenshaw, Linda Altheide, Roslyn Garcia, Dan Winn, John Helenthal, Steve Andrews, Linda Marsden, Roger Bryant, and Michael Greenwald were present. Staff in attendance: City Administrator Cole O'Donnell, City Clerk Jean Ludwig, **Public Works Director** Robert Helenthal, Community Development Director Pam Broomhall, Police Chief Dave Hinton, Bridge, Park, Cemetery and Sanitation Manager Bob Weis, Sewer Manager Michael Clark, Airport Manager Raymond Ott, Fire Chief Gabe Rose, Assistant Police Chief Brian DePriest, Animal Control Officer Tom Crew, Street Department Manager Tom Beaird as well as other City Employees. MAYOR'S CORRE-

SPONDENCE: Mayor Mahoney swore in appointed city officials, City Clerk Jean Ludwig, Chief of Police Dave Hinton, and City Attorney James Dennis. City Clerk Ludwig read the names of management employees that will continue their current positions: Community **Development Director** Pam Broomhall, Director of Public Works Robert Helenthal, Superintendent Water Pollution Control Plant Tom Wills, Fire Chief Gabe Rose, Street Department Tom Beaird, Bridge, Park, Cemetery and Sanitation Departments Bob Weis, Sewer Maintenance Department Michael Clark, and Airport Manager Raymond Ott.

Mayor Mahoney thanked Joe Shuman and volunteers for City of Christmas display, announced the retirement of Captain Robert Haflinger with 32 years of service in the Keokuk Police
Department, announced
Eagle Days, announced
library reading program
and urged citizen's to
get involved on Boards
& Commissions and
thanked everyone for the
support she has received.

Motion by Greenwald to approve the regular agenda less Item #7, including the consent agenda, second by Garcia. (9) AYES, (0) NAYS. Motion carried.

- Minutes of the Council Workshop, Regular
   City Council meeting & Special Work Session
- of December 16, 2021;
   Minutes of the Safety
- Committee meeting of December 16, 2021;
   RESOLUTION NO.

1-2022 Approving an Ur-

- ban Revitalization Tax Exemption for James & Ginger Knisley, 3405 Middle Road, garage;
- RESOLUTION NO. 2-2022 Approving a Liquor License for Columbian Room of Keokuk, 11 N. 6th Street, effective January 20, 2022 – Class C Liquor License with Sunday Sales & Outdoor Service;
- Motion to pay bills and transfers listed in Register No.'s 5248-5250;

Consider resolution adopting policy pertaining to OSHA'S Emergency temporary standard. (Strike from the agenda)

Motion made by Helenthal, second by Winn to approve the following proposed RESOLUTION NO. 3-2022: "A RESOLUTION DESIGNATING DEPOSITORIES FOR CITY MONIES AND CITY FUNDS NOT TO EXCEED THE SUMS LISTED PER FINANCIAL INSTITION." (9) AYES, (0) NAYS. Motion carried.

Motion made by Helenthal, second by Winn to approve the following proposed RESOLUTION NO. 4-2022: "A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING MAYOR KATHIE MAHONEY AND CITY ADMINISTRATOR COLE O'DONNELL TO SIGN ALL CHECKS IS-

SUED BY THE CITY." (9) AYES, (0) NAYS. Motion carried.

Motion made by Helenthal, second by Winn to approve the following proposed RESOLUTION NO. 5-2022: "A RESOLUTION MAKING THE SAFE DEPOSIT BOX RENTED IN THE NAME OF THE CITY OF KEOKUK ACCESSIBLE TO THE MAYOR, CITY ADMINITSTRATOR & CITY CLERK." (9) AYES, (0)

NAYS. Motion carried.

Motion made by Marsden, second by Bryant to approve the following proposed RESOLUTION NO. 6-2022: "A RESOLUTION DESIGNATING THE DAILY GATE CITY AS A NEWSPAPER OF GENERAL CIRCULATION FOR PUBLICATION OF OFFICIAL NOTICES." (9) AYES, (0) NAYS. Motion carried.

Motion made by Helenthal, second by Bryant to approve the following proposed RESOLUTION NO. 7-2022: "A RESOLUTION APPOINTING COLE O'DONNELL TO THE SOUTHEAST IOWA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (SEIRPC) BOARD OF DIRECTORS." (9) AYES, (0) NAYS. Motion carried.

Motion made by Winn, second by Helenthal to approve the following proposed RESOLUTION NO. 8-2022: "A RESOLUTION DESIGNATING MICHAEL GREENWALD AS MAYOR PRO TEM OF THE CITY OF KEOKUK IN THE ABSENCE OF MAYOR KATHIE MAHONEY." (9) AYES, (0) NAYS. Motion carried.

BOARDS & COMMIS-SIONS: First Notification for Devon Dade to the City Planning Commission, filling an unfinished 5-year term to expire 5/14/2025. First Notification for Dustin Wade to the Depot Commission, filling an unfinished 5-year term to expire 6/1/2022.

STAFF REPORTS: Public Works Director Robert Helenthal reported on cemetery clean-up/ maintenance and repairs on N. 2nd Street. WPC Superintendent Tom Wills reported on plant/ pre-treatment operations and progress on new belt press. Community **Development Director** Broomhall reported on updated city fee structure, UTV/golf cart ordinance, demos of 422 Main, old Jefferson School and two homes, sign violations, vacant building registry, funding for re-habilitating city owned buildings in 600 block of Main, funding to save some homes rather than demo. Helenthal reported on new storage building and runway lighting project at airport, holiday double trash pickups were run without overtime. Snow crews did a good job over the holiday weekend. Discussed snow ordinance. Chief Hinton said national crime rates are high and we tend follow those trends. Court cases are often delayed. O'Donnell reported on monthly meetings with each council member, development of city owned building in

and budget calendar.

Motion made by Helenthal, second by Marsden

the 600 block of Main, an

increase in GRRWA fees

to adjourn the meeting at 7:12 p.m.

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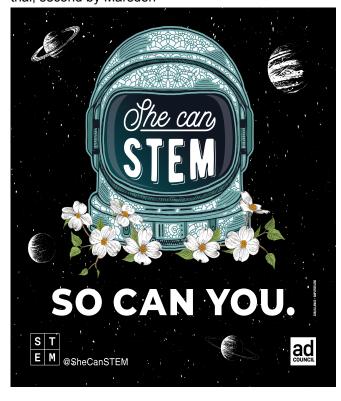
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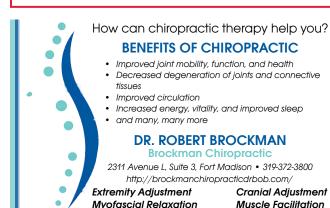
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## Lee County News/From the Front

**BUDGET** - Continued from Page 1

since left the department for a different position. That leaves his detective supervisor position open. The new position would be a department detective to augment the supervisor position.

"The nature of the work requires undistracted attention to detail, skill in investigative techniques, and follow through, and more importantly timeli-

He said bringing the additional position on at a cost of \$90,000 is zero option

"This is going to have to require an investment from the city. And this is something we need to invest in and do at this time. I consider this a no-option proposal that I'm giving to the council."

The department is budgeted for 20 officers and there are currently three openings.

Rohloff said there is a nationwide shortage of officers and said Keokuk Police Department was just in front of their council with the same concerns.

Councilman Rusty Andrews said since

Rohloff has been with the city, staffing has been an issue. He was careful to say it wasn't Rohloff's fault because everyone was experiencing the same difficulties.

"Finding law enforcement candidates is difficult. There is no easy pass there. What we've started on as far as offering lateral positions and offering bonuses has been somewhat successful," Rohloff

Andrews said the staff is getting very young, to which Rohloff said he was a "mile wide and an inch deep".

The council also agreed preliminarily to have Varley boost the contribution to Lee County Economic Development Group from \$30,000 to \$35,000.

Varley said the city needs to start preparing for some capital expenses at the Old Fort. Varley said staff at the Old Fort has been making repairs they are qualified for, but additional larger scale renovations are going to be needed.

Mayor Matt Mohrfeld told Varley to look at finding some money in the budget to set aside for that work.

## Old Fort in need of repairs | State COVID proclamation to expire on Feb. 15

VIRUS - Continued from Page 1

exposed, and following CDC guidance for isolation and quarantine if you are positive or exposed."

Ross said LCHD and state health officials are still encouraging people to wear well-fitting masks in public settings to reduce transmission risks, as well as choosing to be up-to-date on vaccinations.

"Of course we also encourage frequent hand washing and other infection control precautions that have been promoted from the very beginning. All of this will help reduce virus transmissions in our county including cold and flu viruses."

Meanwhile Gov. Kim Reynolds announced today that she will be letting the Public Health Proclamation that's been in place in one form or another for close to two years, expire on Feb. 15, 2022.

"We cannot continue to suspend duly enacted laws and treat COVID-19 as a public health emergency indefinitely. After two years, it's no longer feasible or necessary. The flu and other infectious illnesses are part of our everyday lives, and coronavirus can be managed similarly," Reynolds said.

"State agencies will now manage COVID-19 as part of normal daily business, and reallocate resources that have been solely dedicated to the response effort to serve other important needs for Iowans."

Ross said she's concerned that the virus has become a secondary thought to many people as they try to get back to normal.

"I know this has become a common mindset for many people given how long we have all been dealing with this and will continue to deal with especially if it will be considered endemic by top officials. Bottom line, for those who test positive for COVID-19 and only have mild cold like symptoms or no symptoms and recover easily- consider yourself lucky," Ross said.

But she said unfortunately there are still far too many people who are experiencing more serious illness that has led to hospitalization and long-term serious health

"That is the risk we all fall under- the unknown outcome. As public health, we continue to promote best practices for reducing spread of virus activity and taking added precautions especially to protect those who are more vulnerable and susceptible to severe illness and complications."

Ross said unvaccinated Iowans still make up the largest percentage of those currently hospitalized or in ICU beds in the state, according to state data.

In Reynolds release Thursday afternoon, she said Iowa is one of about half the states in the country to allow public health proclamations to expire.

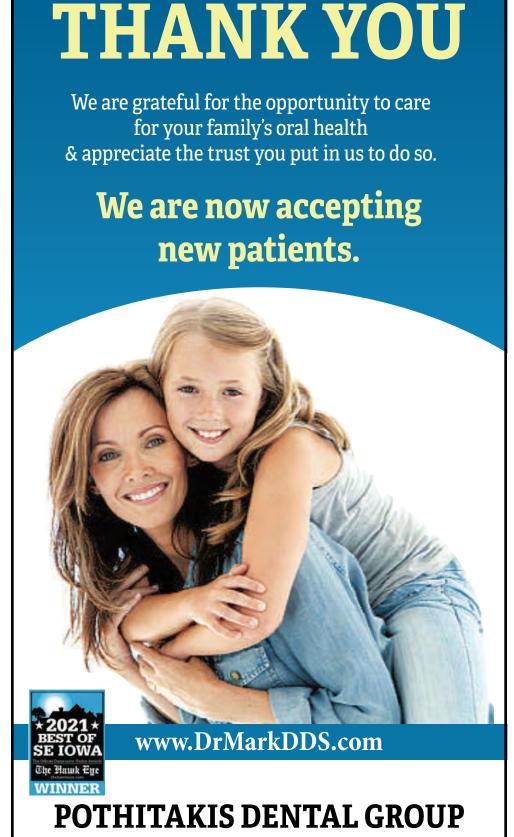
## Oden-Shabazz to speak at KARE event

KEOKUK - The Keokuk Association for Rights and Equality (KARE) will host a Black History Celebration on Tuesday, February 8, at 6:00 pm. at New Bethel Church, 1217 Morgan St., Keokuk. Dr. Byron Oden-Shabazz will give a presentation, Allyship: It's in the Action. Music will be included in the program and there will be a free community dinner to conclude the evening.

Dr. Oden-Shabazz is a graduate of Western Illinois University where he is a Foreman in Facilities Management. He holds a BA in General Studies focused on African American Studies and also holds a Master's degree in Sports Management focused on

the Misuse of Black Athletes, Graduation and Retention and the importance of Diversity and Mentorship. Dr. Oden-Shabazz is the President of the McDonough County Branch of the NAACP. He also stays active on campus as a Mentor and a speaker for student organizations. His biggest project was creating a Foundation and 501c3 to support a 2-million-dollar project to build a new Cultural Center to honor the life's work and legacy of Macomb native, Rev. Dr. C.T. Vivian, a leading figure of the American Civil Rights movement.

Please contact Dev Kiedaisch at 319-520-6724 or Brenda Bradley at 319-520-7829 if you have any questions.



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