

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

Monday, January 23, 2023 | 7 pages | Volume 7 • Issue 23



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Arson coming into focus

SUNDAY FIRES: City calling on state fire marshal's office to help with recent fires

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - Two fires Sunday have city officials now looking to the state for help as arson comes into focus. The fires, which were extinguished by Fort Madison Police officers before they got out of hand, did minimal damage. But officials say these were the first in the latest string of fires

that were set on or near occupied homes. FMPD Police Chief Mark Rohloff issued the following statement Sunday outlining the recent fires in the 2800 block of Avenue O. "Shortly before 4 a.m. Sunday, the Fort Madison Fire Department was dispatched to a residential fire. Although

See FIRES, page 3



Corey Fraise of Fraise Auction and Real Estate calls out bids in between basketball games Friday night during the FM Athletic Boosters Annual Cake Auction night at the Hound Dome.

KEOKUK

Insight spokesman outlines preliminary plans for hospital

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

KEOKUK - A spokesperson with Insight, the health system in talks regarding the closed Blessing Keokuk Hospital, said Insight teams were on-site last week to evaluate the shuttered facility. Paul Stewart, a media spokesperson with Insight, said a final determination on what services the facility will provide has not been made, saying several processes need to be flushed out.

"We want to work closely with local leaders as to what's going to be in the best interest of the community going forward. Whether that's critical access care, a rural hospital, and one or two others that we're exploring," Stewart said. "We have not been able to have real discussions yet because we were still

negotiating the terms of the (letter of intent)." Stewart said the LOI is not contingent on current Rural Emergency Hospital legislation being moved through the Iowa legislature, or any financial incentives at this point. However, the timing of beginning operations could be based on those developments.

See INSIGHT, page 3

OPINION



We didn't see the whole board

I like chess. You have to get your butt kicked before you get any good, and it helps define your ability to see the whole board. I've been naive a good portion of my life. Always wanting to be everyone's friend and the class clown tends to make you turn a blind eye in an end game of being liked by everyone. That was me in high school. It's also important for journalists to be able to see the whole board. We don't always catch everything, or see what's coming down the road, but the longer we do this, the more savvy we get. I got played Wednesday. I let it happen. Not sure what I could've done differently than ask directly if city officials were closing the Old Fort. I saw a post on "Our Old Fort Madison" Facebook page and immediately reached out to Fort Madison Mayor Matt Mohrfeld. This is 18 hours after I asked him what was going on with the Fort following Tuesday's City Council meeting. At that time the Mayor told me that nothing was off the table, but nothing had been decided yet. It was a perfectly legitimate response. I included it in my article on the City Council meeting. Upon seeing the Facebook post Wednesday, I reached out to the Mayor again at about 1 p.m., and I got the same line sprinkled with his frustration that people weren't following

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WEATHER

OpenWeatherMap
MON 23 Jan.....Partly sunny and cold, 37° F/ 26° F
TUE 24 Jan.....Cloudy and cold, 36° F/ 28° F
WED 25 Jan.....Cold with chance of snow, 33° F/ 24° F
IOWA LOTTERY
LOTTO AMERICA 01/21.....25 27 29 35 50, Star Ball: 6 All Star Bonus: 4
LUCKY FOR LIFE 01/21.....6 10 11 29 35, Lucky Ball: 7
MEGA MILLIONS 01/20.....20 29 31 64 66, Mega Ball: 17 Megaplier: 4
PICK 3 01/19, 01/20, 01/21 MIDDAY.....430, 740, 537
PICK 3 01/19, 01/20, 01/21 EVENING.....097, 829, 347
PICK 4 01/19, 01/20, 01/21 MIDDAY.....1683, 9034, 6189
PICK 4 01/19, 01/20, 01/21 EVENING.....7485, 4832, 3934
POWERBALL 01/21.....514 19 46 64, Powerball: 22 Power Play: 4

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Obituaries/Sports

SPORTS

Hounds fall victim to momentum

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC Editor

FORT MADISON – There’s a magic to momentum.

An impact that’s not physically real, but palpable to anyone who’s up against it.

That invisible force rolled over the Fort Madison Bloodhounds Friday night as Keokuk erased a 22-point deficit to get an improbable South-east Conference win.

It was the Chiefs’ first conference win in two years.

The Hounds played some of their cleanest ball of the year in the first half, not unnoticed to Head Coach Ryan Wilson.

The Hounds opened with a basket in less than four seconds when Leif Boeding got open on the second pass off the tip to score along the baseline.

Fort Madison would push the lead to 9-4, but the Chiefs would come back to tie things at 9 and then again at 15 in the first period. After starting 3-of-3 from the field, the Hounds then missed six of their next eight shots from the floor.

Down 11-13, Dayton Lamar

scored inside on a nice interior loft pass from Boeding to Lamar on the blocks who scored to tie things at 13. Lamar would finish with 10 points, all in the first half.

The Hounds would get a stop on the Chiefs’ next possession, and then Hunter Cresswell would score on a double move underneath to get the Hounds a 15-13 lead after one.

It was all Fort Madison in the second half as they went on a 14-5 run behind Lamar’s eight points.

Holding a 29-18 lead at the half, Fort Madison came out of the locker room looking as if they would put the game away early.

Boeding picked the Chiefs’ pocket in the halfcourt and raced down for a layup to put the Hounds up 38-18, while the Hounds’ defense held Keokuk scoreless until 5:24 left in the third period.

Then momentum swung Keokuk’s direction and the mysterious energy would carry the Chiefs down the stretch as the Chiefs went on a 34-8 run, trailing by 22 at 40-18. Boeding would score for Fort Madison to

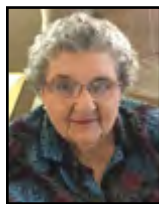
See **HOUNDS**, page 7

OBITUARIES

MILDRED E. WALLJASPER

Mildred Elizabeth Walljasper, 91, of Salem, Iowa, passed away at 4:52 a.m. Friday, January 20, 2023, at the West Point Care Center.

She was born on August 18, 1931 in St. Paul, Iowa, the daughter of Joseph and Lena (Kuhljuergen) Fritzjunker. On September 12, 1950, she married Ralph Walljasper at St. James Catholic Church in St. Paul. He preceded her in death on June 21, 1996.



WALLJASPER

Survivors include her six children: Wendel (Wendy) Walljasper of Donnellson, Arlo (Sherry) Walljasper of New London, Sandy Kuhlmeier of Fort Madison, Jeanne (Alan) Vantiger of West Point, Dean (Angie) Walljasper of West Point, Jolene (Alan) Edmonds of Mediapolis; grandchildren: Shelly (Lee) Ekle, Dustin (Samilyn) Walljasper, Caitlin Walljasper, Amanda (Doug) Tate, Sara Walljasper, Katie (Brian) Kremer, Denise Waymack, Jason Kuhlmeier, Jeremy (Kris) Kuhlmeier, Michelle (JD Hoover) Walljasper, John Walljasper, Stacey (Jason) Stotlar, Eric (Jen) Vantiger, Bryce Walljasper, Kira (Tristin) Howe, Luke Walljasper, Sarah (Brad) Conley, Sawyer Edmonds, Wyatt Edmonds and several great grandchildren and great great grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband: Ralph; daughter: Mary Elizabeth; son and daughter-in-law: Wayne and Kathy Walljasper and son-in-law: Jerome Kuhlmeier; brother: Joe Fritzjunker and sister: Marian Kilbourn.

Mildred was a member of St. James Catholic Church, the Altar and Rosary Society of the church, Daughters of Isabella and the St. James Quilters. She enjoyed quilting, playing cards, square dancing and gardening.

Visitation will begin at 12:00 noon, Monday, January 23, 2023 at Schmitz Funeral Home in West Point, where the family will receive friends from 3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. A parish rosary will be recited at 4:00 p.m. and a Christian wake service will be held at 6:00 p.m.

A Mass of Christian burial will be held at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, January 24, 2023, at St. James Catholic Church in St. Paul with Father Dan Dorau as celebrant.

Burial will be in St. James Cemetery.

A memorial has been established in her memory for St. James Catholic Church or West Point Care Center.

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

DOROTHY MILAM

Dorothy Milam, 76, of Fort Madison passed away on Friday, January 20, 2023 at 2:19 AM at the Henry County Health Center in Mt. Pleasant.

She was born on February 10, 1946 in Muscatine, Iowa to Clyde and Susan Miller Delmater. Survivors include nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents.

Per her wishes, cremation has been entrusted to King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory and there will be no formal services at this time.

Online condolences may be left at www.kinglynk.com.



Lunch Specials
January 23-27
11am - 1pm

Monday, January 23
Turkey Sandwich, Cheese Potatoes, Corn

Tuesday, January 24
Breaded Pork Chop, Loaded Potatoes

Wednesday, January 25
Tater Tot Casserole, Green Beans

Thursday, January 26
Fried Chicken Dinners

Friday, January 27
Fish & Shrimp Dinners, Fries, Slaw

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#3 John Bennett Drive, Fort Madison
(319) 372-5225 . www.leecountyhd.org

Charles Vandenberg, Editor
(319).371.1670
charles.v@pencitycurrent.com

Lee K. Vandenberg, Sales Manager
(319).371.4125
lee.v@pencitycurrent.com

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From the Front

Insight waiting on certificate of need

INSIGHT - Continued from Page 1

He said the current landscape has Insight planning to have something open in the next several months, well before the end of the year.

Evaluation teams were at the Keokuk facility last week, but Stewart said upper level Insight officials haven't reviewed that report as of Friday.

Blessing officials said in September that a private engineering firm estimated that \$20 million in building repairs were needed.

The Keokuk Hospital has seen multiple owners over the past decade with each effort resulting in closure or sale. Stewart said Insight has a different payor mix because of the wide range of services they provide, which gives the health system other viable options.

"We have an overall strategy of using economies of scale because of our system, and the specialists we have on staff, that allows us to have a slightly different mix," Stewart said.

"That, coupled with the values we can find for higher level procedures, has proven out before," Stewart said. "We are in a very similar situation in Chicago with an underperforming asset that we've stabilized."

The medical group runs a 400-bed unit on Chicago's south side, and has other units in Michigan. Stewart says this acquisition would allow Insight to expand their services in the Midwest.

He said the Keokuk facility kind of popped up on their radar, but Insight is in an active growth mode and looks at underperforming operations.

"Our initial projections show we can find some areas to stabilize the finances and we'll be working closely with local elected officials and the state to get a facility up that reflects the needs of the community and county," he said.

Stewart said Insight's leadership is keenly aware of the struggles other operators have encountered trying to sustain at Keokuk hospital.

"We've been doing some initial research on those closures. And other factors have caused some strain. We want to bring some thought-leaders to the situation and help alleviate those issues," he said.

Currently Insight is waiting for a certificate of need that's being prepared, as well as information from the state and city on how best to move forward in Keokuk.

He said Insight is also following the Rural Emergency Hospital bill in the Iowa legislature, closely.

"We're very familiar with that model and it's something we're looking at. The certificate of need helps us better understand things and we're in very preliminary stages of the transition and overall delivery model," Stewart said.

"We want to do what's in the best interest of the community there. And right now, I'm not in any position to say specifically what that is."

The bill for the emergency hospitals creates facilities that, according to Rep. Martin Graber (R -Fort Madison), serve essentially as triage centers where patients are stabilized and observed, if necessary, before being transported to area higher-level hospitals.

Lee County has added nine full-time staff and additional equipment to prop up emergency services in Keokuk due to the closure of the hospital.

County officials have said the direction of the ambulance service is geared toward emergency priorities and then transports. Lee County Board Chairman Garry Seyb said it's still critical for the EMS levy to pass in September to help fund the county ambulance service.

Seyb said the new development with Insight doesn't change the posture of the county toward the levy or the continued development of the ambulance program.

FMPD douses fire before too much damage done

FIRES - Continued from Page 1

initially given an incorrect location, a police officer located flames outside a house several blocks away in the 2800 block of Avenue O, and was able to extinguish it. No serious damage resulted, and the home remains occupied.

Department arson-trained investigators were called in and are currently conducting interviews. An initial investigation revealed an accelerant was used at an outside corner of the residence, and that a secondary fire was located across the street to a neighbor's decorative yard ornament. Valuable trace evidence has been collected.

These most recent events are believed to possibly be related to a string of fires on the city's south side in recent months and is the third on this same two block stretch of Avenue O. Previously the structures were vacant, dilapidated houses. This is the first known attempt on an occupied home. Consequently, the State Fire Marshal has been contacted and the investigation continues."

Damage to the home consisted of smoke from the accelerant and almost no charring. Siding was removed by FMPD to ensure there was no smoldering.

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Classifieds/Public Notices

PEN CITY CURRENT CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE MEETING NOTICE

The Green Bay Levee & Drainage District will hold a regular meeting at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, January 26, 2023, at Heartland Co-op, east of Wever.

PUBLIC NOTICE PROCEEDINGS FORT MADISON CITY COUNCIL 1/17/2023

At 5:30 P.M., Council met in adjourned session with Council Members Amandus, Andrews, Bowker, Cangas, Gray, Rink and Roller present.

On motion, Council ap-

proved the Consent Agenda: Minutes of 1/3/2023; Liquor License Renewals: Hy-Vee Food Store and River Rocks Bar & Grill; Claims dated 1/12/2023, December Manuals, December Financial Report & Payroll of 1/13/2023.

At 5:34 P.M., Mohrfeld opened the public hearing concerning the Sale of City-Owned Property at 1410-12 Avenue E. The winning bid was \$1,500 and submitted by Timmy A/Cari A Schmidt. With no oral or written comments, Mohrfeld closed the public hearing. On motion, Council adopted Resolution No. 2023-03, approving the sale

of City-Owned Property at 1410-12 Avenue E to Timmy A/Cari A Schmidt for \$1,500 plus costs. On motion, Council adopted Resolution No. 2023-04, approving the following applications of Thaddeus D/Kimberly Sommers, 1601 Avenue G; Charles Edward/Emily Jo Logan, 117 - 16th Street; James Yager, 2218 Avenue B and Frederick A/Katrina J Dunn, 2130 Avenue H, for 3-Year Urban Revitalization Tax Exemptions. On motion, Council adopted Resolution No. 2023-05, approving the Mayor's signature on Change Order #7, for PIP 2020-05, Reconstruction of Old

Hwy. 61: 6-10 Street. On motion, Council adopted Resolution No. 2023-06, accepting PIP 2020-05, Reconstruction of Old Hwy. 61: 6th - 10th Street as complete.

On motion, Council approved the Mayor's appointments of Barbara Asay and Thomas Schulz, terms expiring 3/31/2024; and Matt Emmett, term expiring 3/31/2025, to the Planning and Zoning Commission. On motion, Council approved the Mayor's signature on a Community Catalyst Remediation Grant for 833/835 Avenue G.

The meeting adjourned at 6:07 P.M.

/s/ Matt J. Mohrfeld, Mayor

EXPENDITURES

General	\$ 40,808.17
Special Revenue	122,593.36
Road Use	42,060.85
Capital	47,104.47
Water	169,848.50
Sewer	300,375.62
Solid Waste/IWC	31,471.48
SW Utility	1,759.11
	<hr/>
	\$756,021.56

REVENUES

General	\$ 25,745.18
Special Rv	10,208.33
Debt	4,823.72
Water	436.73
Sewer	8,412.89
Sld Waste, IWC	253.67
SW Utility	32.52
	<hr/>
	\$49,913.04

CLAIMS 1/17/2023

AHLERS & COONEY, PC, PROFESSIONAL FEES 1,400.50
ALAN ENVIRONMENTAL PRODUCT, GLOVES

ATTEST: /s/ Melinda L. Blind, City Clerk

PAYROLL

	1/13/2023
General	\$219,141.55
Old Fort	2,992.91
Merschon Trust	500.64
Road Use	29,569.44
Water	31,572.68
Sewer	31,115.97
Solid Waste	16,711.20
Airport	312.77
Storm Water	3,017.48
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	\$334,934.64

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PUBLIC NOTICES

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MANUAL CLAIMS DEC 2022

ALLIANT ENERGY, ELECTRIC 56,157.51	CENTURY LINK, PHONE/INTERNET 185.57	IOWA DEPT. OF REVENUE, WET & SALES TAX 16,517.71	IOWA FINANCE AUTHORITY, INTEREST PYMTS 367,687.01	MASTERCARD, DOMAIN/TRAINING/UNIFORMS 1,308.46	MERCHANT SERVICES, CREDIT CARD FEES 3,881.37	MIDWEST GROUP BENEFITS, FLEX PYMTS & SELF INS CLAIMS 16,312.55	PITNEY BOWES, E-Z SEAL FOR POSTAGE MACHINE 322.98	WELLMARK BC/BS,
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- Opportunities to earn up to \$29.46/hr
- \$.45 2nd shift / \$.65 3rd shift pay differentials
- 3% annual pay increases per contract
- \$175 monthly Company contribution to pension from date of hire
- 3% Company match to 401(k); 100% immediately vested
- Blue Cross Blue Shield PPO starting at \$27.69 per weekly payroll deduction
- Plus Dental, Vision, Life, STD and more!

Open Salary Positions

Quality Assurance Manager | Production Team Leader
Quality / Sanitation Team Leader | Environmental Engineer
Quality Specialist



- 3-5 years of HVAC service experience OR an HVAC certification/diploma or completed apprenticeship program AND 1 year of HVAC field experience.
- Must have the required Universal EPA certification for handling refrigerants
- Experience in team processes, interpersonal communications, team building, facilitation, and self-management skills
- Starting wage \$28.27/hr with targeted standard wage of \$30.05/hr
- \$.45 2nd shift / \$.65 3rd shift pay differentials
- Position is continuous shift operation
- 3% annual pay increases per contract
- \$175 monthly Company contribution to pension from date of hire
- 3% Company match to 401(k); 100% immediately vested
- Blue Cross Blue Shield PPO starting at \$27.69 per weekly payroll deduction
- Plus Dental, Vision, Life, STD and more!



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Classifieds/Public Notices

SHOP Classifieds

PLACE YOUR AD ONLINE AT WWW.PENCITYCURRENT.COM OR CALL (319)371.4125

PUBLIC NOTICES

HEALTH INS PREMIUMS 106,685.08
 WEX BANK, FUEL USAGE 21,574.01
 590,632.25
 GENERAL 19,966.89
 SPECIAL REVENUES 119425.18
 ROAD USE 22,178.92
 WATER 141267.48
 WASTEWATER 285,400.61
 SOLID WASTE ... 2169.62
 AIRPORT 223.55
 TOTAL 590,632.25

If you would like to pose a question to the Board, please use the Chat feature and wait for the Chairman to address you. If you are participating by phone, please wait until everyone is done speaking before addressing the Board. Please keep your microphone muted to cut down on background noise. If you are participating by phone, press #6, this will mute your phone.

upon request
 Contact Title VI Administrator
 319-372-3705
 County Website: www.leecounty.org

PUBLIC NOTICE City of Fort Madison 2022 Salaries

Police
 Doyle, David 16520.92
 Gibbs, Brent 80978.82
 Judd, Karl 46454.94
 Carle, James 87492.9
 Fullhart, Dustin 86752.98
 Gray, Jack 69132.92
 Parker, Nathan... 63928.52
 Worley, Dakota 77164.05
 Miner, Carol 42927.75
 Schleidt, Kayla.. 36514.41
 Fedler, Nicholas 68261.97
 Wade, Joshua... 70672.38
 Warosh, Gregory 69412.37
 Rohloff, Mark 94348.8
 Hugg, Kelsey ... 45908.41
 Kuesel, Carsen 61036.72
 Chandler, Brenton 57950.33
 Vanhemert, Austin 70934.26
 Boecker, Jeremy 51639.9
 Potthast, Cody.. 94424.75
 Gilpin, Brandon 49003.46
 Hennigar, Bryson 32907.97
 Mann, Steven ... 18648.64
 Chaney, Benjamin 11851.58
 Lefler, Jonathan 10510.06
 Fire
 Weisinger, Drew 74293.65
 Eastin, Christopher 72894.18
 Meierotto, Alexander 79046.27
 Lange, Jonathan 72098.5
 Fullenkamp, Charles 70376.01
 Gathers, Neal ... 87851.34
 Brisby, Kent 71524.36
 Fullenkamp, Mike 84649.72
 Johnson, Daniel 71553.57
 Hannum, Chad 82702.66

Schneider, Mike 6141.11
 Pulbic Works
 Degen, Michael 48310.56
 Green, Brian 80387.62
 Zumdom, Shane 45471.72
 Bryant, Bradley 47746.86
 Stein, Brian 45001.04
 Helling, Cole 47917.71
 Bousset, Mark... 108572
 Bohnenkamp, Eric 50803.38
 Gruening, Luke 49149.57
 Brown, Robert... 50853.96
 Bergquist, Doug 52490.32
 Puckett, Elmer .. 52574.91
 Wilson, Leon..... 50804.45
 Estrada, William 45889.09
 Manning, Donald 17253.5
 Honadel, Kenneth 48963.05
 Clute, Ty 48760.19
 Woods, Lawrence 19713.5
 Henderson, Kyle.... 14156
 Johnson, Kody.... 17990.5
 Woods, Kevin 550
 Hamelton, Jeffrey ... 2054
 McCollum, Franklin 15076
 Tourism
 Peiton, Jean..... 2652.86
 Airport
 Woodley, David.... 8829.8
 Water
 Horn, Daniel..... 70890.07
 Peitz, Joe..... 52614.09
 Dodson, Norman 78225.16
 Bartholomew, Edmund 53051.24
 Kempker, Michael 1885.28
 Hoenig, Kevin ... 51954.61
 Hannum, Garrett 10304.55
 Wiegand, Brian... 32623.3
 Peterson, Don... 49822.54
 Kern, Robert 53335.36
 Wastewater
 Kuhlmeier, Jason 1023.78
 Huebner, Casey 78840.43
 Griffin, Matthew 57773.46
 Horey, Heather 40186.74
 Brown, Benjamin 52268.39
 Koser, Nathan... 60935.31
 Stewart, Clifford 59069.18

Schroeder, Travis 56464.03
 Zumdom, Dana 56410.41

HELP WANTED

Public Works General Operator

Performs a variety of unskilled or semi-skilled maintenance work, operates a variety of equipment in the construction, operation, repair, maintenance and replacement of City street, sanitary and storm drainage facilities and systems.

DESIRED MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS
 Education and Experience:
 • Graduation from high school education or GED equivalent and
 • Two (2) years of experience relating to construction, maintenance, or repair, or
 • Any equivalent combination of education and experience.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS
 • Valid State Driver's license
 • Class B CDL with the ability to obtain a Class A CDL within one year of hire

Necessary Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

- Some knowledge of equipment, facilities, materials, methods and procedures used in maintenance, construction and repair activities;
- Skill in operation of some of the listed tools and equipment;
- Ability to perform heavy manual tasks for extended periods of time; ability to work safely; ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing; ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with employees, other departments and the public; ability to understand and carry out written and oral instructions.

Submit applications to Justin Cullen at City Hall, 811 Avenue E, Fort Madison, IA 52627 or via email at jcullen@fortmadison-ia.com by 4:30pm on Friday, February 3rd, 2023.



PUBLIC NOTICE
Lee County, Iowa
Board of Supervisors
Agenda
DATE: Monday,
January 16, 2023
MEETING
CONVENING TIME:
10:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.
(CDT)
LOCATION:
933 Avenue H
Fort Madison, IA

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From the Front/Sports

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FORT - Continued from Page 1

proper protocols in city messaging.

I then drove over to City Hall where David Varley followed the company line while sitting next to me in the lobby. He said that no decision had been made, but there were options on the table and the council would have to make some decisions.

Former Fort Madison City Councilman Tom Schulz told me later that evening that a decision had been made at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday morning to close the Fort - four full hours before I reached out to the mayor and City Manager for information on the closure.

City Councilman Rusty Andrews confirmed that meeting via text on Wednesday evening.

Schulz and Andrews both said everyone was asked not to comment on the closure until the city could issue a formal release. Varley told me at 2 the release was coming later Wednesday or Thursday morning.

It came out two hours later. But the council wasn't convened in that time frame, so the council didn't make a decision in that time frame. Clearly the decision had already been made.

I'll say here that I've carried the water for the city on many issues because I believe that progress right now is mandatory. And the Mayor, City Manager, and City Council have ushered in that progress.

There was a Beside the Point that said get on board or get out of the way. Welp, help us stay on board.

Some of this progress has been forced, but some of it has to be. You will never, ever, ever get everyone on board with every project. It just won't happen. So we have to look at progress in the best light possible. At Pen City Current we do that - always.

The Mayor has a vision to clean up Fort Madison, bring people to the community, all while creating a safer community and re-establishing tourism. He's done that with the support of the Council and it's an elected council. We are a democratic Republic, so our voices are carried by those we elect - whether we like it day in or day out - or not. The whip comes at the ballot box.

But a critical part of that process is an informed media. We have two and somedays three or four media outlets in this community. It's our job to ask those questions and, in doing so, we expect forthcoming, accurate answers from the people we elect, and people whose salaries are paid by the citizenry.

This isn't sour grapes. It's not. If we have information about a topic and we call to get information on that topic it's expected we get treated in good faith and with respect.

I feel that was abandoned on Wednesday. Maybe that was the intention, maybe it wasn't. Maybe it's all part of a plan to ratchet up emotion about the Fort to get people on board with ponying up to save it...

That's all conjecture for sure, but without an accurate and good faith discussion on the topic, what else are we left with? With it looking like the Fort will be dismantled now - I guess this discussion could really be Beside the Point.

Chuck Vandenberg is co-owner and editor of Pen City Current and can be reached at charles.v@pencitycurrent.com.

Hounds play was "poetry in motion" in 1st half

HOUNDS - Continued from Page 2

make it 42-18 and then the wheels fell of the Hounds' train.

"It was selfish basketball," Wilson said. "We didn't want to do the things we were doing in the first half. We had guys trying to dribble through the press, guys trying to dribble between two and three guys at a time, guys who wanted to shoot instead of making a pass to the open guy. We did didn't play team basketball."

Keokuk sophomore Brenton Hoard and junior Diego Garcia took turns chipping away at the Hounds' defense, while a smothering press seemed to confuse and frustrate the Hounds down the stretch.

The two led all scorers on the night. Garcia with 23 and Hoard with 19. But it was Garcia's bucket with 1.2 seconds left on the clock that proved to be the downfall for Fort Madison.

Garcia scored from four feet out over a couple Hounds trying to get in the way of the bucket. The ball hit the back of the rim and bounced up and through. Wilson called and granted a time out. Officials put 1.2 seconds back on the clock.

Fort Madison employed a play that allowed them to win with no time on the clock at Holy Trinity last week. Senior Aidan Boyer again found Hunter Cresswell this time outside the three point lane. Cresswell turned and got a shot off before the buzzer, but it sailed high, hitting the top of the backboard and bouncing harmlessly to the floor, securing the win for Keokuk.

Cresswell finished with 12 points on the night. Carson Rashid had 14 for Fort Madison.

Wilson said the Hounds played "phenomenal" through the first half and into the third quarter. "It was beautiful for the first 19 minutes. We shared the ball, we moved the ball, we played defense, and then all of a sudden it was 'I'm gonna get steals' or 'I don't wanna come out'.

We don't trust the process," he said.

"We don't let the coaches coach and referees ref. We let all these things into our head."

Keokuk got hot from the field, hitting 12 of 16 during the run, and six of nine from the free throw line. In the meantime, the Bloodhounds committed six turnovers in about four minutes in the third period as the Chiefs got within eight at 45-37.

A 3-ball from Brenton Hoard from the right baseline tied the game up with 1:56 left at 48-all. Garcia would score after another Hound turnover to give Keokuk its first lead since the first quarter. Carson Rashid would score on a couple free throws with 19 seconds left to tie it up at 50, but Garcia would then get his bucket with just over a tick left, forcing the Hounds' hail mary at the buzzer.

Wilson said the Hounds just lost their way.

"We're trying to dribble through the heart of a press, and then we're trying to attack the lane and Eurostop between two defenders instead of a jump stop and make the next pass," Wilson said.

"We all wanted to be heroes tonight. We didn't have one single hero in the first 19 minutes. We moved the ball - it was poetry in motion. It was great - until it wasn't."

Fort Madison falls to 4-8 overall and 1-6 in the Southeast Conference, while Keokuk moves ahead at 5-8 (1-5). The Hounds host Clark County (1-6) on Tuesday at the Hound Dome.

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