

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

Tuesday, June 27, 2023 | 7 pages | Volume 7 • Issue 111



www.pencitycurrent.com

Teacher rings board's bell

LARSON: Elementary teacher says 2022 concerns ignored by Superintendent

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - A retiring Fort Madison school teacher took a couple minutes Monday night to ask the school board to look into concerns the teachers' union had forwarded to a school official last year.

Fort Madison Elementary teacher Julie Larson spoke during the open discussion agenda item Monday and told the board that concerns the teachers' union had related to the culture of the district have not been addressed by Superintendent Dr. Erin Slater.

"Last year (Fort Madison Education Association) FMEA presented Ms. Slater with staff concerns. The concerns were related to climate and culture and have not been addressed or acted on," Larson told the board.

"Teachers feel micromanaged by not being allowed to teach reading and math in ways to best meet student needs."

Slater responded via email to Pen City Current writing that the district provided a total of four release days for two FMEA leadership staff to talk with teachers in each building to get input and feedback regarding things that were working well in the Dis-

See BOARD, page 6

SUPERVISORS

Keokuk Mayor asks board to clarify turbine situation

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

LEE COUNTY - Keokuk Mayor Kathy Mahoney is pumping Lee County Supervisors for help in quashing discontent in the city of Keokuk over a turbine donated by Ameren.

At Monday's regular meeting of the supervisors, Mahoney spoke during the public comment section of the agenda asking the supervisors to explain that it was their decision to approve the turbine being located in Estes Park, a park in the middle of the city that is actually owned by the county.

Supervisor Chair Garry Seyb said he was on the board several years ago when the decision was made by supervisors to not oppose putting the turbine in the park.

"There was a lot of caution there," Seyb said.

"I talked to the mayor (Tom Richardson) and he didn't have a problem with it. Main Street wasn't in favor, but they said if the Dam Museum wanted it there, they would step back from it. I talked with several officials and there wasn't a whole lot of pushback."

Seyb said any contention that the county wanted the turbine in the park is not accurate, but that supervisors weren't opposed to putting it in the park after speaking with city officials about the donation.

"We're two years into it and I don't think we're at a place now to back away from that," Seyb said.

Ground is close to being broken to start putting the foundation in to support the 90-ton turbine donated by Ameren.

Seyb said he believes the turbine is still in Illinois.

Mahoney said there has been some discussion of late that the turbine could be placed in Riverfront Park or in the

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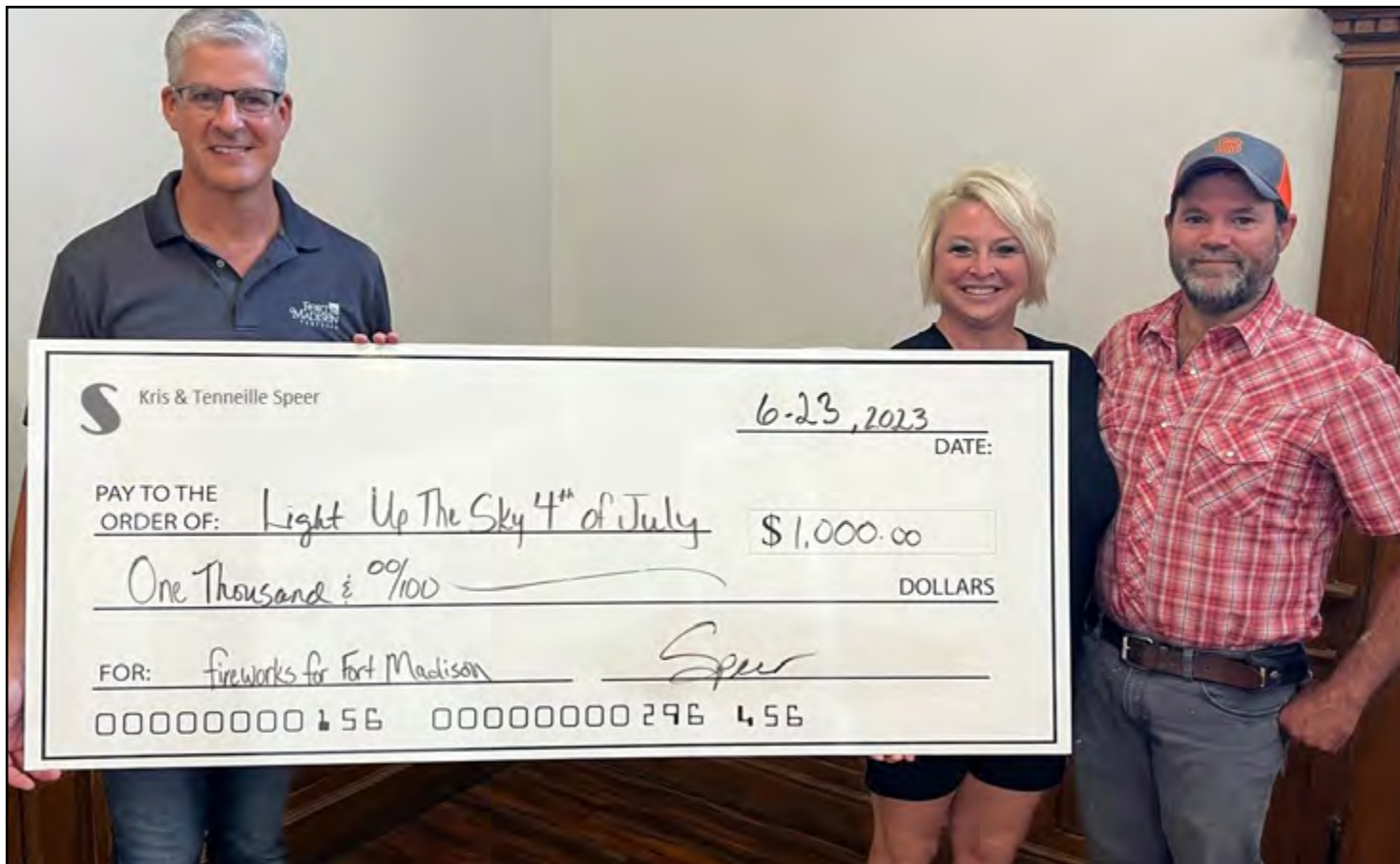


Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

Kris and Tenneille Speer show their support toward the 4th of July fireworks effort currently underway by Fort Madison Partners by donating \$1,000 to the Light Up The Sky 4th of July campaign. Partners' Director Tim Gobble accepts the check.

SCHOOL BOARD

FMHS students could see more lenient dress code

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - Fort Madison High School students can expect a different look in the district's dress code this year.

Co-Principal Patrick Lamb told the Fort Madison School Board at Monday's regular

meeting that the district may have a little more lenient stance with student attire.

Lamb said he and Co-Principal Adrian McKay spent more than 30 hours going over the current dress code trying to make the policy easier to understand and enforce.

"It's hard for me to justify that clothing

is a distraction to education unless its egregious," Lamb said.

"We're looking at being a little more lenient. As long as you're not showing parts of your body that shouldn't socially be

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WEATHER

OpenWeatherMap

TUE 27 Jun.....Sunny and warm, 85° F/ 65° F
WED 28 Jun.....Partly sunny, warm, chance of early showers, 87° F/ 69° F
THU 29 Jun.....Mostly sunny, hot, chance of early storms, 92° F/ 69° F

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From the Front

Mahoney moves turbine contention in front of county supervisors

PARK - Continued from Page 1

middle of Estes Park so it's not in the corner near the streets.

"Now that we're getting ready to do this, apparently there are those that didn't pay any attention to things two years ago," Mahoney told the board.

"I'm asking the board of Supervisors, since Lee County owns that property, to put an article in the paper; step up; at least say something to the citizens of Keokuk on why you want it in that park; don't want in the park; why it was put there in the first place - just something so that the citizens realize that you, as a board of supervisors, chose for it to go there."

The county has offered to turn Estes Park over to the city, but that has been rebuffed in the past, and

Mahoney confirmed that sentiment Monday.

"The city doesn't own that, they don't want to own the property, this is your park and if there is a compromise that's great, but we would ask that you guys take a little initiative to say that this is a Lee County and Dam Museum project and not the city of Keokuk project," she said.

Mahoney asked if the county would consider moving the turbine's planned location to a more central area of the park so it wouldn't be considered an eyesore by some.

"I'm wondering if it couldn't be located more centrally in the park. I know there is a gazebo there, but I also know that there may be a little leeway to set it some other place on that property so that people who think it's an eyesore - it's not."

Mahoney said people think it's the city's project and would like it clarified as to why the turbine was placed in the park.

Work crews are ready to start digging into the ground to create the foundation for the turbine display, however Seyb said he doesn't believe the turbine has been delivered yet.

Mahoney said there could be a compromise, saying she spoke to Ameren and getting the turbine to Riverfront Park is an option.

FMHS to move on attendance policy

ATTENDANCE - Continued from Page 1

shown. Come to school with marijuana leaves, we'll ask you to change. If we can see your bra, we're going to ask you to change."

Lamb said the high school spends too much time dealing with dress code violations.

"I struggle to see why we are as restrictive as we are. It results in kids being referred to the office for things that aren't egregious," he said.

"Adrian and I spent 30 hours on dress code issues alone. It's not a good use of our time."

Lamb said school officials are still putting limitations on what students can and can't wear, we just aren't looking at being as restrictive as we once were."

In a related issue, Lamb said he would like to put pre-Covid attendance policies back in place.

He said the average daily attendance is at 90%, which is 5% below the district and state goal of 95%.

"When we had the policy in place, we were at 95% and then Covid affected us and attendance rapidly fell off," Lamb said.

Now that we're no longer in a pandemic, we'd like to return to the policy."

Prior to Covid, any student with five unexcused absences would be dropped from a class with a failure.

Lamb specified that those are unexcused not excused parent-notified absences.

"These are unexcused, not those where you call in due to being ill as long as you haven't exceeded those allotments," he said.

In other action, the board:

- approved, 6-0, the 2023-24 insurance program with the Iowa Association of School Board's Safety Group Insurance Program with a premium of \$482,147.96, an increase of \$4,550.21.
- approved, 6-0, the renewal of the district's agreement with Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center for athletic training services.
- approved, 6-0, new meal prices for the 2023-24 school year, including continuing free breakfasts for all students. Lunches for PreK through 6th grade will move to \$3.25 from \$3 and students in 7th-12th grade will pay \$3.50 per lunch. Milk will stay at .45 per carton, while adult meals will go to \$5.00 from \$4.25.

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Obituaries

OBITUARIES

EARLEEN H. VanNIEWAAL

On the evening of Friday June 23, 2023 Earleen (Chi) Helen VanNiewaal, 65 years of age, born in the Chicago area; daughter, sister, mother, grand and great-grandmother, made her journey to reunite with her lost, loved ones.



VanNIEWAAL

She will greatly be missed by those who love her here on Earth. After several years of battling illnesses, family and friends are comforted knowing she is now finally pain-free and at peace. She was beautiful, hard-working, creative, compassionate, funny, and fierce.

Mom had a zest for life. She loved music and dancing. She had a strong compassion for animals, especially horses, dogs and birds. She often reminisced about her childhood horse, Cindy, and the super close bond they shared. She loved going to the rodeo and dreamed about going on a trail ride round-up like the cowboys did back in the day. Some of our best memories with her have been made camping, pontooning, and playing in the water. She had a knack for interior design and always made where we lived or traveled feel as homey as possible.

Dad was our rock. ... and SHE, she was everybody's net. She and Dad were together approximately 32 years. They traveled a lot (as much as they could), they shared a love for NASCAR and went to many races. They ran the FTA Speedway together for several years with us kids and close friends (family).

We all already miss the holidays and random cookouts they would host for the whole family. The world isn't the same without these two. Now they are back together in spirit - throwing parties in heaven or sitting side by side playing slot machines.

Preceding her in death, and waiting for her as mentioned before, is her late and great husband, Randy D. VanNiewaal; her beloved parents, Ruth and Manuel Hurley; father-in-law (Ron VanNiewaal); brother and sister-in-law (Michael & DJ Hurley); one sister-in-law (Michelle Hurley); one uncle (Charles Hock); and three nephews.

Missing her on Earth are her children: Rachel Correll (Victor Peterson), Autumn Turner, Heather Winn, Bobbie Brooks (DJ), Randy VanNiewaal Jr. (Katy), and Rusty VanNiewaal; along with 15 grandkids and 5 great grandkids all of whom she loved dearly; her brother, Patrick Hurley (Deborah); her sister-in-law, Raymonde De Waha; her sister, Sharon; her mother-in-law, Patricia VanNiewaal; sisters & brothers of Randy D. VanNiewaal Sr. -Rod (Jeannie), Tina (Rick), and Vikki; as well as many special nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date.

Prugh Funeral Service is in care of the arrangements.

Condolences can be sent to the family by visiting Earleen's obituary at www.prughfuneral.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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OBITUARIES

DAVID P. VOGEL

David Peter Vogel, 67, of rural Nauvoo, Illinois, passed away at 2:11 p.m. Thursday, June 22, 2023, surrounded by his immediate family, at home.



VOGEL

Born on August 1, 1955, in Oakland, California, the son of Vernon and Audrey (Christianson) Vogel. On July 1, 1995, in Silver Springs, Nevada, he married Debra Kildew.

He is survived by his wife: Debra; three daughters: Amanda Campbell of Fort Madison, Vanessa (Chad) Kelley of Niota, and Joleena (Robert) Tate of Macomb; eight grandchildren: Tristin Newpher,

Audrey Campbell, Cassandra Campbell, Jaida Tate, Caleb Tate, Owen Kelley, Noah Tate and Harley Kelley; two brothers: Donald Vogel and Frank Vogel both of Nevada; three uncles: Charles Vogel, Frank Vogel, and Paul Vogel all of Minnesota; and eight aunts: Rose Honer, Cecelia Haffner, Emma Ciliberti, Bernadette Obowa, Verna Marks, Mathilda Senst, Mary Stoen, and Mona Hauge all of Minnesota. Also surviving is a lifelong friend: Denny Moore of Stagecoach, Nevada.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

David was a 1973 graduate of Fernley High School, Fernley, Nevada. He started working out of high school for Lyon County Road Department, Lyon County, Nevada, before beginning a 26 year career with Nevada Cement Company in Fernley. He later moved to the Nauvoo area and worked for the Hickey Contracting Company in Keokuk, Iowa, retiring in 2019.

He learned to be a jack of all trades from his father and grandfather. He enjoyed teaching the same lessons and skills to his grandchildren. He also enjoyed operating heavy equipment and visiting with family and friends. He never met a stranger and was quite the story teller. He loved to share lifetime memories with anyone who would listen. He was an avid St. Louis Cardinals fan and had an interest in trains and rail transportation.

His body has been entrusted to the crematory of Schmitz - Banks & Beals Funeral Home for cremation.

A Celebration of Life with food and refreshments will begin at 11:00 AM Saturday, July 15, 2023 at the Western Illinois Old Threshers in Hamilton, Illinois.

Cards may be sent to Debra Vogel, 1891 N. Co. Rd. 890, Nauvoo, IL 62354.

Schmitz-Banks & Beals Funeral Home of Nauvoo is assisting the family with arrangements. On-line condolences to the family may be left at www.sbbfuneralhome.com.

HAPPY
4th of July

As we remember and celebrate all who fought for our independence, Pen City Current will not publish an e-Edition Tuesday & Wednesday, July 4th & 5th. The e-Edition will resume Thursday, July 6th.

Please celebrate safely and responsibly. We care about all of you.

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Light Up the Sky



Courtesy photos

Light Up The Sky this 4th of July fundraising campaign continues! Pictured is Kim Fehseke, Senior VP of Marketing & Communication for Connection Bank, presenting a check to Tim Gobble, Director Fort Madison Partners, as they continue their support for this annual event. Members of the Pilot Grove Savings Bank present a check towards Fort Madison's Light Up The Sky This 4th of July fireworks campaign.



Courtesy photos

Thank you to OCI Nitrogen for their contribution to the Fort Madison 4th of July fundraising efforts to continue this community event. Pictured from OCI Nitrogen is Darcy Uhlmeier presenting a check to Tim Gobble, Fort Madison Partners. Below, Gobble receives a check of support from The GM Giant, Shottenkirk Fort Madison, in support of the 2023 Light Up The Sky This 4th of July fireworks campaign.



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Classifieds/Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICES

**PUBLIC NOTICE
MINUTES
KEOKUK CITY
COUNCIL MEETING
May 18, 2023
501 Main Street
5:30 P.M.**

The City Council of the City of Keokuk met in regular session on May 18, 2023, at 501 Main Street. Mayor Kathie Mahoney called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. There were seven council members present, two absent. Carissa Crenshaw, Roslyn Garcia, Shelley Oltmans, Steve Andrews, Dan Tillman, Roger Bryant, and Michael Greenwald were present. Linda Altheide, and John Helenthal and were absent. Staff in attendance: City Administrator Cole O'Donnell, City Clerk Celeste El Anfaoui, Public Works Director Brian Carroll, Community Development Director Pam Broomhall, Chief of Police Zeth Baum, Water Pollution Control Manager Tom Wills, and Bridge, Cemetery, Park & Sanitation Manager Bob Weis.

MAYOR'S CORRESPONDENCE: Reported on upcoming events taking place in Keokuk. Motion made by Tillman, second by Oltmans to approve the following agenda, including the consent agenda. (6) AYES, (1) ABSTAIN - Garcia. Motion carried.

- Minutes of the Regular City Council meeting of May 4, 2023;
- Cash Receipts & Treasurer's report for April 20, 2023;
- RESOLUTION NO. 234-2023: Approving a Liquor License for Keokuk Yacht Club, 2029 River Road, effective June 8, 2023 – Class C Retail Alcohol License with Outdoor Service & Sunday Sales (pending dram);
- Special Event Permit for Dr. Getwells, 1100 Main Street, Juneteenth Celebration with Food Trucks, Wednesday June 21, 2023 - 2-9 p.m.;
- Special Event Permit for Dr. Getwells, 1100 Main Street, Juneteenth Celebration, Food & Music after parade, Friday, June 23rd, 2023, 3 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.;
- Special Event Permit for KARE new Bethel, Parade on Main June 23rd @ 6 p.m., Celebration @ Rand Park June 24th, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.;
- Special Event Permit for Roslyn Garcia, OCI 5K, 5K Walk/Run in Oakland Cemetery, July 1, 2023 – 8 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.;
- Motion to pay bills and transfers listed in Register No.'s 5338-5340,

Mayor Mahoney opened the public hearing at 5:36 p.m. on FY 2023-2024 Budget. A public hearing notice was published in the Daily Gate City on Friday, May 5, 2023.

COMMENTS: O'Donnell reviewed budget. Oltmans inquired about franchise fee revenue; Crenshaw inquired about river trail expenses; Garcia recommends citizens contact state legislators regarding changes in legislature; Kirk Brandenberger, Keokuk Area Convention and Tourism Bureau, reviewed hotel/motel funding over past few years.

No further comments were received, Mayor Mahoney closed the public hearing at 5:50 p.m.

Motion made by Crenshaw, second by Tillman to approve the following proposed RESOLUTION NO. 235-2023: "A RESOLUTION APPROVING FY 2023-2024 BUDGET." (7) AYES, (0) NAYS. Motion carried.

Mayor Mahoney opened the public hearing at 5:50 p.m. on rezoning proposal on property known 417, 419, 423 & 427 Timea & 317 S. 5th Street. A public hearing notice was published in

the Daily Gate City on Wednesday, May 10, 2023.

COMMENTS: Broomhall gave overview of proposal. Andrews asked about fencing for project; Citizen Kathie Marion inquired about the reason for rezoning.

No further comments were received, Mayor Mahoney closed the public hearing at 5:55 p.m.

Motion made by Bryant second by Garcia to approve initial reading amending the zoning ordinance of the City of Keokuk, Lee County, Iowa by rezoning lots 7, 8

and 9 in the original City of Keokuk from R-3, two family dwelling districts to a M-1, light industrial district.

Roll Call Vote: AYES – Crenshaw, Garcia, Oltmans, Andrews, Tillman, Bryant, and Greenwald. (7) AYES, (0) NAYS, (2) ABSENT. Motion carried.

Motion made by Bryant, second by Crenshaw to waive the 2nd & 3rd reading of the ordinance.

Roll Call Vote: AYES – Crenshaw, Andrews, Tillman and Bryant. NAYS - Garcia, Oltmans, and Greenwald. (4) AYES, (3) NAYS, (2) ABSENT.

Motion failed.

Motion made by Oltmans, second Garcia to approve third reading of an Ordinance amending Chapters 13.04, 13.08, 13.10, and 13.14 Sewer Regulations of the Keokuk Municipal Code. No roll call vote taken.

Motion made by Garcia, second by Oltmans to approve the following proposed RESOLUTION NO. 236-2023: "A RESOLUTION APPROVING A DEMO CONTRACT FOR PROPERTY AT 720 MORGAN STREET, 1002 CONCERT STREET AND 1222 BANK STREET." (7)

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Iowa News/Classifieds

ABATE ride set for July 15th in Burlington

BURLINGTON - The ABATE District 18 HOSPICE RIDE is set for July 15 2023.

All proceeds benefit Lee County Health Department and Southeast Iowa Regional Hospice.

Gather your friends and ride for a great cause!

Sign up at Doris' Tavern in Burlington Iowa 10am to noon. Last bike in at Burlington Eagles Club by 6pm followed by auction. Food available before and after ride.

Have something to donate? Contact Amanda Bass at 319-850-4909. Questions? Contact Randy Hiland at 319-572-5733 or Jeremiah Bass at 319-759-5727.

All vehicles and people welcome!

Got a news tip?
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Superintendent says curriculum built by teacher teams

BOARD - Continued from Page 1

trict, and areas that needed improvement.

"That data was then utilized at monthly follow up meetings during the school year that included myself and FMEA leadership," Slater wrote.

"We used that time to collaborate, to learn together, and to put actions into place to keep improving the District."

Larson said the curric-

ulum resources provided to teachers are scripted and don't allow freedom to teach students in ways that are engaging and thought provoking.

"In addition, the scripted curricular resources do not need to waste teachers' time intentionally planning," Larson said.

"Teachers are the ones building relationships and making connections and

know students. Teachers should be trusted."

Slater said the District has adopted evidence-based curricular resources that are used to teach the priority learning standards.

"These priority learning standards are identified by teacher teams who have determined what is needed for student success in each grade level and course," she wrote.

"The job of a teacher is very difficult and challenging. We value and appreci-

ate our teachers, our support staff, and all of the employees of the Fort Madison Community School District."

Larson listed 10 concerns including regular shifting of principals from one building to the next, creating unpredictability for staff and students. Other issues included lack of communication; not all administrators attending PLC meeting or IEP meetings to support staff and students; and called the lack of discipline procedures "astounding".

Larson also cited a lack of cleanliness in the schools, calling the conditions "deplorable".

"I wonder if you have considered the many staff who are departing and have asked them why they are leaving?" Larson asked.

"I hope that each of you would be willing to pull back the curtain and take a good look at how to support students, teachers, and staff at FMCS D.

DIAGNOSED WITH NEUROPATHY?

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- PAINFUL HANDS/FEET?
- NUMBNESS & TINGLING
- COLD OR BURNING FEET?
- LOSS OF SENSATION?
- BALANCE PROBLEMS?

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We utilize several safe, effective, and natural therapies that have helped people get relief from most, if not all of their symptoms...even diabetics. Our treatment program has a high degree of lasting success as long as nerve damage doesn't reach critical levels. Usually, once nerve damage reaches 85% nothing can be done.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

AYES, (0) NAYS. Motion carried.

Greenwald requested to reconsider Sewer Regulation Ordinance for a roll call vote.

ORDINANCE NO. 2039 Amending Chapters 13.04, 13.08, 13.10, and 13.14 Sewer Regulations of the Keokuk Municipal Code. No roll call vote taken.

Roll Call Vote: AYES – Crenshaw, Garcia, Oltmans, Andrews, Tillman, Bryant, and Greenwald. (7) AYES, (0) NAYS, (2) ABSENT. Motion carried.

BOARDS & COMMISSIONS: Motion made by Tillman, second by Crenshaw to approve the final notification for Heather Sisk to the Civil Service Commission, filling 6-year term to expire 4/1/2028. (7) AYES, (0) NAYS. Motion carried.

COUNCIL LIASON REPORTS: Garcia reported on Oakland Cemetery Initiative Cemetery Stroll; Mayor Mahoney updated on Road of Honor project.

STAFF REPORTS: Wills gave pretreatment permit update; Carroll updated on river trail project, reported on public works and energy software; Baum informed of new unit on the road.

Motion made by Garcia, second by Tillman to adjourn the meeting at 6:10 p.m.



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