

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's **Black & White** and **Read** all over

Tuesday, December 3, 2024 | 8 pages | Volume 8 • Issue 197



www.pencitycurrent.com

County wants FM to revisit 302nd

LEGAL ACTION: Both sides trying to avert costly lawsuit for taxpayers

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – Just barely a quorum of Supervisors made a statement to the City of Fort Madison that the 302nd Avenue squabble is far from over.

With just three of five supervisors present Monday morning at the regular meeting of the Lee County Board, discussion was dominated by Supervisor Tom Schulz and the condition of 302nd Avenue near Gethsemane Cemetery near Rodeo Park.

Supervisors Matt Pflug and Ron Fedler were not in attendance. Both supervisors were defeated in November's general election.

The city and county are once again deadlocked on how



SCHULZ

to approach a drainage issue the city says is minor and the county says is so pronounced that someone is going to get hurt.

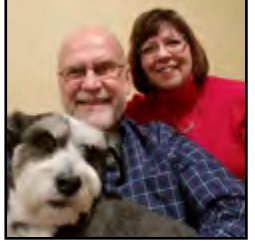
The drainage problems are being pointed at construction of the PORT trail near the cemetery that has caused drainage to run across 302nd Avenue instead of natural ditches and culverts that previously drained water in that area. The county claims the design of the trail failed to take drainage into consideration, and the city says the issue is minor and the county signed off on the design. A recent conversation between County Engineer Ben Hull, Supervisor Tom Schulz, Fort Madison Public Works director Mark

See **ROAD**, page 8

COMMENTARY

EMPTY NEST

By Curt Swarm



Talkin' Turkey

Growing up on the Maple Hill Farm west of Monroe, we always had a few chickens for eggs, a steer and a pig or two for meat, and, the year I'm thinking of, one tom turkey. I don't know how we managed to have one turkey, but we did. I think my grandmother gave him to us. We called him Tom.

Tom was quite large, close to 30 pounds, and spent a lot of time hanging around the back porch in full strut. He was kind of a watch turkey, gobbling when anyone pulled in the driveway, and defecating all over the sidewalk. Tom was going to be our Thanksgiving turkey. I couldn't imagine eating a family pet, but life on the farm is what it is. Until it isn't.

Dad rounded up Tom by the feet, hung him upside down on the clothesline, and was going to lop off his head. Tom was so heavy, he pulled the clothesline down. Dad had to restring him up, Tom flopping the whole time, nearly beating Dad to death. But Dad got the job done.

I remember vividly when Tom was dunked into a kettle of boiling water for scalding and feather plucking. He was upside down in the kettle, and he started kicking. Dad slammed the lid on the kettle, sat on it, and shouted, "He's alive!"

Dad was joking. It was reflexes. But at the time, I thought Tom was alive.

Anywho, we were going to have a big family Thanksgiving dinner. Grandma and Grandpa were invited along with my older sisters and brother who were married and had children. So there were a lot of people coming, but in the huge old farm house of Maple Hill, we all fit nicely. BTW: Maple Hill Farm is on display on the walls of an I-80 Rest Area near Newton.

Grandma and Grandpa arrived the night before so that Grandma could help

See **SWARM**, page 5



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg/PCC

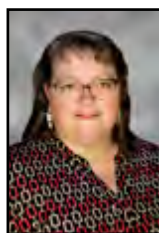
Mistletoe on Main Street was held Saturday in downtown Fort Madison and Dr. Mariah's Family Chiropractic Clinic featured a live nativity with singing children and real animals.

LIBRARY HAPPENINGS

Library's holiday event slate full through December

BY SARAH CLENDINENG
FM Library Director

FORT MADISON - The Fort Madison Public Library is celebrating the holiday season with a variety of fun and festive events for the community. All month long, you can participate in our Reading Wrap-Up Bingo Challenge on Beanstack (fortmadison.beanstack.org).



CLENDINENG

by Jeff Guinn.

Read books and complete activities to get Bingo or black out your card. Set a goal for yourself and see if you can meet it.

On December 5, join us for a special book discussion of "The Autobiography of Santa Claus"

This delightful holiday

read explores the fictional backstory of Santa Claus, offering a charming perspective on the man behind the legend. It's a perfect way to get into the holiday spirit while enjoying engaging conversation with fellow book lovers.

On December 12 from 4-7 pm, we invite all gift-givers to our Christmas

See **LIBRARY**, page 5

INDEX

Business Directory.....P.6
CLASSIFIEDS.....Ps.6-7
Complete Rental.....P.3
Fort Colony Family Restaurant.....P.2
Fort Madison Family YMCA.....P.5
FROM THE FRONT.....Ps.5,8
Hinterland Dairy.....P.5
LCK Roofing.....P.5
LEE COUNTY NEWS.....Ps.2,8
LOCAL NEWS.....P.5

OBITUARIES.....Ps.2-3
• Thomas D. Brasfield, 91
• Richard F. Merschbrock, 74
• Albert O'Bleness, 94
• Roger L. Saben, 58
OPINION.....P.5
Pen City Current.....Ps.3-4,6
Pilot Grove Savings Bank.....P.2
Pothitakis Dental Group.....P.4
Pothitakis Law Firm, P.C.....P.3

Public Notices.....Ps.6-7
Ron Davoo.....P.5
Sonny's Super Market.....P.8
Southeast Iowa Regional Airport.....P.2
Southeast Iowa
Regional Medical Center.....P.5
SPORTS.....P.4
Turnwater Bar & Grill.....P.4
Welch's Insurance.....P.2
West Point Wine & Beer Walk.....P.8

WEATHER

TUE 03 Dec.....Sunny & cold, 30° F/ 24° F
WED 04 Dec.....Mostly sunny & cold, 43° F/ 11° F
THU 05 Dec.....Sunny & cold, 22° F/ 11° F

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PICK 3 EVENING 12/01.....8 0 2
PICK 4 MIDDAY 12/01.....4 6 8 6
PICK 4 EVENING 12/01.....12 0 9

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Obituaries/Lee County News

OBITUARIES

RICHARD F. MERSCHBROCK

Richard F. Merschbrock, 74, of Wever, Iowa, passed away at 10:00 a.m. Wednesday, November 27, 2024, at the Southeast Iowa Regional Hospice House in West Burlington, Iowa. He was born on September 23, 1950, in Fort Madison, Iowa, the son of Ambrose and Bertha (Harvey) Merschbrock.



MERSCHBROCK

Survivors include his siblings: Robert (Barbara) Merschbrock of Marion, Iowa, Danny (Marsha) Merschbrock of Eldridge, Iowa, Deb (Farmer) Cook of New London, Iowa, Diane (Roger) Bailey of Fort Madison, Iowa, Dale (Deina) Merschbrock of West Point, Iowa; Dennis (Patty) Merschbrock of Bartonville, Illinois; bonus daughter: Jackie Smith and multiple nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents: Ambrose and Bertha; brother: Ronnie; niece: Heather Merschbrock; best friend and companion for over twenty-seven years: Kathy Smith.

Richard was a 1969 graduate of Marquette High School. He served in the United State Army. He worked as a carpenter and then a painter for twenty plus years at Great River Medical Center. Richard was a member of the Elks and the American Legion. Richard, in his spare time, enjoyed overseeing his acreage, woodworking, duck and deer hunting and fishing. He will be missed by his family and dog "Lizzie".



His body has been entrusted to the crematory of Schmitz Funeral Home for cremation. A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

Memorials have been established in his memory for Southeast Iowa Regional Hospice House or Wever Fire and Rescue.

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

OBITUARIES

ROGER L. SABEN

Roger L. Saben, 58, of Nauvoo, Illinois, formerly of Dallas City, Illinois, passed away at 5:50 p.m. Tuesday, November 26, 2024 at his home.



SABEN

Roger was born June 7, 1966 in Rock Island, Illinois, the son of Donald and Madelyn (Scott) Saben. He was raised in Pontoosuc, Illinois, and was a 1984 graduate of Dallas City High School. He married Marla Knight. They later divorced.

Following high school, he served four years in the United States Air Force. After his military service, he returned to the Dallas City and Niota areas. He worked many years for Pieper Farms in Weaver, Iowa and was most recently employed by Consolidated Grain and Barge in Colusa, Illinois. He also worked as a commercial fisherman all of his life.

Roger enjoyed tinkering on vehicles, welding, fishing and farming.



Survivors include two children: Shanda (Dustin) Hudgens of Montgomery City, Missouri and Timothy Saben of Hannibal, Missouri, six grandchildren, his special friend: Dixie Savage; one sister, Donna Saben of Iowa; and several nieces, nephews and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his parents; step-father: Orve Nickols; two brothers: John and Gary Saben and two sisters: Lynn Saben and Wendy Emmons.

Cremation has been entrusted to Banks & Beals Funeral Home.

The family will receive friends from 12:00 noon until 3:00 p.m. Saturday, December 14, 2024 at Banks & Beals Funeral Home in Dallas City.

A memorial fund has been established for the family. To leave an online condolence for the family, please visit Roger's obituary at banksandbeals.com.

City, SEIRPC looking for roadway safety survey responses

BURLINGTON – The Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission (SEIRPC) is encouraging drivers, bicyclists, walkers and other travelers to take a brief online survey that will be used to deliver roadway safety improvements in Des Moines, Henry, Lee, and Louisa Counties.

The survey can be found at <https://bit.ly/SEIRPCSurvey>.

The safety survey is a primary step in the development of a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan (CSAP),

which will serve as a guiding document for the Commission to identify safety challenges and solutions to make area streets and roads safer for all. Whether you walk, bike, drive, or roll, your experiences are important. SEIRPC wants to hear from you!

Through the survey, residents will have the opportunity to share how they travel within Southeast Iowa, and their safety experiences while walking, driving, or biking, as well as other insights. The data will be utilized in identifying and prioritizing safety initiatives

and assist in the creation of a regional CSAP.

For more information on the survey or the Commission, please contact SEIRPC at 319-753-5107.

SEIRPC is a public, non-for-profit entity established in 1973 by Des Moines, Henry, Lee and Louisa counties and recognized in Iowa Code Chapter 28H as one of 17 Councils of Governments in Iowa. SEIRPC was established to provide southeast Iowa with services individual government entities couldn't provide on their own.

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Obituaries

OBITUARIES

ALBERT O'BLENESS

Albert "Obie" O'Bleness, 94, of Keokuk, passed away on Monday, November 25, 2024, at Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center in West Burlington, Iowa.

Obie was born on November 30, 1929, in Keokuk, Iowa, the son of Albert, Sr. and Helen (Ketterer) O'Bleness. On April 25, 1953, he was united in marriage to Alice Jayne Garner at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Fort Madison. She preceded him in death on June 12, 2003.



O'BLENESS

Obie was a mason contractor, operating Mayhew and O'Bleness until his retirement. He was a member of All Saints Catholic Church, where he was very involved for much of his life. He was also a member of the Elks Lodge #106 in Keokuk. Throughout his life Obie was an athlete, going to Nationals in Bowling and spending much of his time golfing in later years. Cheering on the Iowa Hawkeyes or attending Keokuk Chiefs games were two of his favorite pastimes.

Obie is survived by two children: Denise O'Bleness (Scott Verhagen) of New York City and Michael (Janet) O'Bleness of Keokuk; son-in-law: Dave Carroll; four grandchildren: Brian (Leah) Carroll and Christopher Carroll, both of Keokuk, Dr. Jessica O'Bleness (Drew Fischels) of Iowa City and Dr. Andrew O'Bleness (Kelsey) of Waukee, Iowa; six great-grandchildren: Aubree, Ascher, Kyler, Isaiah, Ellia and Callum; and other beloved family members.

Obie is preceded in death by his parents; his two sisters Mary and Margaret; his wife Jayne, along with his daughter Debbie Carroll.

A funeral mass will be held at 10 am on Saturday, November 30, 2024, at All Saints Catholic Church in Keokuk, with burial to follow in Oakland Cemetery, Catholic Section. Visitation will be held on Friday, November 29, from 1 to 4 pm, with family meeting friends from 2 to 4 pm at Printy Funeral Home, 917 Blondeau Street, Keokuk, Iowa.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be directed to All Saints Catholic Church or the Arthritis Foundation.

Tributes and condolences may be left at www.printyfuneralhome.com.

Printy Funeral Home of Keokuk is in charge of arrangements.

OBITUARIES

THOMAS D. BRASFIELD

Thomas Darrel Brasfield, 91, of Fort Madison, IA, passed away at 10:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 28, 2024 at Southeast Iowa Regional Medical Center in West Burlington, IA. He was born on July 22, 1933 in Niota, IL to George & Marie Sallen



BRASFIELD

Brasfield. He married Jeanette K. Strunk on July 25, 1953 in Fort Madison, IA. He was a truck driver for 37 years and served in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War. He was a member of Holy Family Parish and enjoyed traveling, hunting when he was younger and spending winters in San Diego, CA.

Tom is survived by: his wife: Jeanette Brasfield of Fort Madison, IA; 2-daughters: Kimberly Brasfield of Sammamish, WA & Kathleen (Gilbert) Simon of Burlington, IA; 2-grandchildren; 1-brother: Michael Brasfield of Wever, IA & 1-sister: Carol Ann (Arlin) Clover of LaHarpe, IL He was preceded in death by: his parents, 1-grandson: Leon & 1-brother: Richard.



A visitation will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. on Tuesday, December 3, 2024 at King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. A funeral mass will immediately follow at 11:00 a.m. at Sacred Heart Church with Rev. Gary Beckman officiating. Cremation will take place following the funeral mass and a private family burial will be held at Sacred Heart Cemetery. A memorial has been established in Tom's memory. Online condolences to the Brasfield family may be left at the King-Lynk Funeral home & Crematory website: www.kinglynk.com.

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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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Sports

HOOPS PREVIEWS

Bloodhound boys look to grow into 2024-25 season

BY JOHN BOHNENKAMP
PCC Sports

FORT MADISON - Jamboree games mean nothing in the regular-season record, but the two Fort Madison High School's boys basketball team played taught coach Ryan Wilson a lot.

He hopes his team picked up on the lesson as well after the Bloodhounds scrimmaged West Burlington and Iowa City Regina.

"We're very raw right now," Wilson said. "And we have to get better defensively."

Wilson pointed to the 84-81 score against West Burlington as an example of that.

"It's awesome to score 81 points, but at the same time, you don't want to see the other team scoring 84," Wilson said. "There's not much defense either way or on either side of the ball there. But you know, those are just the things we've got to correct."

The Bloodhounds, who open the season Friday at Fairfield, bring back two starters from last season's team that went 11-10 overall and 7-3 in the Southeast Conference.

Guard Julian Dear, a senior this season, averaged 6.8 points per game and led the Bloodhounds with 60 assists. Forward Dayton Lamar averaged 8.7 points and was second on the team with 128 rebounds.

They'll be joined in the starting lineup by Kenden Bowie, a senior who played in eight games last season, along

with senior Jackson Guzman and junior Nolan Guzman.

Nolan Guzman played in 20 games last season and was second on the team in steals. Jackson Guzman played in eight varsity games.

"After that, it's kind of a tossup," Wilson said.

Sophomore center Darius Foy won't be able to play until after Christmas break, but Wilson expects him to be a key part of the rotation once he can play.

"From there, it's a lot of sophomores and freshmen who will be in the rotation," Wilson said.

Freshmen Brody Ulik and Reece Huey have impressed Wilson early in the preseason.

"They work hard. They understand the game," Wilson said. "They bring some athleticism. Not a lot of size, but just some athleticism and some smart play."

Junior Daniel Seager and sophomores Rowan Benda, Lucas Helmick, Hunter Wiegand and Willian Scanlan are also on the varsity roster.

"Some of those guys will play junior varsity as well, but if we get into some foul trouble in (varsity) games they'll mature and grow a lot quicker," Wilson said.

Fort Madison's schedule is quirky. The Bloodhounds play just four games before Christmas break, with only one at home. They don't get their second home game of the season until January 11 against Central Lee.

"That's five out of our first six on the road, so our younger players are really going to have to get used to playing in road environments," Wilson said. "And hope-

fully, we'll stick together and grow through it. There will be some trial by fire, though."

The Bloodhounds' success, though, will be determined by their defense.

"If we can play defense, get stops, force some turnovers, just be disciplined, that should allow us to get out and run like we want," Wilson said. "But, trading basket for basket and allowing teams to set their defense or set their press, that could be an issue. We know what we have to work on."



Photo by John Lovretta/Special to PCC

Fort Madison's Kenden Bowie is hoping to be a bigger part of the Bloodhound basketball team this year. Bowie's athleticism brings a new facet to the program.



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From the Front

Clean oil can ruin an engine

SWARM - Continued from Page 1

prepare the meal. Grandma was a firm believer that on Thanksgiving, the “electricity ran slow” because of all the people cooking. So she got up at 4:00 am, stuffed Tom, and popped him in the oven.

Well, Tom was so fresh, that by 7:00 am, he was done. The smell of Turkey wafted through the farm house, pulling us out of bed by the nose. There was nothing left to do, but sit down and have Thanksgiving dinner at 8:00 in the morning. Which was all right by me. Dad returned thanks and the meal began. There were mashed potatoes and gravy, pies, cranberries—the works. Tom was so tender he melted in our mouths. I had a little trouble swallowing, as I could still see Tom kicking at the lid of the kettle. But I got ‘im down.

A little side story: Grandpa and Grandma had an old jalopy, a 1945 Chevrolet. Grandpa didn’t believe in changing the oil. He just added to it. The oil was black as Iowa dirt. After Thanksgiving “breakfast” while Grandpa was napping, two husbands of my sisters, stole Grandpa’s car and drove it to town. My dad ran a Mobil station. They changed the oil and lubed Grandpa’s car, thinking they were doing him a favor.

Grandpa awoke while his car was gone, and was so upset, he started walking to town. But here came his car back, with fresh oil in it, and two smiling Grandson-in-laws. Grandpa was still upset. He rounded up Grandma and took off for home. “Clean oil will ruin an engine,” he maintained.

Grandpa was known to be stubborn. A few years after this, when the United States put astronauts on the moon, Grandpa didn’t believe it, and sided with the people that said the event was staged in Arizona. Arguing with Grandpa was like arguing with a brick wall.

I was 16 at the time of this Thanksgiving dinner. My girlfriend had invited me to her house for Thanksgiving dinner also. Back then, I could eat my weight. I had two Thanksgiving dinners that day, a full stomach, and a lot of stories to tell my grandchildren.

Have a good story? Call or text Curt Swarm in Mt. Pleasant at 319-217-0526 or email him at curtswarm@yahoo.com. Curt is available for public speaking.

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Library ornament workshop set

LIBRARY - Continued from Page 1

Present Wrapping Workshop. Bring your holiday presents and wrapping supplies to the library’s meeting room, where we’ll provide tape, scissors, and some wrapping paper. Whether you need some extra space or just a little help with your wrapping skills, this is the ideal opportunity to wrap your presents in a relaxed, festive environment.

To round out the holiday season, the library will host a Christmas Ornament Workshop on December 23 from 10am to noon. Come create your own holiday ornaments while enjoying delicious treats. It’s a great way to add a personal touch to your holiday décor and share some festive cheer with others. Don’t miss these exciting events and the chance to make this season even more memorable at the Fort Madison Public Library!

Get Into the Holiday Season with These Books*

- Tamales for Christmas by Stephen Briseño (EF BRI)
- Christmas with the Queen by Hazel Gaynor (F GAY)
- Christmas Treats to Make and Bake by Ruth Owen (J 641.568 OWE)
- One Big Happy Family by Susan Mallery (F MAL)
- The More, the Terrier by Andy Carpenter (MYS ROS)
- The Twelve Months of Christmas by Sheila Roberts (F ROB)
- We Disagree About This Tree by Ross Collins (EF COL)
- Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive the Sleigh! By Mo Willems (EF WIL)

- Baking for the Holidays by Sarah Kieffer (641.568 KIE)
 - The Man Who Invented Christmas by Les Standiford (823.8 STA)
 - The Dreaded Feast edited by Michele Clarke and Taylor Plimpton (394.26 DRE)
- There are 11 because I couldn’t pick just 10 and this is just scratching the surface of all the great holiday books we have at the library for all ages.

Upcoming Events at the Fort Madison Public Library
The library will be closing at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, December 24th and will be closed all day on Wednesday December 25th for the Christmas Holiday. The Library will be closed on Wednesday, January 1st for the New Year Holiday.

Pre-School/Toddler Story Hour –Wednesday morning at 10:30 am.
Teen Volunteer Opportunity – Tuesday, 3:30-5:00 for ages 12-19, except for December 10 and 24.

Minecraft –3:30-5:00, all ages on Mondays.
Once Upon a Wednesday –Join us for an afterschool adventure on December 11 from 3:30-5:00.

Thursday Crafternoon –Thursday, 3:00-5:00, for ages 14-adult. This program is an opportunity to spend some time working on an in-depth project for the whole month.

All Booked Up! - The library’s book discussion group meets on the first Thursday of the month at 1:30 p.m. On Thursday, December 5th we will be discussing “The Autobiography of Santa Claus” by Jeff Guinn. Join us in January, on the 2nd for “The Giver of Stars” by JoJo Moyes

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Classifieds/Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE
Lee County Pioneer Cemetery Commission Meeting Notice
December 3rd, 2024 at 6:00 P.M.
Connection Bank Meeting Room
636 Ave G,
Fort Madison, Iowa

AGENDA

1. Mowing contracts.
2. Budget talks.
3. Have a Christmas Party.

PUBLIC MEETING
CITIZENS WELCOME

Vision and hearing assistance available upon request

Contact Title VI Administrator
 319-372-3705

Join us on Facebook-Lee County Pioneer Cemetery Commission

PUBLIC NOTICE
West Burlington Regular City Council Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 20, 2024

The West Burlington City Council met in regular session on Wednesday, November 20, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at West Burlington City Hall, 122 Broadway Street, West Burlington, Iowa, with Mayor Ron Teater presiding.

MEMBERS PRESENT:
 Ron Teater, Ringo Covert, Andy Crowner, John Johnson, Therese Lees, and Melanie Young

MEMBERS ABSENT:
ALSO PRESENT:
 Police Chief Jesse Logan, City Clerk Kelly Fry, Finance Manager Angela Moore, and City Administrator Gregg Mandsager

CALL TO ORDER
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL
PERFECTING & APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Lees, seconded by Crowner, to approve the agenda as amended to move item #14 (Consider Resolution hiring Jace Marshall as a Police Officer) to item #1 under New Business.

Motion carried by the

following votes:

Ayes: Covert, Crowner, Johnson, Lees, and Young

CONSENT AGENDA
 • Minutes from the Regular City Council meeting on November 6, 2024

• Payment to Snyder & Associates for engineering services related to the Spring Street Water Main Replacement Project - \$22,500

• Payment to ESO Solutions, Inc. - \$6,326.17
 • Approve Justin Prier's promotion to Battalion Chief with the Fire Department

• Accept Stacia dePerrot's resignation as Police Department Administrative Assistant

• Accept Jayla Alston's resignation from the Fire Department

• Accept Adrain Balderas resignation from the Fire Department

• Clerk's Monthly Financial Report for October 2024

• Payment of Claims as listed on the Expense Approval Report - \$321,301.76

Moved by Lees, seconded by Young, to approve the Consent Agenda items as presented. Motion carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Covert, Crowner, Johnson, Lees, and Young

COUNCIL & STAFF REPORTS

CITIZEN INQUIRIES
 No inquiries.

PUBLIC HEARING

Council will hold a Public Hearing on proposed plans and specifications, proposed form of contract, and engineer's opinion of probable cost for the proposed Spring Street Water Main Replacement project in the City of West Burlington, Iowa

Mayor Teater opened the public hearing at 6:13 p.m. to consider the proposed plans, specifications, form of contract and estimate the cost of the proposed Spring Street Water Main Replacement Project. The project involves replacing 640 LF of 6" DIP water main with 6" PVC water main by trenchless methods along the south end of Spring

St and relocating water service connections from the old water main to the new water main, including all miscellaneous items incidental to construction. No verbal or written comments were received. Mayor Teater closed the Public Hearing at 6:14 p.m.

Council will hold a Public Hearing on granting Eastern Iowa Light and Power Cooperative a Non-Exclusive twenty-five year Franchise to supply Electric Energy to the City of West Burlington and implement a franchise to be paid to the City.

Mayor Teater opened the public hearing at 6:14 p.m. on the question of the City's intentions to adopt a new Ordinance granting Eastern Iowa Light and Power Cooperative a non-exclusive twenty-five-year franchise to acquire, construct, erect, maintain, and operate an Electric Energy system in the City of West Burlington, Iowa and to furnish and sell electric energy to the City and its inhabitants, and require said company to pay a 3% Utility Franchise fee to the City of West Burlington, Iowa. No written or verbal comments were received. Mayor Teater closed the Public Hearing at 6:15 p.m.

Public hearing on a proposed Economic Development Support Agreement with Greater Burlington Partnership

Mayor Teater opened the public hearing at 6:15 p.m. on an Economic Development Support Agreement between the City and the Greater Burlington Partnership ("GBP") in connection with the provision of services, programs, events, and initiatives for the promotion of economic growth and development in the West Burlington Urban Renewal Area, which Economic Development Support Agreement provides for certain financial incentives in the form of incremental property tax payments to GBP in a total amount not exceeding \$30,000 as authorized by Section 403.9 of the Code of Iowa.

Per the agreement,

the City agrees to make five (5) annual economic development support payments of \$6,000 each to the GBP. Each Payment shall be made on or before July 1 in each fiscal year during the Term, commencing on July 1, 2026 and continuing to, and including, July 1, 2030. The commitment of the City to make the Payments to GBP under the Economic Development Support Agreement will not be a general obligation of the City but will be payable solely and only from incremental property tax revenues generated within the West Burlington Urban Renewal Area. No written or verbal comments were received. Mayor Teater closed the Public Hearing at 6:16 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS
NEW BUSINESS

Consider a Resolution approving the proposed plans and specifications, proposed form of contract, and engineer's opinion of probable cost for the proposed Spring Street Water Main Replacement Project

Snyder & Associates has prepared and submitted plans and specifications, form of contract, and engineer's opinion of probable cost for the Spring Street Water Main Replacement Project. The Engineer's Opinion of Probable Cost is \$220,500.00 for the total project base bid. There are several contingency items included in the project to replace lead service lines if discovered during construction. If there are no lead service lines discovered, the Engineer's Opinion of Probable Cost is \$169,500.00. The project involves replacing 640 LF of 6" DIP water main with 6" PVC water main by trenchless methods along the south end of Spring St and relocating water service connections from the old water main to the new water main, including all miscellaneous items incidental to construction.

Moved by Lees, seconded by Johnson, to approve a Resolution adopting the proposed plans and specifications, proposed form of contract, and engineer's opinion of probable cost for the proposed Spring Street Water Main Replacement Project. Motion carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Covert, Crowner, Johnson, Lees, and Young

Consider a Resolution awarding the contract for the Spring Street Water Main Replacement

project in the City of West Burlington, Iowa

Five bids were received for the Spring Street Water Main Replacement Project. The project involves replacing 640 LF of 6" DIP water main with 6" PVC water main by trenchless methods along the south end of Spring St and relocating water service connections from the old water main to the new water main, including all miscellaneous items incidental to construction. The lowest base bid was received from Local Boring Company of Solon, IA for \$155,740. Snyder & Associates reviewed the bids and recommended awarding the base bid to Local Boring Company.

Moved by Crowner, seconded by Lees, to approve a Resolution awarding the contract for the Spring Street Water Main Replacement project to Local Boring Company of Solon, Iowa in the amount of \$155,740. Motion carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Covert, Crowner, Johnson, Lees, and Young

Consider the first reading of an Ordinance granting Eastern Iowa Light and Power Cooperative a non-exclusive twenty-five year franchise to furnish and sell Electric Energy to the City of West Burlington and require

Eastern Iowa Light and Power Cooperative to pay a franchise fee to the City

Council considered an Ordinance granting to Eastern Iowa Light and Power Cooperative the right and franchise to acquire, construct, erect, maintain and operate in the City of West Burlington, and the right to erect and maintain the necessary poles, lines, wires, conduits and other appliances for the distribution of electric current along, over, under and upon the streets, alleys and public places in the City of West Burlington, to supply the city with electrical services for the period of twenty-five (25) years. The Ordinance also establishes a franchise fee of three percent (3.0%) on the gross receipts from the sale of electricity to their customers located within the city limits.

Moved by Lees, seconded by Young, to approve the first reading of an Ordinance granting Eastern Iowa Light and Power Cooperative a non-exclusive twenty-five year franchise to furnish and sell Electric Energy to the City of West Burlington and require Eastern Iowa Light and

Power Cooperative to pay a franchise fee to the City. Motion carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Covert, Johnson, Lees, and Young Nays: Crowner

Consider a Resolution Approving Development Agreement with Greater Burlington Partnership, Authorizing Annual Appropriation Tax Increment Payments and Pledging Certain Tax Increment Revenues to the Payment of the Agreement

City Administrator Mandsager explained that entering into the Economic Development Support Agreement between the City and the Greater Burlington Partnership ("GBP"), the city incurs debt that can be paid utilizing Tax Increment Financing (TIF). The Economic Development Support Agreement provides for financial incentives in the form of incremental property tax payments to GBP in a total amount not exceeding \$30,000. Per the agreement, the City agrees to make five (5) annual economic development support payments of \$6,000 each to the GBP. Each Payment shall be made on or before July 1 in each fiscal year during the Term, commencing on July 1, 2026 and continuing to, and including, July 1, 2030.

Moved by Crowner, seconded by Young, to approve a Resolution approving a Development Agreement with Greater Burlington Partnership. Motion carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Covert, Crowner, Johnson, Lees, and Young

Consider a quote from ACCO to replace the swimming pool heater

Moved by Lees, seconded by Young, to approve a quote from ACCO to replace the swimming pool heater for up to \$70,000. Motion carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Covert, Crowner, Johnson, Lees, and Young

Consider a quote from ACCO to replace six (6) check valves at the swimming pool

Moved by Crowner, seconded by Johnson, to approve a quote from ACCO to replace six (6) check valves at the swimming pool for \$19,238. Motion carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Covert, Crowner, Johnson, Lees, and Young

Consider a quote from Thrasher Foundation Repair to lift settled concrete and repair cracks to the sidewalk at the swimming pool

Moved by Crowner, seconded by Johnson, to approve a quote from Thrasher Foundation Repair to lift settled concrete and repair cracks to the sidewalk at the swimming pool

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Classifieds/Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICES

Moved by Young, seconded by Crouner, to approve a quote from Thrasher Foundation Repair to lift settled concrete and repair cracks to the sidewalk at the swimming pool for \$2,058.61. Motion carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Covert, Crouner, Johnson, Lees, and Young

Consider approving the State of Iowa Annual Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Finance Manager Moore presented the State of Iowa Annual Financial Report for FY 2023-2024. The Annual Financial Report shows the operations and financial condition of the city. This report is due to the State by December 1, 2024. The report for FY23-24 shows an ending fund balance that is lower than budgeted. This was because the TIF Debt Service Fund was under budget due to Southeast Iowa Regional Medical not paying property tax while in litigation. The Capital Projects – Sidewalk (Gear Avenue Trail) was over budget because reimbursements were not received until FY2024-2025. The Water Fund was under budget due to the finalization of the ARPA funds and amendments to the FY2022-2023 for the Water Tower Project. The Sewer Fund was over budget because

of amendments to the FY2022-2023 budget.

Moved by Young, seconded by Johnson, to approve the State of Iowa Annual Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 as presented. Motion carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Covert, Crouner, Johnson, Lees, and Young

Consider approving the Street Finance Report for FY 23-24

The Code of Iowa, Chapter 312 requires Cities to file a Street Finance Report on an annual basis. This report shows all street-related revenues and expenditures for the fiscal year. There was a total of \$2,563,552 for street-related expenses for FY23/24.

Moved by Crouner, seconded by Young, to approve a Resolution approving the Street Finance Report for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 as prepared by Finance Manager Moore. Motion carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Covert, Crouner, Johnson, Lees, and Young

Consider approving annual Urban Renewal Report for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Moved by Young, seconded by Lees, to approve the annual Urban Renewal Report for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 as prepared by Finance Manager Moore. Motion carried

by the following votes:

Ayes: Covert, Crouner, Johnson, Lees, and Young

Consider amending Resolution 2024-47 to correct the payment amount and date of the payment for funds being obligated from the Incremental Property Tax Revenues for the appropriation to the payment of an economic development payment obligation which shall come due in the next succeeding fiscal year to Greater Burlington Partnership

The proposed Resolution corrects the amount of the July 1, 2025 Economic Development payment to Greater Burlington Partnership from \$5,000 to \$6,000 as approved in the Economic Development Agreement adopted November 20, 2024.

Moved by Young, seconded by Johnson, to approve the Resolution amending the payment amount and date of the payment for funds being obligated from the Incremental Property Tax Revenues for the economic development payment obligation, which shall come due in July 2025. Motion carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Covert, Crouner, Johnson, Lees, and Young

Consider approving annual Tax Increment Financing Report for Fiscal

Year 2025-2026

In a memo to Council, Finance Manager Moore explained that by December 1 of each year, the city needs to instruct the County as to the amount of TIF debt it wants to collect for the next fiscal year. The city has \$767,032 due in TIF debt payments in the FY25/26 fiscal year, which consists of the following:

Bond/TIF Agreements:

- 2017 GO Bond (Street Projects) - \$590,000
- Greater Burlington Partnership - \$6,000
- Campus Community Developers -Blackhawk Tower - \$56,662
- Internal Loans:
 - 2015 Residential Development (old public works bldg.) - \$2,185
 - Administrative and Professional Support Program - \$100,000
 - Legal Fees - \$12,185

Finance Manager Moore recommended Council approve certify \$800,000 in Fiscal 2025-2026.

The city currently has an undesignated TIF Fund balance of \$1,397,197. Council agreed to use these funds for the following projects:

- Gear Ave. Trail Project - \$630,000
- Stormwater Master Plan - \$151,500
- Comprehensive Plan & Zoning Code Update - \$160,080

Finance Manager Moore explained that

in the past, there have been issues with the TIF fund not being balanced correctly. She has been working with the auditors and Speer Financial to get all the issues corrected so the fund will balance correctly with the next audit.

Moved by Young, seconded by Lees, to approve certifying \$800,000 in TIF debt for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. Motion carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Covert, Crouner, Johnson, Lees, and Young

Consider advertising for Police Administrative Assistant Position City Administrator Mandsager explained to Council that in FY24-25, we budgeted a 20-hour employee to assist the Police and Fire Administrative work as well as cross-train with the Utility Billing Clerk. Staff feels it would be more beneficial to have one full-time person fill the position than to have two part-time people. With the retirement of the part-time Police Administrative Assistant, City Administrator Mandsager recommended advertising for one full-time position in lieu of the budgeted part-time position.

A few of the benefits of full-time over part-time:

- Better coverage
- Cross training
- Better communication
- Given the sensitive

nature, confidentiality, and detailed work related to public safety, including evidence, it is ideal to have one person in the position to coordinate with the chief and officers.

Johnson stated he would rather have two part-time positions so the City didn't have to pay benefits.

Moved by Lees, seconded by Crouner, to advertise for a full-time Public Safety Administrative Assistant Position. Motion carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Covert, Crouner, Lees, and Young Nays: Johnson

Consider a Resolution hiring Jace Marshall as Police Officer

Moved by Crouner, seconded by Young, to approve a Resolution hiring Jace Marshall as a Police Officer pending successful completion of the pre-employment physical. Marshall will enter into a Five-Year Contract with the Department. His approximate start date would be December 16, 2024. Motion carried by the following votes:

Ayes: Covert, Crouner, Johnson, Lees, and Young

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Approved
Ron Teater, Mayor
Kelly D. Fry, City Clerk

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From the Front

County to review road ownership before going back to city

ROAD - Continued from Page 1

Bousselot, and City Manager Laura Liegois produced what the county thought was an agreement to allow both sides to move forward.

But that agreement was derailed at an October Fort Madison City Council meeting.

Ben Hull said the meeting resulted in an amendment to the current 28E agreement regarding maintenance of all shared roadways in the county, and for the city to accept ownership of 302nd.

"It's just a matter of time before there's an accident out there, and then there's going to be a lawsuit," Holmes said.

Schulz said the county and city have discussed the issue multiple times.

"We've had multiple meetings, multiple discussions, multiple attempts to discuss it very much to the city's benefit. Our staff has bent over backwards to try to make an arrangement that would be accommodating for them and benefit taxpayers," Schulz said.

"On Oct. 1, the City Council voted not to accept the agreement to take over the routine maintenance of that road after that had been negotiated both informally with the mayor and more formally with the city manager and the public works director."

Schulz said Mayor Matt Mohrfeld called the agreement B.S. and he agreed with him that the process has been B.S., but for completely different reasons.

Schulz and Chairman Garry Seyb said no one disagrees that the trail is a great benefit to the community. However, the county has threatened a lawsuit to force the city to take responsibility for the drainage issue and correct it, or put the stretch back to its original condition which could result in moving the trail at a substantial cost.

"No one wants to have a lawsuit where taxpayers are the ultimate losers, but the city, in my opinion, hasn't negotiated in good faith on this," Schulz said.

He said the county went ahead and resealed the roadway again, even though the city said under the agreement, they would be responsible for that. Even with that, Schulz said the mayor continued to blow up the agreement.

Schulz also asked that the issue be put back on the city council agenda so he could speak on the issue.

"The mayor does not want me there, unless we're open to a simple agreement on snow removal," Schulz said.

He went on to say that he doesn't believe the Fort Madison City Council has been fully informed on the issue and that needs to take place.

"Other than that, I do not see an option other than to proceed with some kind of legal action," Schultz said.

"It's a sad disservice to the taxpayers in this community. Every one of those taxpayers is also someone I represent and the way this has been handled by the community is disgusting," he said.

Supervisor Charles Holmes said he agreed with everything Schulz said and doesn't understand why the threat of a lawsuit isn't already moving forward.

County Engineer Ben Hull said both sides sat in a room and hashed out another agreement and shook hands afterwards.

"We had talks and sat in a room, shook hands that this had been settled," Hull said. "At that point in time, we had reason to believe that it would be superfluous to move on with the lawsuit," Hull said.

"Since that time, we've done some more research on property issues and that's under (Lee County Attorney's) review right now to make sure that legal actions taken would be the proper ones."

Holmes said the ultimate responsibility falls with the city's engineer.

"I would think the city would see that and they would have recourse to sue the engineer," he said.

Schulz said when he was on the City Council that he suggested just that very thing to the Mayor and Public Works Director.

The city has argued that the county signed off on the project, but Schulz said that isn't true, but with the tight timeline the city and the PORT Committee were working on to secure funding for the project, the county agreed to allow them to move forward with the project, while letting them know there were significant design problems with the project.

"I think the discussion, as I recall it, was that these

things would be addressed during the construction phase, and they weren't," he said.

Seyb said he's hearing significant talks took place and some agreement had been reached prior to Oct. 1 but they had fallen apart.

He said the city's ability to do maintenance is a little different than county procedures specific to pretreatment for icing and the city is better designed to take care of those situations because of the work that was done.

Hull said his biggest concern is snow in the winter that melts and runs across the road and then refreezes, creating a dangerous situation for motorists through the area.

Holmes, who was an original member of the PORT advisory committee, said the city knew there were issues but they wanted to move ahead to qualify for grants.

Seyb said no one argues about the project being a good one, but said it appears it was done a little hastily.

"It sounds like we had an agreement, at least in principal, that was shook on, prior to the Oct. 1 meeting," he said. "My thoughts are that I reach out to the Mayor and City Manager one more time to see if we indeed have reached an impasse. If we have, I think the board has already voted on where we go from here."

Lee County Attorney Ross Braden said he is checking on the ownership issue and the requirements of the city to annex half of the roadway to the center of the road. He said he wanted to firm up that requirement before reaching out again to the city.

"I think I agree with Tom that we've really bent over backwards and made every attempt possible to reach an accord with the city, but it was completely blown up by the mayor and the agreement failed by a unanimous vote. I wanna research this and get back with Ben on the ownership of this roadway."

In other action, the county:

- approved the final reading of an ordinance on alcohol enforcement that would offer a training course for retail establishments caught selling alcohol to minors, in lieu of paying a fine.

West Point Community Club
WINE & BEER WALK
 DECEMBER 6, 5-8PM

ON THE SQUARE

Golden Eagle Distributing @ Speers Supper Club
 Appleberry Orchard @ Corner Tap
 IBEV @ Phill's Pub
 Backpacket Brewing @ 4th Street
 Herschler Winery @ Hair Etc.
 Green Frog @ Sonny's Other Side
 Thunder Creek Winery @ Turnbowl Lanes
 Wooden Wheel Vineyards @ Harmeyer Insurance
 Johnson Brother's Distributing @ American Legion (downstairs)
 Mistletoe Margarita @ American Legion (upstairs)
 Fireside/Ackerman Winery @ Menke & Company

OFF THE SQUARE

Ardon Creek Wines @ West Point Lumber
 Golden Eagle Distributing @ Bentler Auto
 Lake Hill Wines @ Katie's Cuts
 Fareway Wines @ First Fitness
 Signature Drink @ Duo Skin & Hydration



Lunch Specials
 December 2-6
 11am - 1pm

Monday, December 2nd

Turkey Sandwich, Tater Tots, Baked Beans

Tuesday, December 3rd

Meatloaf, Loaded Potatoes, Corn

Wednesday, December 4th

Chicken & Noodles, Mashed Potatoes, Blueberry Salad

Thursday, December 5th

Fried Chicken Dinners

Friday, December 6th

Fish & Shrimp Dinners