

Southwest City Council Waives Debt On Water Leak

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During the regular meeting on Tuesday, Southwest City's board of alderman met with the property owner of 508 Birkes St. in order to get to the bottom of a water leak that's been flowing for seven months.

City Clerk Krystal Austen previously explained that the tenant, Heather Burden, was notified of the leak when it was found in July 2020 and has been reminded multiple times of the high usage. Within the last few months, Burden had told Austen that the landlord was contacted, but no repairs had been made.

On Tuesday, property owner Ginger Warren approached the council on behalf of herself and her husband, Carl. Warren said she was first notified of the leak two weeks ago, following the council meeting, and

was unaware the bill had grown to \$1,407.93.

Warren said the leak will be repaired as soon as possible. She said the water service is currently off at the property because the pipes broke during freezing temperatures last week and the tenants are relocating by the end of the week.

Warren said she would also be willing to pay back half of the outstanding balance but noted that she is unable to cover the whole sum because of her husband's growing medical bills, living on a fixed income, and not receiving payment for their rental property in months.

Mayor David Blake pointed out that, previously, the council would allow 30 days for account holders to fix a leak before charging the surplus costs related to the leak. He went on to say he's never seen a bill this high.

"What kind of tenant would sit back and let their property go to ruination like this instead of going in there,

spending an hour and fixing that water leak?" pondered Alderman Steve Golden.

Clerk Austen said that, in the future, the city should require certification in writing that both the tenant and the property owner have been notified of the leak.

Alderman Amber Killion stated that the debt was unlikely to ever be paid and she doesn't believe that the Warren's should be held liable.

The council voted to waive the bad debt.

Alderman Shain Scott addressed the other council members regarding HB2020. He noted that the bill proposes moving the municipal election from April to November for cost-saving purposes. Scott expressed concerns that increased ballot issues will overwhelm voters. He asked the council to reach out to their representatives and express their thoughts.

Gabriel Hernandez requested permission to

install an in-ground storm shelter on his property at 601 Liberty Road. After reviewing the aerial view, property lines, drainage and Hernandez's proposed renderings, the council approved his second proposal.

Stephen and Brandy Holly requested permission to replace and extend fencing on their property at 310 Academy Street. Currently, the property has fencing on both sides of the home and the Hollys would like to enclose the front yard as well. The council approved the permit.

Departmental Reports

Fire Chief Shane Clark reported that, since the last meeting, the department has responded to four medical calls, one motor vehicle accident and one downed power line, conducted one welfare check, extinguished two structure fires and provided aid to a neighboring agency during a

vehicle fire.

Mayor Blake said the power line in Blankenship Park was likely downed as the result of a goose on the loose.

Police Chief Bud Gow reported that the department issued three tickets, took two reports, assisted with one lockout and provided aid to neighboring agencies twice.

Gow went on to request the purchase of two new shotguns. He said the current firearms are 30- and 20-years old. Gow expressed interest in a firearm that will convert to semi-automatic and is able to utilize less than lethal rounds at a price of \$700 each. He noted that the seller will provide a \$100 trade-in value on the outdated weapons, as well.

The council approved the trade-in of the used firearms and the purchase of two new firearms.

Public Works Director Shane Clark reported that the street department has

been plowing streets during winter weather. He said that the water department repaired three water main leaks and identified two more leaking water services. He said the wastewater plant made it through the cold and the lift station was repaired as well.

In other business, the council:

- Voted to purchase a window unit heat pump at a cost of \$629.99 plus tax and a water heater at a cost of \$249.99;
- Transferred \$52,202.50 from General Fund to Police Department to cover budget deficits in the first quarter;
- Approved the publication of additional ads seeking an assistant city clerk;
- Granted permission to destroy records exceeding the state retention schedule;
- Added Clerk Austen as a cardholder of the city's corporate credit card with a limit of \$1,500;
- Paid bills in the amount of \$8,394.

Thomas' Pretrial Conference Reset

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A pretrial conference for a Noel man accused of shooting and killing a man in the Noel Heights Apartments has been postponed until early March.

McDonald County sheriff's deputies and the Noel Marshal's Office responded to a report of shots fired at 9:35 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 22, reports said.

Deputies found Jonathan Arrellanos lying face down in a pool of blood, according

to reports.

Investigators are charging Shun'tavion L. Thomas with second-degree murder and armed criminal action in connection with the incident.

Thomas' pretrial conference was scheduled for 10 a.m., Feb. 24, in Judge John LePage's court but was rescheduled to 10 a.m., March 3, according to court records.

Thomas' Jan. 20 hearing was held in front of LePage, and an order for fingerprinting was executed.

Kayja E. Stanley is serving as his public defender.

NOEL: Council To Further Research Business License Fees

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and taking the time to research the idea.

Council members also discussed how nearby cities handle their Tyson or Simmons plants that are nearby. Though they employ a large number of residents, the plants are sometimes technically located outside of city limits.

The council agreed to keep the \$20 fee for the business license and will continue to research other levels of fees.

In other business, the council voted to deny a zoning request for 117 S. Kings Highway from R-1 to R-2. Davis said the property isn't large enough, lacks enough parking and doesn't meet the zoning

code. Councilmember Reid Schmitt said he had driven by the property and agreed there isn't enough parking. Councilmember Faye Davis made the motion to deny the zoning request and councilmember Linda Glendenning seconded. The council voted to deny the request.

The council also could not approve a license for Ronnie Waldo's pot-belly pig. Waldo said he's simply trying to obtain a license for the pet he adopted seven months ago. Davis said his pet classifies as a farm animal, according to the state, not a therapy animal, but that the council could revisit the issue if Waldo is able to obtain some animal therapy certification. Waldo said he might look into rehoming the pot-belly pig.

The board also agreed to work on revamping an outdated ordinance regarding shutoffs. The ordinance was written back in the day when city officials had an agreement with Liberty to perform shutoffs. Crews had to dig up the line and install a valve so water would be shut off. Additionally, the information was brought to the board for its approval, which no longer takes place. The city also used to charge \$250 to disconnect services, which is no longer the case. The board will work on revamping the verbiage and bring that to the next month's meeting.

Street superintendent Christopher Craig said icy streets and hills were difficult to address during the recent winter storm. He

said he worked tirelessly, only to find the streets looking untouched the next day. "It was like fighting a losing battle," he said. Approximately 5,000 pounds of salt were put on city streets, he said.

During other reports, Wilson said the marshal's office made 16 arrests and had 154 total cases for January. Two recent traffic stops led to sizable drug busts. The suspects are currently in jail on warrants, he said.

Barrett said the fire department equipment fared well during the winter weather but the department is short-staffed with just eight people.

Crews worked several car wrecks during the storm and helped Southwest City with two fires.



COURTESY PHOTO

Student Marnee Sanny gets a book from the new book vending machine at Anderson Elementary School.

SCHOOL: Literacy Is One Of District's Main Goals

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she said.

The machine takes tokens rather than coins. It is an Inchy the Bookworm vending machine from a company in New York that makes all kinds of vending machines. It is filled with books from all grade levels, from picture books to chapter books, to capture the interest of all students.

"They get to select a book and keep it forever," Abbott said. "They love it. They've been very excited. It's fun to watch them stare as the book's falling."

Literacy is one of the school district's main goals, Abbott said, and she

hopes that by adding the new machine she is working toward instilling a love of reading in the students that will carry on as they grow.

"I hope to use it for many years to come," she said.

"The book vending machine is an exciting addition to our school," Messley said. "Literacy is a focus here at AES, and we are always looking for unique ways to reward remarkable behavior and hard work. The book vending machine is a great way to share the joys and rewards that can be found with a good book while recognizing the great choices that our Redbirds make every day."

FUNDRAISER: Keys Plan To Sell Treats At Upcoming Events

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nutritional element, she said.

The flavors include peanut butter pumpkin, which is good for digestion because of the peanut butter; pet-friendly chocolate, because all pets love chocolate but they cannot have regular chocolate; duck peanut butter, which is made from dehydrated duck and is also good for digestion; sunflower bacon, which is good for the dog's coat because of the bacon grease and sunflower oil, and also the chicken broth is good for digestion; cinnamon roll, which includes coconut oil that is also good for the coat; nutter butters, which are a peanut butter cookie treat; and the new flavor, chick o'nut twists, which is chicken jerky and toasted coconut in a twist.

"Every single one of these we make, they smell so good

and we have tasted every single one," Danae said. "If I won't eat it, I'm not going to feed it to my dogs."

"Before we started our nonprofit, we were selling the treats at a local farmers market to pay for the training for our daughter's dog," Joel said. "Danae did a lot of research on recipes and we did our own twists to them and came up with our recipes."

He said making the treats is "pretty much a full-time job." This year they do not plan on attending the local farmers markets but rather setting up at larger events. Danae said they feel they have a greater outreach by attending larger, multi-day events. Among the events they will attend will be Neosho Fall Fest, Vintage Market Days in Bentonville, Ark., and three events hosted

by Live Love Events NWA called Spring Into Summer Market, It's Fall Y'all and The Winter Market.

"We have had so many people hunting us down that have thrown away the package that has the reorder information on it," Danae said. "We call them our dog-treat stalkers."

She said they come up to the booth and say "I'm so glad I found you."

"It happens every event," she said.

Sometimes they have deer or elk antlers for sale that they cut into seven- or eight-inch pieces. Dogs love to chew on them, and they are better than a rawhide bone, which can tear up the dog's gums, Danae said.

The Key family has three dogs at home, Felicity, Ollie and Shadow, plus Amos, the service dog.

READ TOGETHER

Children who read well do better in other subjects, and in all aspects of school and beyond.

Reading skills correspond directly to one's ability to ...

- be an informed citizen
- communicate effectively
- earn a higher salary
- succeed in one's chosen career, and
- achieve personal fulfillment.

Source: raisingbookworms.com

CORNERSTONE BANK *salutes*

The Economic Security Corporation of Southwest Area

Community Salute

The Economic Security Cooperation was created in 1965, works to combat poverty and support low income families struggling to become self sufficient.

Here in McDonald County, ESCSA is dedicated to providing comprehensive support programs and vital services to help families in need.

THE CORNERSTONE BANK

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Incorporated in 1898

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