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Thursday, Sept. 25, 1997

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Hoopeston officials may seek Attorney General's opinion in suit

Hoopeston city officials may seek an opinion from the Illinois Attorney General's office concerning an apparent conflict between laws.

At issue is whether the city revolving loan committee should follow guidelines of the Illinois Open Meetings

Act or the rules governing funds from the Department of Commerce and Community Affairs which provided money for the loan fund.

The issue was raised when the Chronicle, in June 1996,

Briefly

Energy assistance to begin

Community Action of Danville will be at the Multi Agency from 10 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. Oct. 16 taking applications for energy assistance for senior citizens and disabled people.

To apply, bring proof of income, Social Security cards for everyone in the household and the most current energy bill. Renters must also bring a rent receipt.

For questions or to schedule a different appointment, call the Multi Agency at (217) 283-5544.

Applications for the public will be taken Nov. 12.

Music Booster meeting

The Hoopeston Area Music Boosters will meet at 7 p.m. tonight in the middle school chorus room.

Interested parents are encouraged to attend.

School board chief resigns

The Rossville-Alvin school board needs a new member.

At Monday's meeting, the board accepted the resignation of board president Don Frazier, who quit for job-related reasons.

Anyone interested in filling Frazier's seat in township22N Range 12 W, should contact the high school office.

In other business, the board:

☐passed a budget with \$2.25 million in expenses and \$2.25 million in income.

☐hired CARE teacher Dawn Sangkawatana; teacher's

aides Linda Herman, Martha Nunn and Terri Wilson; and custodian Tim Bottoff.

Marching Cornjerker contests

The Hoopeston Area High School Marching Band will perform in three contests in the following weeks.

On Saturday, the band will perform at Danville High School football stadium at 2:30 p.m. There will be no parade this year.

On Oct. 4, the band travels to Eastern Illinois University and will be on the field at 9:45 a.m.

On Oct. 11, the band will be at the University of Illinois for a 9:15 a.m. parade, followed by the Marching Cornjerkers' performance at 10:48 a.m.

Flu shots

The Vermilion County Health Department will be at the Hoopeston Multi Agency, 206 S. First Ave., from 9 a.m. to noon Oct. 15 to administer flu shots.

For more information, call (217) 283-5544.

CRIS senior program

CRIS Senior Services will sponsor a workshop on "Home Security" at 10:30 a.m. Monday, Sept. 29 at Centennial Manor, 426 E. Honeywell.

For more information, call CRIS, (217) 443-2999.

The workshop is provided in coordination with the East Central Illinois Agency on Aging and the Hoopeston Multi Agency.

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See SUIT on other side

Suit continued from other side

filed suit against the city for closing portions of loan committee meetings to the public and press.

Officials said they did not want to disclose personal financial information of revolving loan applicants, saying disclosure is prohibited under DCCA rules.

Last week, Vermilion County Circuit Judge Thomas J. Fahey ruled the loan committee is a public body subject to the Open Meetings Act.

City officials had requested an earlier ruling from the Attorney General's office concerning the discrepancy, said Mayor Bob Ault. However, once the Chronicle filed suit, the Attorney General's office refused to issue an opinion until the suit was settled.

Ault said he was "highly disappointed in the outcome," but added the decision allows the city to put the issue before the Attorney General again.

The city also has the option to appeal Fahey's decision, Ault said.

The ruling means the city must revamp how it handles revolving loan applications, although Ault said he is unsure what changes will be made. "I've got some ideas," he said, "but I still need to talk to a couple people."

★

Police News

★

A 26-inch boy's blue Pacific bicycle was found Tuesday on Conservation Club Road. The owner may identify and claim it at the police station.

No tickets or injuries were reported in an accident at 11:17 a.m. Tuesday at 317 N. Market.

Police said David I. Anderson, 6614 St. Rt. 9, Rankin, drove his 1995 Dodge pickup truck into a 1995 Lincoln Towncar driven by Edward J. Layden, 39461 N. 2000 East Rd. Layden stopped for a vehicle backing from a parking space.

Obituaries

LONGEST - Alta Longest, 75, of Hoopeston, died at 12:29 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 24, 1997 at Hoopeston Community Memorial Hospital. Arrangements are pending at the Brown-Alkire Funeral Home.

Decision may hurt loan program: committee chair, applicant

Last week's decision that the Hoopeston revolving loan fund must adhere to Open Meetings Act requirements may hurt the program.

That is the opinion of the committee chairman and a business owner currently trying to obtain a loan.

"I don't intend to be in contempt of court," said Alderman Bill Goodwine, revolving loan committee chairman. "We're going to have to find a way to obey the law and protect people's confidentiality."

Goodwine said when the suit was first filed, loan applications stopped. "We didn't get any for a long time," he said. "Finally, someone asked about the confidentiality and I told them we could keep the information private until there was a ruling. But now I can't do that."

More applications followed suit, but all applicants requested their financial information be kept private. "Everybody who's applied has requested confidentiality, without exception," Goodwine said.

Included in those requests for confidentiality is a business owner currently in the revolving loan process.


"I'm going to pursue the loan because it's at the last stage," said the owner, who asked to remain anonymous. "I don't know if I was just starting out if I would, though."

Owners of business started with revolving loan funds have also said they would not have used the program without confidentiality.

Getting money through the program should not mean disclosure of personal finances, the applicant said. "My personal information - I have a real hard time with that being known by the public. They don't need to know."

The owner praised the committee for the way it has handled disseminating information so far. "I think they've been doing a real fine job of telling people what they need to know."

A decision on this application will probably be the first made under the ruling. "My case is going to be the guinea pig," the owner said.



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