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Hoopeston city council accepts grant for two new officers

Two additional officers will join the Hoopeston Police Department following action taken by the city council Tuesday night.

In a 6-2 vote, the council approved accepting a \$150,000 federal grant to fund two new officers for the department.

The grant will cover training costs, salaries and benefits for the new officers for three years.

Although the city must repay 25 percent of the officers' salaries, two aldermen were more concerned with how the city will pay for additional officers when the grant expires.

Aldermen Drew Allen and Bill Goodwine voted against accepting the grant. Both men cited budgetary concerns about paying the officers' salaries when they

are no longer covered by the grant.

"One of the questions I've got is where are you going to get \$60,000 (for salaries) plus cars and whatever else you need in three years," Goodwine said. "It's got to come from somewhere."

Goodwine said the process of deciding to add additional officers was done "backwards. "Don't people usually figure out how many officer they need then try to get the grant," he asked.

Alderman David Borders cited a Federal Bureau of Investigation survey which stated one officer is needed for each 500 residents of a community.

That argument did not sway Goodwine. "It's been like that for a decade," he said.

See OFFICERS on other side

Investment professional says pay yourself first for retirement

We all have so many people to pay: the utility companies, banks, medical professionals. But according to a local investment expert, the first person anyone should pay is himself.

Sharon Dixon, investment executive at First Allied Securities, spoke at Tuesday's Hoopeston Jaycees meeting.

Dixon spoke about the new Roth IRA, as well as investments for people on budgets.

Dixon had three investment recommendations. First, she said, people should have a set-aside of six to 12 months salary.

Second, employees should participate in employer-offered retirement plans, if they are available.

Employers "are giving you a gift" with such programs, Dixon said, because often, they contribute to employees' retirement funds. Also, employees' payments to such

plans use pre-tax dollars, lowering the tax burden.

Dixon's final recommendation is an individual investment plan, which, she said, does not require a major cash outlay. "It's your time in the market, not timing, that will be your best ally," she said.

Those who invest as little as \$25 monthly on a consistent basis will build a substantial nest egg for retirement, she said.

As for the new IRA, "I think it's a great thing," Dixon said. She cautioned that people should contact their tax advisor before switching a traditional IRA to the Roth variety.

Points in favor of the Roth IRA are that more people are qualify for the program and there is no cut-off age for contributions (compared to 70½ for traditional IRAs).

While contributions to the Roth IRA are not tax-

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Officers continued from other side

Chief Carl Valentine urged the council to accept the grant, which, he said, could be renewed for two years.

Valentine has written a letter asking for a waiver of the 25 percent pay-back fee.

Should the waiver be denied, the city will make up the cost by saving overtime pay for current officers. Valentine said this year, nearly \$20,000 has been paid in overtime for officers who are sick or on vacation.

Hiring two officers should reduce that expense by 70 to 80 percent, he said.

Safety was also a concern, Valentine said, adding sick time or vacations often cause officers to work one per

See **RETIREMENT** on other side


Retirement continued from other side

deductible, earnings may be withdrawn tax free for those who are at least 59½ or by those who wish to purchase a first home or pay for college. Other reasons for penalty-free withdrawals include disability or death, she said.


Converting a traditional IRA may benefit those who

do not retire for many years, as well as those who expect their tax bracket to stay the same or go up at retirement, do not want to take required minimum withdrawals at age 70½ or have savings outside the IRA that will pay taxes due at the time of conversion, Dixon said.

Those who convert to Roth IRAs this year will have an added bonus. Dixon said the tax due on an IRA



Police News



Mark A. Hewitt, 27, of 111 E. Lincoln, was arrested at 5:01 p.m. Monday, charged with burglary and criminal damage to property.

Police said they arrested Hewitt in connection with a burglary Jan. 31 at Demeter.

Hewitt was taken to the Public Safety Building,

Danville, to await hearing.

Jason A. Longfellow, 23, of 824 E. Wyman, was arrested at 5 p.m. Monday.

Longfellow, wanted on a Vermilion County warrant for burglary, was taken to the Public Safety

Obituaries

DAVIS - Larry Lee Davis, 62, of Mountain Home, Ark, formerly of Hoopeston, died at 9:25 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 1, 1998, at Baxter County Regional Hospital in Mountain Home. Graveside services will be held at 1 p.m. Saturday at Floral Hill Cemetery. Visitation will be from noon to 12:45 p.m. Saturday at the Brown-Alkire Funeral Home. Memorials are suggested to the East Side Baptist Church Building Fund, Mountain Home, Ark., or the Larry Davis Memorial Athletic Fund, P.O. Box 193, Mt. Carmel,

shift. “I can understand in years past, you thought one guy could handle it, but it’s not that way anymore,” he said.

About 40 weeks of each year are taken by vacation, said Mayor Bob Ault.

If a grant renewal is not approved, Valentine said officers could be dismissed, and would be hired knowing that possibility exists.

However, Sgt. Danny Danner said three current officers may retire from the department within the next three years, eliminating the need to dismiss the newly-hired officers.

With approval given, the department can now begin

the process of finding and training the new officers.

In unrelated business, the council discussed 1998 street projects, tentatively including resurfacing Fourth St. from Penn to Route 9 and Seminary from Market to Seventh St.

The cost of replacing the now-brick streets is prohibitive, said alderman Mark Drollinger, street/alley committee chairman. “I honestly don’t see how we’re ever going to be able to afford it,” he said. No state or federal funds are available for such a project, he added.

The streets, along with several others, are part of an ordinance which says “every effort” will be made to keep the streets bricked.

The ordinance was enacted after concern was expressed by the Hoopeston Historical Society. Drollinger said he will discuss the issue with the society and explain the costs.

While Drollinger said other brick streets may be retained, Goodwine disagreed. “If you can’t fix Fourth, you can’t fix any of them,” he said.

Drollinger again cited the cost. “If you get new policemen, you can’t have bricks,” he said.

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