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## City council hires Ruh as Hoopeston's economic developer

The woman who has been overseeing economic development in Hoopeston will have another year at the helm.

Shannon Ruh was hired as Hoopeston's economic development director in a unanimous vote by the city council Monday night.

The council approved a salary of \$38,500 for Ruh but finance committee chairman Bill Goodwine said \$50,000 has been earmarked for Ruh to include salary, health benefits and related costs such as seminar fees and office expenses.



### The touch of a button

Ephriam Bolin of Hoopeston uses a touch screen to vote Tuesday at Hoopeston City Hall. Election judges reported a good turnout early in the day.

The bulk of the money - \$30,000 - will be paid by city Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds. The rest will come from contributions from Hoopeston Industrial Corporation, Hoopeston Chamber of Commerce and Grant Township.

Ruh's activities will be overseen by the economic development steering committee, whose members include Lance Raver, Dick Read, Bill Nicholls, Pat Bailey, aldermen Brandon Hamilton and Goodwine and Mayor Bill DeWitt. Additionally, she will report to the city's finance committee.

Ruh came to Hoopeston under Western Illinois University's Peace Corps Fellows program. Her 11-month stint will end soon and her employment with the city will begin December 15. However, Goodwine said, Ruh has asked for a two-week, unpaid leave of absence to spend the holidays with her family so her salary will not begin until Jan. 2, 2007, he said.

Goodwine does not envision the economic development director's position as being a long-term one, saying it will last about two years.

"We have a lot to offer," Goodwine said, adding the city needs someone to help get the word out about Hoopeston. Goodwine talked about a site south of the city, on which Ruh has been working to get an option, and the amenities there, including a natural gas supply line, adjacent railroad track and sewer line. "Some company's going to really, really want it if they only knew about it," he said. Ruh's job is to help tell people about that and the other benefits of Hoopeston, including its available workforce. "Does Hoopeston have a lot to offer," he asked. "You're darn right we do."

In other business, the council:

**See COUNCIL on other side**

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## Council

- Heard from Alderman Bill Crusinberry that a broken pump at the water plant may cause rusty water in the city. The pump is about 30 years old and parts must be specially-made to fix the problem.

- Approved an ordinance amendment banning auxiliary police from carrying a firearm. Alderman Ed Lotz said the state law was changed to disallow auxiliary officers from carrying guns unless they have had 400 hours of training. Only one Hoopeston auxiliary officer has that training and the cost to train the others is too high, he said.

City attorney Brian Manion said the change in the law also bans auxiliary officers from making arrests. They will still have the power to stop people but arrests must be made by an official officer, he said.

- Accepted a \$1,293.15 bid from Berry's Garden Center, Danville for perpetual care grave blankets. Berry's was the only bid received, said Alderwoman Gail Lane.

- Discussed but took no action on a Downtown Matching Grant program for downtown beautifica-

tion.

- Learned Bhupendra Naik, who hopes to build a motel, has agreed to extend his contract with the city to May 31, 2007, giving the city more time to get a No Further Remediation letter from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

In order to get the letter, property owners within 500 feet of the proposed motel site must agree to cap their wells. However, one property owner is resisting capping his well.

Ruh said the city is looking at annexing surrounding property and a possible forced annexation for the property owner, then passing an ordinance banning private wells in the city.

However, surrounding property owners “are not in total agreement on annexation,” DeWitt said.

Naik will not build the motel without the NFR letter, which states that a site is clean and does not require further remediation to meet EPA standards.

- In a related issue, DeWitt said he has met with the EPA about the former Hoopeston Fertilizer property on West Thompson. A meeting will also be held with the federal EPA and on December 4, all leftover chemicals will be removed from the property. The move is an effort to “see what we can do about getting that property a clean bill of health,” DeWitt said.

## Weather



Partly cloudy today, tonight and tomorrow. High today 64, low 47. Tomorrow's high 68, low 47.

For current weather conditions, call Hoopeston Weather Service, (217) 283-6221.



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