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Wednesday, April 18, 2007
Hoopeston's only locally-owned daily news publication

P.O. Box 441, Hoopeston, IL. 60942 **www.justthefacts.net**

Council approves hikes in cemetery rates, perpetual care

The cost of getting buried is going up.

The Hoopeston City Council unanimously approved a rate increase in labor charges for Floral Hill Cemetery at Tuesday night's regular meeting.

This is the second increase in as many years.

Under the new rate system, fees for opening adult graves will go from \$250 on weekdays to \$300. Rates for opening graves for ashes and babies will go from \$100 to \$150. Saturday rates will go from \$125 for urns and baby graves to \$225 and for adult graves, from \$325 to \$450.

In the event of a Sunday or holiday grave opening, the rate is \$750 for adult graves and \$375 for ashes and baby graves.

Grave openings are done on Sundays and holidays only in emergency situations and with cemetery committee approval.

Seeding of graves, which had a \$20 charge, will now be included in grave opening fees. The charge for sod-
See COUNCIL on other side

Local polling places experience problems on election day

Hoopeston voters faced a few problems during Tuesday's election.

Those who planned to cast ballots bright and early in Grant 2 were turned away because the polling place was short a Democrat election judge.

One of those who was told to return was Hoopeston Area School Board candidate Joel Bird, who tried to vote shortly after 6 a.m.

Bird said he was told to return around 10 a.m. but went back shortly after 8 a.m. and was able to vote.

Vermilion County Clerk Lynn Foster said a judge from another precinct was brought in to the polling place.

In Grant 1, some city voters were given ballots that did not include the name of aldermanic candidate Nancy Stipp.

The polling place includes voters in both Hoopeston city proper and rural residents.

Election results will be included in Thursday's Just the Facts.



Grant 5 election judge Dovey Cleveland, seated, explains the ballot to voter Rosalie Hickman of Hoopeston. The women were at St. Anthony Parish Hall.

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Council continued from other side

ding graves remained at \$50.

Alderswoman Gail Lane, head of the city cemetery committee, said Floral Hill rates had been far lower than rates at other cemeteries. The new fees are more in line with what others charge. She said she does not think the committee will ask for increased rates next year.

Fees for perpetual care at the cemetery were also increased, from \$1,000 to \$1,500.

The new rates will become effective May 1.

In other business, Ed Hubbard, chairman of Witch School, announced the school has been sold and will be out of Hoopeston by May 1.

Hubbard did not disclose details on the sale, saying only that he received "a considerable amount of money" for it. He did not respond to email and telephone requests for further information.

Hubbard told the council that the jobs WitchSchool created will also go with it. He talked of the mural on the front of the building the school has rented. Done by Phil Lacey, Hubbard said the mural had received coverage in news media in Los Angeles, New York and London and that a plan for Lacey to do another mural on the side of the building has been scrapped. More than 400 stories had been generated by WitchSchool's existence in Hoopeston, he added.

Additionally, Hoopeston will lose sales tax revenue paid by WitchSchool, payroll taxes and money that is put back into the community through employees purchasing items in the city.

Hubbard reminded the council of when he first came to Hoopeston, when a group of citizens presented a petition to the city asking that WitchSchool not open in Hoopeston. "If I had listened to that petition, my health would be better," he said.

Hubbard said he recently had a heart attack scare which turned out to be a pinched nerve.

Hubbard stressed that Illiana Web is not a Wiccan company. "I've resigned from everything," he said. "I'm tired of the prayer circles at my house. I'm tired of being told every day that I shouldn't be here." Some of the people who tell him that are "very influential," he said.

Hubbard then asked the council whether they wanted Illiana Web to stay in Hoopeston. The company, an internet service provider, is online, offering technology "among the most advanced in the world," he said.

In response to the question, Mayor Bill DeWitt said, "We reside in America. It's the land of the free and the home of the brave. If you want to stay here and try to be successful, ok. If you want to move down the road, good luck to you."

City attorney Paul Manion wondered why Hubbard was seeking council approval. "I was in business for 40 years," he said. "A lot of people loved me, a lot of people hate me. I didn't get council approval. I didn't care if they liked me. I didn't care what they thought."

DeWitt echoed a similar thought. "If I was in business in a community and I thought I had to have a public opinion poll, by hell, I would move," he said.

In unrelated business, the council:

- Approved a \$1551.51 bid from Lancaster Construction of Westville for a dump truck. It was the only bid

Police News

Martin C. Varela, 41, of 122 Guthrie, Rankin, turned himself in to police at 3:50 p.m. Monday. Wanted on a Vermilion County warrant for failure to appear, he was released on \$500 cash bond.

Linda L. Brown, 44, of 422 E. Honeywell, was arrested at 6:18 p.m. Monday in the 400 block of East Honeywell. She was charged with driving under the influence and driving on a revoked license.

Brown was released on \$300 cash bond.

Cathy S. Smith, 33, of 528 N. Fourth St., was arrested at 10:14 p.m. Monday at Second Ave. and Washington. Wanted on an Iroquois County warrant, she was released on \$300 cash bond and a new court date.

Fire Calls

Hoopeston Fire Department was called at 6:25 p.m. Monday to 501 Dice for an activated fire/smoke detector. No injuries were reported.

Weather

Partly cloudy today and tonight. High 54, low 34. Tomorrow, mostly cloudy. High 57, low 37.

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

received.

- Learned that Mike Wallace was hired as the new humane officer.
- Heard from DeWitt about Mayor's Youth Council member Elizabeth Booher who will do mission work in Tanzania this summer. Booher is accepting contributions towards the \$2,600 needed for the trip.
- Learned Ameren CIPS is clearing the property of its former office at Seminary and Front so that someone will be able to build a home on the site.
- Heard from Grant Township Supervisor Bill Boose that work is expected to begin this week on CSX crossings in the county. Projects should be done by next week.
- Approved a resolution to go forward with applying for a state sidewalk grant program, "Safe Routes to Schools in Illinois. The grant, with a \$400,000 maximum, pays for sidewalk repairs and installations within one mile of schools.

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