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Lourdine Florek, owner

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Hoopeston water tower improvements nearing completion

Hoopeston's water tower improvements are nearing completion but may be slowed if recent rains continue.

At Tuesday's Hoopeston City Council meeting, Mayor Bill Crusinberry, reporting for Alderman Bill McElhaney, said work on the 250,000 gallon ground storage tank has been completed and that workers will soon drain the water tower to finish sandblasting the bowl and then repainting it.

Crusinberry said that when the tank is drained, three tanks located around the city will maintain pressure but that residents should expect more rust in the water. That rust is already in the system and will be pushed through by pressure.

In related discussion, Alderman Randy Carter asked about the status of the bell attached to the aerial tower.

"Right now, it's up in the air," Crusinberry said, eliciting chuckles from aldermen and the audience.

Fire Chief Joel Bird said he researched the bell's history and learned it was the bell used to alert firemen many years ago.

Officials have previously discussed what to do with the bell. Suggestions have included leaving it where it is or taking it down and putting at city hall or the fire station.

Bird said he would ask firemen's opinions at a department meeting Wednesday.

Carter said a recommendation would be welcome "but I don't think it's been determined that it's your property."

In further discussion, Crusinberry said a secondary line will be added to the city's water distribution system. Currently, only one line is available and a problem with it "would be a disaster," he said. "You could be looking at days without water."

In other water matters, Crusinberry said the city has specific funds for water and sanitary sewers, but nothing for storm sewers, which also need work.

Possible funding solutions was referred to the water/sewer committee, but during the public comment section of the meeting, resident Stan Steiner inquired about the city getting drainage district tax funds. Crusinberry said officials will look into that tax.

Regarding Carter's comment that the city will take possession of the former Amvets and Second Chance buildings, and will provide trucking, backfill and some miscellaneous items for demolition, Steiner wondered how it is determined who gets paid prevailing wage on such a project.

Each year, the city agrees to pay prevailing wage on projects that involve tax dollars, such as the ongoing water project and street work. Prevailing wage can be significantly higher than what city employees earn but failure to pay the prevailing wage when needed could result in the loss of state grants and low interest loans for the city.

"The guy in the excavator gets prevailing wage; what about the guy driving the truck," Steiner asked.

Crusinberry replied that he believes prevailing wage does not cover municipal workers.

Talking about the additional cost of prevailing wages, Steiner suggested "It's time for somebody to grow a pair and stop (prevailing wage)."

In unrelated business, the council:

- Waived bidding and approved purchasing a 2015 3500 Silverado 4WD truck from Anthem Chevrolet for not more than \$35,000. The truck, when equipped with a skid unit, will be Hoopeston Fire Department's new brush truck, said Alderman Brandon Hamilton, fire committee chairman.

See IMPROVEMENTS on other side

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Obituaries

June 4

Carla Nunez, Hoopeston, status hearing July 2.

Brian Suiter, Hoopeston, status hearing July 2.

Tonya Edwards, Hoopeston, case turned over to State of Illinois for further enforcement.

Christopher Hollis, Hoopeston, status hearing July 2.

Coty Morgeson, Hoopeston, status hearing July 2.

Adriana Mendez, Hoopeston, status hearing July 2.

Jennifer Garrett, Hoopeston, status hearing July 2.

Heather Billingsley, Hoopeston, status hearing July 2.

Improvements continued from other side

The city will purchase a skid unit from Quad County Fire Department for no more than \$15,000.

The new truck will replace the department's current 1978-model brush truck.

- Approved the annual appropriations ordinance, which is budgeted amounts plus a five percent contingency.

- Heard from state Rep. Tom Bennett, who discussed Illinois' financial condition and said he and fellow Republicans are working with Gov. Bruce Rauner on a balanced budget. "We will get a budget...but it seems like it will be a painful project," Bennett said.

During this time, which may include some state employees being let go or not receiving their pay, Bennett said he will not accept a paycheck. "It's not a lot but it's something to help," he said.

- Heard from office manager Loni Gress that Envisionwise, a Champaign/California company, has been approached about taking over the city's web page at a cost of \$125 per month. That amount is less than the \$190 per month the city had been paying.

The business has local ties, as co-president RD Miller is related to Carolyn Gress, she said.

Weather

Thunderstorms likely today, tonight. High 88, low 69. Tomorrow, chance of storms. High 85, low 67.

Brittany Kilgore, Momence, status hearing July 2.

Alexander Davis, Hoopeston, status hearing July 2.

Jason Reyes, Hoopeston, status hearing July 2.

Brandon Irvin, Hoopeston, status hearing July 2.

Mark Hewitt, Hoopeston, status hearing July 2.

Debra King-Schwalter, Cissna Park, case dismissed.

Elkanah Asher, Tinley Park, status hearing July 2.

From the Blotter

Skyler Burke, 26, of Hoopeston, was arrested after police were called at 7:28 p.m. Friday for a domestic disturbance in the 400 block of East Young.

Burke was charged with assault on a complaint from a 34-year-old Hoopeston woman and was released on a notice to appear in Hoopeston City Court.

Obituaries

MILLER - Steven Douglas Miller, 56, of Cissna Park, died Thursday, July 9, 2015, at Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana. Visitation was 2-5 p.m. Sunday at Knapp Funeral Home, Cissna Park, and will be 10 a.m. until the 11 a.m. funeral Monday at Apostolic Christian Church, Cissna Park. Burial will be in Apostolic Christian Cemetery, Cissna Park. Memorials are suggested to the church or Cissna Park Peace Meal Program.

Classifieds

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