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Citizens, TV news crew hear update on dispatching issue

Lights!
Camera!
Action!

Local citizens invited a television crew to film the portion of Tuesday's Hoopeston City Council meeting covering discussion between residents and the council about returning local dispatch to Hoopeston.

Robin Lawson, Hoopeston resident and business owner, addressed the council, saying the group was "probably tired of seeing me, but when I start something, I want to finish it.

"Has anybody made contact with anyone," she asked as

a follow up to the December 20 meeting when Ald. Brandon Hamilton said the Vermilion County Emergency Telephone Systems Board (ETSB) was to meet that day to discuss what Hoopeston must do to take dispatching back.

ETSB is the entity that oversees 911 answering in Vermilion County.

Hamilton, chairman of the city police committee, which oversees local dispatchers, said he had not heard

See DISPATCH on other side

Public invited to competition, crowning of Miss Hoopeston 2017

One of three hopefuls will be chosen as the 2017 Miss Hoopeston on Saturday and the public is invited to the coronation.

The on-stage portion of the competition will be held at 3 p.m. Saturday at the historic Lorraine Theatre, 324 E. Main St.

Competing for this year's title are:

- Brea Bushong, 19, daughter of Jason Bushong and Shawn and Stephanie Tuggle
- Shania Goble, 18, daughter of Douglas and Susan Goble
- Autumn Layden, 19, daughter of Joe and Dawn Layden

During Saturday's event, the three will compete in public speaking, evening wear and on-stage question.

Originally scheduled to be held at the Little Lorraine, the competition was moved to the larger venue because of the expected turnout.

Hoopeston Jaycees, sponsor of the Miss Hoopeston competition, look forward to seeing the community support the contestants and the ongoing work of the Save the Lorraine Foundation.

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Dispatch continued from other side

from county officials, a delay he attributed to the holidays. He added he will contact ETSB this week.

"Is anyone else beside (Hamilton) calling (county officials)," Lawson asked.

Mayor Bill Crusinberry said Sheriff Pat Hartshorn had requested that everything related to the dispatch issue go through one person and that Hamilton, as police committee chairman, was designated to be that person.

Some of the roughly 50 people who attended Tuesday's meeting were new to the issue, including Bob Charbonneau, learning that increased costs were a factor

in the council voting to terminate 911 dispatching, asked if residents were asked if they would be willing to pay more to keep the service.

Crusinberry said the only way to do that would be through an election referendum but Charbonneau said he didn't want to wait that long. "I'm willing to pay more property tax," he said.

Resident Judy Brown asked if it would take a year to get dispatching back.

"I don't expect this to take a year at all," Hamilton said. The Illinois 911 coordinator, Vermilion County and

Hoopeston are working together to make sure any plan will work. "When we step forward, we want to step in the right direction," he said.

Dan Brown asked if residents should pressure those at the county level to move more quickly, but Crusinberry cautioned against that saying the wheels of government don't turn quickly and sometimes pressure "makes them turn even slower."

As he has done in previous meetings, Hamilton assured residents that the city is not dropping the ball. "It's not dead," he said. "It's not dropped. "It's just going to be a slow process because we want to make sure everything is done properly."

In other business, the council heard from Ald. Carl Ankenbrand that he has not yet heard back from Arrow Ambulance director Larry Sapp after telling him Hoopeston will donate an unused ambulance to the University of Illinois bomb squad.

From the Blotter

A 14-year-old boy was arrested after a 31-year-old Hoopeston woman reported at 12:34 a.m. Tuesday that someone took alcohol from the 600 block of East Thompson. The boy was charged with theft under \$500 and was released to a guardian.

Weather

Chance of snow then mostly cloudy today. High 18. Tonight, mostly cloudy. Low 4. Tomorrow, sunny. High 17, low 7.

Classifieds

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Photo contributed

I solemnly swear

Republican U.S. Rep. John Shimkus (IL-15), left, takes the oath of office Tuesday as a member of the 115th Congress. Also pictured are Karen Shimkus, House Speaker Paul Ryan (R, WI-01) and Daniel Shimkus. Serving as chairman of the subcommittee on environment and economy, he is also a member of the subcommittees on communications and technology, energy and power and health. Shimkus was elected to represent the 15th District in 2013, replacing Tim Johnson, who retired, but he has served as a U.S. Representative since 1997, first of the 20th District, where he replaced current U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) until 2003, then after redistricting, the 19th District until 2013.