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Monday, March 30, 2020

Hoopeston's only locally-owned daily news publication!

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Council peppers emergency responders with questions, approves emergency declaration

At an emergency session Friday afternoon, Hoopeston City Council voted to approve a COVID-19-related emergency resolution.

As part of Hoopeston's three-stage COVID-19 response plan, an emergency meeting was to be called when a case of coronavirus was confirmed within 40 miles of the city.

On Thursday, Iroquois County officials announced the first confirmed case, a 50-year-old man, who was in home isolation. Friday, a second case was confirmed, a 40-year-old man, also in home isolation.

Information on where in the county the men live is not being released by the Iroquois County Public Health Department. However, Chebanse, the northernmost village in Iroquois County, is 39.09 miles from Hoopeston, as the crow flies.

Aldermen Carl Ankenbrand, Lourine Florek, Bill Goodwine, Alex Houmes and Robin Lawson were in the council chambers, while Jeff Wise participated remotely via computer. Bill McElhaney was absent. Goodwine served as mayor pro tem in the absence of Mayor Bill Crusinberry.

The council met with Brad Hardcastle, Hoopeston EMA director, Fire Chief Joel Bird and Police Chief Jim DeWitt, and others.

Florek started the discussion, saying she had questions about the emergency order. Goodwine, citing Robert's Rules of Order, said questions could be asked after a motion was made and seconded. With no motion forthcoming, "Let's just have discussion without a motion," Goodwine said.

Florek then asked how the 40-mile boundary was determined. Hardcastle said it was decided by an emergency committee made up of himself, along with DeWitt, Bird and Crusinberry. The initial thought was to declare an emergency when a case was confirmed in Vermilion County, he said, but the group realized being in the north part of the county, a confirmed case in Iroquois County could be closer to the city.

Houmes said he thought the current status did not warrant "breaking down the current government structure," and that the council should be involved in declaring a curfew, one of the pieces of the Phase 3 response plan. Wise asked if all the bullet points in Phase 3 had to be declared; Hardcastle said they did not.

Yaden brought discussion back to whether the council wanted to give power to the emergency committee, saying city ordinances indicated to him that an emergency declaration should last only until the council could meet. Using a tornado ravaging the town as an example, Yaden said he could see where it might not be possible for the council to meet under those circumstances, but he did not believe that was the case with the current pandemic. "At this moment in time, I don't see that we are in that state of panic," he said.

Houmes used Wise as an example of the council being able to function during an emergency, saying that despite being sick and in self-isolation, "which he should be, he is still here to help make a decision."

Goodwine said it seemed to him that the council was hesitant to "toss you the checkbook and tell you do what you want to do."

"I'm not going to ask for a brand new fire truck," Bird responded.

Some communities have already enacted emergency powers, Ankenbrand said. "Some of this I agree with. The curfew, no. Some people - sometimes myself included - don't do a very good job of social distancing," he said.

Hardcastle explained that the emergency declaration would allow him to work with Vermilion County EMA to get needed supplies and to receive reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The only piece of equipment wanted now is an intercom system which would allow people to talk to police department personnel without being face-to-face.

DeWitt said despite almost everyone having a cell

phone, many people "still want to go to the police station and talk to someone."

A weatherproof intercom would be located outside city hall or - if the police station window were sealed - one could be located just inside city hall entry doors.

Masks are also wanted but can't be found now, Hardcastle said, adding HEMA will put their request in to VC-EMA.

Additionally, the emergency declaration gives the committee flexibility should Hoopeston have a confirmed case. In that scenario, Vermilion County Health Department - with whom Hoopeston EMA has already been involved - would come to Hoopeston and would direct HEMA on protocols to be followed regarding quarantine.

Yaden asked what would happen to someone who broke quarantine. "Let's say I've got it and you find me at 112 that afternoon. Can you arrest me," he asked.

"We will take the appropriate action that has been set forth," DeWitt answered, adding that in some cases, people are being charged with terrorist acts for breaking quarantine.

Florek said the problem may be that people think of emergencies as the aftermath of a tornado or war, "not a cough and sniffles," and suggested perhaps more should be done to educate about pandemics.

"Nobody's dealt with this since 1917," Wise said, "so
See EMERGENCY on other side

Rossville Village office reopens

Per Mayor Dick Queen, Rossville Village Office has reopened. In order to help reduce the spread of COVID 19, the front door will be locked. Payments can be made by dropping the payment in the night drop slot on the front of the building, through the drive-up window or online thru PSN, on the village website, www.villageofrossville.org/ or www.govpaynet.com/.

Thank you for your patience during this time!

Emergency continued from other side

we can't say what this is going to do...and that's from the guy who's on the computer."

Lawson said that in simple terms, "you're doing what you've been doing, you'll just be able to get what you need to get. You're just trying to keep our city safe."

Goodwine said, "I think we're just afraid to delegate. At some point in time, in the interest of flexibility...I think that personally, trust and delegation are really kind of important.

With discussion waning, Goodwine again asked for a motion, which was made by Ankenbrand, seconded by Lawson and approved 6-1.

After the meeting, Yaden, the sole "no" vote, said an emergency order is not needed to plan. "We should already have a plan," he said.

Under Phase 3 of the emergency response plan, the city may:

- Implement reduction of response plans for both fire and police departments, using phone contact, rather than face-to-face contact, for non-emergencies.
- Implement contingency of operations plans for city departments.
- Consider keeping non-essential city employees at

home.

- Ban all gatherings larger than 10 people.
- Implement a curfew during the duration of the emergency declaration. Hardcastle said at Friday's meeting that a curfew is not currently warranted.
- Implement ordinance 2.50.100 regarding emergency purchases by the EMA director, Hardcastle.
- Hold regular briefings between the police and fire chiefs, EMA director and mayor to determine if the emergency declaration needs to continue or if other action needs to be taken.
- Approve the transfer and direction of personnel or functions of city departments, for the purpose of performing or facilitating emergency services.
- Declare, issue, enforce, modify and terminate orders for quarantine and isolation of people or animals posing a threat to the public.

Doug Toole, Vermilion County Public Health administrator, posted on the health department's Facebook page that as of 2:30 p.m. Saturday, there were no lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the county. Of 66 samples sent to the state labs for testing from this county, none tested positive, 54 tested negative, and results are pending on 12 samples. VCHD has received no positive COVID-19 results from any commercial labs, but also do

not know how many samples were sent from the county to commercials labs.

Even though we have no lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Vermilion County, it is best to act as if we do. Please continue to stay vigilant, maintain social distancing, stay home unless it is necessary to go out, and wash your hands, he said.

In a press release issued Saturday, Hardcastle announced other changes that will be made because of the emergency declaration, including:

- Water shut-offs will not occur during the duration of the emergency. Late fees will still be incurred on delinquent accounts.
- 2019 golf cart stickers will be honored until May 1, 2020. Golf cart owners must still maintain insurance and

equipment requirements as specified in the ordinance.

- City hall remains closed to the public.
 - The drop box outside city hall will remain available for water payments and other city business.
 - Residents may call (217) 283-5833 for payments over the phone or other questions. The city website is available and includes necessary forms. Payments may be made through the site, cityofhoopeston.com/

Weather

Mostly sunny today. High 54. Tonight, mostly cloudy. Low 34. Tomorrow, mostly cloudy. High 44, low 33.

For real time Hoopeston weather, visit justthefacts.net/weather/.

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Silgan Containers is hiring Press Line Mechanics. To apply, please visit <https://silgancontainers.mua.hrdepartment.com/hr/ats/Posting/view/10688>

The City of Hoopeston is accepting application for an eligibility list with the police department. If interested, you will need to pick up and turn in an application to the police department located at 301 W Main St. Hoopeston, IL by May 4, 2020. Testing date will take place on May 30, 2020 at Hoopeston Area High School Library.

Help wanted: tire and mechanic experience helpful. Apply in person. Smitty's Dual Wheel, Inc. 8 miles west of Rossville.

City of Hoopeston is accepting applications for seasonal workers. Applications may be picked up at City Hall, 301 W Main St.

Robinson Chiropractic, a thriving and expanding chiropractic clinic, is looking for team oriented, multi-tasking, detail-oriented people. Candidates will be trained to assist with patient care. Customer service and phone skills a must. Candidates must be enthusiastic, outgoing, positive, great with people and have an interest in natural health and wellness and be flexible as we continue to thrive and grow in offices. Send resumes to trina.keller@robchiro.com.

We are currently hiring for our Verizon location next to McDonald's in Hoopeston! Are you interested in pursuing a career in sales where you can earn a base plus commission? Then this position might just be for you! If you like sales, love technology and have a competitive spirit you may have what it takes to join our amazing team! You'll use your knowledge and passion for

technology to deliver an effortless customer experience while pursuing challenging and rewarding goals! This role comes with an hourly base and commission package as well as awesome benefits. Please email your resume to seth.wilson@alstiremart.com or stop by our store for more details.

Aquality Solutions is looking for full-time delivery drivers skilled in efficiency, organization, and flexibility. Delivery Drivers will deliver bottled water and bagged salt to commercial and residential customers and must have knowledge or be willing to learn maintenance operations when not driving. Apply in person at 102 N 1st Street in Hoopeston or call us at 855-692-7824.

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Obituaries

McFADDEN - Alice V. (Wood) McFadden, 89, formerly of Hoopeston and Danville, died Wednesday, March 25, 2020, at the Villas of Hollybrook, Morton. A private, family-only celebration of her life will be held Monday at Sunset Funeral Home and Cremation Center, Danville. Burial will follow in Floral Hill Cemetery, Hoopeston. Memorials are suggested to Lakeview College of Nursing Alumni Association, 903 Logan Ave., Danville IL 61832.

VOGEL - Lucille Hustedt Vogel, 93, of Cissna Park, died Wednesday, March 25, 2020, at home. Due to the national health emergency, there will be no funeral. Friends and family are encouraged to visit her gravesite in St. Peter's Cemetery, Rt. 49, Crescent City. A celebration of her life will be held at a later date. Private family graveside service was held March 28. Memorials are suggested to Cissna Park Fire Protection District, Cissna Park Community Library, Cissna Park American Legion, Trinity Lutheran Church or Iroquois County Historical Society Old Courthouse Museum. Knapp Funeral Home, Cissna Park is handling arrangements.