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Council rescinds emergency, gets development updates

Nearly three months after it unanimously approved a COVID-related emergency declaration for Hoopeston, aldermen rescinded it Tuesday evening.

At the June 2 meeting, Yaden failed to get an amendment to the declaration passed, but was successful in convincing the council to vote on the declaration at subsequent meetings.

Tuesday, on a motion from Ald. Chad Yaden and seconded by Ald. Alex Houmes, the council voted 4-3 to end the declaration. Joining Yaden and Houmes were aldermen Bill McElhane and Robin Lawson. Voting against were Carl Ankenbrand, Jeff Wise and Lourdine Florek. Ald. Bill Goodwine was absent.

After the meeting, Yaden said he had never seen an "emergency," from the beginning of the COVID situation and that information put out both by the state and federal authorities was "99 percent inaccurate."

While happy the declaration has ended, Yaden said the action does not mean he gives a nod to local businesses opening up completely - at least not unless the council would back it. "If the rest of the city has an interest, I would absolutely open things up," he said.

Brad Hardcastle, Hoopeston EMA director, said the main effect of ending the emergency is that Hoopeston will no longer be reimbursed for costs associated with the emergency.

Costs incurred during the pandemic include masks, gloves, sanitizer, video intercom, a 65-inch television and peripherals for online meetings and training, directional decals to be placed at city hall prior to its reopening, as well as signs previously placed at playgrounds and other city amenities, marking them as closed. Those signs were removed when the amenities reopened.

On a personal level, Hardcastle said after the meeting that he believes the council slighted the Emergency Managers Group by taking away the group's ability to manage the emergency in a timely manner. "It's tantamount to someone telling the fire chief that when they have most of the fire out, they can no longer use their fire truck," he said.

The group is made up of Hardcastle, police Chief Jim DeWitt, fire Chief Joel Bird and Mayor Bill Crusinberry.

"After the June 2 meeting, I thought we had a pretty sound plan on how to move forward with everything COVID-related. I feel that some aldermen have a personal agenda that has taken precedence over the safety of our citizens."

Without a plan in place, if a resurgence of cases happens, the city will have to meet again and pass another resolution, taking time, which may not be available. Had the resolution and plan remained, it would have alleviated

See EMERGENCY on other side

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Have you seen me?
 I'm Sprinkles, a two-year-old indoor Tortoiseshell/Tabby with white paws. I'm missing from my home on South Market near Casey's. I miss my family and I'm sure they miss me. If you see me, call Shannon at (217) 597-7282, Hoopeston Animal Control, (217) 283-0779 or for after-hours dispatch (217) 283-5196.

Emergency continued from other side

the need for a new one.

Hardcastle thanked aldermen who supported the managers group through the emergency and said he is concerned that ending it “throws into question on any federal funding that could come our way.

“It really saddens me that it ended this way. It is disheartening when you pour so much time and effort into something just to have it ripped up on the whim of a few aldermen,” Hardcastle said. While those aldermen may not respect him, EMA or the managers group, “we had the safety of the citizens of Hoopeston at the forefront through it all and we made each decision with them in mind. There was never any thought as to how it would personally give me more authority or perceived "power.” My hope is in the future when we have another emergency within the city that requires our services that future councils will not be as vindictive towards the people in charge of managing the emergency.”

In other business, the council approved resolutions that hopefully will lead to a \$930,000 Rebuild Illinois grant to pay for water infrastructure at the site of a planned motel.

To qualify for the grant, the council unanimously approved a Fair Housing resolution, as well as another resolution in support of applying for the grant.

Mayor Bill Crusinberry said the motel will be located at Heritage Park, 5.5 acres stretching along Rt. 9 from Hoopeston Marathon to the former Chrysler dealership and north to the drivers license facility on West Elm.

With grant money, the city would install water mains, sanitary and storm sewers, and a retention pond. The project is estimated at \$1.13 million, Crusinberry said, adding the city would pay the remainder.

Applications for the Rebuild Illinois Public Infrastructure Program grant are due June 30. Grants will be awarded on a points system, with at least 80 needed to qualify. Early on, Hoopeston had more than 60 points, and more have been added along the way. Crusinberry

From the Blotter

Joshua J. Fiala, 31, of Hoopeston, was arrested after police were sent at 5:31 p.m. Monday to the 500 block of South Sixth Ave., for a reported theft.

Fiala was located, charged with theft and released on a notice to appear in Hoopeston City Court.

Haley M. Edwards, 23, of Hoopeston, was arrested after police were called at 8:34 p.m. Monday to Casey’s General Store, 115 E. Orange.

She was charged with disorderly conduct and released on a notice to appear in Hoopeston City Court.

expects to know whether the city’s plan was accepted by August 1.

A public hearing will be held on the grant proposal at 2:30 p.m. June 26 at Hoopeston City Hall. Residents may attend in person, virtually on Zoom at donohue-associates.zoom.us/j/5325776810, or by phone at 1 (312) 626 6799. The meeting ID is 532 577 6810.

For those who wish to do so, written comments may be submitted to Mayor Bill Crusinberry no later than the start of the meeting on June 26.

A copy of the city’s proposal will be available on its website, cityofhoopeston.com, from June 18-26. Residents may also call (217) 283-5833 to make an appointment to view a copy at city hall.

Crusinberry also reported that both Casey’s General Store and Subway have requested building permits for their respective new stores that will be located along Rt. 1 and that Casey’s - eager to begin the project - has already returned theirs.

Subway has until sometime in October to be out of its current location in the Hooterville Junction building. Other businesses in the building are expected to relocate to the former First Farmers building in downtown Hoopeston. Emptied of tenants, the building will be demolished and a new Casey’s truck stop constructed.

Crusinberry told the council that property taxes from the new construction will repay what the city is spending on infrastructure improvements in the area.

Saying the city owned land on the southwest corner for 15 years, that generated no property taxes, the new First Farmers Bank building is generating about \$20,000 in taxes. Of that, \$3,400 is split among taxing bodies and \$17,000 will go into the city tax increment financing fund

Court Dispositions

May 14

Amber L. Styer, Hoopeston, pleaded not guilty to disobeying police; trial June 10.

Jordan A. Langston, Watseka, failed to appear at sentencing for battery, found guilty by default. He was fined and a status hearing set for June 10.

James R. Roof, Hoopeston, pleaded not guilty to battery; trial June 10.

Weather

Mostly sunny today. High 88. Tonight, mostly clear. Low 66. Tomorrow, mostly sunny. High 92, low 70.

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

annually until 2040, generating more than \$300,000.

Having a “new, modern Casey’s” will generate more property tax than the existing Subway and the car dealership previously located on the property, he said.

In unrelated business, the council:

- Unanimously approved a \$128,878 bid from Ribbe Trucking for the city’s motor fuel tax street repairs.
- Heard from Wise that city slab hours were recently reduced due to the theft of black dirt from the slab but that the slab will return to being open 24/7. While residents may take leaves and mulch from the slab, they may not take black dirt or rock stockpiled there. Anyone caught doing so may be charged with theft.

Anyone who wants wood from the slab must call city hall for permission, Wise added.

Failure to follow the rules will result in restricted slab hours.

Classifieds

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Teasdale Latin Foods has immediate openings on 2nd shift in both Distribution and Manufacturing. Pay to be determined based on experience level. Stop by the Human Resources office at 215 West Washington Street, Hoopeston, for more detail. Please no phone calls.

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Silgan Containers is hiring a Production Manager/Supervisor Trainee. Please apply online at: silgancontainers.mua.hrdepartment.com/hr/ats/Posting/view/10730

The Pit Stop at Fast Lanes is looking for dayshift kitchen help, 8-2. Food handlers license or Food Sanitation license. required

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

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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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