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7/16 - 7/20 Mattoon Bagelfest @ Mattoon Peterson Park

7/19 - 7/27 Champaign County Fair

7/22 VG City Council Meeting @ 6pm

Aug. 2-4 VG AG Days

8/3 Villa Grove Retired Teachers Party 1-? @ Austin Apgar Farm

8/7 VG Shool Year 2019/2020 School Registration from 8-4

8/8 VG Shool Year 2019/2020 School Registration from 12-7

8/12 VG City Council Meeting @ 6pm

8/12 Camargo Board Meeting 7pm

8/19 VG School Board Meeting 6pm

8/26 VG City Council Meeting @ 6pm

If you have an upcoming event that you would like to see featured in Sidetracks, email us at news@thevillagrovenews.com or call us at 832-4201

Council Discusses Ordinance Violation Enforcement

By Tony Hooker, Staff Writer

The Villa Grove City Council met for their regularly scheduled meeting on July 8, 2019, with all members present save Mayor Cassandra Gunter. In her absence, senior alderman Boots Blaney served as Mayor pro tem.

After the call to order, roll call and pledge of allegiance, the minutes of both the regular and closed minutes from the June 24th meetings were approved unanimously.

Next, approval for payment of claims in the amount of \$177,900.95 were approved,

as were revised financial statements from April 30. Financial statements for the month ending May 31, 2019 were also approved.

Fehr Graham Engineer Andy Kieser was on hand to report on the progress of phase two of the water plant project, which includes the demolition of the old structure. Kieser also mentioned that the water plant open house event for local businesses had been a successful one.

Public comments was next on the agenda, and Villa Grove resident Allen Nelk spoke about his concerns with sev-

eral properties on Hancock drive. Nelk noted that the owner's own residence was in disrepair.

A VGPD officer was in attendance and agreed to take down the addresses of the properties and speak with Chief Gire about potential solutions. This led to a general discussion among the council about what the city can and cannot do, and it was decided that whether or not the cases would be prosecuted was irrelevant and that those in charge of enforcing ordinance violations should continue to do so.

Next, Greg Harbin was present and he first complimented the city on the grinding and refinishing of roads in his neighborhood. He then asked if there were any projects in the works to improve other streets in his subdivision. Bruce Allen answered that the budget only allowed for so many improvements every year. "The problem is money, Greg," Allen responded. Harbin then mentioned that when Ameren replaced gas lines a year ago, they had not finished the job by filling the holes adequately and planting grass. "There are low spots that hold water all along Henson Road, Harbin stated," It's unsightly. People who come to town for ball games drive right by it."

Next, Blaney opened the meeting to committee as a whole report. Alderman Griffith offered a compliment to Bruce Allen for the Freedom Celebration. "He did a good job," Griffith said. Blaney then said that the whole event was good, and that the music that played during the show was very moving. "I almost cried,"

Blaney said.

Alderman Johnson stated that the home run derby was well attended. Alderman Hooker then mentioned that the event needed to keep kids at the park, so that they and their families would patronize the vendors, which in turn might entice more vendors to participate and grow the event.

Alderman Johnson replied that he was aware, and that they would explore options for future events.

Alderman Blaney then mentioned that the "touch a truck" event that the Villa Grove Fire Department had staged was a good idea. "It allowed the kids to see the equipment while learning a little about safety," Blaney stated.

Alderman Allen commented that the Public works guys had done an exemplary job getting ready for and cleaning up after the event. "Unlike past Ag Days or Freedom Celebrations or anything else that we would go out the next morning to clean up, I got there at 8:30 this morning and it was done. There wasn't a speck of paper on the ground," Allen stated. "So, accolades to them."

Alderman Blaney then stated that she had some items to discuss. First, she mentioned that the city needed to find someone to clean the council chambers.

Next, she proposed that the city consider hiring someone to enforce ordinance violations. Hooker questioned whether the Building Inspector would be interested in assuming the role.

Jackie Athey, the city administrator, mentioned that the

building inspector was also the zoning chairman. Alderman Garrett, citing his experience in law enforcement, stated that he was certain that the police department could canvass the entire city, searching for violations, if they made a concerted effort.

Blaney then mentioned that senior center was now making 18 lunch deliveries, with 4 more in Longview set to come on board. She also mentioned that recently, as many as ten people were coming in to the facility to eat, as well.

Next, Administrator Athey made her report, with Alderman Garrett asking about the Ambulance agreement with neighboring towns. "On the 22nd, if Murdock has a quorum, they will be making their decision," Athey stated. "It's really hard to get any information from Longview," Athey added.

Athey then stated that the changes in management in Public Works seemed to be going well.

Hooker then asked whether there were any major projects underway, and she mentioned that due to the rainy weather, the project involving the various lines under the Sycamore street bridge had been set back.

After discussion of the Quantum plant and the Wind farm project, the council moved to new business, with a \$15.10 payment to Bud's auto being the only item. The motion passed unanimously, with Allen recusing himself.

The council then moved to adjourn, at approximately 8:20 pm.

McCumbers First Walk as Little Miss



Reagan McCumber of Villa Grove as she takes her first walk after being crowned the 2019 Little Miss Moultrie-Douglas County Fair Queen at the fairgrounds in Arthur on Tuesday, July 9.

A Look Back at One Hundred Twelve Years of the Villa Grove News

By Tony Hooker
Staff Writer

I decided that it would be fun to take a look back in time at three random front pages from the 102-year history of the paper being published.

Volume 1, number 1 of the Villa Grove News was published on April 25, 1907 without fanfare, a number of stories covered the front page. Front and center was a photo of new Villa grove mayor Levi Moore, along with several short stories. Here is one of them, in its entirety.

A Little Business Talk-That You May Understand Our Position-The Government Requires a Paid Subscription List

Now we want to have a heart to heart talk with you, our prospective subscribers. The initial number of the News goes to you without one word of apology to offer for the news department of the paper. You all know the circumstances surrounding the beginning of the business. We have given attention to little of anything except Villa Grove news this week but will shortly branch out to the sur-

rounding towns and adjacent territory. First, we must get the business proper to going in good shape, but in a short time all things will be coming up to ship shape order.

Now we have not solicited a subscriber as yet. We want you to see the paper and we are making an effort to see that every resident of the town gets a copy. We want you to read it carefully and judge what you think is in store for you in the manner of a newspaper.

At present, we are barred from the mails because of a lack of subscribers.

The Government, which is no respecter of persons, requires a certain percent of paid subscriptions before it will admit a publication in the mails as second-class matter. These subscriptions must be paid in advance and we must make a sworn statement to that effect. Therefore, we must get in a large number of subscriptions this week to have the news entered at the postal department.

We can use everybody. We want you if you will. If you



feel so interested in a newspaper, if you appreciate our efforts, if you entertain an interest in this publication, pay us your \$1.25 for a year's subscription. Don't wait for us to come to you, come to us and get it over with. You will want the paper and now is a good as time as any. Get in line and help us to get in favor with the postal authorities at Washington.

In our advertising department, all bills will be collected the first day of the month, be they large or small. In our job department, bills will be col-

lected the same as advertising except to those who have no accounts running at the office when job work will be cash.

We hope this statement will be satisfactory, as the News is primarily a business proposition and we believe that it is so considered by everybody.

For the next randomly selected edition, I fast-forwarded 60 years, to April 27, 1967, to volume #63-number 3. Publisher Jack Holmes and his trademark Sidewalk Flashes were on the front page, along with city council news.

Sidewalk Flashes

Camargo Township District Library Craft Additions

By Jackie Wells

Memorials are a wonderful way to honor the memory of those we have lost. Many of us have very fond memories of dear Madeline Howard. She was such a sweet and kind person with such a talent for crafting. I would like to share a little story to go with this article for our library.

My children are now in their late 20s and early 30s. They never got the chance to personally meet Madeline Howard but a part of her will forever be in their memories of Christmas in our home. Every year, when my kids were little, our neighbor, Kay Wells, would bring over a small wrapped gift for each of them, and inside would be a beautiful felt ornament for them to hang on our tree. One year it was a puppy, one year a Santa, one year a dove and so the tradition went for

many years. These lovely ornaments that hung on our tree were made by Madeline. She loved to make crafts and share them with others. For this reason, her family asked those who wanted to honor Madeline's memory with a gift to make a donation to the library for crafts. We were so thankful that Madeline's family chose the library to help honor their mother's memory.

The library received many donations, and we were overwhelmed with the thoughtfulness of Madeline's friends and family. It was obvious to us that she had touched many lives. With the donations, we were able to purchase many supplies needed for our kid's and adult's craft time, which we offer free of charge every month from September to May. We wanted to do something special with the funds so we decided to have a sign



class for our adult craft hour. For this, we needed a Cricut machine, which we were able to purchase thanks to the generous donations we received. We are very thankful as this will enable us to offer many more fun crafts in the months and years ahead. The crafts that are made here at the library may bring joy and fond memories to those who make them or the folks they choose

to share them with.

This past year was the first year my daughter would not be coming home for Christmas. Instead, she would remain in Vermont and put up her very first Christmas tree in her home. She has been given many ornaments throughout the years from her grandparents, from me, and from her uncles. She called and asked me to pick some



out and send to her. Before we hung up she said, "Mom, please make sure you send my angel." I knew exactly which ornament she was talking about. This little angel is one of the many ornaments Madeline made years ago, and she traveled half way across the country to hang on my daughter's tree. Thanks for the memories Madeline.

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