

City Council

From page 1

The city is expecting a rate increase for water because Illinois American Water Company, which provides water to Tuscola, is projecting a 50 percent increase in its wholesale water costs. Hoel said he thinks the Joint Water Agency owned by Arcola and Tuscola, which also serves West Prairie Water Company and commercial clients, will see a 30 percent increase in water costs. He said he does not think residential customers will see a jump that approaches 30 percent because the wholesale costs of water is not the only factor for the Agency's expenses.

He said the Joint Water Agency plans \$1.4 million in projects next year including a \$1 million water line that will service Cabot Corporation and will improve water pressure and supply for Arcola and Tuscola as well as rural customers. Douglas County has pledged \$1 million of its COVID relief funds toward that project, he noted.

He said if the Agency's costs exceed its funds, both Arcola and Tuscola would have to contribute money toward it. He said he does not foresee that happening next year "but it is possible."

Long commented that one advantage to the capital plan is that the city will have "nearly new equipment everywhere." She said the fund balances will be lower than she'd like to see but the physical assets will be in good shape.

Mayor Dan Kleiss noted that the plan shows just how much prices have escalated. The south fire station cost \$50,000 or \$60,000 to build 30 years ago and the city had to borrow money to pay for it. The new building, which would be built next to the station, is not a complete fire station, he said, but is expected to cost several hundreds of thousands of dollars but the city will not have to borrow the money. The 2023 budget shows \$1.3 million in capital improvements for the fire department.

The police department's capital improvements are budgeted at \$316,000. Streets and alleys are budgeted for \$516,000 in capital improvements. Parks are budgeted for \$105,000 in capital improvements including dog park fencing, replacing two mowers and other equipment. The dog park

received a \$50,000 gift from the Kelly Lock family.

Planned equipment purchases include a police car at \$50,000, a street department truck at \$75,000, a backhoe at \$91,000 and water meter upgrades at \$300,000.

Hoel noted that the backhoe was scheduled to be replaced seven years ago, but the city has kept using the old one while the fund to replace it continued to grow. Even with the big budget for 2023, the city will continue to sock away savings including a projected \$120,000 for the rainy day fund, \$240,000 for equipment and \$120,000 for the street department.

Citywide, the cash balance at the end of the next fiscal year will be about \$8 million, Hoel said. "That's pretty good with all of this capital improvement."

Also as part of the budget workshop, city officials discussed changes in how wages will be determined. Rather than a step salary system, the city will be shifting to a pay range by position. Some firefighter positions will be going to a stipend instead of per call. Hoel said the costs to the city will be about the same.

Mayor Kleiss added that the city has been working toward changing the way firefighters are paid for about four years. He said the number of hours that officers and engineers must spend on training has increased as has the number of calls. He said the fire department is on board with the changes.

Wages for city employees are budgeted to go up about 3 percent. It was noted that the costs of benefits have decreased, so the overall increase to the city is about 1.85 percent. Hoel said it's been a trend to put more emphasis on salary as a hiring incentive.

Kleiss added that in comparing Tuscola to similar towns in the area, "we should be the leader of the pack." He said city salaries will not be able to compete with large cities like Champaign but will be competitive with other smaller cities.

During the regular City Council meeting, the Council approved poppy sales May 28 for the T.K. Martin Memorial VFW Post 10009 and a food truck during the CEO trades show April 26 at the community building as well as an Honor Guard fundraiser May 18 at Sav-Mor Pharmacy; the annual event raises money to

pay for clothing and equipment for veterans who serve in the Honor Guard, which provides military rites at funerals. Heather Madden of Sav-Mor said it costs about \$800 per year for a veteran to maintain the necessary uniforms and equipment for the Honor Guard.

The Council also approved an easement agreement for six properties for the water line extension to Cabot at a cost of \$166,553. Hoel said the property owners have not signed the agreement but he expects they will. He said Brian Moody, economic development director, has spent a lot of time trying to reach an agreement with the landowners and that Mayor Kleiss also intervened at times.

The Council also discussed the prospect of lowering the driving age for golf carts on city streets to 16. Resident Chris Hoogendyk had requested the change and spoke in favor of it. A survey of other communities showed that age requirements are all over the place with some at 16, some at 18 and Arthur at 21.

Andrew Bequette, city attorney, said he doesn't have a position on the issue but offered arguments for and against lowering the age. He said Illinois allows 16-year-olds to drive cars but there are a variety of rules that apply to them. He said he thinks the same rules would apply for golf carts including a seat belt requirement.

Hoogendyk said he doesn't think the law requires seat belts for golf carts. He noted that scooters, which 16-year-olds can drive, don't have seat belts.

Kleiss said Chief Craig Hastings was against allowing golf carts on city streets initially and is against lowering the driving age to 16.

Alderman Tim Hoey said he prefers leaving the age at 18. "It's a safety issue with me," he said.

Alderman Scott Day said he's concerned about yield intersections because he's seen some close calls. He said "there's risk everywhere" and "you can't legislate everything" but the older part of the city has a lot of yield signs that "scare me to death."

There was no vote taken on the issue. Kleiss said it would be on the agenda for the next meeting.

In other business, the city

- approved the purchase of a large ventilation fan for the fire department (for use after a fire or gas leak) for \$4,205.50;

- approved a revised amount for chart recorders for \$10,953.18 from Gasvoda & Associates. The Council previously approved \$9,981.18 for the recorders but Hoel said the city has since learned that a digital/paperless version is available;

- approved summer help for the pool but is still looking for a part-time manager. Hired was manager Jason Rennert at \$15 per hour; cashiers (\$12/hour) Raeanna Boyer, Hailey Downs, Taylor Gordon, Elizabeth Lee, Schuyler McFarland, Belle Notaro, Carlina Patterson, Madison Piat, Pearl Taylor and Harley Woodard; lifeguards already certified (\$12.50/hour) Tristan Gadonski, Mason Holmes, Liam Hetland, Ben Hornaday, Lirial Jones, Allison Kneer, Emily Ray, Brogan Rennert, Tytus Rennert, Blake Taylor, Neil Walker and Logan Wallace; lifeguards pending certification (\$12.50/hour) Keller Beachy, Chris Boyd, Jackson Burlew, Jocelyn Ford, Alyx Gardner, Bryce Graves, David Hornaday, Hannah Hornaday, Bradley Lacine, Zane McFarland, Athalia Patterson and Ava Simpson. Summer help for the street and parks department are Bruce Nofftz (\$13/hour) and Brynn Tabeling (\$12.75/hour).

In his written report, Hoel reported that the insurance evaluation of recent vandalism at Ervin Park came to \$9,016,008. He said the insurance has already paid the claim minus a \$500 deductible. If actual costs are higher, the city can revisit the amount with the insurance company, he said.



ANGI CARTER, vice president, lending for Farm Credit Illinois (left), presents a check to Wilmer Otto, president of the Illinois Amish Heritage Center (right). Also pictured in back is local farmer Levi Yoder and Jim Fleming. Photo by Crystal Reed.

Farm Credit Illinois makes \$25,000 donation to Illinois Amish Heritage Center

The 2022 season for the Illinois Amish Heritage Center (IAHC) began with a celebration lunch on April 5, during which Farm Credit Illinois presented a \$25,000 check toward its \$50,000 commitment. The Gathering Pavilion will soon have installed the Center's first donor plaque on which Farm Credit Illinois will be honored.

Angi Carter, vice president, lending at Farm Credit Illinois has been instrumental in launching the relationship between IAHC and Farm Credit Illinois (FCI) and its 16,000 farmer, rural landowner, and agribusiness members in the southern 60 counties of Illinois. With the generosity of Farm

Credit Illinois and others, visitors will experience an expanded IAHC campus and enjoy witnessing historical farming practices, rural life in the past, learning about where food comes from, and understand more about the Amish culture.

In addition to Farm Credit Illinois's gift to the Gathering Place Pavilion, Graber Building Supply and Hardware provided the metal for the roof, and Okaw Truss, Inc. the structural trusses. They will be recognized on the plaque as well. Similar plaques recognizing other donors will soon be installed in other locations on this growing campus.

Kiwanis recognizes students for improved grades with BUG award

B.U.G. (Bring Up Grades) is a Tuscola Kiwanis program that gives students attending East Prairie School a goal of improving their grades. East Prairie School and the Tuscola Kiwanis Club work together to support this program. The following students are being recognized as B.U.G. winners for improving their grades from the 2nd quarter grading period to the 3rd quarter grading period of the 2021-2022 school year.

Fifth Grade: Ayriana Alhollowani*, Isabella Arroya, Frances Burlew*, Macoen Clarkson, Allyannah Dobson, Kora Gilpin, Alexandria Hinds, Sebastien Inboden*, Hannah Israel, Jordana Moore, Severin Steinert, Mark Usher.

Sixth Grade: Audrey Anderson, Tristin Anderson, Abigail Haynes, Aubree Lantz, Renee Lyons*, Myles McKinnie, Tessa Neuner, Lilian Rhoades*, Savannah Taylor*, Hunter Smith, Brayden Weaver, Matthew

Williamson*. Seventh Grade: Calvin Brazzell, Evan Englehardt, Mikenzie Hearn, Christy Kerner, Keegan Ladage, Finni-boden*, Connor Musgrave, Colton Rahn, Ava Whitson.

Eighth Grade: Jaycee Cleland, Dylan Graves*, Ryker Gough, Wrigley Hackett, Waylan Martin, Jordan Quinn, Bailey Ritter, Izabella Taylor, Jazmine West, Cooper Wigall.

* Indicates second time receiving BUG award

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PUBLIC NOTICE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
DOUGLAS COUNTY, ILLINOIS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF:
PAUL WAYNE COSLET, DECEASED.
No.: 2022-PR-14

NOTICE OF DEATH AND CLAIM PERIOD

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN of the death of PAUL WAYNE COSLET, who died on December 29, 2021. Letters of Office were issued on March 24, 2022, to Gail J. Hoke, whose attorney is Tammy L. Baer, Law Offices of Tammy L. Baer, 102 W. Wilson St., P.O. Box 236, Tuscola, IL 61953.

Claims against the estate may be filed in the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Douglas County, Illinois. Douglas County Courthouse, 401 S. Center St., P.O. Box 50, Tuscola, IL 61953, or with the Executor, or both, on or before October 15, 2022, being at least (6) months from the date of the first publication of this notice, or three (3) months from the date of mailing or delivery of notice to creditors who are required to receive notice under Section 18-3 of the Probate Act of 1975 (755 ILCS 5/18-3), whichever is later. Any claim not filed on or before the date stated in this Notice is barred. Copies of a claim filed with the Clerk must be mailed or delivered by the claimant to the Executor and to the attorney for the Executor within ten (10) days after a claim has been filed.

GAIL J. HOKE,
Independent Executor
902 N. Carico St.
Tuscola, IL 61953

Prepared by:
Tammy L. Baer
Law Offices of Tammy L. Baer
102 W. Wilson St.
P.O. Box 236
Tuscola, IL 61953
(217) 253-5000

MISC.

DOUGLAS COUNTY: HOW HAS THE PANDEMIC AFFECTED YOU?

Looking for written, oral, video submissions on how your life, business, workplace, school, family, health has been affected by COVID-19 for historical documentation project.

Douglas County Health Department is taking your submissions now. For more information, contact Colleen Lehmann at colleen.lehmann@douglascountyiil.com or call 217-253-4137 X 1229.



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