

Council decides city cannot afford 2 new officers

The Irvine Council met in a special session Thursday evening and thoroughly discussed the second reading of an ordinance to hire a full time police officer and move a part-time officer to full time.

The council had approved the hiring at a meeting earlier this month.

"I think we may have jumped the gun a little too quickly," stated Councilman Ernest Farmer.

The city had only planned for five and a half officers in the current budget, which is in effect through June 30.

Farmer said the budget did not include enough money for two full time officers.

He estimated that it costs \$35,000 for a full time officer, and that does

not include their insurance or retirement.

"What the numbers say and what reality is, the shift has to be covered," Police Chief John Sturniolo stated.

He added that when an officer works overtime, the city is paying time and a half. Filling the positions would eliminate a large chunk of overtime which is currently being paid out.

Sturniolo said the officers are paid to go to school, vacation time, time in court, and when on quarantine. Officers have also missed recently due to injuries.

"We can't make more money," Farmer declared.

"Either way, you're going to have to fill those shifts," Sturniolo replied.

"I want you to have as many police officers as

you can get," Farmer stated.

"If they're working part-time here, they're going to be working part-time somewhere else," Sturniolo stated.

City Clerk Robin Powell said the city cannot run a deficit in the budget.

Mayor James Gross



Councilmembers Derrick Muncie, left, and Ernest Lee Farmer sat in their

last council meeting on Thursday. Neither man ran for re-election.



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applicants for the vacancies.

The council then voted to give raises to the fewer number of officers.

"That pay reduction at that time has really got us in trouble," Burkhart said.

The mayor said as many as five or six officers at a time are going to court while the court is doing video hearings.

The police chief predicted that situation is going to get worse after the pandemic. He said the court is now doing only hearings for criminal cases.

"Most of the guys are working single shifts by themselves," Sturniolo stated. "We can reduce our overtime greatly if we get these people."

"I want to make sure everybody gets a paycheck," Farmer said.

Burkhart recommended the city move the part-time officer to full-time, and revisit the budget in April or May.

He also said that property taxes had come in greater than was expected this year.

The council approved Burkhart's recommendations, and no action was taken Thursday to amend three line items in the budget.

The meeting was likely the last one for Councilmembers Derrick Muncie and Farmer.

"I really enjoyed it," Muncie stated. He did not run for re-election because he is moving outside city limits.

Farmer said he also enjoyed being on the council. He is a former councilman and mayor. He also did not run for re-election.

Sheriff charges 1 with kidnapping

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He pulled in behind the vehicle to investigate. Flynn said he noticed the driver slumped over when he reached the driver door. The vehicle was running, and the driver's window was rolled down.

Flynn said he reached inside, turned off the ignition, and removed the keys. He then woke up the man and asked him to step out of the vehicle.

During a pat-down, the sheriff located an unlabeled pill bottle containing two white pills. The man stated they were perc 15's.

The sheriff stated the man was extremely unsteady on his feet, had slurred speech, blood shot eyes, and pin point pupils. He told the sheriff he could not do field sobriety tests due to a back injury.

While talking with the man, Flynn said he kept nodding off.

While performing the search, Flynn said he located a small baggie containing a brown powder substance and \$690 in the man's right rear pocket.

Flynn arrested Michael Edward McDowell, 42, of Elmer Richardson Road, Irvine and charged him with kidnapping - adult and first degree robbery. McDowell was also charged with operating a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance, first offense, possession of a controlled substance, first degree and first offense, fourth degree assault - dating violence (minor injury), and first degree wanton endangerment.

Flynn transported McDowell to the local hospital for a blood draw, which he refused. He also declined calling his attorney.

Man is arrested for stealing equipment

A Breathitt County man was arrested December 15 by Sheriff's Detective Josh Rison on a felony theft charge.

Rison said he contacted the man after Deputy Brad Smith encountered him at the Wendy's on Richmond Road.

The man was asked to come to the sheriff's office for questioning about a theft which had occurred at a construction site on Patriot Drive on December 7.

The man cooperated with the deputies. The citation states that he admitted to taking several items including an air compressor, heater, pipe saw, and several items of copper.

He reportedly told the deputies where he had taken the items and pawned them. He was taken into custody after being charged with theft by unlawful taking or disposition all others \$500 or more but less than \$10,000.

Board discusses returning to class

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Saylor said that the schools had been ready for students since August, and they had spent thousands of dollars on masks, sanitizers, and temperature scanners before the county went into the red zone.

He said that he felt like the district missed five weeks of school during August and September based on the governor's recommendation not to have in person classes when they should have been in class.

Based on the population of Estill County 25

active cases of COVID puts the county in the red zone. He said he felt like school was the safest place for a child to be at this time and that the virtual learning was not working.

He added there were students who have not turned in the first assignment, and this was only affecting students' mental health by not being in school.

Saylor stated that he had surveyed staff members and that not all were on board with classes resuming on January 4th but he felt like it was in

the best interest of the students to start back on a hybrid schedule as soon as possible.

Accommodations would be made for staff members with medical issues but he said that he felt like if they waited until Estill was an orange county again then they would never get back in school.

A survey was also sent out to staff about the vaccine that will be available in the near future. Saylor reported that he would not make the vaccination a requirement but stated that 48 percent of

the staff were willing to take it when it was available to the district. Board member Shiela Samples said that she would take it as well.

A construction update was provided to the board on the bus garage and the technology center. Peter Fisher reported that the bus garage was near completion and hoped to have it wrapped up sometime in February. The technology center is moving along on schedule with some parts of the structure already being painted and drywalled.



Cars were lined up around the fair barn Saturday waiting to pick up gifts for their children. American Legion workers above asked for the name the family registered under, and workers inside the fair barn filled the orders which were handed out the next door.

Gifting Hope this Holiday Season

For many Kentuckians, the holiday season is bittersweet. Families across the commonwealth are praying for a gift that cannot be found wrapped under the tree - the gift of life.

The Kentucky Circuit Court Clerks' Trust For Life encourages everyone to spread holiday cheer by joining the Kentucky Organ Donor Registry.

Families like Eden's, a liver recipient from Harrison County, will make new memories this year

because of a generous donor family. Eden was born with a liver disease and was extremely sick. Her family was told that a liver transplant was their only option.

"Because of Eden's transplant, we can do normal things as a family without having to run back and forth to the hospital," said Ashley, Eden's mom.

Knowing that time with her is priceless, Eden is now a special part of holiday memories that will last a lifetime!

"This year 60,000 Kentuckians have joined us in our mission to save lives through organ donation. Time with those we love is priceless; give the gift of health and hope by saying 'yes' to joining the registry!" says Stephanie Cassidy, Estill County Circuit Court Clerk.

With nearly 1,000 Kentuckians waiting on a transplant this holiday season, the need is great. Everyone can register online as a donor to bring hope to those, like Eden, who are in need.

To join the TFL mission, you may join the Kentucky Organ Donor Registry in the following ways:

Online 24/7 at RegisterMe.org

Driver's License Renewals: Check with your local Circuit Court Clerk and KYTC office to confirm renewal processes by visiting <https://bit.ly/driverlicenseky>.

Using your Apple iPhone, toggle to "organ donor" through the Health App

Estill Co. Covid-19 #s

Total Cases 652
Active -- 61
Recovered 581
Deaths 10
(As of 12/21/20)

Trash pick-up will be Monday

There will be no garbage pickup in the City of Irvine on Thursday, December 24 or Friday, December 25.

Garbage pick-ups scheduled for those two days will be picked up on Monday, December 28.

For more information, please call Irvine City Hall at 723-2554.

Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



FRIDAY
CHRISTMAS DAY
DEC. 25

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