



THE LEWIS COUNTY HERALD

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Amy Johnson Dyer/LEWIS COUNTY HERALD
Spring is here and the female Eastern Kentucky Blue Bird is busy making her nest. They usually have two to three successful nests a year. The male is a brilliant blue and the female is a much more pale color. Be on the lookout, there are many in the area.

Council OKs request to apply for water well funding

By Dennis K. Brown

Members approved a grant agreement for a well project for the Electric Plant Board of the City of Vanceburg.

Council Member Angie Patton, who serves as council representative on the Plant Board, provided a brief update on the city owned utility company.

Council Member John Grabill asked for an update on a request he had made at a previous meeting to make repairs to sidewalks and entrances at the city building/council chambers.

Mayor Dane Blankenship said repairs to the sidewalks had not been completed and referenced a letter from the Kentucky League of Cities that states only one handicap entrance is required and the specifications are met as to when the facility was constructed in 1995.

He added that hand railings had been made more secure and are no longer

loose.

Blankenship also responded to Grabill's request that copies of city ordinances be made available online.

He said the ordinances are available for public inspection at the city clerk's office and added he felt it would be cost prohibitive to take that step at this time.

Council Member Richard Walje, citing the importance of transparency, said all actions taken by council are a matter of public record and are available to the public.

"I want people to feel good about their city government, and when I hear comments about the lack of transparency, it's a little bit disturbing to me because I'm not seeing that," Walje stated.

"I just want people to feel comfortable with the city government and that we're doing everything above board, to the best of our ability, and trying to make our town operate

smoothly and better," he added.

Members also discussed making meetings available online that are recorded and produced by the city.

Grabill made a motion that the city make video recordings of council meetings to make them available online.

Council members Nicholas Cantu, Kathy McCann, and Angie Patton voted against the motions while members Richard Walje, John Grabill, and Joni Pugh voted in favor.

Mayor Blankenship broke the tie by voting against the proposal.

Buffalo Trace ADD Executive Director Kevin Cornette addressed council to introduce himself to members and offer the services of the area development district.

Cornette replaced Amy Kennedy in the position in November.

Approval was given to apply for a T-Mobile grant for funding that

could be used for downtown revitalization or other projects.

Council members approved three resolutions in quick succession for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and Appalachian Regional Commission on grant applications.

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Thank a dispatcher this week

Herald Report

The second full week of April is recognized each year as National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, bringing well deserved attention and recognition to the public safety dispatchers who are an invaluable part of every emergency response team.

This week of recognition, sponsored by the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) International, honors the thousands of men and women nationwide who answer emergency calls, dispatch emergency professionals and equipment, and render life-saving assistance to the world's citizens.

"Our E-911 dispatchers are an invaluable asset in our ability to assist our residents and motorists in times of need," said Lewis County Judge Ex-

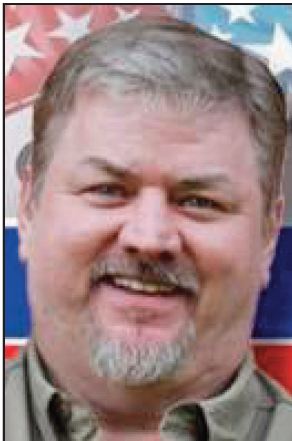
Civil rights lawsuit has been resolved

By Dennis K. Brown

A civil rights lawsuit, filed December 16, 2024, by John Grabill against the City of Vanceburg, Mayor Dana Blankenship, Police Chief Joseph Paul Gilbert, and Assistant Police Chief Joseph Billman has been resolved.

A press release from attorney Christopher Wiest of Covington states that, "John Grabill and officials with the City of Vanceburg resolved a federal civil rights lawsuit previously filed against the City of Vanceburg, Mayor Dana Blankenship, Police Chief Joe Gilbert, and Assistant Police Chief Joe Billman stemming from Mr. Grabill's arrest in August, 2024 and the City's attempts to restrict the open carrying of firearms including at City Council meetings."

Gilbert made the arrest as a meeting of Vanceburg City Council was about to get underway on August 5, 2024. Meetings are conducted at the city building housing council chambers on Second Street in Vanceburg.



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John Grabill

Grabill was arrested and booked into the Mason County Detention Center. He was released the following day.

According to the arrest citation, "Subject entered into the City Council Chamber Meeting with a firearm in open carry on his left side. Subject was asked to take the firearm to his vehicle or leave the building. Subject refused. Subject was asked more than once. Subject still refused."

The charge, a violation, was dismissed in November by District Judge Paul Craft on a motion by Lewis County Attorney

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ective George Sparks.

"Telecommunicators have a very difficult and very important job. Our dispatchers are a vital part of our public safety team. The work they do every day is important and I'm proud of the effort they put forth in performing their duties," Sparks adds.

"Our hardworking dispatchers serve as a vital link between the public and fire, medical, and law enforcement agencies," says Sheriff Johnny Bivens.

"Our dispatchers provide a crucial service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year,"

Bivens adds. "And they do it well."

Lewis County Emergency Management Director Dennis Brown said E-911 telecommunicators quickly and safely dispatch first-responders to medical emergencies, domestic violence calls, motor vehicle collisions, fires, and other urgent situations.

Brown said all of the information concerning each incident is entered into a local computer database. The Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system also keeps a log of all times associated with each incident and includes information about each responder and other details associated with the incident.

"I'm proud of our dispatchers," Brown says. "They are professional and calm when events can dictate otherwise. They

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Plant Board reviews several projects

By Dennis K. Brown

The Electric Plant Board of the City of Vanceburg met in regular session with members hearing an update on funding a new water well project.

Plant Board superintendent Bill Tom Stone said the preliminary application for the well project has been submitted for ARC funding.

"We are now waiting for the invitation for a formal application," he said. "In addition, we have applied for GRANT funds to cover the cost of the matching portion of the ARC grant. We are still working on this funding and hope to hear more by the end of the spring."

Stone also updated members on work to ensure electricity keeps flowing to customers.

"Premier Power Maintenance is continuing to work on a preventive maintenance plan for our substations," Stone said.

"They have had to return and draw some additional oil samples because the ones they drew earlier were damaged in shipment to their labs."

Stone said in September, AEP will be doing some maintenance at the Millbrook station, which will be shut down for around three weeks for repair.

"During this time, we will be served from the Argentum station," Stone said. "We will have a short interruption in service to switch over providers. During this interruption, we will be bringing back online the South Portsmouth substation. Our electric department is working to have the substation ready by the September timeframe."

Stone said the Kentucky League of Cities' legal department has reviewed the utility company's proposed personnel policies and has

sent revised policies for review and clarification.

"Once we have had a chance to review the changes that the League suggests and customize them to our utility, we will meet with the League to finalize a document for the board to approve," he said.

Stone said the utility company will continue to work with AEP Energy Partners to finalize the transition over from Kentucky Power.

He added that the new PJM rates are up slightly, but peak demand was down slightly last year.

PJM manages the high-voltage electricity grid and operates the competitive wholesale electricity market a multi-state region.

"The overall PJM transmission charges look like they will be about the same as last year," he said. "I know that I sound like a broken record, but

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Dennis Brown/LEWIS COUNTY HERALD
Servers are busy plating up lunch for those attending Customer Appreciation Day at Rip's Farm Center in Tollesboro. The annual event was well attended and allows the Meadows family to say thanks to their customers.

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