



THE LEWIS COUNTY HERALD

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Dennis Brown/LEWIS COUNTY HERALD
HIGH WIRE ACT . . . Workers with the Electric Plant Board of the City of Vanceburg perform maintenance on electric lines at Black Oak. While maintenance is an ongoing effort, crews are getting some extra work completed before winter weather sets in.

Council rejects training reimbursement request

By Dennis K. Brown

Vanceburg City Council rejected a request to reimburse Council Member Richard Walje \$556.50 for lodging expenses associated with Kentucky League of Cities training during its regular meeting last week following considerable discussion about the city's policies governing training expenses for elected officials.

The reimbursement request failed on a 3-2 vote, with Council Members John Grabill, Joni Pugh, and Nichole Cantu voting against it. Kathy McCann and Angie Patton voted in favor. Walje abstained after City Attorney Stephen McGinnis advised that he should not vote on a matter involving his own reimbursement.

Grabill questioned whether the city's existing personnel policies authorize reimbursement of training expenses for elected officials. He pointed to language exempting elected officials from coverage under the personnel ordinance and argued that the city should establish clearer procedures governing training, travel, and related expenses.

Grabill said he had attended training at his own expense and supported providing appropriate training opportunities for elected officials. However, he maintained that reimbursement should be governed by an established policy with clear authorization and documentation requirements.

He also questioned whether previous training-related expenditures had complied with procedures applicable to city employees.

Walje defended his reim-

bursement request, explaining that accommodations for council members attending Kentucky League of Cities training had traditionally been arranged through the city clerk's office and paid for by the city.

He said that procedure was followed when he and Council Member Nichole Cantu attended the organization's Summer Summit last year.

Walje said he has attended training to stay informed about legislative developments, statewide initiatives affecting cities, and municipal government operations, while paying his own transportation and meal expenses.

Following the meeting, Walje provided additional information about the hotel arrangements for the Kentucky League of Cities Fall Summit in Covington.

He said the city originally reserved a room for him at a Courtyard by Marriott near the conference location. When a room became available at the Marriott where the conference was being held, he arranged through the city clerk's office to cancel the original reservation.

Walje said he then paid for the replacement room himself for three nights and submitted the receipt for reimbursement. He said he has emails documenting the arrangements.

Council members also discussed the need for a consistent policy governing training expenses for elected officials. Suggestions included establishing clearer authorization procedures, limits on training attendance, and requirements for reimbursement documentation.

The council gave the first

reading to Ordinance No. 130.01G-2026, concerning personnel policies and procedures, a compensation plan, and employee classifications. No final adoption occurred at the meeting.

In other business, council approved the appointment of Starla Thurman to the Vanceburg Housing Authority Board, replacing Ian Cooper. Thurman's term will expire June 3, 2028.

Mayor Joe Billman also presented a request from Housing Authority representatives to increase board members' compensation from \$40 to \$50 per meeting, noting that the amount had remained unchanged for many years. Council approved the increase.

In utility-related business, council approved the procurement of engineering services for the Vanceburg Electric Plant Board Hydrant Replacement Project.

Members also adopted Resolution No. 26-10, authorizing the Electric Plant Board to award bids for its well project.

Council authorized resurfacing the parking area at the city's maintenance building on River Road. Billman said approximately \$10,200 remained in the city's black-topping funds and estimated the project could be completed for approximately \$11,000 or less.

During his updates, Billman reported that several street improvements had been completed, including resurfacing and striping Third Street near the Lewis County Public Library and improvements to Halbert Avenue.

He said city crews were also trimming trees and removing limbs along streets in preparation for winter, in-

cluding work in Oakwood Park, along Flinders Drive, and in the Jacktown area. Additional work was planned along Front Street.

Billman said veterans' banners would remain displayed until after the Veterans Day observance at Lewis County High School, after which the city's Christmas decorations would be

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City council approves nuclear ready certification resolution

By Dennis K. Brown

Vanceburg City Council voted 5-1 last week to support Lewis County's application for full Kentucky Nuclear Energy Ready Community certification, following extensive public discussion about potential development sites, nuclear safety, economic opportunities, and whether the decision should be made by county voters.

Council Member Richard Walje cast the lone opposing vote, the same division as the council's earlier resolution supporting participation in the certification process.

Concord City Council has already approved both resolutions. Lewis County Fiscal Court was scheduled to consider the second resolution at its regular meeting Monday, October 12, after The Herald's deadline for this edition.

Approval by Fiscal Court would mean all three local governing bodies had adopted resolutions support-

Petition seeks public participation & vote

By Dennis K. Brown

A Lewis County resident has launched a petition opposing the development of large-scale data centers and nuclear power-generation facilities in the county and calling for greater public involvement, including an opportunity for residents to vote on whether they want such developments.

Connie Stone is inviting residents, property owners, and other concerned citizens to sign the petition, which is directed to Lewis County Fiscal Court, Vanceburg City Council, the Vanceburg/Lewis County Joint Planning Commission, and other local and state officials.

The effort comes as local governments consider resolutions supporting Lewis County's application for full certification under Kentucky's Nuclear Energy Ready Community program.

Vanceburg City Council approved its resolution Monday, October 5, by a 5-1 vote, with Council Member Richard Walje opposing. Concord City Council previously approved a similar resolution.

Lewis County Fiscal Court was scheduled to consider the resolution Monday, after The Herald's deadline

for this preliminary report.

The petition, titled "Petition to Protect Lewis County, Kentucky," states that its signers recognize the importance of economic development and employment opportunities but are concerned about the possible long-term effects of large-scale industrial projects.

Among the concerns identified are water resources, electrical infrastructure, roads, emergency services, agriculture, residential property, the environment, and the future character of Lewis County.

The petition asks local governments to provide meaningful public notice, hearings, and opportunities for public participation before approving, promoting, incentivizing, or facilitating a specific large-scale data center or nuclear power-generation facility.

It also calls for public participation before further governmental action toward establishing Lewis County as a location for nuclear-energy development, including actions associated with Nuclear Energy Ready Community certification.

For data centers, the petition asks officials to consider a temporary moratorium on applications while

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to address council was Ona Colette Hull, who questioned Buffalo Trace Area Development District Executive Director Kevin Cornette about a provision of the certification process concerning potential development sites.

Hull referred to language requiring information about the availability of sites within the community recognized by the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development as suitable for nuclear energy-related projects.

She repeatedly asked which specific sites would be identified in Lewis County's application.

Cornette explained that multiple properties could be considered for economic development, including locations along the Ohio River extending from St. Paul toward Wilson Bottoms. He also mentioned the Black Oak and Tollesboro industrial parks as properties that

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Dennis Brown/LEWIS COUNTY HERALD
Ona Colette Hull asks questions about the Nuclear Ready Community Certification process during a regular meeting of Vanceburg City Council.

Lions Heritage Fest is Saturday

By Dennis K. Brown

The Vanceburg Lions Club will host its Heritage Fest Saturday featuring live music, traditional crafts, food vendors, and family activities.

The festival will take place from 11:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. in Downtown Vanceburg offering a full day of entertainment and activities celebrating tradition, music, and community.

Live entertainment will begin at 11:00 a.m. with Tom Cox Jr., who will perform until 11:45 a.m.

Hunter Jordan will take the stage from Noon until 2:00 p.m., followed by Hammetowne from 2:30 until 4:30 p.m. Nate Stone will round out the musical lineup with a performance from 5:00 until 7:00 p.m.

In addition to the live music, festivalgoers will have an opportunity to see blacksmithing and leatherworking demonstrations highlighting traditional skills and craftsmanship.

Local vendors and artisans will offer a variety of

goods, while food vendors will provide refreshments throughout the day.

Activities for children and families will include inflatables and a petting zoo.

Food and artisan vendors will set up between 8:00 and 10:00 a.m., with festival activities officially beginning at 11:00 a.m.

The festival will conclude at 7:00 p.m.

Organizers invite area residents and visitors to enjoy a day of music, food, traditional crafts, and family fun at the Heritage Fest.

\$1.00

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Joyce Chatman

