

# Commission pursues raises, matching HOAs for Flock cameras

BY GRANT GERSTNER  
EDITOR

CRESTWOOD — The Crestwood City Commission conducted a first reading for an ordinance that would effectively double the compensation for the mayor and commissioners and provide for an annual cost-of-living adjustment on March 11.

As previously reported, the mayor and commissioners are currently paid \$1,000 and \$200 a month, respectively. Those rates have been the same for two decades, according to Mayor Jim Kramer, and before that the city's elected offices were unpaid.

The new ordinance would increase the mayor and commissioners' pay to \$2,000 and \$400 a month, respectively.

If approved, the earliest that the increases could take effect is Jan. 1, 2027. Kramer questioned whether or not the same would be true for his compensation, due to the fact that he is not up for election.

City Attorney Laura Stoess said she would look into if

Kramer would have to wait until 2028, as state statute usually doesn't allow elected officials to alter their compensation during their term.

As part of their first reading, the commission conducted a public hearing. No one from the public took the opportunity to comment. A second reading is scheduled for the commission's next meeting, where the ordinance can achieve final approval.

In other news, the commission also had a discussion about Flock cameras — surveillance cameras that automatically read license plates to help law enforcement track stolen vehicles.

"A few months ago, we were talking about Flock camera fund matching, and we didn't actually have a formal decision on how we were willing to do that," said Kramer.

Commissioner Terry Weathers confirmed that the city currently operates four Flock cameras.

Kramer confirmed that the city has purchased four additional cameras that have yet to be installed. Subdivisions like Arbor Ridge already

operate some as well, and the Brentwood subdivision is "adding one now," according to Kramer.

Commissioner Joan Bryant asked if the city should only match funds with subdivisions that have a minimum number of homes.

Mayor Kramer replied that he "talked to the Flock company about that," and was told that the cameras typically point at the more arterial roads that lead to the entrances of neighborhoods and "regardless of the size of the neighborhood, the more you add the better it creates security for the whole city."

"I'm all for funding Flock cameras, but only ones that serve the entire community," said Commissioner Russell Cunningham.

"The city includes a lot of homes that are not in HOA-established neighborhoods ..." added Commissioner Tim Klein.

"I like the idea of more [cameras] by spreading out the cost and sharing, but I also recognize that [only] certain neighborhoods that have established HOAs with

the funds capable to [purchase cameras]."

"What I'm hearing is, for subdivisions where [the cameras] are totally self-serving, we would probably not share in that cost," said Bryant.

After some further discussion, the commission approved a motion to split the cost of Flock cameras with subdivisions for cameras that face major roads, and that determining whether a camera faced a major road was up to the city's discretion.

The commission also approved a \$215,106.79 bid from MAC Construction for their spring 2026 road resurfacing and heard the following reports:

Consulting Architect Gant Jones reported that he is pushing for the city hall construction to be finished on April 1, but that it likely won't be complete until April 15 due to an issue in refinishing the wood floors and a delay in receiving the metal frame for the front doors.

Regarding the renovations of the Crestwood Manor, Jones said it was "going great

and that the Papa John's side is expected to be complete in mid-April. The full completion date "would be sometime in the beginning of June," Jones said.

"That becomes the question if they are going to do the work on the Thai restaurant to upgrade it ... They're running out of time, so they want to start working on April 1 ... so they need a response from Darwin [Cotton, owner of A Taste of Thai] to move forward on the renovation work if he wants to keep going," Jones said.

As previously reported, Cotton previously expressed his concerns to the commission about the renovations, which he said will keep his restaurant closed for an extended period and threaten his employee retention.

Cotton also spoke about the lack of communication from the property management company about the renovation project.

A March 19 post to A Taste of Thai's Facebook page states that the restaurant expects work to begin on April 1, which makes their last day of

operation before the closure Saturday, March 28.

"We were told this project would be completed by the end of April. We will keep you posted on any changes. Thanks for your patience, and most of all, your loyalty," the post reads.

The Maples Park representative Jody Smiley reported that the bushes in front of the Dollar Tree at the intersection of Highway 22 and Highway 329 were cleared to help visibility, and the bushes' roots need to be dug out for new landscaping.

She also said the Kentucky Shakespeare will perform "The Tempest" at The Maples Park's amphitheater on April 24 from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Kramer reported that once the city hall is complete, he suggests the city's regular commission meeting time be adjusted from 7:30 to 7 p.m. He said he expects the first meeting in the new building to be in May or June.

The next Crestwood City Commission meeting is scheduled for April 8 at 7:30 p.m. in The Dennis Deibel Barn.

## FILES

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or comments made them feel — including a "PP joke" several statements say Wright made on more than one occasion in regard to "practice problem papers."

The records also included a February email to OCHS Principal Natalie Brown from a mother of Wright's student, which stated that her husband had spoken to Brown about Wright on the phone twice prior, and that they had not been alerted that their child was asked to write and sign a statement.

"I am grateful we have a child that comes home and tells us these things because otherwise we would not know until after. For the future I would suggest contacting other parents on site if such events happen."

The email also requests for their child to be removed from Wright's class, noting that "We are under the impression that this is not an isolated incident with our daughter and the teacher and there are other OCHS students that have had similar issues and have signed paperwork against him ..."

"My daughter has come home crying over this and it has affected her other classes and grades. Psychologically he is harming these students ..."

The records also include another February email sent to Superintendent Claudette Herald and the members of the Board of Education, which cites multiple news articles regarding Wright's termination from Louisville Male High School in 2020 for inappropriate behavior towards students.

### PRIOR COMPLAINTS AND ALLEGATIONS

Also included in the records were several documents in regard to complaints about Wright, with the earliest included document dated August 16, 2022 — five days after his first day teaching at the school, according to documents in his personnel file.

In the document, an email from a guidance counselor to Brown, the counselor says she was contacted by a parent requesting for their child to be removed from Wright's class "citing claims from news articles" and saying that their child worried

Wright would break her 504 plan confidentiality.

The parent also told the counselor that Wright "called her daughter and a few other girls 'beautiful' during class when he was taking attendance," which the parent thought was unprofessional.

The counselor said they felt they "placated the parent for now" by saying a principal would observe and work with Wright, and that the student's schedule was not changed. Brown replied that she would address the concerns with Wright.

Included in Wright's personnel file is an Aug. 22, 2022, letter from then-Superintendent Jason Radford, which notified Wright he was being placed on "paid administrative leave until an investigation ... into inappropriate comments made by you during the instructional day ... is complete."

Records also show that one of Wright's students emailed Brown with concerns in November 2022.

The student wrote that they had spoken with a counselor about a month prior, but that "nothing [had] changed." Brown organized a meeting with the student in a reply, but no other documentation regarding the complaint is included.

About a month later, Brown received an email from a parent who claimed that her daughter felt Wright "was aware of the statement she signed in the fall." The email also claims that Wright "insinuated she should know how to speak Spanish simply by looking at her."

The email further references Wright's August 2022 suspension, with the parent saying her daughter "was surprised when he ended up being back at school" and that Wright had since told students "they hurt his family by going to you [the principal] with their untrue accusations."

The ensuing email conversation indicates that Brown met with the parent soon after, but in January the student emailed Brown, saying that Wright told her "you're a 10 in my book" when giving out group numbers and that he made a reference to a previous allegation of touching students on the back or patting their heads.

Accusations of similar inappropriate behavior were sent to Brown from a female student again in May 2023, including that Wright made "snarky" comments "making

it sound as if it were the students' fault that they were feeling uncomfortable due to his own actions."

In August 2023 — near the beginning of the next school year — another parent reached out to Brown and other OCHS staff on behalf of her daughter, who said that "students in her class were subjected to inappropriate behavior and language by Mr. Wright."

The email conversation that ensued indicated that Brown had a meeting with the parent over the phone, then subsequently told the parent, "We are addressing your concerns" in another email. Brown also sent a follow-up email about a month later, referencing calling the parent.

In November 2023, Brown received another email from a student regarding Wright making "insensitive and inappropriate jokes," such as "accidentally," in his words "doing a Nazi salute while explaining the element Germanium."

The student notes that the "joke" made most of the class laugh, but that they "will absolutely never whatsoever let any form of anti-semitism, even as a joke, pass by ..." The student also stated that Wright made "jokes about private parts" and spoke about students' "low grades" out loud.

A Nov. 14, 2023, VectorSolutions report form details that, when giving a hint about "what Ag (silver) stood for, Mr. Wright responded with, 'It's in your Christmas tree, oh, wait, I guess you don't celebrate Christmas' and said, 'Well, he looks like he doesn't celebrate Christmas' at the class's outburst."

In February 2024, Brown received another email from a student in regard to Wright, saying "If he gets pulled out of class by a principal or something he'll talk for 15 minutes about how what he said wasn't offensive ... And the entire class sympathizes with him."

"I had requested to switch out of his class at the beginning of the year, but Mr. Steedly said that he was an amazing teacher and that I should give it a couple of weeks. I thought it would get better, but I gave it MONTHS and it never got better."

In May 2024, a teacher emailed Brown sharing that students told her "uncomfortable comments made by Mr. Wright."

One instance the teacher said students told her was that Wright "asked several boys to name someone they had a crush on" during a lie detector experiment in class, and further asked them, "if they had any inappropriate thoughts about this crush or about someone else."

In November 2024, a different teacher emailed Brown sharing concerns from a student:

"In a student activity about Newton's third law of motion, it didn't work out according to plan, and Mr. Wright asked the girl in front of the class what she weighed. He said he would need someone lighter, then after she sat down, he oinked at her ..."

The teacher further explained that students said they approached Wright about the situation saying that they were upset, and Wright told them it was intended to be ironic and they need to "go back to English class."

"I wanted to make sure you heard this from an adult," the teacher wrote to Brown. "This is concerning and I know ALL of the girls who witnessed it, heard about it, or experienced it internalize these comments. I worry that continuing to tolerant intolerant actions and words will harm our student body."

In a Nov. 19, 2024, "Memorandum of Concern," Brown told Wright she "determined that inappropriate and unprofessional comments were made towards students in your class ... a teacher must always be a consistent role model who demonstrates the highest level of professionalism and maturity."

"Comments, including comments about students' appearance, do not meet these expectations and cannot be tolerated ..."

Brown continues saying that Wright allegedly said "Oh yeah, baby, that's the spot" to a student in reference to a broomstick placed inside a potato gun and "You got it, baby, turn on for me," in reference to a switch. Brown also referenced the allegations surrounding the Newton's third law of motion oinking incident.

"As we discussed previously, further acts of unprofessional behavior will result in additional disciplinary action up to, and including, termination. Regardless of your intended meaning, several students felt your comments were not only unwarranted, but

unprofessional as well."

The memo then states that Wright "will be put on a Corrective Action Plan" and "will not make any comments to students that could be misinterpreted or misunderstood."

One day later, Brown emailed Wright sharing "a couple reflections" from a meeting with Wright: "I want you to know that it is my sincere hope that we can address any issues and then move forward with you at OCHS."

Brown stated that she would "rewrite" the memo and "omit quotes from the interviews" and include Wright's response. Further, she said she would visit Wright's class weekly to be a "supportive coach" instead of a corrective action plan.

The rewritten memo notes that Wright denied the allegations and states that Brown's weekly classroom visits are "intended to offer constructive guidance and ensure that any concerns are promptly addressed."

In April 2025, an email conversation between Brown and Wright indicates that an investigation was conducted, but that Wright was permitted to return to school after the then-spring break.

A handwritten statement signed by Wright, dated March 28, 2025, states that Wright held a student's head when giving her a pep talk before a test.

It further states that the "only" other time Wright made physical contact with students was when "directing their hands to explain the direction of current, force, and magnetic field using the Right Hand Rule in the Electromagnetism Unit."

### TRIBUNAL HEARING POSSIBLE

Wright's notice of termination stated that state law entitles Wright to due process protections such as "the right to request a tribunal hearing" within 10 days of receiving the notice.

Oldham County Schools officials have not yet responded to the Era's inquiry if Wright requested a tribunal hearing.

Possible outcomes of tribunal hearings are a teacher's termination being upheld, reversed or modified to a lesser penalty. A reversal can reinstate a previously-terminated teacher and possibly award include an award of backpay.

## HAMILTON

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Hamilton is married to Willa. They have two daughters and two grandsons, Denver and Parker. His grandson Denver is the one that helped him transition from planes to trains. "I had lived near railroad tracks all my life," Hamilton said, but the real interest wasn't there until his then two-year-old grandson had an "insatiable love of trains and desire" to keep visiting the La Grange Railroad Museum. Hamilton said his grandson used to say, "Pa, Pa take me to the museum!" Hamilton ended up becoming a member of museum and the rest is history.

"Kids are a big part of what we do," Hamilton said, and thanks to Denver's love of trains and influence on his Pa, the



"Ernie," the locomotive switcher train with a painted-on face, is a family favorite at the La Grange Railroad Museum and Learning Center, located at 412 E. Main Street.

museum has evolved beyond just a museum into a learning center with regular programs for children of all ages including Ernie's Lil Engines Playgroup, Reading by the Rails and

S.T.E.A.M. by the Rails. Ernie's Lil Engines Playgroup, held every Tuesday morning, is up to 85 to 90 people every week, according to Hamilton. "We are out of space. We

ultimately need a classroom building."

Hamilton said the classroom building and an additional multi-purpose railcar to serve also "as a historical display painted like a CSX train but with all the emblems of all the companies that [came before] CSX to honor that heritage" are next on the wish list for the museum. The railcar would allow for more storage, opening the opportunity for the museum to rotate exhibits and keep content fresh, Hamilton said. So far, they have received a grant, but will be fundraising to make these possible.

### A DAY OF CELEBRATING

The Project Guild Of La Grange was founded in August of 1964 with 14 young homemakers as charter members. The original purpose of the organization was to better enable its members to serve

as assets to each other and to the community in which they lived. Since 1971, Project Guild has hosted Oldham County Day — an annual celebration of community pride that provides fun for all ages, serves as a reunion for friends and family and bolsters local charities and service organizations.

Project Guild described Hamilton in their grand marshal selection announcement as "a person whose dedication, generosity and love for our community have made a lasting difference."

"Through his instrumental role in the expansion and development of the La Grange Railroad Museum and Learning Center, he has helped preserve our local history while creating a place where future generations can learn, explore and connect."

"His vision has helped attract

visitors from near and far, bringing tourism and economic growth to our county. His commitment to our community goes far beyond the museum. He is a driving force behind programs that truly serve others, including learning opportunities for children, youth mentoring, grief workshops and supporting our veterans. These efforts reflect a deep compassion for people and a genuine desire to strengthen the community we all share. We look forward to celebrating his leadership, service, and the positive impact he continues to make."

Oldham County Day is always held the third Saturday in July — this year on July 18 in downtown La Grange. Find more information, including booth registration which is now open, at oldhamcountyday.com.