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WEBSTER COUNTY'S OLDEST NEWSPAPER

SEBREE BANNER

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Providence/Webster County Youth Council Begins Work

The Providence/Webster County Youth Council (P/WC Youth Council), a new group that will provide activities and services for area youth is up and running, having received its 501(c)(3) status. The goal of the group, spearheaded by Mike Syers, is to support the well-being, development, and quality of life of children and youth in Providence and Webster County by helping provide access to athletic, recreational, educational, and enrichment opportunities; assisting with essential youth needs when appropriate; and supporting positive activities and programs that foster personal growth, character, leadership, and community involvement.



WEBSTER COUNTY BOARD of Education has added a new student member to the board. Callie Walker took her seat as a non-voting member of the WC-BOE on Monday, November 9. Walker will represent the district's students and offer insight to students' needs, concerns and ideas for moving Webster County Schools forward.

Recently, a board was established to oversee the organization. Hailey Kromer will chair the group with Syers serving as the founder and secretary and Tab Alsbrook as treasurer. Angie Garrard has also joined the board which is still looking for an additional member, according to Syers.

The program, which will be funded through donations and fund raisers, has already begun receiving donations.

P/WC Youth Council will focus on offering meaningful opportunities for child to participate, learn, develop their abilities, build character and leadership skills and improve their quality of life regardless of financial circumstances. Through charitable support, the program will work with community partners to remove barriers and strengthen opportunities for local youth to engage in activities that are sometimes cost prohibitive for their families. The fund will be managed carefully, with documentation for how monies are expended and how youth are helped through the program.

The P/WC Youth Council hopes to get children "out of the house and into activities" like baseball, soccer, swimming, basketball and even mentoring if they need help with school work or learning the basics of a sport. The program will help provide sports equipment, gloves, shoes, coats and other needs for children who are sometimes financially excluded from participation. The board will work with the schools to determine where and for whom assistance may be needed, but no names will be involved as they work to determine which children may need sports equipment or other types of help with sports fees.

An application process will be in place for families to apply for assistance for their children. Applications can be made through the group's website PWCYouthFund.com or visit the Facebook page Providence/Webster County Youth Fund, Inc.

The programs will be dependent on volunteers offering their time to help children enjoy their youth and understand the rules/guidelines of many aspects of work and play.

In addition to unpaid volunteers, donations and partnerships with churches, schools, businesses, and community organizations will be instrumental in helping make this program a success, so the P/WC Youth Council has established a website and a Facebook page to help the public learn more about the program. The program is also working to obtain liability insurance.

Those who wish to support the organization may send checks so that receipts can be issued or donations may be made to the fund directly at Planter's Bank. Donations are tax deductible.

There are few things more rewarding than helping a child, and Providence/Webster County Youth Fund organizers are determined to help local children. They also are open to adding another board member and to hearing constructive ideas and meaningful thoughts from the community. Building a good foundation and providing experiences from children can learn is the PWC's main priority. It will take community support with both time and donations today, to help local children become successful and contributing citizens tomorrow.

Sebree Council Adopts Ordinance Amendment

The Sebree City Council met in regular session on Monday night with Mayor Billy Smith presiding and four council members – Pam Jones, Kathy Edwards, Perry Culberson, and Korderro Cooper – in attendance. Also present were City Clerk Mary Meredith and City Attorney Will Cox.

Council members Jana Forker and Jim Allen Williams were absent on Monday night.

In a session that lasted about 30 minutes, council members passed an ordinance and approved two actions concerning nuisance properties in the city and a loan for the Sebree Volunteer Fire Department.

Following approval of the minutes from the October meeting, council members approved an amendment to the city's burial ordinance, adding a surcharge to the costs of opening grave because of increased fuel costs. According to the city clerk, the city is currently being charged an additional $40.00 because of the rising cost of fuel. The amendment approved on Monday night will pass that cost on to the consumer. If and when fuel prices decline, that surcharge can be removed from the ordinance, according to Ms. Meredith. The amendment was approved with a 4-0 vote.

The council also approved send property management cases to the city attorney for disposition. Cox explained the action is being taken in order to get nuisance properties in compliance with the city's code. He noted that when a property owner refuses to bring a site into compliance, the city will have the option to file suit, obtain a court order, and either use public works employees or a contractor to clean the property. That cost will be assessed to the property owner, and if not paid, a lien will be placed on the property and it will be sold in order for the city to recoup its costs.

Cox told members the process takes several months due to title research, notification of all parties involved, and getting through the court system. He also noted the cost for each action is likely to be in the area of $4,000 to $6,000 from start of research to completion. Council members voted 4-0 to send property management cases to the city attorney for action.

The council also approved obtaining a loan to pay for roof repairs at the Sebree Volunteer Fire Department. Ms. Meredith had obtained rate information from each local bank concerning the funds needed. She told members the estimated cost of the repairs is $23,000, and that amount will be combined with an existing loan for the rescue vehicle at the fire department. That would bring the total loan to about $75,000. The city will obtain that loan from United Community Bank with an interest rate of 5.95% for a period of 60 months. The monthly payment, according to Ms. Meredith, will be $1,449.00.

Council members were also informed of legislative orientation training conducted by the Kentucky League of Cities. Members decided the training would be held locally on Monday, December 21 at the conclusion of the regular council meeting. Cox and Ms. Meredith will conduct that training.

No further business came before the council, and the meeting was adjourned.

Providence Council Amends Insurance Tax Ordinance

The Providence City Council met Monday night in a session that included the approval of an ordinance to increase the insurance company license fee within the city limits as well as a discussion concerning upcoming large expenses and how the city will pay those costs.

Following the approval of the minutes of the last meeting, the council moved into hearing reports from three department heads. Police Chief Ray Agent reported that his officers had a total October activity of 150 responses including responding to 80 complaints, writing a number of citations, giving several verbal warnings, provided nine officer assists and conducted several special details.

In his report public works director Travis Turner told the council that the city still has extra trash bins if residents or businesses need an extra one. He noted that some residents continue to place bags and extra cans out for pick up, and urged citizens to either take another bin or only put out the amount of trash one bin will hold. Turner also reported that the water/sewer departments have nothing new to report except that a pump recently malfunctioned but is now back up and running. In commenting on the trash pick up situation, the Mayor said that the city has been patient with residents, but "at some point we will have to only pick up what is in the cans" specified by the city

At the conclusion of Turner's remarks, Mayor Tom Glover noted that the city has been in water conservation mode for several days, but another pump will be placed in the river on Tuesday, and once the city's tanks are filled the water conservation mode will be lifted. He stressed that the city is not in an emergency situation, adding that the city has worked for months to get parts to repair water equipment so the water situation can be corrected and those parts are finally available.

Council member Jeff Marshall asked if notices can be included with the water bill regarding things like trash pickup; however, Glover pointed out that adding notices to the bills cost about $500 a month; the city will add notices and special announcements to bills on a quarterly basis.

Fire Chief Cameron Brown reported that his department responded to 75 EMS runs, 18 fire runs and completed three hours of training.

In other business, the mayor told the council that the city has a number of large expenses they will have to deal with by October 2027. He specifically mentioned $100,000 on the lift station; over $47,000 for the trash truck payment; $63,696 for an ambulance payment, $78,000 for powerline clearing; $24,000 for property demolition and $80,00) to $100,000 to complete the work that will close out the agreed order the city is under from the state. In addition, the city has talked frequently about repairing or replacing 40 fire hydrants within in the city limits that are not working. The total cost for that project will tally about $400,000 as each hydrant replacement is $10,000. The mayor also noted that the city has a number of equipment needs including two snow plows, a lawn mower, a service truck, a dump truck, a chipper truck, a service truck and a vac truck. He did not include any of that equipment in bills that will have to be paid in 2027, but noted the need for the city to begin replacing old equipment or buying items the city does not have at the present time like a dump truck.

Glover stressed the need for the generation of new revenue, an issue he brought before the council at their November 2, meeting when he introduced an increase to the city insurance company license fee. Presently city residents who carry any type of insurance pay a 7.5 percent insurance fee that goes from the insurance companies to the city government. Glover noted that raising to insurance tax to 10 percent, the city could raise an additional $100,000 annually. At the November 2, meeting and again Monday night, council member Mark Turner stressed that he would prefer a payroll tax rather than an insurance. Glover noted that anyone who owns property, rents property, has an automobile, life insurance, etc. on which they pay insurance is subject to the insurance tax.

The mayor also addressed other non-utility sources of new income including vehicle owners having to purchase a city sticker. Based on number the mayor has, at $25 per sticker, that would generate about $50,000 annually. He also noted that a one percent payroll tax would generate approximately $100,000 annually. Turner again stressed his support for a payroll tax, and councilman Jimmy Crowell who made a motion to amend the city's insurance tax ordinance to raise it to 10 percent, he added that he agrees with Turner, but added that in looking at the city's financial commitments, they may, at some point, have to "do both. That's the reality, and I hate it." Crowell's motion received a second from Scott Frederick and passed on a 4-1 vote. Turner cast the dissenting vote. The insurance tax increase becomes effective on passage of the second reading and publication as well as approval for the Kentucky Department of Insurance and will likely take effect July 1. 2027. Residents are reminded that this is an increase to a tax they are already paying and not a new tax initiated by the city.

The mayor told the council he will continue researching ways for the city to generate new revenue.

The mayor also told the council that he has had multiple complaints about four wheelers being used on city streets. Just over a year ago, the council approved an ordinance that addresses the use of golf carts, four wheelers and side-by-sides on city streets, but on Monday night Glover asked that the council re-visit that ordinance and possibly make some changes. He suggested the council review the present ordinance and determine any changes they would like to see made regarding the use of four wheelers on city streets. Individuals with motorized vehicles that fall under the guidelines of this ordinance are reminded that they must be operated by licensed drivers and meet specifications set forth in the ordinance which follows KRS requirements.

With no other business to come before the council. The meeting adjourned at 6:44. The council's next meeting is slated for December 7, at 6:00 p.m.