Supervisors favor adding sheriff deputies, dog

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

MONTROSE - In a clear sign that Lee County Supervisors stand squarely behind their newly elected sheriff, it was recommended Tuesday that two new deputies and possibly a full-time additional correctional officer be added to the sheriff’s budget.

At Tuesday’s Lee County Board of Supervisors’ meeting, during the budget workshop, supervisors looked at the preliminary budget, specifically items that had come up during the budgeting process that weren’t included in original department budgets.

The county budget has to be finalized by the end of February to allow time for public hearings before final approval and being submitted to the state.

Lee County Sheriff Stacy Weber was on hand to discuss his budget, which includes costs associated with bringing on a service dog. Weber’s original budget submitted to the board in December didn’t include the dog, but Lee County Budget Director Cindy Renstrom included it in the revised budget submitted on Tuesday.

Weber had also wanted to upgrade the county’s video court system to be compatible with Des Moines County. He said Des Moines county had upgraded its system and now Lee County’s was not compatible. That upgrade, too, was included in the revised budget.

When questioned by supervisors on Tuesday, Renstrom said Weber was still hoping to add two deputies to “backfill” the department so he could promote two current deputies, as well as the part-time C.O. The two deputies weren’t heavily discussed and Rick Larkin, chairman of the board instructed Renstrom to add the deputies to the budget after not getting any push back from the other supervisors.

Supervisor Don Hunold told Weber to refigure his calculations on the part-time because it could actually be a cost-savings to hire a full-time C.O. and replace the part-time positions. Weber indicated that he was running at about 500% to his overtime budget so far this year and he said it is difficult to find and keep part-time people.

“Whatever happens is they get a taste for it and then they go to the prison which is a higher paying, full-time gig. I’ve got some professional people down there now, but I didn’t want to come into this heavy-handed and ask for a bunch of stuff,” Weber told the board.

“If you’re paying these three part-timers and have any OT, this could be a wash or we may even save some money hiring someone full time,” Hunold said. “I’d like to see those numbers before moving on.”

Weber said he would have those numbers by the end of the day, but was very happy with the reaction to the requests.

“I was very pleased with that,” Weber said. “I’m glad the board is seeing things this way. I’ve been giving them tours and working with them. And like I said at the meeting, I’ll do whatever they need me to and work with the budget they give me. But I’m very happy with today’s discussions.”

If the budget is finalized with the two new deputies, Weber said he will promote one deputy to the rank of detective and another to a full-time evidence clerk who would also be responsible for video requests and that type of evidentiary processing.

The dog would be used as a multi-service animal for drug searches, people searches and in situations where deputies need back up or assistance with an offender. The dog could also be used to help keep order in the jail when not tasked out.

Again, the budget is still in the reviewing stage and will not be finalized until all recommendations and hearings have been held.

County nixes roadside program in budget prelims

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

MONTROSE - After several presentations on the subject, county supervisors have pulled $200,000 from preliminary budgets for a roadside vegetation program aimed at rekindling the native plants on county roadsides.

At Tuesday’s meeting of the Lee County Board of Supervisors, funding for the project was pulled after Supervisor Don Hunold said he would like to get a group of those in the know together to set a plan for the 2018-2019 fiscal year budget.

Donnellson resident Margo Sprenger has been spearheading the effort to try and keep some native Iowa plants growing along the roadside and reduce the mowing so deep into the ditches in Lee County.

The program was headed to the Lee County Conservation Board to staff and administrate. Hunold said he would like to get Sprenger, Lee County Conservation Director Tom Buckley, County Engineer Ernie Stiefelmeier, who also oversees the secondary roads department for the county, and a few others together to create a plan going forward.

Sprenger said she was unhappy with the decision but indicated she’s getting some support from the county in

PCC poised to prop up P.A.W. with pet parade

FORT MADISON – Last week, Fort Madison’s no-kill animal shelter P.A.W. rescued 37 of 77 Shih Tzu puppies from a Burlington home. (Read the full story at www.pen citycurrent.com) Due to the early response to this story (over 15,000 people have expressed interest), Pen City Current has announced a new promotion designed to raise funds and awareness for the puppies’ plight, as well as care for the other animals in the charge of P.A.W. of which there are over 200 at this time.

Pen City Current encourages all pet owners and animal lovers to post or tweet their most adorable pet picture with the hashtag #PCCPawSomePets and tag us @PenCityCurrent. We will gather all pet photos onto See PARADE, page 2

Don’t forget Social Media! Check us out on the following sites: @pen citycurrent:

SPORTS:
Holy Trinity boys and girls split with visiting Wapello. Hopper goes for 36 in boys game. See pages 3-4

See BUDGET, page 2
Readers’ photos sought for contest

Voting will commence Wednesday, February 8 and will end Valentine’s Day Tuesday, February 14. The winning photo will be announced on this website and our social media channels. 100% of the funds raised through this promotion will be donated to P.A.W. at the conclusion of the promotion. To donate directly to the organization, please visit their website at www.pawfortmadison.com.

Pen City Current

These are the winners of the Readers’ photo contest. 

Palmer amaranth

Weed mucks up roadside plan

No activity report for the day.

Lee County Sheriff’s Report

1/30/17 - 1:40 p.m. - Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Chad Alan Riddle, 33, of Keokuk at the Des Moines County Line on a warrant for arrest of a parole violator. He was taken the Lee County Correctional Center and jailed.

Fort Madison Fire Dept. Report

1/31/2017 - Fort Madison Fire responded to 2 medical calls.

It should be noted a criminal charge is merely an accusation and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.

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The weed most likely will not persist in these new locations being established for conservation habitat since the Palmer amaranth should be crowded out once native, perennial vegetation is established. The concern, however, is that until the perennial plants become established, Palmer amaranth may produce enough seed to begin moving into neighboring corn and soybean fields, according to the extension’s website.

Hunold took it a step further saying that, left uncontrolled, that could take a farmer’s field in about three years.

“You have to kill it before it gets 4” tall. If you don’t you have to actually hoe it out of the fields. That plant will seed a half million seeds,” he said. If it gets in the ditches we’re not going to spray it or mow it every week that’s the only way to kill it. So if we have to go walk that out of the ditches, that’s gonna be a problem,” Hunold said.

Supervisor Ron Fedler said he had a report from the University of Purdue that indicates if left uncontrolled it could hurt soybean yields by 79% and corn by 91%.

“Basically you can’t kill it so the way to control it is to cut before it gets to seed. If it’s left to grow in the ditches one plant can produce a half million seeds. That’s amazing to me and it’s resistant to spray. It’s pretty scary,” Fedler said.

“Palmer amaranth infestations in Iowa were found in crop fields associated with equipment and inputs from outside of the state. More recently, Palmer amaranth has been found on ground set aside for conservation practices,” Hunold said.

Weed mucks up roadside plan

No injuries were reported or citations issued at the scene.

01/30/17 - 9:10 a.m. - Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Raché Genelle James, 47, of Keokuk, in the 2500 block of 256th Street on a charge of possession of controlled substance. She was cited and released on a promise to appear.

1/30/17 - 1:04 p.m. - Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Alex Joseph Dent, 29, of Keokuk, at the Lee County Jail on a warrant for probation/parole violation. He was taken the Lee County Correctional Center and jailed.

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Hopper scores 29 in 2nd half as HTC pulls out win

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - It was a pretty quiet Shottenkirk gymnasium Tuesday night considering it was senior night. Until....

Cory Hopper put away a break away dunk and then just went bonkers with 29 points in the second half as HTC upset Wapello 58-51 in a non-conference match-up Tuesday night.

While Hopper was walking on water, fellow senior Nick Pothitakis held Southeast Iowa Superconference North scoring leader Trenton Massner to 18 points, four in the second half. Massner averages 22 a game for the Arrows.

“Coach said just don’t let him have the ball,” Pothitakis said. “When he did get it, I just laid off until he put it on the floor and then was right up on him,” Pothitakis said.

HTC had two leads in the first quarter 2-0 and 4-3 and then never led again until the 4:04 left in the game. Wapello and head coach Ken Spelbauer were dead set on pressing the Crusaders into submission and scored regularly off turnovers on the inbounds, highlighted by Massner who stole an inbound pass, took two steps and went for a slam, but the ball caught the front of the rim and bounced out.

The Arrows went on to outscore HTC 13 to 8 in the second quarter highlighted by Massner’s six points for a 35-19 lead going into the half. HTC Head Coach John Hellige said he told his squad in the locker room that it was Senior Night and they all scorers with 36 points, 29 of which came in the second half as HTC wiped out a 16-point first half deficit to move to 10-8 on the season.

Lady Crusaders come up short after rally

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - The Holy Trinity girls wiped out a 15-point deficit at halftime only to go cold in the fourth quarter en route to a 54-45 loss to Wapello Tuesday night.

The Crusaders put three players in double figures and seemed to have Wapello figured out in the third quarter when they closed the gap to four on several occasions. Sophomore Emily Box scored nine points in the half as HTC managed to work the ball inside for most of the period, working the perimeter until a passing lane opened up to Box.

She finished with 11 points for the game. Ali Randolph led HTC with 12 points, but got into foul trouble early and had to ride the bench early on.

“We struggled with fouls all night,” Head Coach Tony Johnson said. “Randolph and Box were on the bench for most of the second quarter so that hurt us.”

“But we did a real good job in the third quarter, but we just got in too big of a hurry in the fourth quarter and got away from our offense.”

Wapello’s head coach John Vandenberg put the squeeze on the Crusaders with a trap press for most of the game forcing some turnovers in transition and getting the Crusaders off balance right out of the gate.

HTC only converted 4 of 13 first half shot attempts but their defense was able to keep the game within four at the end of the first period, but the Arrows pulled away outscoring HTC 18-7 in the second quarter, highlighted by a six-minute scoring drought for the Crusaders.

Out of the locker room, Holy Trinity scored first and often kicked off by a Brett Schneider bucket and then two back-to-back buckets by Box. Ali Randolph scored on a bucket inside. The Arrows managed a free throw by Denalyn Lanz, but Box answered with another easy bucket inside.

See COMEBACK, page 4

Dribble and drive

HTC’s Cory Hopper looks for a move off the dribble in Tuesday’s win over Wapello. Hopper led all scorers with 36 points, 29 of which came in the second half as HTC wiped out a 16-point first half deficit to move to 10-8 on the season.

Hopper said he started to feed off the energy of the crowd. And with Connor Conrad out for the rest of the regular season, Hopper said it’s now his job to lead.

“I like playing in front of crowds like that,” Hopper said. “And with Connor out it feels sometimes like I have to take over.”
COMEBACK - Continued from Page 3

With about three minutes left in the 3rd period, Hopper picked off a Wapello pass in the 1/2 court offense, measured his steps and put down a two-handed dunk that brought the HTC faithful to their feet. The momentum shifted and Hopper was off to the races.

He scored 15 points in the fourth quarter, while the Crusaders' defense held Wapello to three free throws in the quarter as the Arrows didn't convert a single bucket the rest of the way.

"Nick did a tremendous job in guarding Massner. (Massner's) a tremendous athlete and scorer. Collin Thornton gave Nick some breaks and did a good job, too," Hellige said.

"Wapello is a very good team, very well coached. Coach Spielbauer does a tremendous job with his teams. This is just a huge win for us going into the seeding meeting tomorrow night."

Hellige said HTC is probably battling Notre Dame for a 4th or 5th seed in district play.

Rounding out the scoring for the Crusaders was Connor Hellweg with 10, Bailey Merschman with 7, Pothitakis with 3 and Jack Stinson Jr. with 2. Massner led Wapello with his 18.

HTC, now 10-8 on the year, finishes up the regular season with a road trip to New London on Tuesday and then hosts Burlington Notre Dame on Friday.

In the junior varsity matchup, Matt Hellige led the Crusaders with 22 points as they downed Wapello 50-41. Reed Fehseke added 8 points, Bryant Hohlkamp had 6 and Quentin Schneider, Adam Rauenbueler, and Kyle Bredemeyer each added four. Connor Holvoet added a bucket.

HTC girls falter in 4th

Schneider then reeled off a 3-pointer and bucket on the next trip down to force a Wapello time out. By that time, HTC had closed the gap to 30-32. After the breather, Karlee Carey hit two-free throws to put the game back at four points 34-30.

Box connected on a jumper from the free throw line and hit the front end of a one-and-one but Wapello's leading scorer Eryka Dickey hit a 3-pointer to hold the four-point advantage going into the final period.

Box and Randolph combined for six points to Wapello's one point on a free throw by Jena Gerot and to take a 39-38 lead but Wapello came storming back and put the game away with a 10-0 run that didn't end until Randolph converted inside to make the score 51-41 with less than a minute left and the game out of reach.

"We just came out a little flat and got into foul trouble," Johnson said. "Credit to them, they came and took it to us."

Rounding out the scoring for the Crusaders was Schneider with 11 and Mya Lawlor and Ashyn Haas each with four points.

Wapello was led by Carey with 20 points. HTC falls to 9-10 on the season and travels to New London on Tuesday night to wrap up the regular season.

Room for one

HTC's Brett Schneider looks for room to the basket in Tuesday's 45-54 loss to Wapello.