Candidates talk streets, safety, and taxes

Forum helps separate goals, candidate priorities

BY CHUCK VANDENBerg
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - Four candidates for two open city seats discussed a variety of issues in a mostly cordial exchange prior to the city’s general election in less than two weeks.

Mayoral candidates Chris Sorrentino and Brad Randolph and 2nd ward candidates Brian Wright and Bob Morawitz were quizzed in council chambers in front of about 25 people by Fort Madison Partners Executive Director Tim Gobble at the event sponsored by Fort Madison Partners and the Fort Madison Daily Democrat.

Randolph is seeking his third term as mayor after being appointed in 2013 and reelected in 2015. He was on the Fort Madison City Council from 2006 to 2013.

Sorrentino is a regional truck driver and has been critical of recent moves of the city with regard to new parking regulations and is campaigning on new trust with city leaders.

Wright was appointed to the council in 2011 and won a special election in 2013 and then was re-elected in 2015 with Morawitz as his opponent that time as well.

Morawitz is an electrician and veteran of the US Navy who has sought several offices including state senator and Fort Madison City Council.

STREETS

Wright said the last annual city planning meeting with the city focused on streets.

"My number one priority will be Avenue F, from 2nd through 22nd streets, specifically the 900 block to the 1500 block has the most deterioration going on. We’ve already done 13th and 14th streets, but I think the city has done a lot with streets."

Wright said the city has been answering the call of the residents, but decisions have to be made with regard to the city as a whole.

Randolph clarified the city budget for streets comes out of road use fund funds from the state.

"We get a percent of money based on per capita and fuel tax. We also have the Local Option Sales Tax which used to be 60-40 and is now 80-20. The 80 percent goes to tax relief and 20 goes to capital improvement so we’re tasked with using 1.4M to 1.5M the best way we can,“ he said.

He said the city passed a quality of life bond in 2014 to help offset some of the costs of getting the roads cleaned up and was able to complete 15th, 24th, and 48th streets and was able to do seal coats and overlays.

Morawitz said he agreed with the mayor on the funding.

"When it comes to streets you do have to prioritize the right ones from the wrong ones and which are in most disarray and have the highest volume of traffic,” he said.

Morawitz said he commended the city’s Public Works Director Larry Driscoll on doing the best he can with the resources he has.

"I think we should leave that up to Larry and the citizens should have some input,” he said. "We’ve been doing better, but we did borrow against the general fund for the road repair program, but I don’t think next year we’ll have the ability to do that. I think we’re going to have a budget issue next year.”

Morawitz was talking about the state’s backfill obligation on commercial property taxes that may not be backfilled next year.

CITY PRIORITIES WITHIN A TIGHT BUDGET

Randolph again brought up taxes and said the state’s property tax bill is a total of $15.91 and he said the $8.10 goes to the general fund levy.

"That’s all we have in the general fund,” he said. "That’s police, fire, parks, policy administration, pools - all the things we like. It becomes difficult at times when you have only a basket of money that we cannot tax more for, to keep things the way they are and that’s been a challenge since I’ve been on the council.”

Sorrentino said the city should be prioritizing departments and prioritizing funding to figure out which departments get which funds.

"You can’t say this department’s going to get this and that department’s going to get that. You have to look at the 5-year plan. But one of my goals is emergency services such as police and fire. Those have to be our number one priority. Without those, we cannot function."

Morawitz said the number one priority is making sure the residents are safe and then the fire department and water and sewer would be the top priority.

"I know we’re going to have issues next year,” he said.
For the Record

Fort Madison Police report
10/24/17 - 11:46 a.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a property damage accident in the 2900 block of Avenue G. 10/24/17 - 1:35 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a larceny/theft in the 1700 block of Avenue D. 10/24/17 - 4:00 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a stolen bicycle in the 1200 block of 33rd Street.

Lee County Sheriff’s report
No incidents were reported.

Fort Madison Fire and Rescue
10/24/17 - 1:35 p.m. - Fort Madison firefighters responded to a report of a hit and run in the 2700 block of Avenue M.

DEATH NOTICES

GEORGIA L. STANSBERRY
Georgia L. Stansberry, 90, of Fort Madison, IA, passed away at 3:50 p.m. on Thursday, October 26, 2017 at Great River Medical Center. Arrangements are pending at King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory.

Ladies’ Night
Thursday, November 9th • 4:00pm - 7:00pm

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OBITUARIES

WILLIAM “BUSS” COLLISON

William “Buss” Collison, 97, of Fort Madison, IA, passed away at 8:20 a.m. on Thursday, October 26, 2017 at the West Point Care Center. He was born on December 4, 1919 in Wilmington, DE to William & Laura Riker Collison. He was a truckdriver for 42 years, mostly at JTL Trucking Company in St. Louis, MO. He served in the U.S. Army Air Corps during WWII in the Pacific Theater. He also served in the Philippine Liberation under General Douglas MacArthur. He was a 53 year member of the Florissant, MO Elks Lodge and was its oldest member.

He is survived by: 2-daughters: Lol-ly (Bob) Orozco of Fort Madison, IA & Diane (D.W.) Counts of Florissant, MO; 1-son: Steve (Kim) Collison of O’Fallon, MO; several grandchildren, great grandchildren and great great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by: his parents, 3-wives, 1-son: Buddy Schilling, 3-grandsons and 1-sister: Panay.

Cremation has been entrusted to King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. A graveside service will be held at a later date at Keokuk National Cemetery. A memorial has been established in his memory and contributions may be sent to: Lolly Orozco, 819 30th Street, Fort Madison, IA 52627. Online condolences may be left at the King-Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory website: www.kinglynk.com.
IFC gives $50K in goods to Burlington schools

BURLINGTON - As part of its ongoing commitment to support schools throughout southeast Iowa, Iowa Fertilizer Company and Orascom E&C USA, Inc. (Subsidiary of OCL) recently provided $50,000 worth of supplies and equipment to the Burlington Community School District.

"Since we broke ground on the Iowa Fertilizer project nearly five years ago, Iowa Fertilizer Company and Orascom E&C USA, Inc. has worked to improve the economic and educational landscape in southeast Iowa," said Nabil Ghantous, Executive Vice President of Orascom E&C USA, Inc. (Subsidiary of OCL). "Through this most recent donation, we are proud to provide valuable equipment, resources, furniture and appliances that the Burlington Community School District will be able to utilize for years to come."

The equipment Orascom E&C USA, Inc. (Subsidiary of OCL) and Iowa Fertilizer Company donated will improve the overall aesthetic of each building in the district, and provide staff with additional resources to further enrich the educational setting. The donation allows the district to replace older furniture with new, modern options to be used in classrooms, common areas, meeting rooms, and offices. Additionally, several storage options were received, along with microwaves and refrigerators. Donations are ready to be used by staff and students right away.

"I am delighted that Orascom E&C USA, Inc. and Iowa Fertilizer Company generously donated to our learning community," said Burlington Community School District Superintendent Pat Coen. "Having quality resources available for staff and students is often overlooked and not easy to do with decreases in funding. This donation will save the district funds for many years and is greatly appreciated.

Iowa Fertilizer Company has previously contributed donation to South-eastern Community College, the Fort Madison Sports Complex, Weyer Fire and Rescue, the Fort Madison Public Schools, United Way, Fort Madison Fourth of July Celebration, the public libraries in Keokuk, Burlington, Fort Madison, and Mt. Pleasant, and more. Iowa Fertilizer Company is a leader in the fertilizer industry. The plant in Weyer, Iowa is the first greenfield nitrogen fertilizer facility constructed in the United States in more than 25 years. Utilizing its state-of-the-art production, industry-leading technology, and environmentally sustainable processes, Iowa Fertilizer Company will help provide farmers in Iowa and around the country with a stable, domestic supply of fertilizer. For more information, visit Iowa Fertilizer Company at iowafertilizer.com.
Pen City Current - Friday, October 27, 2017

**Sports**

**HTC advances to regional final Tuesday**

**Crusaders rebound from skittish first game to win**

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG

**NEW LONDON** - It’s a shame that two of the best teams in the state were pitted against each other in a regional semifinal matchup, but it was as good as billed as Holy Trinity Catholic advanced to the regional championship Tuesday night in Ottumwa.

The Crusaders needed four games to knock off 6th-ranked New London 16-25, 25-20, 25-19, 25-18. The two teams had split four regular season matches 2-2 going into the regional semifinal.

Junior Emily Box (3) sends an attack at New London High School.

The Lady Tigers jumped to a quick 6-1 lead on senior Savanna Sutherland’s five service points. Seniors Emily Box and Madison Mohrfeld both hit long kills in the New London rally and a defensive error forced Head Coach Melissa Freesmeier to use a time out. The Crusaders got the next point and were able to stay within six points, eventually closing the gap to 8-10 on a Box kill.

But New London started reading Box at the net and were able to block HTC’s main threat in the middle. But at 8-12, Box, junior Eryn Anderson, and Mohrfeld all hit long to push the Tigers’ lead back to six at 8-14. Holy Trinity closed to three again when the Tigers’ senior Ashley Birdsell’s attack went long at 11-14. Birdsell and senior Breanna Mettler took control of the net, sending three attacks back for points, and the Tigers had pushed the lead to 7 at 12-15.

Mettler had two more kills to give New London a 24-14 lead. Box and junior Taylor Boeding had kills to bring it back to 8 points 24-16, but a missed attack by Anderson gave the game to the Tigers.

“We made a lot of mistakes in that first game and a lot of it was adrenalin,” Head Coach Melissa Freesmeier said after the game. “The kids were psyched and pumped up. But we gave up that serve for defense, and tonight that worked. It was awesome.”

Rashid said the team wasn’t connecting in the first game and some changes were made in the second.

“We really had to be disciplined with our defense. We knew we could pick up those balls and we weren’t talking, didn’t cross very well and we didn’t read their blocking very well in the first game. Their blocking was very solid tonight,” she said.

Junior Emily Box (3) sends an attack at New London’s Sophie Lounsbery on Thursday night at New London High School.

The Holy Trinity Crusaders mob each other after a 4th game 25-18 win over New London in the New London Regional semifinals Thursday night. HTC will play Southeast Warren-Liberty Center on Tuesday in Ottumwa for a right to go back to state. Above Head Coach Melissa Freesmeier gives some guidance during a time out.

Thursday night at New London.

HTC, who had breezed past Burlington Notre Dame and Seymour in two three-set affairs leading up to Monday night’s Class 1A Region 8 semifinal, got off to a shaky start in the first game. The Crusaders trailed by as much as six points on several occasions in the raucous New London Junior/Senior high gymnasium.

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[See WIN, page 10]
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Honor your family members that answered the call to serve in our special Veterans Day edition on Friday, November 10th.

It is our honor to publish this information. Please include photo (color or black & white), veteran’s name, branch of service, tour(s) of duty, call to serve in our special Veterans Day edition. It is our honor to publish this information. Submissions are due by the end of the day or email it to admin@pencitycurrent.com in case of questions. A brief personal message is also welcome. Submissions are due by the end of the day Tuesday, November 7th.

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Lawlor scores four aces in crucial 2nd game run

WIN - Continued from Page 4

The Crusaders trailed again in the early going of the third game, being down by as much as six 2-8 on a kill by Tigers’ sophomore Addie Pry. Freesmeier called another stop and the Crusaders responded with Mya Lawlor, playing in just her second match this year, at the service line. Lawlor went on a tear serving for nine straight points including four aces and had the Tigers on the run. Box had a kill and a shared block with Rashid in the run that wasn’t broken until Lawlor missed on her 10th attempt and took the Crusaders from a 4-9 deficit to a 13-10 lead. At 14-12 HTC put together another 6-3 run with kills from Hoenig, Rashid, and Box. Two defensive errors by New London had the Crusaders with a 20-15 lead. At 22-16, Boeding registered another kill from the outside, Box scored from the middle, and Mohrfeld put the game away with a kill at 25-19.

The fourth game saw HTC in control at the start, but New London brought the game to a tie at 10-10 on a kill by junior Kaylor Schalte. They took an 11-10 lead when Mohrfeld’s attack went long. Box faked an attack and scored, dumping the ball over the blockers to tie it back up at 11. Lawlor served long to put New London back on top 11-12 and Mettler and Birdsell teamed up to block and score at 13-11. Box had a kill on the next service point to make it 12-13 and then recorded an ace to tie the game at 15. The Crusaders then went on a 10-3 run to win the match including a nifty series of five straight points won at the net by Anderson, three attack scores by Box, and a Box block that scored.

Freesmeier said after the game she didn’t think it was fair that these teams met this early in the post season. “It’s too bad because there’s going to be teams that state tournament that New London’s better than. I don’t think it’s fair. There’s nothing I can do, it’s a state decision.” The two teams are in the same conference, but Freesmeier said Janesville and Tripoli are closer than New London and Fort Madison and they are in different regions to keep the top teams at the tour-
nament. “They do that for Tripoli and Janesville and they’re 20 miles apart. The state says they want to get the top eight teams there and last year they did, but this year they did not,” she said.

Rashid said she knew the Crusaders were capable of putting some runs together. “We knew that we had to start running runs. We would say Emily would run this or that and I would set it somewhere else and then Taylor came up with some bombs. She was on it tonight, so was Eryn. Everyone was sold.” Box, who finished with 53-60 attacking with 25 kills, and was icer her right shoulder and knee after the match, said she was frustrated in the first game. “The first game I was getting flustered and I just had to fix that. I needed to get around the block,” she said. “My teammates were behind me the whole time and they really picked me up and that was the big turnaround after the first game.”

She said this was one of the toughest matches HTC will face all year. “This is one of the toughest games we’ll play. It’s a huge rivalry and we both put it all out there tonight.”

Anderson said after the nerves settled in, things came more naturally. “We finally got it together. The first game I think the nerves shook us up and the crowd obviously. We finally played within ourselves and we really started to trust each other especially on defense,” she said. “We have so much respect for them. They’re a great team, hands down - they have great coaching, great girls, and we knew it was going to be a dog-fight.”

Anderson finished with 27-32 attacks and 11 kills and Boeding was 25-29 at the net with 10 kills. Elyse Pothitakis was 11 of 11 serving with one ace and Lawlor ended the game 20 of 21 serving with four aces.

Tuesday’s game begins at 7 p.m. at the Evans Middle School in Ottumwa against 25-7 Southeast Warren Liberty Center.
Cruise Lines have been talking with the city about mentioned cruise lines looking at possibly docking here. There needs to be a total renovation of the jetty to help dredging the silt that settles is a problem and he said riverfront. “We do have our meetings broadcast just like we are open and transparent. We’ve tried to improve technology and sooner or later the city’s going to have toメンテナンスをしないと・・・” Wright said communication is improving from the city’s side. He said that’s why there is representation, but he does have people come up to him and he welcomes those conversations. “We did have our meetings broadcast just like we are tonight so everyone can view them and they can go back and watch past meetings. The city website also has been kept up-to-date by John Luna. I believe the communication is open and transparent and it is there. I commend you Bob for stepping up and running because fewer people do.” Randolph said the feeling isn’t just local, it’s at the state and national level as well.

People in general just feel disenfranchised with the way things are being conducted. For us, I have to say we’ve made some big strides to make local government open and transparent. We’ve tried to improve technologically to the point where we’re trying to make each representative up here more accessible. I hope we keep looking at that along the lines of our shortcomings,” he said.

Two other candidates for Fort Madison City Council, including Rusty Andrews and Mark Lair were in attendance, but didn’t participate in the forum because they are running unopposed. Absentee voting is now open and early voting is available at North Lee County courthouse.

There are circumstances that could come up and I don’t want to rule it out, but I would rather they want to come into the city.

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Engagement Sorrentino said communication between the city and its residents is poor. “The individual doesn’t think they have their voice heard or their voice doesn’t carry any power. I’ve had people say it’s just a good ol’ boys club and whatever the city wants, the council rubber stamps it and it goes on through.” Wright said communication is improving from the city’s side. He said that’s why there is representation, but he does have people come up to him and he welcomes those conversations.

“We have to create more of an open door, and when I open door we have to make it more accessible for the public. Have conversations with 18 and Avenues South," said Wright. He said the Baxter Sports Complex has added quality of life to help attract new businesses and the new Highway 61 project will also be an asset to the city.

The economy has not improved, as the state has indicated, and we’re going to lose that $97,000 backfill. They did the same thing in the 1970s with the machinery tax that they said they would backdate and after about three years they stopped backfilling and left us to our own.,” Wright added that the city has had a balanced budget and has had that for several years and has increased the general fund. He said the past couple of years the backfill has been paid by the state and he thinks it will stay in place for the next couple of years. He said Driscoll has been good at getting grants to help offset some of the infrastructure costs to the city.

“We need to improve infrastructure and keeping focus on tourism, with the industry to come to town, it’s not always what the city will get out of out, but the quality of life that can be gained. We need to promote those things. He said TIF works if used properly but he said it’s been abused. He said he’s still upset about the money the state gave Apple when they were going to come anyway. Wright said when you look at what you offer an in investment, “it’s not always what the city is going to get out of out, but the quality of life that can be gained.

I think we’re good here for the foreseeable future, but I agree that we need to be fiscally responsible and make the best decisions for the city," Wright said.

Morawitz said the marina and the riverfront are one of his biggest concerns. He also said tourism is lagging and in his travels around the state he doesn’t see any tourism racks. We do have our meetings broadcast just like we are open and transparent. We’ve tried to improve technology and sooner or later the city’s going to have toメンテナンスをしないと・・・” Wright said communication is improving from the city’s side. He said that’s why there is representation, but he does have people come up to him and he welcomes those conversations. “We did have our meetings broadcast just like we are tonight so everyone can view them and they can go back and watch past meetings. The city website also has been kept up-to-date by John Luna. I believe the communication is open and transparent and it is there. I commend you Bob for stepping up and running because fewer people do.” Randolph said the feeling isn’t just local, it’s at the state and national level as well. People in general just feel disenfranchised with the way things are being conducted. For us, I have to say we’ve made some big strides to make local government open and transparent. We’ve tried to improve technologically to the point where we’re trying to make each representative up here more accessible. I hope we keep looking at that along the lines of our shortcomings,” he said.

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