City balks on new personnel manual
Back-to-back tie votes puts manual on hold, however changes have been in place since July 1

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADI-SON - City leaders have balked, on a couple tie votes, on approving a personnel manual that governs employee benefits. However the changes defined in the manual are already in place.

At Tuesday’s meeting of the Fort Madison City Council, amendments to the personnel manual were presented for a vote by the council, but when the motion was put up for discussion, Councilman Bob Morawitz asked why the council hadn’t seen a copy of the changes.

City Finance Director Peggy Steffensmeier said the manual went in front of the council in June, but the process had taken longer than expected.

Morawitz asked City Manager David Varley what kind of changes were in place and Varley listed such changes as sick hour accrual limits, family sick leave, bereavement days, adjustments on uniform reimbursements, adjustments in overtime calculations, compensatory time changes, among other.

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Fort Madison Mayor Brad Randolph swears in new 3rd Ward Councilman Matt Mohrfeld at Tuesday’s City Council meeting as, behind from left to right, Councilmen Rusty Andrews, Mark Lair, and Chad Cangas look on.

 Mohrfeld takes over 3rd Ward
BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - Only one person stepped up to take on the 3rd Ward seat that was up for appointment Tuesday, but he’s a familiar face and jumped right into service.

Fort Madison businessman Matt Mohrfeld was the only candidate to offer to fill the seat through winter, 2019. Mohrfeld was sworn in by Mayor Brad Randolph at Tuesday’s regular council meeting.
Mohrfeld takes the seat held by Travis Seidel who
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Five locals honored for volunteer service
Tebbs one of four honored by governor for service to county’s ISU Extension and Outreach

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

LEE COUNTY - Four Lee County Extension board members were honored by the Governor at a regional ceremony in Ottumwa on Wednesday.

Rick Tebbs, Tom Mohrfeld, Steven Newberry and Tina Loges were all honored for volunteer service with the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Lee County Council.

Tebbs was honored for 20 years with the council. The board itself was honored at the Lee County Fair this year for a century of service to Lee County residents.

As volunteer service is a commitment with all of the award winners, Tebbs literally has close to 150 years of combined volunteer service in multiple organizations focused on outdoor stewardship, as well as community and county-focused organizations.

Tebbs was born and raised in Fort Madison and said volunteerism carries a simple philosophy for him.

“I just want to make a difference,” he said.

“That’s what I tell people and I always felt that way. You’re lucky enough to have support of family and friends and you want to make a positive impact. I want people to know that volunteering, for me, isn’t about...”
Sheriff's Report

8/6/2018 - 7:00 a.m - Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Nicholas Wayne Burgess, 34, of Keokuk, in the 100 block of N 7th St., on a warrant for violation of parole. He was taken to Lee County Jail and held.

Lee County Sheriff’s Report

8/6/2018 - 12:00 a.m - Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Elizabeth Alarcon, 38, of Cedar Rapids on a warrant for violation of probation. She was taken to Lee County Jail and held.

8/6/2018 - 10:30 a.m - Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Nicholas Wayne Burgess, 34, of Keokuk, in the 100 block of N 7th St., on a warrant for violation of parole. He was taken to Lee County Jail and held.

8/6/2018 - 4:43 p.m - Lee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested Cynthia Renee Pullinger, 26, of West Burlington, at the Sheriff’s office, on a temporary hold. She was taken to Lee County Jail and held. Those listed above are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

8/6/2018 - 4:42 p.m - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 600 block of Ave. E. Madison Police responded to a report of larceny theft in the 1200 block of 25th St.

8/6/2018 - 7:04 a.m - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a personal injury accident in the 300 block of 303rd Ave.

8/6/2018 - 5:35 p.m - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of a personal injury accident in the 1200 block of 303rd Ave.

8/6/2018 - 4:42 p.m - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of larceny theft in the 600 block of Ave. E.

8/6/2018 - 1:15 a.m - Monday, August 6, 2018 at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City, Iowa.

Born July, 8, 1944 in Fort Madison, Iowa the son of Earl and Gloria Mae (Copeeland) Sheets. On December 31, 1962, at Fort Madison, Iowa he married Linda Jondall.


He was preceded in death by his parents, one brother: David Sheets and son in law: Randy Klesener.

ROY MELVIN SHEETS

Roy Melvin Sheets, 74, of Fort Madison, Iowa passed away at 1:15 a.m. Monday, August 6, 2018 at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City, Iowa.

KATHRYN “KATHY” INGBERITSON

Kathryn “Kathy” Norseth Ingebritson, 84, of Fort Madison, IA, passed away at 4:45 a.m. on Monday, August 6, 2018 at Fort Madison Community Hospital. She was born on August 24, 1933 in Melrose, IA to William & Nora Dinneen Malone. She married Phillip J. Ingebritson on June 25, 1960 at St. Paul’s Church in Burlington, IA. She worked at Burlington Bank & Trust and was a homemaker. She was a member of Sacred Heart Church, Altar & Rosary Society, T.T.E. & P.E.O.

Kathy is survived by: her husband: Phillip Ingebritson of Fort Madison, IA; 2 sons: John Ingebritson of Iowa City, IA & Mark (Kelly) Ingebritson of Highlands Ranch, CO; 2 grandsons: Matthew & Nathan Ingebritson; 1 brother: William (Sharon) Malone of Goshen, IN; 1 sister: Patricia Malone of Burlington, IA and a number of nieces & nephews. She was preceded in death by: her parents, 1 brother & 3 sisters.

Friends may call after 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 9, 2018 with the family to receive friends from 5:30 to 6:30 with a rosary to be recited at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday evening at King Lynk Funeral Home & Crematory. The funeral mass will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, August 10, 2018 at Sacred Heart Church with Rev. Joseph Phung officiating. A luncheon will immediately follow the funeral mass. Burial will be held at Sacred Heart Cemetery in Burlington, IA. A memorial has been established for Holy Trinity Catholic Schools. Online condolences to Kathy’s family may be left at Kinglynkfuneral.com.
Keokuk’s Wolfe is FMAAA Exhibitor for August

Erika Wolfe, well-known silversmith from Keokuk, IA, displays her work with her show "Signature Pieces" at the FMAAA gallery show, with an opening reception on Friday, August 10 from 5 to 7 PM. The Signature pieces Erika Wolfe explains, "Are pieces that most express my personal creative design style. I stress the geometric because I believe it to be a recognizable when you are familiar with her work. Buyers know they have found something special and collectors can’t stop at owning just one of her pieces."

"The human body is the most intimate gallery that I can think of and the challenge of making beautiful and timeless jewelry - art that is personal, to be displayed in public as a personal statement of individual taste - deeply appeals to me,” says Erika.

For the month of August, featured guest artist, Erika Wolfe, will be exhibiting what she calls her, "Signature Pieces" and new Touchstones along with a special selection of her one of a kind and limited edition series, earrings at the FMAAA gallery show, with an opening reception on Friday, August 10 from 5 to 7 PM.

The Signature pieces Erika Wolfe explains, "Are pieces that most express my personal creative design style. I stress the geometric because I believe it to be a visual form that is easily understood - a kind of universal law that expresses an absolute dimension." She adds, "My pieces set up an aesthetic in which various forces of volumes and voids, color and texture, balance between stone setting, play and interact."

Everything begins with a detailed drawing and takes three dimensional form and space from that point on. Many of the pieces for this show come from her special collection of long treasured and saved up stones or work requiring a particularly challenging process of assembly and construction. Everything that she creates is fabricated from sterling silver sheet, wire or tubing and can require truly specialized amount of time and patience to bring to its final and completed form.

"At times the challenge becomes an all consuming task but also one that is more satisfying and meaningful than anything else that I am able to do,” she says.

Over the years, Erika has donated auction pieces of her jewelry to the Keokuk Art Center, "Festival of Trees and Gifts," the FMAAA Expressions auction and the Main Street, Keokuk, "Summer Street Festival" events.

With a masters degree in silversmithing from California State University, Erika Wolfe taught high school students until early retirement in 1996. Leaving California for Main Street, Keokuk, "Summer Street Festival" events.

"My talent is a God given gift, " Erika concludes, "and as long as He continues to provide an opportunity to accomplish here. I think he's going to be a welcome addition to the council and I look forward to working with him."

Randolph said the fact that Mohrfeld stepped to the plate speaks well of the city. "I appreciate Mr. Mohrfeld stepping up," Randolph said. "I think the fact that he's a lifelong resident and he's an active community leader, very involved in just about everything that's going on in town, just speaks volumes to what we're trying to accomplish here. I think he's going to be a welcome addition to the council and I look forward to working with him."
Tebbs says years of service is to “make a difference”
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Council wants to see changes in policy before voting again

MANUAL - Continued from Page 1

changes. The manual also eliminates executive leave for those who are exempt from overtime, such as department heads, who were previously allowed seven days compensatory time.

Morawitz then questioned who had reviewed the changes, specifically the overtime changes. “This was never brought before the council. We didn’t know anything about this and it wasn’t in our packet.”

Varley said he was bringing it in front of the council now.

Morawitz said he didn’t agree with how the process was handled and would vote against the changes.

After a brief discussion on vacation accrual, Morawitz made a motion to table the resolution until the council could see a report outlining the changes.

That motion resulted in a tie, with Morawitz, newly sworn in 3rd Ward Councilman Matt Mohrfeld, and Rusty Andrews voting in favor of the motion and Chris Greenwald, Mark Lair, and Chad Cangas voting against it. As a tie, the motion failed. Then the council voted on whether to approve the new manual, which also failed along the same votes.

Mohrfeld said the manual changes were discussed with employees in departments, but Morawitz said he would rather see a summary.

Mohrfeld said the manual changes were made by city personnel attorney Pat O’Connell to verify state and federal compliance.

Mohrfeld, who now replaces Travis Seidel in the Third Ward, asked if the changes were already implemented, to which City Finance Director Peggy Steffensmeier said, yes, to a murmur from the handful of residents in attendance.

“Isn’t that problematic?” Mohrfeld asked.

Varley said the manual changes had been underway for a while as a result of the Chapter 20 changes at the state level that pulled bargaining rights from public employees. He said the manual was run by city personnel attorney Pat O’Connell to verify state and federal compliance.

“They are no longer allowed to bargain for a lot of things they used to be able to and now it’s pretty much restricted to wages,” Varley said. “What we did was went through and took what was in their contract and moved the benefits covered into the personnel manual.”

Fort Madison Community School District went through the same undertaking with their teacher benefits after the law changed.

“Our goal was to make it as fair and consistent as possible across all departments. It’s impossible to do all because state law treats police and fire differently,” Varley said.

“Overall, the cost to the city is going to be a little higher now. But overall we think the employees in the policy manual will be equal to or better off than when they were under the contract. That’s why we were doing this. 66% of employees are not union members.”

Mayor Brad Randolph asked how often manual gets reviewed and Varley said either by city review every three to five years or a change in state or federal law that needs adopted into the manual.

Councilman Rusty Andrews said the manual has been a topic of conversation with employees who’ve brought it up to him, and asked if he had seen it yet.

“It’s been worked on for quite a while so I believe it’s thoroughly done,” he said. “But when city employees come to me and ask me about it... If it was disbursed to council I think it would be a good idea.” Andrews said.

City Public Works Director Larry Driscoll asked if the policy manual isn’t approved would the adjustments take place.

“Well, we can go back and take away the money I guess if they don’t want it to approve it tonight,” Varley said. “Take away the money we started July 1, the additional you get for getting a CDL because we increased that 90-cents per hour. If the council wants to take that away from employees and make that retroactive we can do that. But there’s quite a few instances of changes like that.”

“I think the ask is that they would have liked to have seen the contents of the changes to get a little more time to understand that. I don’t dispute it, it sounds like you met with respective parties and got input,” Randolph said.

Steffensmeier said she had hoped to have the manual before the council sooner.

“We thought this was going to go to you guys before June,” she said.

“The attorney didn’t get it done. We wanted our employees to know that we were doing this in good faith so we went ahead and did it.”

“I don’t think we need to deconstruct the entire thing just because it wasn’t handled well,” Cangas said.

Randolph asked Varley if the city would keep going in the same direction financially, to which Varley said it would.

After the meeting, when asked how the city could continue to administer benefits according to a manual that didn’t pass council approval, Randolph said the city is going forward in good faith with its employees.

He said the issue will probably be reintroduced as an agenda item at a future council meeting.
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