

Arrest

Continued from Page 1A

Noah Petersen called for the city to defund the Newton Police Department, saying it is a “violent, civil and human rights violating organization” that does not make the community safer. He also claimed the department is “pro-domestic abuse” for employing what he called a domestic abuser.

Newton Mayor Mike Hansen slammed his gavel and said Petersen was out of order. Despite Petersen’s protests, Hansen called on Newton Police Chief Rob Burdess to escort him from the council chambers inside city hall. Hansen said Petersen was violating the rules of the city council meeting.

“You are violating the United States Constitution,” Petersen said.

At every council meeting, the mayor allows citizens to address the council on matters included in the consent agenda or a matter that is not on the regular agenda. When recognized by the mayor, each person is given three minutes to speak. Others already spoke before Petersen and were held to the time limit.

However, Petersen had only spoke for a minute before the mayor cut him off. The police chief approached the podium and tried to get Petersen to leave. Petersen refused and said he would speak for his three minutes. The mayor said his three minutes had ceased and that he violated the rules.

The city requires comments or questions during citizen participation must be related to city policies or the provision of city services and shall not include derogatory statements or comments



Christopher Braunschweig/Newton News

Noah Petersen, right, is told to keep order by Newton Police Lt. Chris Wing on Sept. 6 after disrupting the city council meeting with comments condemning the police department. Petersen returned to the Oct. 3 city council meeting saying the same comments and was subsequently arrested for disorderly conduct. Petersen says his First Amendment rights were violated.

about any individual. Petersen’s comments referenced a specific officer but did not outwardly call the officer by name.

“I have a right to criticize the government if I want to criticize the government,” Petersen said. “You are violating the First Amendment.”

Burdess reiterated to Petersen that he was told to leave. When Petersen said he would not leave, Burdess asked him if he wanted to be arrested.

“Sure, arrest me then,” Petersen said. “Arrest me for speaking my First Amendment rights. Go ahead. You should be ashamed of yourselves.”

Petersen was escorted quietly into the atrium of city hall, where Burdess patted him down in a search for weapons, drugs and paraphernalia, finding nothing. Petersen was then charged with disorderly conduct and transported to Jasper County

Jail. POLICE DEPARTMENT ISSUES PRESS RELEASE ON INCIDENT

Newton News reached out to Burdess and the city administrator for comment and was given a press release about the incident.

The police department alleged Petersen was speaking in a manner that was deemed to be in violation of the stated rules for citizen participation. Newton police said Petersen became disruptive and refused several directives by law enforcement to leave the podium as directed by the mayor.

At the meeting, Petersen was reading from a prepared statement on the Notes app of his phone. He later shared the full statement on social media, where he tells city council to reallocate funds from the police department to a number of other areas that he says will “actually help people.”

Petersen’s statement rec-

ommended the funds be used to aid people with substance abuse issues and create an “actually viable public transportation system.” He also told council to give money to a different organization that deals with traffic infractions “instead of an armed paramilitary.”

Funds should also be used, he added, to deal with the housing crisis “by creating a robust public housing program for the poor and working class.”

PETERSEN MADE PREVIOUS APPEARANCES AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

This most recent council meeting was not the first time Petersen tried to share his criticisms of the city and police department.

At the Sept. 6 council meeting, he read from the same statement during a resolution approving the design and construction of a park project and a resolution amending the contract with Teamsters

Local 120. The mayor ordered Newton Police Lt. Chris Wing to remove Petersen from the chambers.

Petersen believes it was wrong for the police chief to arrest him. The city did not want to hear his criticism, he said.

“They actually let one person speak over the three-minute period. There was no cut off. There was no telling him to stop speaking. There was no cops involved. Rightfully so,” Petersen said. “I think that is the correct approach. People speaking at public meetings should not have cops involved and be cut off.”

MORE BACKGROUND ON PETERSEN’S CLAIMS

In a follow-up interview with Newton News, Petersen said if given the chance to finish his statement he would have expanded on a few other points in addition to his comments about the department supporting domestic abuse.

This comment in particular was referring to the specific officer. Officer Nathan Winters — whose background was called into question online after he arrested 19-year-old Tay Galanakis in late August for driving impaired, only for him to blow a 0.00 on a breathalyzer and pass further drug inspection tests — has a protective/no-contact order placed on him.

The order was put in place because of a civil domestic abuse case with Winter’s former girlfriend. However, the order has an added stipulation, agreed upon by the former girlfriend, that allows Winters to conduct official police business. The order has since been extended and is still in place.

Contact Christopher Braunschweig at 641-792-3121 ext 560 or at cbraunschweig@newtondailynews.com

Admin

Continued from Page 1A

“When you come in that door, that door is specifically marked,” Sparks said. “It’s marked who’s in that hallway and the only people in that hallway is adult and juvenile probation. The sign says ‘Jasper County Offices.’ The letter on the door says ‘adult and juvenile probation.’ The other two doors are also marked.”

Even with those designations on the door, Sparks argued they cannot be seen by customers who are already face to face with the glass. Customers are given one of two choices: walk around on the outside or walk through the building.

Sparks said complaints from the public say on the two doors that are labeled, depending on which way a person drives down the road he or she might not see the sign. So driving in one direction the sign is visible while driving in the

other direction the sign is not.

“The reason they’re telling me they’re going through the other two doors is because they’re marked Jasper County Offices,” Sparks said.

Ultimately, people are looking for the driver’s license/motor vehicles departments. Sparks initially thought to have the new sign state “Jasper County Offices,” but he also considered the idea of having a east side sign more specific to nearby services after speaking with county treasurer Doug Bishop.

“Which he’s probably not wrong if we make it as specific to the treasurer/DMV because we’re trying to catch the 90 percent of the people going into that building and looking for that specific office,” Sparks said. “If we write ‘Jasper County Offices’ on this sign and put it up there ... they may still walk in the other doors.”

Sparks provided supervisors with quotes from Newton businesses Sign Pro and Perfor-



Christopher Braunschweig/Newton News

Officials noted the lack of signage on the east side of the Jasper County administration building is causing issues for customers and for staff. At an upcoming meeting, supervisors will consider the purchase and installation of a sign that refers people to the treasurer’s office services.

mance Sign Company for the installation of the Jasper County Offices sign. Sign Pro provided a quote of \$3,925. Performance Sign Company provided a quote of \$4,566. But with other ideas on the table, supervisors held off on a vote.

Other issues the administration building has come across is the address for the driver’s

license department at 315 W. Third St. N. suite 500 — when searched on Google Maps — directs drivers to the nearby Lions Gate Apartments, further emphasizing the need for some kind of specific signage.

Bishop said claims have been submitted to Google to address that problem. He, too, emphasized the need for signage by sharing the number of visits his office received these past months. In August,

there were a little more than 5,000 customers who entered the treasurer’s office; September saw more than 7,000.

“If you put ‘Jasper County Driver’s License, Motor Vehicle, Property Taxes’ on there, you’re filtering 70 to 80 percent of those folks. You’re still going to have some folks who go the wrong way or whatever, but I don’t blame adult probation. I wouldn’t want to be a traffic cop for us all day long either,” Bishop said.

Jasper County Supervisor Doug Cupples proposed the sign could say “Jasper Co.” and then use the extra space to add the services available at the east entrance. Other ideas were shared by the maintenance director, treasurer and supervisors, prompting the board to postpone their action.

Now accepting appointments!

Newton Clinic is excited to welcome family practice/OB physician Dr. Sarah Florence. Dr. Florence has special interests in women’s health and obstetrical care, though she also enjoys caring for every member of the family at any age. If you or someone you know is in need of a general doctor, needs a pediatrician, or are planning to have a baby, call for an appointment with Dr. Florence at Newton clinic!

Dr. Sarah Florence
family practice + OB

Newton Clinic is a multi-specialty clinic serving the citizens of Newton and Jasper County. Our 22 providers offer health-care services in the areas of family medicine, obstetrics, gynecology, internal medicine and surgical podiatry.

Newton Clinic has same-day appointments for urgent care issues and offers a daily walk-in clinic for acute care issues from 5-6PM weekdays and 9AM-noon on Saturdays.



Newton Clinic PC
Be treated... like family

300 N. 4th Ave. E.
641-792-2112
www.newtonclinic.com
www.facebook.com/newtonclinic

YOU DECIDE!!

Vote for your favorites.

Show your appreciation for local businesses by voting for them in the Readers Choice 2022 contest.

See the results on November 24 in the **JASPER COUNTY TRIBUNE & PCM EXPLORER** and in the November 25 edition of the **NEWTON NEWS.**

To fill out a ballot log on to:
<https://newtondailynews.secondstreetapp.com/Jasper-County-Readers-Choice-2022-2/gallery>

*** 1 VOTE PER DAY, PER CATEGORY ***
 *** Voting ends 10/16 at Midnight ***