

# Forum

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forum, the Democrats talked meeting times, secondary roads splitting up board work and what their overall goals were for the county. Other times candidates were asked to speak on previous board actions, like a heating shelter and gun sanctuary.

When it comes to meeting times, both Price and Olson felt an evening meeting could be justified. The board of supervisors currently meets every Tuesday morning, but the candidates felt at least one evening or Saturday meeting could give citizens an opportunity to make presentations or hear what's going on.

"This is one of my pet peeves," Olson said. "There are four meetings a month. You can't tell me that at least one of those meetings couldn't be an evening or a Saturday. We need to be able to get people in. They're working during the week so a lot of times they can't come in. But they have issues they need to bring."

Oddly enough the issue of secondary roads was not brought up in the joint forum, but it was addressed in Q&As sent by Newton News. The answers both Olson and Price shared were similar to those responses, which are viewable at www.newtondailynews.com. They stressed the

importance of gravel roads.

"We need to be sure that our farmers can get their crops in on quality roads," Price said. "And most importantly we have school buses out there with precious cargo on those roads, and we need to make sure our kids are getting back and forth the school safely."

When asked about the specific workshops between the engineer and supervisors, Olson shared her skepticism. Price, too,

The moderator of the League of Women Voters forum asked how Olson or Price would function in a split board if they are elected. If only one Democrat is elected to the board, she would be surrounded by two Republicans. Price said she has worked with differing perspectives in the past.

"We need to recognize what everybody has to bring to the table. Once we found out who the players are we need to respect those," Price said. "But most of all we need to encourage one particular board member to treat people with respect. And that goes a long way."

Price said her overall goal for the county is to boost economic development, saying it funds all the services citizens need. Olson said her overall goal for the county is to make it the best she can.

"Make it great for people to live here. Make it great for companies to want to



Christopher Braunschweig/Newton News

come in here and put their money into our county, to get them to see how we have all these wonderful little towns here

in Jasper County that have great things going on for them," Olson said. "We need to publicize it."

# Arrest

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be removed from power. Mayor Mike Hansen told him to not defame the police chief and to continue on.

When Petersen persisted to call the mayor and police chief fascists, Hansen slammed his gavel and said his comments are over. The mayor reminded Petersen that the rules of public comment clearly state that citizens are not to make derogatory statements or comments about any individual.

"Including an employee of the City of Newton. Seize your comments. Sit down," Hansen said before suspending the council meeting. Newton News was viewing the stream through the city's website, at which point it went offline when the mayor ordered the suspension. The council meeting resumed not long after.

In a recording posted on YouTube by spectator Justin Comer, Hansen is heard advising Petersen that he was being asked to leave the council chambers for violating the rules. Petersen appears to walk towards the exit where he is stopped and arrested by Lt. Chris Wing and Police Chief Rob Burdess.

Petersen was also given a letter of no trespass, which he signed. The letter states he was ordered to leave the administration building at 101 W. Fourth St. S. in Newton and to not return for the next 24 hours for any purpose. If



Christopher Braunschweig/Newton News

Noah Petersen, 22, is arrested and removed from the city council meeting on Oct. 24 in Newton. Petersen made derogatory comments about the mayor and police chief, which is against the rules laid out in the citizen participation portion of the agenda.

Petersen did not follow the notice, the city states in the letter that it may prosecute.

### MAYOR SAYS IT IS NOT THE PLACE AND TIME FOR COMMENTS

Shortly before Hansen reconvened the meeting, he suggested citizens would not be allowed to conduct oneself at a school board, supervisors or state legislature meeting in the way Petersen has the past two council meetings. Petersen was previously arrested after saying the police department was pro-domestic abuse.

Like the Oct. 3 meeting, Petersen was told to stop but continued to speak and was eventually put in handcuffs and removed from the building. Petersen also called for

council to defund the police during multiple agenda items in a September meeting. Hansen called the recent behavior disrespectful.

"And as long as I am sitting in this chair and we have rules to enforce, I will do so," Hansen said. "I make no apologies for that whatsoever. This is a business meeting, conducted to take care of your business. And if you want to be political, politically active, on issues, there's plenty of place and time for that."

But the time and place to address those issues, he added, is not in the council chambers.

According to Iowa Code Chapter 21.7, which specifically addresses the rules of conduct at meetings, government bodies are not prevented

"from making and enforcing reasonable rules for the conduct of its meetings to assure those meetings are orderly and free from interference or interruption by spectators."

### LEGAL ADVICE PRECEDES CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Prior to citizen participation, Hansen had Doug Fulton — an attorney for Brick Gentry P.C. who subbed in for city attorney Matthew Brick — provide context to citizens' First Amendment rights. The U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly affirmed the freedom of speech under the First Amendment is not absolute.

"First Amendment does not guarantee the right to communicate one's views at all times and places or any

many that may be desired," Fulton said. "Cities have the ability to implement and enforce rules regarding reasonable time, place and manner restrictions during public meetings."

Residents of Newton can make public comments during the citizen participation portion of the meeting, which is held before the consent agenda and other major agenda items. Each person is given three minutes to speak, and comments must be related to city policies or the provision of city services.

However, the rules also say residents shall not include derogatory statements or comments about any individual.

They must also state their name and address before making comments. All remarks must be germane, Fulton said, so that citizens making irrelevant remarks or use profanity may be barred by the presiding officer, who will determine the germaneness of comments.

"It is a violation of the rules for anyone to refuse to identify themselves or (refuse to) provide their address at the state of the comments, or to make derogatory comments referencing individual citizens or employees," Fulton said. "For those violations, any individual can be told their period of comment is terminated."

They can also be removed from the council chambers.

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

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