

Ackley World Journal

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In Short Order

Ackley Council Cuts 'Wish-Lists'

BECKY SCHIPPER
EDITOR

The Ackley City Council met in a special session last Tuesday evening to take a look at the Fiscal Year 2024 budget work completed thus far by department heads and Ackley City Clerk, Malena Dennis. The meeting lasted only a half hour, including a public hearing on the proposed property tax levy, approving the total maximum property tax dollars requested from property owners/taxpayers in Ackley for the budget, and accepting a bid for the removal of five trees in the City Park.

With no taxpayers making comment during the public hearing, the property tax levy of 13.33275 per \$1,000 of assessed value, was accepted, and approved unanimously. The maximum amount to be raised through the levy will not exceed \$561,259, per Resolution 23-06. The amount is a decrease from last year by 2.26 percent.

Council members Chuy Flores and Dan Scallon both attended the meeting via telephone, Scallon disconnecting shortly after the vote to accept the levy rate.

Approval meant that work on the budget could continue with the figures plugged in by Dennis, noting that \$111,765 would need to be cut in order to balance the budget. Dennis opened the workshop by explaining that the Iowa Legislature is still in session discussing further rollback to the multi-residential property rollback put in place in previous sessions.

Last Thursday, the rollback did pass the Iowa Senate. At press time, a vote by the Iowa House on the issue was scheduled for Feb. 6. If approved, the rollback change would go into effect with the FY24 budget resulting in the City of Ackley receiving approximately \$50,000 less revenue.

That decision would require an equal amount of further cuts to the Ackley budget before it needs to be certified. Every city in Iowa, big or small, will face the same issue. State officials discovered the error in October, though failed to tell cities, counties, and school boards, which continued their budget process unaware.

As presented for the workshop, city leaders needed to cut \$111,765, a feat which Dennis and department heads had been discussing prior to the meeting. Dennis advised that a portion of that figure – based on individual departmental 'wish lists', could be pulled from the respective departments' reserve accounts rather than from the City's general fund.

Kendall Meyer, Ackley Fire Chief, agreed to pull the purchase of a generator from that departments' reserve account. The funding for that account is provided through monies from townships as well as that from the City of Ackley. Using the fire reserves will not affect the monies put back in a capitol reserve account which funds for new fire trucks and other major equipment.

Other departments, such as the Ackley Public Library, may put LED lighting on hold for another year in order to preserve reserves while still taking care of a broken water line underneath the concrete in the building. At the same time, the Ackley Police Department will not be looking forward to purchasing a new car camera and radar gun during the FY24 budget.

In order to find the remainder of the cuts needed, Clerk Dennis suggested the city consider cutting the legal expense budget from \$3,000 to \$1,500 base on past need. Additionally, funding for the replacement of Christmas lights in the community was also put on hold.

Councilperson Judy Crawford agreed that the cuts are sufficient until, and if, the Legislature makes the change in the law regarding the rollback previously discussed.

Following the meeting, Mayor Mike Nuss explained that while city leaders may need to go through the process of cutting the budget again before it can be certified, every other city will also be losing tax dollars they thought they had.

"There are no easy answers. Coupled with continuing rising costs, a loss of revenue, in any amount, can result in having to make difficult decisions in regard to providing services to residents," Nuss said. "As a taxpayer, I also want to pay less; as Mayor, I want to be able to continue providing services to residents." ●



Table for Nine

BRITTANY SHAFFER/ACKLEY WORLD JOURNAL

Bitter cold on Thursday and Friday brought flocks of birds to feeders throughout the area. Activity at this feeder was particularly busy as the sparrows gathered to do their best to empty it.

Ackley World Journal named 2023 Newspaper of the Year

The Ackley World Journal was named as the Iowa Newspaper Association 2023 'Newspaper of the Year' during the association's Awards Ceremony held on Feb. 2 in Des Moines. The newspaper is owned by Times Citizen Communications in Iowa Falls.

There were approximately 2,500 entries in dozens of categories which were judged by class, based on circulation numbers. The Ackley World Journal competes in Weekly Class I, which is newspapers published weekly with a maximum circulation of 875 and under.

In addition to the top honor, the Ackley World Journal placed first overall in General Excellence in its class, which included entries from 24 newspapers. General Excellence winners are determined based on points accumulated for

each award won in the contest.

The paper also placed first, second, and third in Best of Class Advertising. The award winner is chosen from first place ads in each class.

In total, the Ackley World Journal won 32 awards.

The Ackley World Journal placed first in Best Sports Section, Best Feature Page, Coverage of Business, Best Special Section – Editorial, Total Newspaper Design, Community Leadership presented for the newspapers continued organization of the annual visit from Santa Claus, Best Headline Writing, and Best Newspaper Website. The paper placed second in Best Front Page, as well as placing

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Land Auction Set by Supervisors

Four Named to Condemnation Board

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Becky Schipper, Ackley World Journal, also contributed to this story.

The Hardin County Board of Supervisors approved Condemnation Board changes at their Jan. 23 meeting, as John Kix and Jeremiah Andrews have both resigned from the board. The board named the following individuals as replacements. Representing property owners, Teresa Thoms and Julie Duhn were named along with Norm Houston representing realtors, Curt Groen from the business community, and Glen Carpenter, farming.

A public hearing was scheduled for Monday, Feb. 13, to convey a ten acre plot of land in a public auction. Set for 9:05 a.m., the live auction will take place at the same time at the EOC Building in Eldora. The auction will take place in the training room there.

The property, located at 28749 County Highway D41, is just southeast of Owasa. It consists of approximately 10 acres of landlocked tillable wetlands, in Section 26, Township 88, Range 20W.

Supervisor Chair, Lance Granzow, advised any interested parties that the parcel may be landlocked and an easement will be necessary with the surrounding landowner. There is not a current easement to gain access to it. Granzow said the opportunity is a "buy at your own risk" transaction. Qualified bidders should have their



CREDIT

Hardin County Supervisors will hold a live public auction for this 10-acre parcel of land located southeast of Owasa.

bids in the Hardin County Auditor's Office in Eldora, no later than 4:30 p.m. this Friday, Feb. 10. The interested bidder or agent must also be physically present at the auction to bid. The min-

imum bid, per acre, is \$1,500.

Questions on the auction or the property may be addressed to the Hardin County Attorney, Darrell Meyer at 641-939-8118. ●

