

# Ackley World Journal

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## Hold that thought

### Ambulance Merger to go to Re-Vote

BECKY SCHIPPER | EDITOR

In a surprise move, Ackley councilman Joe Wessels challenged the vote on proceeding with the merger for services between the Ackley Volunteer Ambulance Service and Eldora Emergency Services during the meeting held on Wednesday evening. That vote took place during the February meeting of the Ackley meeting.

Wessels explained that he had contacted the Iowa League of Cities, who informed him that the mayor pro tem Judy Crawford's vote for proceeding with the merger was improper and that she could not vote on the issue.

That information was incorrect, with City Clerk Malena Dennis providing the council with Iowa Code 372.14 which clearly states that the mayor pro tem retains all of the powers of a council member.

Crawford, herself, was absent from the March 8 meeting, and Mayor Mike Nuss reminded the council members in attendance that only a member voting in favor could call for a re-vote, leaving Wessels without the option of calling for the re-vote.

Wessels said, "After all the disturbing, not disturbing, but illegible stuff that's been putting (sic) in the news media, electronic media, and everywhere else, I've had people asking me what we are doing, and asking me if I can explain it to them." He continued, "I think we have to look more into this agreement more than just a simple vote."

Councilman Mike Abbas who serves as the AVAS Board of Trustee President, and who along with Crawford and Dan Scallon, voted in favor of the measure in February, did make the call for the re-vote which will take place April 12.

The Ackley Public Safety Committee is comprised of council members Chuy Flores and Crawford. Crawford and Scallon, along with Mayor Nuss, have attended at least one subcommittee meeting held with representatives from Eldora - Carrie Callaway Morton, Jerry Kramer and Maile Carter - on the joint venture. Details of that meeting included breaking the merger into phases, slowing it down and allowing Ackley time to secure sleeping quarters for the new crew which would be stationed in Ackley.

The decision to re-vote blindsided AVAS Director Joan Frazier, who reminded the members present that as it sits presently, the AVAS is not sustainable.

"I know you're frustrated I didn't present any other options. I don't have any other options," she said. "I have 11 on the crew, four are done in July, one is on medical leave - now I have seven; five of whom have submitted applications for the new service."

What Frazier didn't remind the council is that earlier in the evening, they approved the budget for Fiscal Year 2024. That budget, based on the merger proceeding, provides AVAS with revenue of \$26,000 and \$23,747 in expenditures to cover operating expenses for the June services which are payable in July and the remaining agreed upon merger expenses for the budget year. If the merger does

not happen, the City of Ackley will need to find places within the budget to fund running the service until another option becomes available.

In the first three quarters of FY22, the service had revenue of \$53,614 and expenses of \$63,074.

"If you don't vote for this, I don't have another solution," Frazier said.

Four AVAS crew members, Jesse Gardner, Jesse Oelmann, Reid Shaffer and Chris Richtsmeier spoke to the council during the public forum. All four were in favor of the merger, with Richtsmeier asking if the council wanted 24/7 coverage with a response time of five to seven minutes, or if they'd rather wait 20 minutes for aid.

"Think about that," Richtsmeier said.

Shaffer, though relatively new to the crew, told the council that if the service is lost, it's something that the community won't be able to get back.

"If we don't merge, we're done," Shaffer said.

In other business, council members learned that hazardous mitigation plans (through Hardin County Emergency Management) need to be redone. Plans from 2018, Mayor Nuss told, were not adopted by resolution by any of the cities in the county, meaning that the State of Iowa will not recognize those plans. As a result, Thomas Craighton, Hardin County Emergency Management Coordinator is coordinating the communities in the county so new plans are put together and adopt them through Resolution.

Nuss reported that an Ackley Lions member had informed him that the club members had voted to sell their building to the City at a cost of \$40,000. The structure had been looked at as a possible location for the AVAS. If the City wishes to purchase the building, it would be available.

Council scheduled a public hearing to amend Chapter 78 of the Ackley Code of Ordinances relating to the use of off-road utility vehicles within city limits. These UTV's will be allowed on any street within the city, while the use of snowmobiles will be limited to using the most direct route from a residence to outside the town. ATV's will not be allowed on any street.

Resolution 23-10, which sets salaries for city employees was approved. The following hourly wages were established for the clerks: Malena Dennis, City Clerk, at \$23.39 per hour; Carrie Stahl, Deputy City Clerk at \$16.50 per hour.

Other wages and salaries set include: Gerry Frick, Police Chief, at \$63,000 a year; Kendall Meyer, Public Works Supervisor, \$22.34 per hour; Brock Holmgaard, Public Works Assistant, \$18.94 per hour; Trent Walters, Public Works Assistant, \$17.85 per hour; Tanner Weichers, Public Works as needed, \$15 hour; Marjean Clemons, Library Director, at \$14.96 per hour; Barbara Kreymeier, part-time library, \$11.04; Stephanie Buhman, part-time library, \$11.36; Ambulance Service personnel for vehicle and shed cleaning, \$12 per hour; Run Report Manager, \$12 per hour; and scheduler, \$12 per hour. These wages will become effective with the first pay date in July.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the council is scheduled for April 12. ●



CREDIT

Members of the 2023 AGWSR Decathlon team performed well at the State competition held last week in Urbandale. Members include: (front) Eleanor Martin, Catelynn Koop, Ava Olson, Ella Diemer and Jade Wood; (back) Trinity Rotgers, Kylie Willems, Noah Clikeman and Alex Bausman.

## AGWSR Decathlon team earns top honors at State

The 2023 AGWSR Academic Decathlon team competed at the 38th Iowa State Academic Decathlon competition in Urbandale on March 3 and 4. Top scoring schools from around the state are invited to compete. This year's event included 209 high school students competing for medals and trophies.

AGWSR students qualified for the competition by placing well at the Regional Competition held in Grundy Center on Jan. 26. Four to five regional competitions are held across the state with the 24 top schools qualifying for the state competition.

This year's topic was 'The American Revolution'. The nov-

el for the year is 'Wieland' by Charles Brockden Brown.

Academic Decathlon includes ten events. Three are subjective events - speech (including a prepared speech and an impromptu speech), interview, and essay; seven objective events - art, economics, language and literature, math, music, science, and social science. The central topic, The American Revolution, is the focus for each of the objective tests.

A decathlon team is made up of nine members. There are three GPA divisions and each team is to have three students in each of those divisions. The GPA used includes only core classes, rather than a com-

prehensive GPA used in class ranking.

The 2023 AGWSR Decathlon State team members include the following:

Honor Division - Alex Bausman, Eleanor Martin (Math, silver medal), Ava Olson (Interview, gold medal); Scholastic Division - Catelynn Koop (Interview, silver medal), Ella Diemer (Math, bronze medal), Jade Wood (Economics, silver medal and Science, bronze medal); Varsity Division - Trinity Rotgers, Kylie Willems, Noah Clikeman. The team is coached by Christy Koop.

The 2024 topic will be Technology and Humanity with the novel 'The Lathe of Heaven' by Ursula K. Le Guin. ●



BRITTANY SHAFFER/ACKLEY WORLD JOURNAL

AGWSR students and staff got a surprise early out last Thursday as heavy snow blanketed the area. Kids ran to the bus excitedly chattering to each other about all the wonderful activities they would do on the snow day that ended their school day just hours after it began.

## AGWSR Board holds meeting March 7

BECKY SCHIPPER  
EDITOR

The AGWSR school board held a meeting on March 7 in the district board room. The agenda posted shows it was considered a regular session of the board members. The meeting was scheduled for 6:30 p.m.

Minutes, sent for publication at 10:12 p.m. on March 7, show the meeting included all

board members took part in a closed session based on Chapter 21.5(1)(i) of the Iowa Code to evaluate the professional competency of an individual whose appointment, hiring, performance, or discharge is being considered when necessary to prevent needless and irreparable injury to that individual's reputation and that individual requests a closed session.

Iowa Code also states that final action must be taken in public. No actions were shown to have been made following the closed session which ended at 8:02 p.m., the same time the meeting was adjourned. That does not suggest the board acted in the closed session, only that an action was not made during public, or open, session. ●

