

Ackley World Journal

VOL. 129 | WEEK 20 | \$1.50



The annual cap toss was held inside for the Class of 2023 following ceremonies held for the AGWSR seniors on Sunday afternoon.

BECKY SCHIPPER/ACKLEY WORLD JOURNAL

POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE

BECKY SCHIPPER | EDITOR

The day AGWSR's Class of 2023 has imagined throughout their high school careers arrived on Sunday as the 45 students crossed the stage to receive their high school diplomas and prepared to take the first steps toward the goals they have set for their life's journey.

The gymnasium was packed with their extremely proud families and members of the entire community, each excited to share in the moment their loved ones received their diplomas from school board president Josh Meyer and

superintendent Erik Smith.

Honor students, including Avery Lafrenz, Ella McGrath, and Lila Vaughn as Valedictorians – those students maintaining a 4.0 grade point average throughout their high school career, and Rachel Haupt as Salutatorian, were presented to those attending the ceremony.

High School principal, Jason Gabel, provided the commencement address, with Avery Lafrenz providing the response.

National Honor Society members of the class are Bo Gerbracht, Avery Lafrenz, and Ella McGrath.

Students earning Silver Service cords, those who have donated 300 or more hours of community service, were: Bo Gerbracht, Brianna Kruger, and Ella McGrath.

The class chose "One step at a time, but always forward." as their class motto, the white rose and white carnation as their class flowers and chose purple and navy as their class colors.

The Class of 2023 includes: Alina Andrade-Smith, Eli Brandt, Taryn Day, Aiden De Wolf, Steven During, Bo Gerbracht, Brianda Gonzalez, Jose Gonzalez, Yatziry Gonzalez, Jared Granzow,

Rachel Haupt, Katilyn Homeister, Kienzle Hoodjer, Beau Ivey, Brianna Kruger, Avery Lafrenz, Dania Larios, Annabelle Ludt, Sydney Lyman, Madyson Mausser, Ella McGrath, Breyden Miller, Tate Miller, Elizabeth Muir, Nathaniel Mullins, Makayla Nolte, Ashtion Palmateer, Alejandro Puente-Morales, Jadya Rae, Coltan Richtsmeier, Chloe Roberts, Alma Robling, Sakya Rodamaker, Bradley Roder, Cade Rose, Trinity Rotgers, Sidney Schafer, Camden Shogren, Kylie Sillman, Bryn Smith, Tessa Sperfslage, George Van Hove, Lila Vaughn, Ana Villalobos, and Kylie Willems. ●

IT'S ON AGAIN

Ackley Council will move forward with merger

BECKY SCHIPPER
EDITOR

The possibility of moving forward with the merger between the Ackley Volunteer Ambulance Service (AVAS) and Eldora EMS is back on the table following the May 10 Ackley City Council meeting. The unanimous vote to continue was preceded by a lengthy conversation between the council and the members of the crowded galley, including AVAS medical director, Dr. Berri Swasand.

Other than a dozen fire department members who showed interest in becoming First Responders, there were no new alternatives proposed for the community. As such, the conversations surrounding the service returned to options for the proposed merger with Eldora.

While the fire department members did have a discussion, and indicated their interest in the roles, there was not a formal vote to move forward with the option.

Fire Chief Kendall Meyer explained that there are members interested in serving in the role as a way to give back to their community. Nothing formal – from investigation into training, costs, or manner to proceed had been taken.

"We just want to help," began Fire Chief Kendall Meyer. "If we could do something to help, during the day, when we don't have an ambulance crew – to do whatever until an ambulance can respond, that's all the further this has gone at this point."

Mayor Mike Nuss had spoken with Steve Vannatta, EMS Field Coordinator with Iowa Department of Public Health, Des Moines, and provided the council and audience with facts regarding First Responders. First Responders, he explained have very different roles than those of EMS personnel. They do work under a medical director but are very restricted in their response at a scene.

"Along with those things, Steve is familiar with Hardin County emergency services, and he questioned why the community would want

to downgrade the service when they have another option," Nuss said.

Swasand posed some tough questions in regard to what might happen if the merger does not take place.

"You have no money allocated after July 1. And not enough warm bodies to facilitate for the community which has donated to and invested in it," Swasand said. "First Responders are great, but they can't transport a patient." She explained that there is training to consider – three to six months.

"My understanding is that (with a merger) there would be paramedics here two days a week and as the revenue stream increases, that would increase," Swasand said. "That's better than no days a week, which is what you have now."

Jessie Gardner, AVAS member, suggested that the city ask for two EMTs for more days a week, as opposed to the current merger plans of a single paramedic for two days a week.

"We'd still be better off than what we have right now," Gardner said.

Councilman Joe Wessels was concerned about if any new proposed plan or idea would also be offered to Iowa Falls Emergency Services.

"Eldora is willing to have a crew here," Mayor Mike Nuss reminded Wessels. "Iowa Falls won't put a crew here." Nuss explained that a discussion with Jody Anderson (Iowa Falls City Manager) and Taylor Nederhoff (Iowa Falls City Attorney) was his source of information.

After a bit more discussion surrounding the topic, council person Judy Crawford made motion that the City of Ackley move forward with a merger with Eldora, changing verbiage to 'net lease' of equipment, ask for more people in Ackley, and more frequent financial analysis to expedite more coverage in Ackley as the possible merger proceeds.

Maile Carter, EMS Director for Eldora, says she remains open to suggestions from Ackley city leaders.

"I think at this point, we sit back and wait for Ackley to make a proposal," Carter said. "We will still be there for Ackley residents, and with or without a merger, we'll provide the best care for them that we possibly can." ●

New hires

City leaders approve new police officer and deputy clerk

BECKY SCHIPPER
EDITOR

The May meeting of the Ackley City Council involved more than discussions on the local ambulance service. Council members had a relatively short agenda outside of the discussions on the proposal, still it was a late night, with adjournment at 9:30 p.m.

The Ackley Police Department will double in size with the hiring of Brandi Valverde as the new police officer. Valverde was approved by the Ackley City Council for the position during their May 10 meeting. She will begin her role with the department on June 1 with a non-exempt salary of \$51,000 annually. The salary is based on a 43 hour work week, resulting in an hourly wage of \$22.81.

Also hired was Michelle Rotgers to the position of Deputy City Clerk. Rotgers will be paid \$15 per hour and be eligible for a 50 cent per hour raise after 90 days in her position. She will begin her role on June 1.

Dumont Telephone will be constructing a fiber optic project in Ackley and was on the agenda for a second month in a row. According to information in the council packet, the project will come into Ackley on Highway 57, go south on Prospect to Main Street, west on Main to State Street, south to 1st Avenue, west to Cerro Gor-

do, through an alley to Franklin Street, north to Lincoln, west on Lincoln to a hub which has already been put in place and then on to Douglas and Warbler. Representatives from the company were to be on hand for the meeting but did not show up.

Liner installation at the wastewater treatment plant has been installed, though Conner Ubben, representative of Peoples Service, is concerned about longevity of the liner, specifically on one side, due to soil preparation. Payment for the project will be withheld until questions about the work can be asked. The soil beneath the liner on one side of the holding pond is causing some stress points on the liner already. Lee Gallentine, city engineer, did tell the council that the manufacturer was on site during the process and did sign off on the installation.

Progress on the splashpad project was provided to the council. It was noted that the deck has been poured, tile has been plastered, and electric work in the control room has been started. Kendall Meyer, Certified Pool Operator, said that while a Memorial Day completion has been promised by the contractor, that deadline could be tight.

Council will proceed with a grant process which would aid in the cost of putting sidewalks on Butler Street for school children to use. The project, if grant funding is found, would need to wait until Fiscal Year 2025 due to budget constraints.

The next regularly scheduled council meeting will be held June 14 at 7 p.m. in council chambers at city hall. ●

