

Landmark case brought forth by citizen watchdogs

Court finds violations of Open Meeting Law were intentional; city council members fined \$7800

In what may be the biggest Open Meeting Law case in Minnesota history, a Carver County District Court has found four current Victoria City Council members committed a total of 38 intentional violations of the state transparency statute, leveling a total of \$7,800 in personal fines.

Victoria City Council members Tom Strigel, Mayor Tom O'Connor, Jim Crowley and Lani Basa were found by a Carver County Court to have committed 38 total violations of the MN Open Meeting Law.

by Tom Steward
Center for the American Experiment

The civil case brought by 13 residents of the Twin Cities suburb alleged numerous violations of the Open Meeting Law by city officials in 2013 in the process leading up to building a new city hall and public works building. State law requires governmental bodies to open their meetings to the public for transparency and stipulates fines of up to \$300 for each intentional violation.

Carver County District Judge Janet Cain found Victoria Mayor Tom O'Connor and City Councilor Jim Crowley each responsible for eleven Open Meeting Law violations, City Councilor Tom Strigel responsible for ten violations and City Councilor Lani Basa responsible for six violations. O'Connor and Crowley face fines of \$2,250, while Strigel was fined \$2,100 and Basa was fined \$1,200. None of the defendants commented in response to an American Experiment inquiry.

"They've been convicted of not complying with the law and misled the public about what was truly going on," said Tom Funk, a plaintiff with wife Carolyn. "The public was not allowed to participate in and witness the decision making process."

Judge Cain also found numerous additional violations of the Open Meeting Law by the Victoria City Council as an entity for failing to record meetings, provide notice of meetings and properly close meetings. She placed most of the responsibility for those failures on top city staff.

Judge fines elected officials for OML violations continued on page 2

Last weekend push has Col Hts School Board candidates ready for today's special election

Who'll win the second of two school board seats in Columbia Heights ISD 13?

Observations from the Field
Bryan Olson



COMMENTARY

The special election for the first seat has been completed and the winner, Naty Severson took office almost two months ago. The second seat is on the ballot today (Tuesday 5). The contest is between Tim Utz and Hala Asamarai. It's been a sleepy affair with not many people realizing the election was coming up. After all, they have been used to seeing candidates' signs all winter long because the primary for the first seat was in early December.

A couple of things stood out over the past few days: the Utz team stepped up their lawn sign placements and added a message to those signs, reminding voters of today's election. Also the Star Tribune published a story that said Utz had gained a sizeable amount of organized Muslim support because Muslims in the area are having a dispute with Asamarai and her husband about the operations of a mosque in Eden Prairie. The article had no information about the specifics of the dispute but the point the article wanted to make was there was some internal squabbling among Muslims that may have an effect on today's election.

The article wanted to stir a pot without knowing all of its ingredients. How seriously should we take this kind of reporting?

I'm more interested in the turnout. Will this supposed squabbling bring out any more voters? Today's election could have the lowest turnout of all the

Observations from the Field continued on page 5



ISD 13 school board candidate Tim Utz (center) with supporters in photo taken last week and released by the Utz campaign.

Salary and reimbursement changes for Nowthen City Council put off to future meeting

by Bryan Olson — Special to the Anoka County Record

Nowthen city councilor Randy Bettinger proposed at the March 3rd and 8th city council meetings that taxpayers could realize a savings if council salaries were adjusted to a flat rate and reimbursements were abolished.

During the earlier meeting, councilor Mary Rainville and Mayor Jeff Pilon asked for more detail to the proposal, and further discussion continued at the March 8 meeting. Ultimately, it was decided to put the matter off again.

The staff memo in the meeting packet showed some strikeouts to current dollar figures with new ones being proposed; the changes would be made to Section 3 of the city code as Ordinance 2016-02.

Bettinger came back to the second meeting to make one correction to the dollar figures in the memo. In 2012, council pay and mileage came to \$27,982; in 2013, \$33,574. For 2014 Bettinger made a verbal correction, stating that \$34,309 was spent. And in 2015 the amount was \$24,506.

Bettinger's changes to the ordinance passed in 2008 would put the city councilors salaries at a flat \$400 per month and the mayor's to \$500 per month. This represents an increase of \$100/month to each, however Bettinger wants to eliminate all reimbursements and mileage payments.

Pilon said he saw no urgency to act on this proposal since any change would

Proposal to abolish Nowthen councilor reimbursements cont. on page 5

TONIGHT SEN. BENSON, REP. DAUDT TO HOLD TOWN HALL MEETING IN NOWTHEN

Rep. Kurt Daudt, (R-Crown), Speaker of the House, and Sen. Michelle Benson, (R-Ham Lake) will hold a town hall meeting tonight, Tuesday April 5th to give an update on the legislative session and take questions from constituents.

The meeting will be at Nowthen Alliance Church, 19653 Nowthen Blvd. N.W. in Nowthen. Persons wanting to attend should enter through Door B, go right down the hall, and look for the choir room about halfway down the hallway.

Sen. Chamberlain Capitol Update

Real ID Bill

This week, Governor Dayton signed into law the Real ID bill that allows the Department of Public Safety to research the implementation of Real ID in Minnesota. By April 14, the department will present their findings to the legislature and then we'll decide whether or not to make all state-issued driver's licenses and identification cards compliant moving forward.

The media has sensationalized this issue, but there's no need to worry. You'll still be able to board an airplane with your current ID for quite a while. If you're one of the few people who needs to enter a federal facility that requires Real ID compliant identification, Enhanced Driver's Licenses or ID cards are available at many driver's license exam stations across the state. Here's more information on applying for an enhanced ID.

Hugo Rail Line Service Repair Bills

I have authored two bills (SF 2242 and SF 3189) that would secure funding for needed repairs to the rail line serving the City of Hugo and its industrial park. Without a source of funding, it is likely that rail service to Hugo will be permanently discontinued, jeopardizing several local businesses and putting approximately 500 jobs at risk.

OLA Reports

The Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) serves as a nonpartisan entity of oversight for virtually any state funded program or topic that affects state government, reporting back to the legislature on a regular basis. Recently, two reports were released by the OLA. One deals with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and its project selection process, while the other addresses the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB).

- IRRRB: The OLA was very critical of the IRRRB. The OLA determined that oversight and evaluation of loans and grants made by IRRRB are inadequate, there is a general lack of organization and accountability, databases and other recordkeeping methods are outdated and inadequate, in addition to many other critiques.

- MnDOT: The OLA was critical of MnDOT's project selection process. Two major critiques were: 1) MnDOT's standard selection process is not transparent and does not provide sufficient information regarding decisions and 2) it has selected projects, particularly for the Corridors of Commerce program, inconsistently and subjectively.

I highlight these reports because we should pay very close attention to each one distributed by the OLA and I believe taxpayers deserve to be well-informed when an agency funded by tax dollars is mishandling its duties.

Dyslexia Awareness Day at the Capitol

Decoding Dyslexia Minnesota will hold a rally at the capitol on Tuesday, April 5, to bring greater awareness to the much needed appropriate reading instruction for dyslexic students in public schools. Many students, parents, and legislators will share stories about their experiences with dyslexia.

Along with this rally, I have already had two hearings for dyslexia related bills this session. SF 2283 would allow parents to use a \$3,000 tax credit to help pay for the reading tutor services that dyslexic students need. This bill may be included in an omnibus tax bill this session.

SF 2308 would create six full time dyslexia specialist positions. These dyslexia specialists would be staffed at regional centers of excellence across the state to provide school districts with technical assistance for dyslexia and dyslexia related disorders. We have another hearing for this bill next week.



**Senator
Roger Chamberlain
District 38**
129 State Office Bldg.
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul MN 55155
651-296-1253

Rep. Scott Assists Round Lake Association

Action For Our Area

As a legislator, I sometimes look to solve problems in our district through the passing of legislation. Other times, simply working with a state agency starts the process without ever needing a bill passed. This year, I presented a bill, HF2600, to remove the narrow leaf cattails that have overtaken much of Round Lake in Andover. Thankfully, we did not need

a bill to help our local lake. I recently spoke with the Round Lake Association and representatives from the DNR, and the DNR agreed to grant a permit to the association for this purpose. It's encouraging to see tangible results for our area through simple communication.

Hunting Bill

I'm a coauthor of a bill, HF3208, to allow hunters to wear blaze pink in addition to blaze orange. This isn't a fashion statement for one gender or the other; it helps disguise hunters from deer sight. Humans can still see the blaze pink, but the added disguise from deer assists hunters. HF3208 has broad bipartisan support, and is making its way through the legislative process.

Met Council Reform

One issue that affects our area but goes largely unnoticed is the action of the Metropolitan Council. The 17 council members represent the seven county metro area, and are tasked with improving the Twin Cities through transit, housing initiatives, and regional planning. While their goals are noble, their execution is flawed. The governor appoints all members leaving citizens NO recourse to voice their opinion if a member doesn't represent their area well.

There's a bill in the House to hold these unelected officials accountable. The legislation requires any appointees to be a current city council member, mayor, or county commissioner. This would give residents a chance to vote members out of office, and finally provide some voice for the people regarding the Met Council.



**Rep. Peggy Scott
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Judge fines elected officials for OML violations *continued from page 1*

"The Defendants profess their ignorance of the OML to a degree this Court finds shameful with regard to their duty to the public," Judge Cain wrote in a 38 page opinion released late Thursday. "Defendants claim the OML is somehow unclear and overly technical. There is no justification for this argument. All meetings of the public body are to remain open, with certain specifically defined exceptions."

The case has taken nearly two years to adjudicate at a cost of more than \$260,000 in attorney's fees, covered by insurance, to the city alone. A core group of about 20 citizen watchdogs logged thousands of hours and procured more than 30,000 pages of city documents in filing the civil case against the four elected officials.

"The toll is just unbelievable for the amount of time, stress, effort, cost, all of that," Funk said. "But it's the right thing to do and we're going to see it through to the end now."

In her decision, Cain said she weighed the council members' service to the community against "a comprehensive showing by Plaintiffs of a lack of accountability to the public by Defendants in their lack of adherence to the OML."

The Carver County jurist also suggested the need for a "legislative overhaul" of the Open Meeting Law to make it more feasible for citizens

to participate. The citizen watchdogs were represented by veteran litigator Alan Kildow of DLA Piper pro bono, avoiding significant legal fees that make it difficult for most taxpayers to pursue potential claims.

"Private individuals — ordinary citizens — are generally ill-equipped to adequately address and litigate alleged violations of the OML, primarily for financial reasons," Cain wrote in a footnote. "Private individual financing of a case such as this is simply not a reasonable expectation."

While the court granted the plaintiffs' request for reimbursement for about \$20,000 in expenses related to the litigation, she ordered the city, instead of the defendants personally, to provide payment.

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ANOKA COUNTY WATCHDOG

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Always on the lookout for governmental waste, fraud, and abuse in Anoka County

April 1, 2016

Editor's Note: Harold Hamilton regrets to inform our loyal readership that this will be last edition of the Watchdog. After an amazing 11 year run as a highly read, often quoted publication, the time has come to put down the pen.

With the rise of Bernie Sanders, eight years of Obama, the re-emergence of Jim Abeler, and the failure of capitalism to eliminate war, poverty, and the scourge of mass transit, it is time to admit defeat and move on. The fight is no longer worth it.

Instead, it is time to focus more on friends and family, including Harold's beloved niece, April Phoole. She is apple of his eye and a very mischievous girl.

Since today is April's birthday, it would be an appropriate time to step aside and submit to the intellectual gravitas of Bernie Sanders and the moral superiority of Hillary Clinton.

Little April would have it no other way. Farewell, friends.

And if you believe it, you would also believe in April Phoole!

THE ABELER UNIT RE-ESTABLISHED

Since first constituted way back in the spring of 2005, the Watchdog has been on the watch, especially with respect to those elected officials who would raid the public fisc and defile the conservative principles and values that made America great.

One long-time offender is Jim Abeler, who spent nearly twenty years in the Minnesota House casting bad votes, perhaps the infamous of which was the override of a Governor Pawlenty veto to implement a \$6 billion transportation tax increase.

After a brief career as a registered lobbyist, Mr. Abeler is back again, this time wearing the title of "state Senator," representing a deep red conservative district in Anoka County.

This thanks to a fumbled campaign run by a flawed GOP candidate who lost to Abeler in a primary, despite Abeler's abysmal voting record and the fact that Abeler failed to win the GOP endorsement.

That is where the Watchdog comes into play, as a guardian of the taxpayer and a keeper of accurate historical records, not the whitewashed record of the mainstream media.

With Senator Abeler once again holding elective office, our own "Abeler Unit" (AU) has been reconstituted, in order to track his voting record, bill authorship, and fidelity (or lack thereof) to conservative principles and values.

Of course, the AU won't be operating at full speed right now.

Being newly elected, Sen. Abeler will be on his best behavior.

He has the GOP endorsing convention

tomorrow and then there's a possible primary and then a general election, all in short order this year.

Moreover, the Senate GOP is in the minority. Without a committee chairmanship and the appropriation authority that comes with it, the tools for growing government just aren't available.

In addition, being in the minority means a caucus dynamic that is focused on a unified front to act as the loyal opposition and oppose majority initiatives.

On top of all that, this is not a budget year for the state, so there isn't a lot of money to throw at things like public Educational Industrial Complex. When you're endorsed by the teachers' union...

This means that you likely won't see any major offenses. The most likely would be an oversized bonding bill that runs up the state's credit card debt.

But for the immediate future, taxpayers are unlikely to see the other (true?) version of Abeler.

You know, the ultra-low Taxpayer's League of Minnesota scores, the votes for fat, bloated bonding bills, the support of light rail, and support for public employee unions.

While 2016 may be quiet on this front, 2017 will likely be a whole other ball game.

It's a budget year, with billions and billions in the state budget, just waiting to be spent (or returned to the taxpayers!).

If successful for re-election, Abeler will be unaccountable to voters for four whole years.

Regardless, this publication will be watching.

IRRRB MADNESS

So what if we told you that up on the Iron Range, but in the heart of the DFL, there was a quasi-governmental organization that was set up to spend taxpayer money.

The money is collected locally and spent locally, with "oversight" provided primarily by Iron Range legislators.

The ostensible purpose of this organization, called the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB), is to "diversify" the Iron Range economy and provide job creation.

If you said it sounded like a slush fund ripe for waste and abuse, you wouldn't be alone.

What could go wrong with such a scheme?

Before reading on, what do suppose the track record is of such an organization?

A just-released report from the non-partisan Office of Legislative Auditor (OLA), gives us all a glimpse into how well the IRRRB has carried out its mission.

And it ain't pretty.

Here's how the IRRRB works:

A large part of IRRRB's economic development work is awarding loans and grants. Businesses are the primary recipients of loans; municipalities and nonprofit

organizations primarily receive the grants. IRRRB owns the Giants Ridge Recreation Area in Biwabik, which is a public resort that offers golf and skiing, among other activities. In addition, it owns the Minnesota Discovery Center in Chisholm, a museum highlighting the region's history.

IRRRB receives most of its funding from taxes on taconite mining in its service area. Its budget in fiscal year 2015 was \$41 million. Beyond its annual budget, IRRRB also had access at the end of that fiscal year to \$90.6 million in statutorily defined funds for grants and loans.

A governor-appointed commissioner heads the agency. A board of nine legislators approves agency spending and, by law, the governor also reviews and approves certain expenditures. The term "IRRRB" refers to both the agency and the board overseeing it.

Here are some of those OLA program review findings:

Giants Ridge operating losses grew substantially from 2006 through 2014. In addition, IRRRB has not set sufficient targets to evaluate how well Giants Ridge is meeting its goals.

Giants Ridge revenues for operations have not kept pace with its expenses since 2006 (in inflation-adjusted dollars). IRRRB has subsidized Giants Ridge operations by \$17.4 million from 2006 through 2014—an average of \$1.9 million annually. Over this period, IRRRB also paid \$6.7 million for Giants Ridge capital investments and \$19.8 million to retire bond debt.

IRRRB set four goals for Giants Ridge when it first purchased the resort in 1984: create economic development, attract private-sector development, provide recreational facilities to enhance quality of life for people of the Iron Range, and create a year-round recreation destination. However, IRRRB has not established sufficient targets to judge how well Giants Ridge is meeting its stated goals.

Many IRRRB loan contracts we reviewed did not adequately specify objectives for job growth. For many of these loan projects, businesses did not meet job-growth objectives specified in their applications.

State law requires loan and grant agreements over \$150,000 to contain measurable and specific objectives, including numbers of jobs to be created. In addition, economic development literature establishes the importance of specifying detailed objectives in loan contracts. Companies for 10 of 16 loans we reviewed forecast job growth in their loan applications, but their loan contracts did not require job creation.

IRRRB cannot evaluate its loan program because it does not maintain an accurate database of loans.

Developed in 1987, IRRRB's existing loan database does not contain reliable data. Sometimes a single loan has been assigned multiple loan numbers, making it appear in the database as multiple loans. The

ANOKA COUNTY WATCHDOG *cont. on page 4*

Medical Expense Deductions

BlueCross BlueShield Minnesota

If you have a lot of medical expenses it's worth doing the math to see if you can claim them as deductions on your taxes.

DO THE MATH

Your medical expenses have to be more than 10% of your adjusted gross income to claim them. This has changed recently so be sure you're using the correct figure. If you are 65 or over, that figure is 7.5% for this year.

HERE'S WHAT'S IN

Basically, if your doctor prescribed something to diagnose, cure, treat or prevent a disease, it likely qualifies. This may include things like weight loss programs, or humidifiers for chronic breathing problems. The cost of getting to and from care also counts.

You may also be able to include medical insurance premiums — as long as it's not an employer sponsored plan — and some long-term care insurance.

HERE'S WHAT'S OUT

You can't include expenses paid from a medical savings account, since those contributions aren't taxed in the first place.

Over the counter medication is out too, since it's not required to be prescribed. And forget those spa-getaways — while R&R may good for your health, Uncle Sam doesn't recognize it.

Household help to care for you or an ailing dependent isn't deductible either, even if it's recommended by your doctor. It may, however, help you qualify for the dependent care credit.

These are just a few guidelines to help you determine if you qualify for a little tax relief. Some exceptions and special rules apply — check with your tax preparer or irs.gov for more details.

DON'T FORGET

Things that aren't covered by insurance may also be deductible, such as an extra pair of eyeglasses or set of contact lenses, false teeth or hearing aids, to name a few.

Summer Day Camps at Wargo Nature Center

Wargo Nature Center is excited for another year of excellent summer camps full of fun and adventure. Our summer day camps are about exploring nature, having fun, and getting dirty outside! This summer, several brand new day camps will be offered for children pre-K through 7th grade. There are even camps for grandparents.

By utilizing small groups, individual attention is available for each child. Hands-on activities and great resources allow participants to explore the natural world around them. Day camps are held in the beautiful Anoka County parks, with ecologically diverse forest, meadows, and wetland habitats.

Our naturalists are highly experienced college graduates and professional educators who have spent years working with kids in the outdoors. They are also certified in First Aid, CPR, and AED.

At Wargo, nature is our guide and we look forward to sharing an amazing world of wonder with your child!

To view a brochure of upcoming camp offerings or to register visit anokacountyparks.com or call Wargo Nature Center at 651-429-8007.

Day Camp at 4-H Camp Salie

A fun-filled day with 4-H is now being offered! Anoka County 4-H will be hosting a free family day camp at 4-H Camp Salie, Linwood Township Saturday, May 7th from 10 am to 2 pm. Campers will experience a day loaded with games, crafts, songs, and a delicious lunch. Youth and adults of all ages are welcome.

For more information on 4-H Youth Development programs in Anoka County, please call the University of Minnesota Extension Service, Anoka County at 763-755-1280.

For more information and registration form: visit our website at www.extension.umn.edu/county/anoka, or call 763-755-1280.

Low Interest Loans for Well and Septic Fix-Ups

Low interest loans are available to eligible property owners and businesses located in Anoka County to repair or replace private well and septic systems under a program offered by Anoka County Community Development and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Best Management Practices Program (AgBMP).

The program targets projects that prevent or reduce water pollution. In Anoka County, some eligible projects include:

- Repair or replace failed or failing septic systems;
- Relocate a private well to meet setback requirements;
- Repair broken casings in a private well;
- Seal a well that is no longer in use or is contaminated;
- Solve an existing or potential groundwater pollution problem;
- Repair or replace non-compliant septic systems;
- Repair a failed or failing drain field.

The program provides loans up to \$200,000 at below market interest rates. Property owners who are current on their mortgage payments and property taxes are encouraged to apply. Loans will be repaid via a special assessment on the property tax statement through Anoka County.

For more information or to obtain a loan application, call 763-323-5722 or go to anokacounty.us/cd.

ANOKA COUNTY WATCHDOG

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database does not include fields for important data, such as number of jobs created. It contains codes that current staff neither use nor understand, and it does not reflect changes that should occur following certain events, such as a default.

During the last election, voters punished the DFL in part because of a \$90 million state office building for themselves.

The boondoggle up on the Iron Range makes that situation look like child's play.

Not only is this kind of pork contrary to the principles of representative democracy, it's downright harmful to the citizens who are supposed to benefit from these programs.

The Iron Range has suffered more than its fair share of economic hardship over the generations.

Mining is a very cyclical market segment, subject to magnified booms and busts.

The current collapse in steel prices has devastated the Iron Range economy.

Every citizen has a right to good government.

These citizens are in desperate need of it.

What a shame.

The Anoka County Watchdog is a place where concerned taxpayers can find fact-supported information and other resources about governmental waste and abuse in Anoka County.

My intent is to provide you, the taxpayer, with the information you need to hold your local politicians accountable.

Visit my website and sign up for free weekly e-mail updates at:

www.AnokaCountyWatchdog.com

or contact me personally at:

harold@anokacountywatchdog.com

Sincerely,

Harold E. Hamilton, owner.

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Proposal to abolish Nowthen councilor reimbursements *continued from page 1*

not take effect until January. Rainville asked for more information that would explain the reasons behind the fluctuations from year to year in council expenditures, noting that much less was spent in 2015 than in 2014 and 2013. "Sometimes it's because of what's in front of the council," Rainville said, referencing that council time spent on certain issues may play into these higher expenditures.

"So do you want me to go back and research what every councilor was paid each month and what meetings they went to?" Bettinger asked, "that would be so much time; I'm not willing to do that."

Bettinger continued, "the expenditures are what they are, you have it in front of you... it's self explanatory." He said his plan would make the council expenses a flat \$25,200 a year, simplifying bookkeeping and budgeting, and saving money in the long run.

Rainville used the words "penalty" and "punitive" when this issue was discussed at the two meetings. She told Bettinger that his proposal "could be punitive to council members who are more aggressive in the additional work that they do."

"I don't think it's fair to ask elected officials to pay for registration fees for conferences," Rainville opined, "...those are things that come with being an elected official... a flat rate says 'if you don't go to any meetings, you'll make more money.'"

Bettinger said he attends council and commission meetings. Fellow councilor Jim Scheffler said he doesn't ask for mileage reimbursement when doing his

recycling duties. Rainville and Pilon have attended meetings and conferences with other elected officials.

Other council action on March 8

There was partial resolution to the complaints that developer Kent Roessler made at the Feb. 9 council meeting. At that meeting, Roessler made a twenty-minute presentation to the council regarding his negative experiences with Nowthen's city planner, Liz Stockman (see *Record*, Feb. 16, 2016). He was most upset about being accused of not having a septic permit by city staff but his own records showed that he did. He sought an apology for this from Stockman as well as a refund of about two-thirds of his costs for a lot split.

At the March 8 meeting, both Bettinger and Pilon apologized to Roessler, who was in the audience, for the city misplacing his property file. Bettinger made a motion to refund \$500 to Roessler for his inconvenience, and the council approved, after city councilor Paul Reighard expressed some mild misgivings about being able to arrive at any dollar amount for the misplacement of a file. Reighard acknowledged a point that had been made by building official Andy Schreder, who had said that hiring a part-time building inspector help would assist in better record keeping. (See *Record*, March 8, 2016). Councilor Mary Rainville asked city attorney Bob Ruppe if a legal precedent would be set by refunding money to a citizen for a staff error. He said no, that whether to refund money can be decided by the council on a case-by-case basis.

Among the numerous code enforcement items on the council agenda was one of Harvey Greenberg, 8040 Viking Blvd., who

has semi-trailers parked on his property. Rainville suggested the council put this matter off and have staff attend to other code enforcement investigations that have been on the city's list for a longer period of time — to get those done first, and this would allow Greenberg some time to deal with his health issues.

Councilor Jim Scheffler said he would like to see an acknowledgement made by Greenberg that he is aware of the code violations and "plans on doing something about it in the near future." Rainville asked planner Liz Stockman if Greenberg is aware of the issues. She said she had met with him, he understands the issue, "and given his poor health, he was asking for additional time but he did not want to specify a date." Rainville asked Scheffler if what Stockman said suffices. He pressed that he would like to see "a response from him as far as what he's going to do about it, whether it be in the near future or the distant..."

Kent Roessler indicated he wanted to speak on the issue and was called on by the mayor. "Mr. Greenberg is a 92 year-old patriarch of our community — he helped commercial business here for 60 years. When you say the name Nowthen, you think Harvey Greenberg. That's how important he is to this community. He had just come home from cancer surgery on the day that Liz Stockman visited him."

Roessler went on to say that he doesn't think Greenberg is aware of the situation because of his health and asked the council give the matter some more time.

The City Council will next meet this Thursday and the following Tuesday, April 12. *ACR*

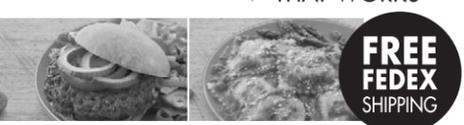
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Observations from the Field: School Board Special Election *continued from page 1*

recent special elections. The first election, a primary on Dec. 1, 2015, had a turnout of 649 voters, but the numbers have dropped for subsequent elections.

It's very likely polling places will not see more than 500 voters today, which is barely over 3 percent. There are 14,000 registered voters in the school district.

The Muslim "factor" in this race dates back to last fall when school board member Grant Nichols, who had been in office only 9 months, was accused of making negative comments about Muslims in response to an article on the *Star Tribune* website. Nichols claimed a co-worker wrote the comments, using his cell phone and Facebook account without his knowledge. A local Muslim group eventually had a meeting with Nichols and upon his resignation, the group spokesmen said they believed Nichols' account of the controversy and considered the matter closed.

The media generally pays little attention to Columbia Heights unless there's a murder, but they might try to make some hay out of the election results if it appears there was a decisive split among Muslims and a larger than expected turnout.

Asamarai, a Muslim, is a teacher and academic, endorsed by the DFL (see *Record*, Dec. 4, 2015). Utz is a white hard hat and Constitution buff. She's 38, he's twenty years older.

The *Focus* newspaper has published brief

questionnaires answered by the candidates; the *Northeaster* has interviewed them both.

A reporter's question in the *Northeaster* interview surprised me, "Do you agree with the district's decision not to broadcast the public comment portion (of) school board meetings?"

Where did this come from? Has someone been reading the *Anoka County Record*?

Only this paper has identified transparency issues with this and other school districts and city halls.

Utz was quoted as saying, "the Superintendent said it's because somebody might mention a child's name..."

If you believe that, I have a bridge in Brooklyn, New York I'd like to sell you cheap.

Asamarai's answer to the question straddled the fence, but she did say "there is a concern about data privacy."

Students' names and addresses are public data — read Chapter 13 of state statutes and the U.S. Code to learn for yourself.

Utz also faulted the media for looking the other way. He said of the school administration, "questioning (them) is considered opposition."

It took a run for office to shed some light on the secrecy, but at least the spotlight is now turned on. *ACR*

PUBLIC NOTICES

ANOKA COUNTY SUMMARY OF BIDS
Bid #2016-10

Description of Bid/RFP: Advertisement for Bids for Jail Lock Replacement Project

Bid Opening: May 6, 2016

For more information regarding the above published bids/RFPs, please visit the Anoka County Web Site at: www.AnokaCounty.us/bids.

(Published 4/5, 4/12, 2016 Anoka County Record) #399

ANOKA COUNTY SUMMARY OF BIDS
Bid #2016-14

Description of Bid/RFP: Advertisement for Proposals for Environmental Services Software

Bid Opening: May 11, 2016

For more information regarding the above published bids/RFPs, please visit the Anoka County Web Site at: www.AnokaCounty.us/bids.

(Published 4/5, 4/12, 2016 Anoka County Record) #400

ANOKA COUNTY SUMMARY OF BIDS
Bid #2016-15

Description of Bid/RFP: Advertisement for Bids for Removal of Deer Carcasses on or Near Anoka County Highways

Bid Opening: April 29, 2016

For more information regarding the above published bids/RFPs, please visit the Anoka County Web Site at: www.AnokaCounty.us/bids.

(Published 4/5, 4/12, 2016 Anoka County Record) #401

CITY OF OAK GROVE COUNTY OF ANOKA STATE OF MINNESOTA

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Oak Grove Planning Commission's Regular Meeting will be held on Thursday, April 21, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. at the City Hall, 19900 Nightingale St NW, to hear the following public hearings in the order that they appear:

CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING to consider a variance for Ralph Pearson, 20731 Lake George Blvd, creating a lot in a minor subdivision without the required road frontage within the following legally described property: Lot 4, Block 1, Nicholas' South Bay Estates further described by PID #16-33-24-32-0007.

All written and oral comments will be heard. PUBLIC HEARING to consider an Interim Use Permit for Donna Remick, 18978 Lake George Blvd (Remick's Orchard), to operate a seasonal business with the following activities: corn maze, corn pit, straw bale maze, hay wagon rides, walking trails, pick own pumpkins, picnic area, vendors and more exhibits/events. The property is legally described as: the NE ¼ of NE ¼ of Section 32, Twp 33, Rge 24 further described by PID #32-33-24-44-0002.

All written and oral comments will be heard. *The hearings of this*

request are not limited to those receiving copies of this notice, and if you know of any neighbor or affected property owner who for any reason, has not received a copy, it would be appreciated if you would inform them of this public hearing.

Hearing impaired persons planning to attend who need an interpreter or other persons with disabilities who require auxiliary aids should contact City Hall at 404-7006 no later than Wednesday, April 13, 2016.

Sheryl F. Fiskewold
City Clerk
(Published 4/5, 2016 Anoka County Record) #398

CERTIFICATE OF ASSUMED NAME STATE OF MN MN STATUTES CHAPTER 333

The undersigned, who is or will be conducting business in the State of Minnesota under an assumed name, hereby certifies:

1. Assumed Name: **Yowie Outdoors**
2. Principal Place of Business: **13269 Owatonna CT NE Blaine, MN 55449**

Nameholder(s): **Forfar LLC 13269 Owatonna CT NE Blaine, MN 55449**

4. I certify that I am authorized to sign this certificate and I further certify that I understand that by signing this certificate, I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Minnesota Statutes section 609.48 as if I had signed this certificate under oath.

FILED: 2/23/2016, # 881800700026 /s/ Dean Sime

(Published 4/5, 4/12, 2016 Anoka County Record) # 402

AMENDMENT TO ASSUMED NAME STATE OF MN MN STATUTES CHAPTER 333

1. Assumed Name: **S.E.S., Inc.**
2. Principal Place of Business: **12320 Gladiola St NW Coon Rapids, MN 55433**

4. Nameholder(s): **Sustainable Energy Savings, Inc. 12320 Gladiola St NW Coon Rapids, MN 55433**

5. Amendment of Certificate of Assumed Name File Number: **3877341-2**

Originally filed on: **6/15/2010**

Under the name: **SES., Inc. (Per M.S.)**

6. I certify that I am authorized to sign this certificate and I further certify that I understand that by signing this certificate, I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Minnesota Statutes section 609.48 as if I had signed this certificate under oath.

FILED: 3/3/2016, # 876456000026 /s/ Matthew C Strebe, President

CERTIFICATE OF ASSUMED NAME STATE OF MN MN STATUTES CHAPTER 333

The undersigned, who is or will be conducting business in the State of Minnesota under an

assumed name, hereby certifies:

1. Assumed Name: **Upscaled Designs**
2. Principal Place of Business: **17801 Dunkirk ST NE Ham Lake, MN 55304**

Nameholder(s): **Upscaled Designs LLC 17801 Dunkirk ST NE Ham Lake, MN 55304**

4. I certify that I am authorized to sign this certificate and I further certify that I understand that by signing this certificate, I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Minnesota Statutes section 609.48 as if I had signed this certificate under oath.

FILED: 2/23/2016, # 874606800020 /s/ Kerry Eldstrom

(Published 3/29, 4/5, 2016 Anoka County Record) #383

PUBLIC NOTICES UNPAID

CITY OF BLAINE
Request for Proposal
Telecommunication System

The City of Blaine, Minnesota will receive sealed proposals until 2:00 pm Friday April 29, 2016 for the provision and installation of a city-wide telephone system.

Specifications, proposal forms, and instructions to proposers are on file and may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office at City Hall at 10801 Town Square Drive NE or on the City of Blaine's website at www.ci.blaine.mn.us/go/bid.

CITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS
Seasonal Maintenance Worker

Position Summary: Performs landscape and grounds care of parks. Maintains recreational facilities, park shelters, and ballfields. Assists with street maintenance and repairs. Assists with traffic signs. Works with the sewer cleaning crews. Flushes and paints fire hydrants. Performs other general labor duties.

Required Qualifications: High School graduate or equivalent. Valid driver's license with satisfactory driving record. Must be 18 years of age or older. Ability to frequently lift/move 50 pounds and occasionally 100 pounds. Must be able to take work direction and be to work on time.

Length of Employment: 67 to 100 days

Starting Wage: \$10.49 per hour

Hours: Forty hours per week, Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Subject to occasional shift changes.

Application Procedure: City applications are available at the Public Works Department at 637 38th Avenue NE, Columbia Heights 55421 or by downloading from our website at www.columbiaheightsmn.gov, or by calling (763) 706-3700 TDD: (763) 706-3692. City applications MUST be completed and returned to the City of Columbia Heights, Public Works Department, 637 38th Avenue NE, Columbia

Heights, MN 55421.

Closing Date: Applications accepted until all positions are filled.

CITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS
SEASONAL PROPERTY MAINTENANCE INSPECTOR

PRIMARY DUTIES: Performs inspections of properties for violations of the City's long grass and weed ordinance. Photographs violations and posts notices on properties. Uses computer to verify property owner information, performs data entry of violations and photographs, and generates violation letters. Ability to deal courteously but firmly with public if necessary.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS: High School graduate or equivalent. Valid driver's license with satisfactory driving record. Must be 18 years of age or older. Knowledge of computer use, including data entry.

LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT: Summer Seasonal

STARTING WAGE: \$10.26 per hour

HOURS: 20 - 25 hours per week, Monday through Friday, starting at 9:00 am.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE:

City applications are available at the Fire Department at 825 41st Avenue NE, Columbia Heights, or by downloading from our website at www.columbiaheightsmn.gov, or by calling (763) 706-8150 TDD: (763) 706-3692. City applications MUST be completed and returned to the City of Columbia Heights, Fire Department, 825 41st Avenue NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421.

CLOSING DATE: Friday, April 8, 2016 at 4:30 p.m.

City of Columbus
Public Notice

Important Information Regarding Assessment and Classification of Property This may affect your 2017 property tax payments.

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Appeal and Equalization for Columbus in Anoka County shall meet on April 25, 2016 7:00 p.m., at Columbus City Hall located at 16319 Kettle River Blvd. The purpose of this meeting is to determine whether taxable property in the jurisdiction has been properly valued and classified by the assessor, and to determine whether corrections to the property tax value assessment need to be made for the 2017 payable tax year.

If you believe the value or classification of your property is incorrect, please contact your assessor's office to discuss your concerns. If you are still not satisfied with the valuation or classification after discussing it with your assessor, you may appear before the local board of appeal and equalization. The board shall review the valuation, classification, or both if necessary, and shall correct it as needed. Generally, an appearance before your local board of appeal and equalization is required by law before an appeal can be taken to the county board of appeal and equalization.

City of Columbus
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Preliminary Plat

Notice is hereby given that a Public Hearing will be held by the City of Columbus Planning Commission on Wednesday, April 20, 2016 at 7:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as parties may be heard, in the City Hall located at 16319 Kettle River Blvd., Columbus, Minnesota, to consider a request for a preliminary plat "Winiacki Estates" creating one (1) new lot. The hearing shall continue until all evidence and testimony has been received.

Applicant: Joseph Winiacki
Property Owners: Joseph & Kim L. Winiacki
Address: 14805 Furman St. NE Columbus, Minnesota

MINOR NAME CHANGE

State of Minnesota County of Anoka
In the matter of the application of: Courtnie Marie Cook
On Behalf of: Eleanora MaeLynn Kirvelay
For a Change of Name to: Eleanora MaeLynn Cook
An Application for Name Change in Anoka County District Court for a change of name for the minor child from Eleanora Kirvelay to Eleanora Cook will be heard on May 10, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. at the Anoka County Courthouse, 325 East Main Street, Anoka, MN 55303.
/s/ Courtnie Cook, Applicant, Dated March 18, 2016
/s/ Lawrence R. Johnson, Judge of District Court, Dated: March 22, 2016
(Published 4/5, 4/12, 4/19, 2016 Anoka County Record) # 403

ESTATE OF MICHAEL D. HALVORSEN

State of Minnesota County of Anoka
Estate of Michael D. Halvorsen
Decedent.
Notice of informal probate of will and appointment of personal representative and notice to creditors
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS AND CREDITORS:
Notice is hereby given that an application for informal probate of the above-named Decedent's last Will, dated May 8, 2015, has been filed with the Registrar herein, and the Application has been granted informally probating such Will. Any objections may be filed in the above named court and the same will be heard by the Court upon notice of hearing fixed for such purpose.
Notice is hereby further given that informal appointment of Bonita J. Long whose address is 10775 Kingsfield Lane, Woodbury, Minnesota, 55129, as personal representative of the estate of the above-named Decedent, has been made. Any heir, devisee, or other interested person may be entitled to appointment as personal representative or may object to the appointment of the personal representative, and the personal representative is empowered to fully administer the estate, including, after 30 days from the date of issuance of her letters, the power to sell, encumber, lease, or distribute real estate, unless objections thereto are filed with the Court (pursuant to Minnesota Statutes §524.3-607), and the Court otherwise orders.
Notice is hereby given that ALL CREDITORS having claims against said estate are required to present the same to said personal representative or to the Court Administrator within four months after the date of this notice or said claims will be barred.
Dated: March 8, 2016
/s/ Peggy Zdon, Registrar, /s/ Lori Meyer, Court Administrator
Attorney for Personal Representative: Steven T. Hennek, Hennek Klaenhammer Law, PLLC 2585 Hamline Avenue North, Suite A, Roseville, MN 55113
Attorney License No.: 238673, Telephone: 651.633.4400
Email: steveh@hklaw.com
(Published 4/5, 4/12, 2016 Anoka County Record) # 404

Legal Description: PIN#26-32-22-22-0006 THAT PRT OF NW1/4 OF NW1/4 OF SEC 26 TWP 32 RGE 22 LYG SLY OF N 515 FT THEREOF & LYG NLY OF S 267 FT THEREOF, EX RD, SUBJ TO EASE OF REC, Anoka County, Minnesota
Elizabeth Mursko, Zoning Administrator

CITY OF LEXINGTON
Position: Finance Director
Date Posted: Saturday, March 19, 2016
Deadline: Friday, April 15, 2016 at 3:30 PM
The City of Lexington, Mn, located in Anoka County, (pop. 2114) is seeking a full-time Finance Director that is responsible for directing and managing \$65,000. Please send the city finance city application, resume, functions. The position cover letter, salary is responsible for history and references financial management to Bill Petracek, City of a General Fund of Administrator, 9180 Lexington Avenue, Lexington, MN. 55014 or email to blpxington@comcast.net. For more information or to obtain a complete job description and city application, visit our website: <http://www.ci.lexington.mn.us/> or call 763-354-2805.
A Bachelor's Degree in accounting, finance, or business and/or 3 years of municipal accounting experience or a combination of both is desired, but not required. Other related combinations of education and experience will be strongly considered on an individual basis.
Salary range: \$55,000-



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