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Leadership Academy Terminated

By Anne Primm

Wednesday's Knox County School Board Meeting was called to order at 5:02 p.m. by Chairwoman Patti Bounds. Fourth District Representative Lynne Fugate led the Pledge of Allegiance after the moment of silence. Bounds followed by asking for changes to the agenda at which time the 1st District Representative, Gloria Deatridge, requested

that items 11.E and 11.D change places on the agenda with item 11.E being discussed first. Law Director Gary Dupler interjected that items 11.D and 11.E are independent of one another. However, he said his office recommended voting to end the Leadership Academy agreement tonight. A motion to interchange these two agenda items was brought forth by Deatridge and seconded

by Fugate but failed seven to two when the vote was taken.

After approving some board policies and grants, Vice Chair Amber Rountree made the motion to approve the Cultural Competency Training contract set forth by the University of Tennessee at the Monday, December 4, 2017 work session. There was a second by Fugate. Rountree introduced Crystal

Yamazaki as a member of the public forum who asked to speak on this issue. Yamazaki said she was a representative for the Voices for Trans Youth organization and that she thinks this Cultural Competency Training will help Knox County Schools deal with all kinds of prejudices, not just those of the LGBTQ population. Reverend John Butler also spoke in favor of this training as

a member of the African American community and as the head of the local NAACP.

Before the vote was taken, Mike McMillan, 8th District representative, offered an amendment that states that the board shall review the results of the prior year's Competency Training before authorizing funds for each new year. This amendment was seconded by 5th District

representative Susan Horn. The motion to approve the Cultural Competency Contract with the University of Tennessee passed for 2018 passed unanimously.

The Leadership Academy was the next topic for discussion. A motion was made by board member Tony Norman of the 3rd District and seconded by McMillan to terminate the

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Short-term rental amendment approved

By Mike Steely
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The decision on an amendment to the short-term rental ordinance was reversed in last week's Knoxville City Council meeting. The amendment, which would require rental owners to notify their neighbors if they request an STR operating permit, was brought up again by Vice Mayor Duane Grieve after failing its initial motion.

Grieve, who was chairing his last council meeting in the absence of Mayor Madeline Rogers, got the one additional vote he needed from Councilman Marshall Stair. Nick Pavlis, who was absent from the meeting on company business, would have voted NO and only council members Mark Campen and Brenda Palmer voted against the motion. Palmer called the amendment an "unneeded action."

Stair, who had voted against the amendment two weeks ago, said he has "been back and forth on this one" and then he said, "On balance it's the right thing to do."

Councilman George Wallace, who was absent two weeks ago, voted in favor of the amendment calling it "reasonable" since it would require a one-time notification.

Grieve then motioned to pass the amendment on an "emergency" basis and that passed as well.

Three neighborhood leaders spoke in favor of requiring a notification and Amy Midas of the Forest Heights Association said that letters to neighbors "show a good sign" and help in creating bonds.

Mary English spoke for the League of Women Voters and said that neighbors have a right to know about STRs near them.

"STRs have divided Knoxville but notification is something we can all agree on," she said.

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HOLIDAY SPIRIT SWELLS IN FOUNTAIN CITY

By Mike Steely
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There may not have been a Christmas Parade in Fountain City this year but members of the Fountain City Lions Club and Fountain City Town Hall may have started another tradition.

Friday evening, with hundreds of residents present, a celebration of the holiday, complete with cookies and hot chocolate, led to the lighting of the community Christmas Tree. The tree stands in the Fountain City

Park gazebo and remained dark as the crowd gathered.

Festive Christmas music was performed by the Central High School Band and carols were sung by Matt Parks and the Central High School Bobcat Company (pictured above). Three small girls from Fountain City Presbyterian Church sang sweetly to the building crowd.

Commissioner Michelle Carringer, dressed in an elf outfit, acted as host and recognized those taking part in the ceremony. She told

The Focus that when the parade was cancelled the groups talked about something special and the tree lighting and festivities resulted.

Following the lighting of the tree Jolly Old Santa Claus appeared and parents and grandparents lined up with their children for their turn with Santa.

Adding to the festivities was a light snow fall. The Christmas Tree Lighting at Fountain City Park was all anyone could hope for to bring about the holiday spirit.

Three things the commission asked from legislators

By Mike Steely
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A packed meeting at Dead End BBQ on Sutherland Avenue Thursday between Knox County Commissioners and local state legislators saw three matters discussed. On hand were several state lawmakers including Eddie Smith, Randy McIlally, Jason Zackery, Rick Staples, Bill Dunn and Harry Brooks. Most of the commissioners attended as well as County Finance Director Chris Caldwell, MPC Chair Rebecca Longmore, and City Communications Director Jesse Mayshark.

State Representative Smith hosted the meeting and Commissioner Carson Dailey began the discussion by addressing the roadside trash problem that has increased drastically since prisoners are no longer required to help. Dailey and the commission are asking the representatives



Commissioner Carson Dailey speaks to local state legislators about the need to have legislation to make community service mandatory for DUI and other offenses.

to change the state law and give local jurisdictions the use of DUI and other offenders by mandating at least 24 hours of community service.

Dailey said that the year before

the law changed Knox County had 1,452 offenders doing county labor and now there are only 96. He said that convicted offenders were picking up 118 tons of trash compared to only

30 tons this year. The county's probation revenue dropped from \$67,082 three years ago to \$4,435 last year.

Law Director Richard

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