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Mayor Rogero names Eve Thomas new chief of police

By Mike Steely
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Twenty-five-year police veteran Eve Thomas officially became the new Knoxville Police Chief last week. Mayor Madeline Rogero named Deputy Chief Thomas to the post in a well-attended announcement Thursday in the City-County Building's main auditorium.

Thomas and outgoing Chief David Rausch joined the force at the same time and Rausch had words of praise for his colleague. Thomas is the first female police

chief in city history.

"The Knoxville Police Department is full of men and women who come to work every day not knowing what they may be called upon to do to protect and serve the people of Knoxville," Thomas said.

"This is a difficult job and can be a very dangerous job. I feel privileged to have this opportunity, to lead such a dedicated and committed group of public servants. I promise to do everything in my power to provide you with the guidance and resources that you need to do this job each and every day."



Eve Thomas takes the oath to become Knoxville's first female Police Chief. U.S. District Judge Pamela Reeves administered the oath following Thomas being named by Mayor Madeline Rogero to replace Chief David Rausch who resigned to become Director of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation. Photo courtesy of Traci McDonnell.

Amplified Sound Ordinance Postponed

By Mike Steely
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The city's rush to prohibit street performers from using amplifiers for their acts got muffled a bit Tuesday after several performers spoke against the idea. The amendment to the city code would have forbid amplification of sound on public property and right-of-ways throughout the city. Facing the second reading of the amendment several performers, including Abby Roach, Sterling Walsh, David Hayes and Julie Mitchell, told the council the new rule would be a violation of free speech. Roach, who heads the Asheville Buskers Collective, said that performers often travel between Knoxville and Asheville to perform. She said that "jumping straight to oppressive regulations is wrong."

Walsh said Knoxville is "historically a musical town" and that busking adds culture. He called the proposal "arbitrary and overly broad" as that it doesn't set volume levels or restrictions as to time of day or proximity to dwellings.

Rick Emmett, the city's downtown coordinator, told the council that as proposed the amendment would be a "blanket ban on amplification." He said it would be enforced through complaints based on volume, adding, "We love our buskers."

Several councilmembers questioned the rush to approve an ordinance. Councilman Andrew Rober to mentioned an option to get a permit and asked if the enforcement "would be flexible." He also suggested an online permit application.

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Focus Family Celebrates Accomplishments



PHOTO BY BECKY FERGUSON

Knoxville Focus columnist Rosie Moore recently released her third book, "Love Anytime." She signed copies at a reception in Fountain City Tuesday night. Pictured with Moore are Knoxville Focus staff and contributors Ray Hill, Marianne Dedmon, Ken Lay, Bill Wright, Steve Hankey, Pete Gawda, Rosie Moore, Rose King, Dr. Jim Ferguson, Ralphine Major and Pam Poe. Not pictured, Steve Williams.

Local writers promote works at signing reception

By Ken Lay

Three local authors and Knoxville Focus contributors held a book signing reception Tuesday night at the Fountain City Lions Club Building.

Rosie Moore, Pete Gawda and Ralphine Major all signed their latest books, all published in 2018, at a reception.

Moore promoted her third and latest release, "Love Anytime," at last week's event. Gawda, a veteran reporter, promoted "Reflections of a Small Town Reporter" and Major appeared to promote "Piddle Diddle, the Widdle Penguin, and the Texas Longhorns," the third and latest installment in a children's book series that chronicles the adventures of the titular penguin and her brother, Peety.

Moore's book is a love story that unfolds over several years. She said that, while the book isn't biographical, it is based on some life events.

"I just write from my heart," said Moore, who has also published "Daisy Mae" and "The Girls." "It's a love story about a young woman and it starts when she's age 12 and it follows her through the years and shows what she goes through."

Moore is the longest-tenured columnist at



PHOTO BY ROSIE KING

Family, friends and guests proceed down the signing line beginning with long-time Focus columnist Rosie Moore. Further down the signing aisle are Pete and Cheryl Gawda and The Major 3: Ralphine, Wayne and Juanita Major.

The Knoxville Focus.

Gawda's work chronicles his career as a reporter and photographer at The

Okeechobee News.

He said that he was encouraged to write a book but waited until he retired from the small Central Florida newspaper.

"People told me that I should write a book and I waited until I retired and came to Knoxville," Gawda said.

"The book kind of took on a life of its own. I didn't know that covering city and county politics could be so funny."

Major was promoting her latest release in Piddle Diddle the Widdle Penguin children's book series. She co-wrote the book with her brother, Wayne, who created the book's main character. The books are illustrated by Teresa Wilkerson.

"Piddle Diddle, the Widdle Penguin, and the Texas Longhorns" follows the penguin and her family on vacation at a Texas dude ranch.

Ralphine and Wayne have also written "Piddle Diddle's Lost Hat" and "Piddle Diddle, The Widdle Penguin, Goes to Hawaii."

Ralphine said that they are working on the next book in the series and that the process of publishing a book in the series takes approximately one year.

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