



The Knoxville Focus

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City council approves pay raise for mayor

By Mike Steely
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Knoxville's next mayor will get a pay increase. The city council voted Tuesday evening to increase the pay to \$162,500, a \$20,000 pay hike. Unlike all other city employees who receive a pay boost each year of about 2 to 3% the mayor does not and proponents have argued that if the mayor position had been included in the yearly increases the current salary would be larger than the approved raise.

The increase passed on second reading with seven council members agreeing to the hike, Councilman Andrew Roberto voting "No" and Councilman Marshall Stair passing on the vote. Stair is a candidate for mayor and abstained.

Councilwoman Seema Singh-Perez changed her vote from the first reading and supported the raise. She clarified her initial statement noting that the mayor position is a full-time job but noted that "some people in Knoxville work hard without fair compensation."

The council, on a resolution by Roberto, honored the Bearden High School basketball team for capturing the Class AAA state championship. Coach Jerome Parrott told the meeting his team has many "great accomplishments" including scholarships. He said, "I am honored to be their coach."

Mayor Madeline Rogero's appointment of Jay Price to the Regional Solid Waste Board was approved. The council voted to support the Chapman Highway Safety Improvement Project on a motion by Councilwoman Stephanie Welch.

A property at 542 Tipton Avenue was approved for sale through the Homemaker Program to Thomas Wade Shehan for \$50,100. Community Development Director Becky Wade said the city captured its investment on the blighted property toward back taxes. She said the structure will be renovated and

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Vestal continues to deal with homeless

By Mike Steely
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The Vestal Community Organization met last week and continued to wrestle with an increase in homeless people there. The meeting, at the South Knoxville Community Center, heard from Officer J. Claybough and President Eric Johnson on the issue.

The meeting also heard from Ben and Heather Burchfield

Ream about the on-hold BMX track at South-Doyle Middle School and Gene Burr gave an update on the Vestal Archway Park. About two dozen citizens attended and shared concerns and questions about their community.

Officer Claybough, a Vestal native, said that some homeless have been sleeping in the Vestal Pavilion but said that unless a

property is marked with a "Keep Out" sign there's no violation. He also noted that city parks are only open from dawn until dusk. He also cautioned people to lock their cars when at home and take the keys. He also suggested locking garage doors after one resident reported bicycles being stolen.

Johnson reported that 94 people attended a recent

meeting on Vestal's homeless problem.

"You are the eyes and ears, pass the information along," Claybough said. "If you see someone you don't know and if you feel uncomfortable then call us," he said, adding, "Just walking on the street isn't illegal."

Ben Ream spoke to the meeting and obtained a vote in

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Fulton High School Principal Rob Speas thanked the crowd for their goodwill.

Tenna site plans draws crowd at North Knoxville meeting

By Amy Box Fellhoelter

Standing room only may be the best way to describe April's North Knoxville Business & Professional Association meeting where attendees filled a lower room of the Helen Ross McNabb Center to capacity. Last Friday, in excess of 70 people gathered to hear City of Knoxville's Chief Operating Officer and Deputy to the Mayor David Brace explain the city's current plans for the empty Tenna site formerly known as St. Mary's and

located behind Fulton High School.

The meeting, held off of W. Springdale Avenue in North Knoxville, began with NKBPBA President George Bove acknowledging the staff of Helen Ross McNabb Center for hosting and sponsoring this month's breakfast. His thankfulness was followed by a prayer from a local pastor, the pledge of allegiance, and an introduction of more than

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School board approves Five Year Strategic Plan

By Anne Primm

Chairperson, Terry Hill called the Wednesday April, 10, 2019 meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. with all nine Board of Education Members present. Representative Hill welcomed at large, seat 11,

County Commissioner, Justin Biggs to the meeting. Next, Hill announced the CTE (Career and Technical Education) goes live on Market Square on May 3, and she encouraged everyone to attend.

Second District Representative Jennifer Owen reported

next on legislative activities in Nashville regarding public schools. The Charter School Authorization bill passed last week. Now any entity wishing to open a charter school in Tennessee will go before this

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Bud Armstrong addresses West Knoxville Republicans

By Ken Lay

Knox County Law Director Richard "Bud" Armstrong made a rare appearance at a local Republican Club early last week.

"I don't get to as many Republican Club meetings as I'd like to," Armstrong told members of the West Knoxville Republican Club at its monthly meeting at the Kingston Pike location of Red Lobster on

Monday, April 8. "I don't get to as many of these meetings as I'd like to because when you have these meetings, I'm still at the office and working," Armstrong, who said

he's been no stranger to long days at the office. His days begin early and end in the evening.

"I start early because I'm an early person. I usually show up about two hours before anyone else,"

he said. "But if I didn't get in early, I wouldn't be able to get the things done that need to get done."

Armstrong, who said he and his staff have saved Knox County taxpayers millions of dollars, commended the members of his staff for their hard work.

"I get ready to leave about 7 o'clock in the evening and many on

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PHOTO BY KEN LAY

Knox County Law Director Bud Armstrong addresses the West Knoxville Republican Club at its monthly meeting on Monday, April 8. Armstrong discussed his office's accomplishments during his tenure serving the citizens of Knox County.

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