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EARLY VOTING NOW UNDERWAY

Pension suit delayed until December 19

By Mike Steely
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Knoxville attorney John P. Valliant has apparently been hired by Mayor Glenn Jacobs to represent the county in the class action suit against the county in the Retirement and Pension Board case. The suit was filed on September 10 and the county given 30 days to answer. Valliant filed a motion on October 10 to extend the time to answer the suit. A November 21 date was set on the Chancery Court docket but was then changed to 9 a.m. on December 19.

Knox County Commission Chairman Hugh Hystrom said he was notified about the hiring of Valliant and the county mayor's office confirmed the hiring Friday afternoon.

The court docket also indicates that a separate motion, filed by John Owens, has been received asking that he be approved to enter the lawsuit on behalf

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Team Mannix for Mayor greet early voters at The Love Kitchen Friday. Early voting for the new Knoxville mayor and four city council seats began Wednesday, October 16 and ends October 31. The General Election is Tuesday, November 5.

City may seek \$1.5 million for new transit buses

By Mike Steely
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When the Knoxville City Council meets Tuesday evening it takes up a variety of issues ranging from approving Mayor Madeline Rogers' nominees to city goals to seeking \$1.5 million from the state to purchase three transit buses.

The council will consider Leslie Henderson and Matt Teglas as appointees to the Board of Environmental Appeals and reappointing Jennifer Stone to that group. Rogers also wants approval to name Eric Johnson, Jack Sherrod, Judy Mullins, Morgan Wilson and Mike Ward to the Neighborhood Advisory Council, replacing Darryl Gray, Donnie Ernst, Anna Compton, Terrell Patrick and Travetta Johnson.

Ordinances on second and final reading include moving \$15,000 from Save our Sons to Perinatal Development for its leadership program and \$900 from the same fund and donating it to Next Step Initiative for block parties. Other Save our Sons funds, \$3,600, may be approved on first reading for Vine Middle School's Real Talk Program to expose young men to education beyond high school, STEM careers and college tours.

Name changes of streets and alleys include changing part of Walter Taylor Street to "Taylor Homes Road."

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School Board Debates Deferral of Lonsdale MOU

By Amy Box Fehlböller

Other than the many presentations and awards given to board members and principals, most of last Wednesday's BOE meeting dialogue revolved around the topic of two current schools (Sam E. Hill E.S. and Lonsdale E.S.) and one new school to be built. Once announcements of upcoming meetings were noted and Knox County Commissioner Evelyn Gill was welcomed by Board Chairperson Susan Horn, members discussed a change to agenda item 11F. The item stated as "Approve Memorandum of Understanding with Knox County and the City of Knoxville for the transfer of the Lonsdale Park Property from the City of Knoxville to Knox County and the transfer of the Sam E. Hill Primary School property from Knox Co. to the City of Knoxville for the design, construction and operation of a new Lonsdale Elementary School" was requested by Board Member Jennifer Owen to be deferred. Owen made this request so a provision could be added to prohibit any possible use of the property for a private or charter school in the future.

"The bottom line is that if we agree to move the property without any



The BOE and Superintendent Bob Thomas recognized member Terry Hill with an award for her countless hours of service as the board chairperson during the 2018-2019 school year at the Oct. 16, 2019 regular session meeting.

restrictions, then we are basically opening it up for another charter school that we will be paying millions for," Owen said with concern.

In opposition, Board Member Patti Lou Bounds declared, "I don't like the idea of having the restrictions on the property."

When Board Member Evette

Satterfield asked how the timeline of the project would be affected should the item be deferred, Knox County Schools Chief Operating Officer Russ Oaks answered, "I don't think it would have any delay with the project itself. I think an amendment of that nature may have some of the other bodies may

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Brad Anders to take over as Executive Director of 9-1-1 Center

By Bill Howard

At the quarterly board of directors meeting of the Knox County Emergency Communications District (the 9-1-1 center) on Oct. 16, board chair Mayor Madeline Rogers announced that Brad Anders would succeed Alan Bull as executive director. Anders, who has been on the Finance Committee and was hired over 27 other candidates, will start October 21. His two-year term, which can be extended upon evaluations, pays \$135,000 per year, plus benefits.

"We're gonna do some things

different," said Anders, who also serves on the county commission (for one more year). "I think we're gonna have a longer-term vision of just doing the day-to-day stuff. The team inside the center is phenomenal. There's some improvements we can make in our training, some improvements in our policies that will continue to improve our already good district. My goal is to keep the momentum moving forward."

Legal counsel Don Howell gave the board an update on a lawsuit Knox County is involved with along with other counties. "For a

number of years our district and a number of other districts have been involved in litigation against various phone service providers," Howell said. "They're not collecting the fees that are supposed to be provided by various phone providers. They didn't properly collect or remit the service fees they're required to by state law."

Howell said the county owes \$11,968.50 as part of the expenses associated with the litigation. "In order to get the case ready for trial you have to retain experts," he said. "This is our share of the cost of retaining

those experts in the litigation. One of the defendants is Level 3 Communications. These are normal expenses to prepare our case."

According to Howell, the case is set for trial in March next year, and several million dollars are at stake. "We're saying they didn't collect the 911 fee on their bill, or that they didn't remit it back to us," Howell said. The board approved the payment.

During the Finance Committee meeting, Anders informed fellow members of the plan to upgrade the system's technology

infrastructure. He requested \$75,000 for the change.

"I got to looking at our IT on the Admin side," he said. "Now the CAD (Computer Aided Design) side we feel is completely safe. On the Administrative side we're in bad shape. We've got Windows XP computers in the building. We started talking about what it would take to get us up to speed. Our website and our internet are provided by Knoxville Internet. It's very difficult to use."

"My desire was to get everybody up to Windows 365, and

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