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Council approves COVID-19 additional funding

By Mike Steely
Senior Writer
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The Knoxville City Council approved Mayor Indya Kincannon's request for additional funding from the current budget to compensate several organizations and provide a bonus for

the police and fire departments. The idea is to fund those groups for losses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The police department will receive \$228,000 in additional money and the fire department will get \$189,500. Councilwoman

Amelia Parker objected to the police and fire funding because of what she described as police not responding in a timely manner to some calls from citizens. She suggested the funding go to KAT drivers and other city workers.

Parker also questioned

why the city police have a military-type assault vehicle that she says is "intimidating" to some citizens.

Barbara Cook of Chinkapin Lane called into the 200M meeting to question the \$124,000 donation to Second Harvest and the \$62,000 to Mobile

Meals.

"We're likely to have a much greater need down the road," she said.

Parker was the lone "No" vote as the funding passed as part of the current budget. The ordinance also includes additional funding to the United Way,

CAC's food security, Nourish Knoxville and Senior Citizens Home Assistance. Councilman Andrew Robert to successfully moved to have the funding passed as an emergency allocation.

Following that vote the council turned to a routine **Continue on page 3**



CAK athletes, performing arts students receive tribute

Christian Academy of Knoxville had a socially distant parade honoring its senior athletes and performing arts students recently. The students lost the majority of the spring semester and spring sports season due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Photo submitted.

By Ken Lay

The COVID-19 pandemic may have halted the spring semester and brought an end to high school sports but Christian Academy of Knoxville wanted to give its athletes and performing

arts students a final tribute.

So it had a parade for the student-athletes and arts students. The event was held on Saturday, May 2 and was conceived by CAK athletic director Red Estus and the Warrior Athletic Club.

Estus, who also coaches the school's girls soccer team, said he knew that it wouldn't make up for a lost season for athletes in baseball, softball, boys soccer, tennis, track and lacrosse or actors, singers and other musicians at the school.

But he felt that he and the school had to do something for these students and that was a socially distant parade where cars drove the length of campus to honor athletes and stage performers.

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New City Human Resources Department questioned

By Mike Steely
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Knoxville Mayor Indya Kincannon and her staff keep reminding people that the proposed Human Resources Department is needed. They point to the city having both a personnel office and a Civil Service Merit Board until 1986 when a financial situation caused the civil service board to take the duties of the personnel office.

They also say that the civil service department will remain and oversee many personnel duties including doing background checks and hearing requests of employees denied by a HR director.

Kincannon said that the current duties of the civil service director creates an "inherent conflict of interest." She said that the director has been administering employee rights while, at the same time, being the

final say in a complaint.

Some city employees are against the creation of a new department. In her first Zoom meeting on the subject earlier this month, 18 callers had questions and comments.

Wednesday afternoon Mayor Kincannon held her second Zoom meeting, this time with the police department. Chief Eve Thomas took part in the discussion, joined by several officers at police headquarters. She spoke briefly about

changes in the HR creation and one line has been added that she requested stating appeals of HR decisions could be appealed to the Civil Service Merit Board.

Kincannon reassured the police employees they will have "full protection" by the Merit Board.

Many of the duties assigned for years to the civil service director are shifting to the new HR director if the **Continue on page 2**

Avirtual moment of silence and Pledge of Allegiance wasn't left off the BOE May 6th agenda which focused on moving forward using safety precautions during COVID-19 times, and discussing how KCS can become a 1:1 district. Before these two items were discussed, announcements given by Chairperson Susan Horn included May 3-9 as Teacher Appreciation Week, a budget meeting for the 2020-21 school year slated for May 20, and the uncertainty of June BOE meetings to be held virtually or in person. BOE members were also reminded to complete their required annual Tennessee School Boards Association training by June 30.

Once the agenda was approved, Superintendent Bob Thomas gave his report. He thanked school nutrition workers, teachers, staff, administration, and volunteers for their hard work of supplying 673,000 meals in such difficult times. "I've been inspired by the example of the KSC community and I'm so proud of the 'can-do' spirit of our employees who have come together to serve students and families at this time. Thank you to our teachers, and not only for their dedication and their hard work during this crisis but for the commitment to the community every day of the year." Meals will continue to be served until Wed., May 20 at 39 locations.

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He announced 2020 graduations will be held between July 27 and August 8 at the high school football fields. For those schools without a football field, the World Fair's Park pavilion will be substituted instead. Ceremonies will be closed to families and the public but will be live streamed, and a recording will be sent to each graduate's family of their child's ceremony.

Next, Dr. Martha Buchanan from the Knox County Health Department weighed in on the conversation and thanked the BOE and superintendent for all of their hard work during the pandemic. "I know graduation is not ideal," said Buchanan who **Continue on page 4**

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