



Clean It Up

The pleas of a Belleville man, noting he has no money, fell on deaf ears of members of the Belleville City Council Monday night. Municipal leaders ordered George Massella to clean up his property or face fines.

-Telescope Photo by Fred Arnold

Baseball & Softball

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their life would really hurt them.”

Pike Valley parent and coach Brent Melby spoke to the board in support.

“As the football coach and golf coach, this isn’t something that they’re looking to take away from track and field and golf. Track is an important sport, kids need to be out for track, it helps with football, it helps you with basketball, every other sport.”

“I know my daughter loves playing softball. She’s mentioned several times that she would love to play college softball, but the opportunities after 8th grade, they’re just not there unless you want to pay a bunch of money and try to find a travel team somewhere and go do that,” Melby added.

Coach Melby added, “I actually think if we keep our teams in the house, doing a dual sport would be so much easier for students than if they’re trying to play it at a different town where, frankly, their coach probably doesn’t care about our track team or anything else.”

School board president John Garman thanked the group for the presentation.

“I appreciate you all coming in, sharing this with us, and we will definitely consider it,” Garman said. “I think the administration should look into this and update the board on what they find from their side of it. If you want updates on what’s going on with it, I would encourage you to contact Mr. Gritten or Mr. Miller, to see where they’re at in the process.”

Chamber Asks For Grant Funding

Belleville Chamber & Main Street Director Molly Springer is on a mission to improve downtown Belleville. Last week she asked city leaders for their help.

If everything falls into place.

The “if” Springer was talking about is if the Chamber is awarded funding from The Rural Champions Grant through the Kansas Department of Commerce.

“This is a super exciting grant opportunity,” the Chamber director said.

The funding, if approved, Springer said, would grant a \$20,800 stipend to an individual to oversee projects that enhance a rural quality of life. That would be followed by an additional \$25,000 used to implement the work.

“Two years ago when community consultant Jeff Ziegler came to our com-

munity, he said Belleville wasn’t very loveable. We need to change that by improving our downtown for starters,” she added.

Springer said in 2025 Belleville native and K-State architecture student Isaac Morris gave a presentation on his vision of downtown Belleville

“If we are approved, the grant will help to start to take Isaac’s vision and bring it in part to a reality,” she added. “It would be a good kickoff for us to get something started downtown.”

Members of the Belleville city council were supportive of the potential project and unanimously voted to contribute \$5,200 set aside for economic development, pending grant approval.

Grant applications for the current round of funding must be submitted by Feb. 20.

“What, Are You Gonna Throw Me Out In The Street?”

Belleville Man Says Paying Taxes & Utilities Is Good Enough

By Fred Arnold
Telescope Publisher

An agitated Belleville man accused members of the Belleville city council on Monday of trying to force him into homelessness, following action declaring his property at 1427 S Street a public nuisance.

George Massella missed the portion of the city council meeting where the item was addressed and open for comment. But he did arrive at the end of the night’s agenda and made his feelings known.

At issue is a number of junk, unregistered vehicles located at 1427 S Street. City leaders voted unanimously to give Massella 10 days to either request a public hearing or remove the vehicles. Massella contends that one or more of the vehicles are not owned by him but are owned by an ex-girlfriend. He says

that if he removes them, she will come after him legally.

“It’s my house, those are her cars, you can’t lay that on me,” he said.

“And what, now you’re going to fine me. I can’t pay for this.”

The Belleville man says he pays his bills. He pays his taxes. He pays his utilities. That is good enough.

Council members say the issue between Massella, and an ex-girlfriend is domestic. But he needs to remove the vehicles and ultimately iron it out on his own.

“At the end of the day, it’s your property and your responsibility to take care of it,” council member Andrew Bates said. Bates then added that there is also the condition of the roof that needs to be looked at.

“What’s wrong with the roof?” Massella snapped back. The councilman said the structure has very

little asphalt on it. And the house directly north, also owned by Massella, has structural issues to the roof.

“I can’t pay for a roof, what are you guys gonna do... fine me?” Massella asked. “What happens to me now, you gonna throw me out on the street?”

Bates responded by saying that as the property owner it is his responsibility to maintain the condition of the houses.

“I can’t pay for that. Are you gonna throw me out on the street? What am I supposed to do?”

Bates responded by saying “I guess I wouldn’t own more property than I could afford to take care of.” The councilman assured Massella that if his property falls under the nuisance category, ultimately the city would abate it.

City attorney Julie Effenbeck told the Belleville man that in the process, any fines would be

attached (as a lien) to the property.

“What happens to me?” Massella asked again.

Belleville City Administrator Adam Anderson suggested that Massella start by either removing the nuisance vehicles or placing them behind a fence, He suggested Massella come to the city offices during business hours and get a construction permit for a fence.

Massella then walked out and did not request a hearing within the 10-day grace period.

County Commissioners Put The Brakes On OK’ing Handbook Update

By Fred Arnold
Telescope Publisher

It might be only a minor snag. Then again, it might not.

Earlier this week, Republic County commissioners met with the employee task force committee charged with updating the county’s employee handbook. Committee members Joe Popelka, Travis Boyer and Amy Mukis-Havel presented their suggestions.

The handbook has not been revised since 1995.

chack acknowledged that the county had great departments and employees. He believed commissioners have upped their game as far as compensation and benefits packages.

“I think we have been very generous these past five years with salary and benefits,” he told the group.

The longtime commissioner cautioned fellow commissioners as well as the handbook task force to remember that every increase in things like pay and benefits comes

where the money would come from.

“I agree with that,” commissioner Tim Eitzman said, “We need to see a direct cost of where we are now against where we would be.”

Commissioner Splichal said he thought it would be important to see comparables with what other counties are doing as far as benefit packages.

“We need to see comparables with like-size counties,” he said. “Not what they are doing in Johnson

“Every time we send out tax statements, we can see that county taxpayers are starting to squirm when they open that letter.”

Ed Splichal
-Republic County Commissioner

The primary issue related to wages and benefits, more especially, sick time and paid time off. The committee said they felt the county was lagging behind what other counties offered. No specific “wants” were publicly shared on Monday, but commissioners indirectly indicated what the steering committee was substantial.

Commissioner Ed Spli-

with a price. Taxes have to increase.

“Every time we send out tax statements, we can see that county taxpayers are starting to squirm when they open that letter,” Splichal added.

Commission chair Doug Jackson said that while he wasn’t against increasing benefits, he needed to understand the figures, how they were arrived at and

or Pottawatomie County.”

Jackson sent the handbook committee back to the drawing board and charged them with coming back with numbers based solely on wages and benefits.

“Nobody is saying the handbook doesn’t need to be updated,” Jackson said, “But we will just take it item by item starting with those things.”

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The Heart Center is an accredited Chest Pain Center by the American College of Cardiology, providing early, accurate, and life-saving diagnoses, as well as procedures such as bypass surgery, stents and angioplasty; TAVR (transcatheter aortic valve replacement); treatment for atrial fibrillation with the minimally invasive WATCHMAN™ procedure; and cardiac rehabilitation.

Whether you need general cardiac care provided in our clinic or a surgical procedure at Salina Regional Health Center, we are one team working together for your heart. For an appointment or more information, please visit heartcenter.srhc.com.



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