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Batavia City Council OKs sales tax hike



The Batavia Police Department is currently housed in the Batavia Government Center at 100 N. Island Ave. **DAVID SHAROS/FOR THE BEACON-NEWS**

Purpose is to fund a future police facility

By Molly Morrow
Aurora Beacon-News

The overall sales tax in Batavia will soon be increasing to 8.5%, after the City Council moved to approve a 0.5% hike in the local sales tax at its meeting on Monday. The purpose of the hike, the city says, is to fund a future police department facility for the city. In January, FGM Architects,

which the city hired to evaluate its current police facility and plan for the future, presented recommendations to the Batavia City Council regarding issues with the current headquarters, per a memo from City Administrator Laura Newman. It was ultimately determined that the city would either need to do an adaptive reuse of an existing building or create a new facility for the police based on site constraints at the current facility. The Batavia Police Department is currently housed in the Bata-

via Government Center at 100 N. Island Ave. The idea for a local sales tax increase is that the city could accumulate funds in anticipation of a future police facility project, what Newman's memo calls a "save-then-spend" model. The plan is aimed at reducing how much debt is issued for the eventual project, the memo notes, "thereby lowering interest costs and long-term financial obligations." And it spreads the cost of the police facility beyond Batavia residents, Newman's memo notes,

pointing to the Randall Road corridor's retailers and the revenue they generate from out-of-town shoppers. The sales tax hike will not apply to groceries, vehicles, medical items, prescriptions and services like lawyers, accountants and hairdressers, Ald. Jennifer Baerren said at Monday's City Council meeting, where the measure was approved unanimously by the council. Baerren explained that the money generated by the sales

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At right, Evan Dolan dances with Jessie Potter in "White Christmas" at the Paramount Theatre in Aurora. **BORIS MARTIN**

Knowing how to shine

After eight shows in the ensemble, 'White Christmas' star at Paramount in Aurora stands out in role



Denise Crosby

Evan Dolan's aunt was over-the-moon excited. And who could blame Michele Corrado. The Arlington Heights woman had just watched her sister's youngest of six children on stage at the Paramount Theatre, singing and dancing his way through Irving Berlin's iconic "White Christmas," which is being staged at the theater through Jan. 11. Corrado has certainly seen her nephew in plenty of other

productions on stage at what she describes as "this gorgeous theater" in downtown Aurora. And no wonder – this is Evan Dolan's ninth Broadway Series show, starting with "Sweeney Todd" in 2017, followed by "Newsies," "Beauty and the Beast," "Cinderella," "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," "The Full Monty," "Frozen" and "Cats." But this "White Christmas" performance was special. It is her nephew's first time in a principal role and Corrado could not have been more proud as she watched him shine as the charming and carefree Phil Davis. "He was unbelievable," she

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Evan Dolan relaxes following a recent matinee of "White Christmas" at the Paramount Theatre, where he takes on the rigorous role of Phil Davis, his first lead after being in eight Broadway Series ensembles at the downtown Aurora theater. **DENISE CROSBY/THE BEACON-NEWS**

Oswego OKs concept plan for development at old school site

By Linda Girardi
Aurora Beacon-News

The Oswego Village Board recently approved a revised concept plan with fewer units for a proposed residential project on the former Traughber Junior High School site in Oswego. The development is proposed for a 12.34-acre property – owned by Oswego-based School District 308 – at the northeast corner of Route 71 and Washington Street close to the village's downtown. The former Traughber Junior High School building on the site would be razed as part of the proposed project, now set to feature 161 apartments and townhomes. School District 308 officials said the Traughber building has remained in disrepair, causing the district to invest more than \$250,000 annually for maintenance and other expenses. Village staff was directed to negotiate a redevelopment agreement between the village, school district and the developer for the project, called Traughber Estates. JM Development – a joint venture – originally presented a proposal to the Oswego Planning and Zoning Commission in September about the project at the former school site. That plan featured 239 residential units. However, the commission recommended denial of the plan based on the density. The developer modified the concept plan based on public feedback before bringing the proposal on Oct. 21 to the Oswego Village Board, which has the final say on the project. That plan featured 202 units. Trustees were not receptive to a five-story building proposed for the site. The developer revised the site plan based on the initial reviews, village officials said. "The most significant change is that the proposed five-story building along Route 71 has been removed and replaced with two three-story apartment buildings," Oswego Development Services Director Rod Zenner said in a report to trustees. The overall number of units has been reduced by 41 units from the October plan and there are 78 fewer units compared to the proposal rejected by the Oswego Planning and Zoning Commission in September, village officials said, with the number of units now set

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Bears say they're looking into building a new stadium in NW Indiana

By Robert McCoppin and Dan Petrella
Chicago Tribune

The Chicago Bears are considering a move to northwest Indiana amid growing concerns that Illinois lawmakers will not approve the financial incentives needed to build a new stadium in Arlington Heights, a top team official told the Tribune. In an exclusive interview, Bears President and CEO Kevin Warren confirmed the possibility of crossing state lines, but said the orga-

nization also would consider sites in other parts of Illinois. A letter to season ticket holders Wednesday outlined plans to look elsewhere, too, adding more fodder to the ongoing political debate over the franchise's future and renewing an old threat to leave the state if the team doesn't get its needs met. "We're looking at opportunities that may exist in the Chicagoland area including northwest Indiana," Warren said. "We still believe that Arlington Park is the most viable location in Cook County, but now we're putting everything back on

the table and exploring all options." The news comes after Indiana lawmakers earlier this year created the Northwest Indiana Professional Sports Development Commission to attract a major sports organization such as the Bears. "Northwest Indiana is in our home marketing area," Warren said. "From a TV, media, radio rights standpoint and our fan base, it's an extension of Chicago. It seems like it would provide a viable opportunity." Word that the team would

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The Chicago Skyway Toll Bridge, a common path for Chicagoans to travel to Indiana, shown from South Ewing Avenue in South Chicago on Wednesday. **DOMINIC DI PALERMO/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**