

Harvey council meets; still no acting mayor

Aldermen approve road improvements, FOIA settlement

By Evy Lewis
Daily Southtown

The Harvey City Council meeting concluded Monday with the city still lacking an acting mayor.

The City Council voted to approve several items, including a lawsuit settlement and the acceptance of road improvement funds. However, there was no action scheduled on the mayoral vacancy.

Mayor Christopher Clark died Jan. 30, leaving Harvey without a mayor. The City Council was scheduled to select a new acting mayor to serve out the remainder of Clark's term at a special meeting Feb. 2, but deadlocked between 1st Ward Ald. Shirley Drewenski and 5th Ward Ald. Dominique Randle-El. Each received three votes from the six-member City Council.

Drewenski is mayor pro tempore until an acting mayor is elected.

The selection of an acting clerk and a resolution to update the city's bank signatories were deferred until an acting mayor is selected.

"I understand that there's no timeline," resident Amanda Askew told aldermen Monday. "But I do believe that the sense of urgency needs to happen, like, yesterday, so those people can lock in and do their job properly."

Drewenski said the mayoral vacancy will be addressed at the City Council meeting at 7 p.m. on Feb. 23. Since not everyone who wanted to attend the last meeting was able to fit in the council chambers, Drewenski said, the aldermen are seeking a venue that will accommodate more people.

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The Harvey City Council members put their hands together, like a team before a game, at the urging of 4th Ward Ald. Tracy Key, second from left, at Harvey City Hall, Monday. **EVY LEWIS/DAILY SOUTHTOWN**



Don Ligon and Jessica Null, social workers at Bremen High, helped create The Braves Closet, where students who need clothes or toiletries can get them for free. **JANICE NEUMANN/DAILY SOUTHTOWN**

'It's one less thing they have to worry about'

Bremen High School's Braves Closet offers help with discretion in a comforting space

By Janice Neumann

Bremen High School has long had clothing and hygiene products available for students in need, scattered in various storage areas at the school in Midlothian.

But thanks to the school's longtime chief custodian, Eugene Reyna, all that has changed.

"We came in over the summer and she (Principal Jessica Rucinski) said, let me show you this," said Jessica Null, a social

worker at the school.

Just off the gymnasium, a newly painted bright red door led to racks of neatly organized clothing and shelves of toiletries.

It was a far cry from the dingy closet that had been there before being upgraded by Reyna, who's been at the school for 13 years.

"I do think it's nice to have everything in a centralized location where we can offer students in a discreet way," Null said. "It's good for them. It's one less thing they have to worry about when

they're at school."

Reyna worked last summer to transform the utility space into something that now resembles a pantry.

"We're fortunate we have a very talented chief custodian — he brought this to life," said Rucinski. "We just said we wanted a nice space where kids felt comfortable going to."

The principal said the school has offered a micropantry for about a decade, but there was a need for something more. And as soon as the call for donations went out, many people helped fill

what's now known as The Braves Closet.

"We're blessed to have so many generous people in the community, that we're overflowing," said Don Ligon, a school social worker who helped organize the project. "We did a clothing drive with staff, which really got a lot of great clothes."

Ligon said he and other social workers sometimes heard from teachers about students in need.

"If (students) request it or some-

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James 'Boz' O'Brien, owner of the Reilly's Daughter tavern in Oak Lawn, dies at 75

By Rick Kogan
Chicago Tribune

If ever a man seemed born to run a tavern, that man was James "Boz" O'Brien, and he ran one of the finest this city has ever known.

A native of the Mount Greenwood neighborhood, he was only in his mid-20s when he opened a small tavern in a strip mall at 111th Street and Pulaski Road in Oak Lawn. He called his place Reilly's Daughter and over the

next decades, as it grew in size from 1,400 square feet to more than 5,000, it became not only an oasis of food and drink but a place of frequent parties, celebrations, music and events large and small, the sort of gatherings that help define and knit a community together.

O'Brien died on Jan. 28 at age 75. His death was confirmed by his son, Brendan O'Brien.

A wake took place at the Curley Funeral Home in Chicago Ridge, a

funeral mass at St. Cajetan Catholic Church and burial at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery. The crowds were plentiful.

"It was something to see," Brendan O'Brien said. "It showed how many lives my dad touched."

A good tavern is more than a place to get a drink or seek shelter from the bumps and troubles of the world. A good tavern levels

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Boz O'Brien, left, and Brandon O'Brien talk about the past and future of Reilly's Daughter Pub on Nov. 2, 2015, in Oak Lawn. **JIM BOYCE/FOR THE DAILY SOUTHTOWN**

