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Warrenton okays 75% abatement for data center

By William Carroll
EDITOR

Aldermen approves tax break by 4-2 vote

By a 4-2 vote the Warrenton Board of Aldermen approved the Chapter 100 plan that includes a 75-percent personal property tax abatement for Crusoe for the data center project to be built in the city.

After a brief question and answer period with Mark Grimm with Gilmore & Bell, who pre-

pared the Chapter 100 documents, and a representative from Crusoe, the board voted in favor of the proposed abatements with aldermen Brandon Lang, Scott Schulze, Jack Crump and Larry Corder voting in favor of the measure and aldermen Christine Wait and

Roger Romaker voting against the measure.

The proposal approved by the board calls for \$85 billion in bonds. Under the terms of the agreement, the company will begin installing equipment, which will consist of computer servers and processors, in the

spring of 2027 and anticipate turning over the equipment to the city before Jan. 1, 2028. Under the terms of the agreement, if the equipment is turned over after Jan 1, 2028, but before Jan 1, 2029 the first year of any abatement would be 2029 and the company would pay 100

percent of any personal property taxes due and owing in 2028.

According to the cost-benefit analysis, the company anticipates that the cost of equipment for the facility will be approximately \$8.366 billion. The company also anticipates expending approximately \$8.25 billion every six years to replace outdated equipment.

See CENTER Page 2A



Backstoppers present \$155,000 donation

Warren County Backstoppers recently presented a check for \$155,000 to the group's parent organization, proceeds from this year's dinner and auction. The Warren County group has raised \$1,256,875 since being formed in 2011. Backstoppers provides emergency funding and ongoing support to the families of first responders who gave their lives in the line of duty. Currently, the Warren County Backstoppers support three families of officers who were killed in the line of duty — Lonnie Cole, a Warren County Sheriff's deputy, Paul Fricke, former Hawk Point police chief, and Truesdale Police Officer Vernon Seals.

Pictured, from left, are Greg Brown, Mike Owenby, Michelle Heiliger, Amy Leach, Larry O'Toole, Kevin Harrison, Scott Taylor, Jacob Devore and Sean Johnson. Submitted photo

Wright City seeks grant renewal to cover salaries

Board also votes to prohibit semi parking on I-70 ramps

By William Carroll
EDITOR

The Wright City Board of Aldermen unanimously approved the grant proposal for the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services Grant to renew its current grant that allows the city to pay the salary of three officers.

The vote occurred during the board's April 9 meeting, and according to Mayor Michelle Heiliger, was to make up for a previous discussion that did not result in a vote.

Heiliger said the city is currently operating under a COPS grant that pays 75 percent of the wages and benefits of three officers in the Wright City Police Department. She says that because of the grant the cost to the city for those three officers for three years is only \$122,000 total.

The board approved the grant proposal by a 3-0 vote as Alderman Karey Owens was not present at the April 9 meeting.

The board also voted 3-0 to approve an ordinance which would amend the Wright City Municipal Code with respect to streets where parking is prohibited. Heiliger said the city has been receiving calls from residents about semi-trucks parking on the west on-ramp to Interstate 70 at Wildcat Drive. She said that if the city has an ordinance prohibiting parking, Missouri Department of Transportation officials have said they would pay for and place signs along the on-ramp.

The board also briefly discussed the city's Flock Security cameras. Heiliger said that Owens voiced some concerns about approving the use of Flock cameras. Heiliger said Owens' concerns were that any resident could file a Missouri Sunshine Law request and obtain personal information about other residents through the system.

City Attorney Paul Rost said that there are a lot of people using public records requests to put pressure on Flock, specifically those concerned with the "surveillance state."

"There are a lot of issues going on as to where that's (challenges to Flock) going to end," Rost said. "It is an evolving situation."

See RENEWAL Page 2A

R-III board approves budget amendment

By Jim Faasen
CORRESPONDENT

Given the current financial climate for Missouri school districts, the Warren County R-III district is doing about as well as can be expected. That's the message the district Superintendent passed on at the April school board meeting.

At the monthly meeting, Superintendent Dr. Gregg Klinginsmith briefed the board on the current financial status in preparation for the board's vote on a budget amendment, including an operational deficit of \$750,000.

That figure is up from the projected deficit, he said.

"We originally planned for a deficit of about \$500,000," Klinginsmith said. "The shortfall in state funding is really pushing that back, so we'll see how that all lands."

One area that is helping the

district fiscally is the funding it is receiving and will continue to receive to support high needs students. With the monies received, even with an overall decrease in state funds, the impact was lessened somewhat as the district incurred a loss of \$71,833 in state funding.

That figure could have been much larger, Klinginsmith said.

"We did see an increase in the high needs fund and, next year, we should see another increase," Klinginsmith said. "That's because we have more high needs students needing access and needing services. That has been good to offset costs and that's why we're seeing purchase services higher, too."

Klinginsmith said that the district's fund balance is also in a good place — for now.

"I'm projecting our fund balance to be close to 32 percent," Klinginsmith said. "That's close

to what we've had. That's healthy for what we have. It is, however, something that we cannot sustain for a long time. We had some minor changes, but the big change is in the state funding."

Overall, the district has the funds to deal with an average in expenses. That's due to bond money that Warren County R-III has in its bank account.

He reminded the assembled board members that the operational deficit must be addressed in the long run.

"Our revenue is at \$58 (million), and our expenses are at \$73 (million)," Klinginsmith said. "We're not deficit spending almost \$20 million. It's not what you see. We have money in the bank. On the operational side, we do have that deficit."

After the presentation, the board voted unanimously to approve the budget amendment.

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in this issue

Classifieds5B Obituaries.....4B Real Estate3B
Do You Remember...7A Legals.....7-8B Shot of the Week ...4A

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