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CITY OF SUN PRAIRIE

City will pay \$37,834 to attorney who resigned after alleged gun incident

By Jennifer Fetterly

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The former Sun Prairie city attorney currently facing charges of bringing a loaded gun into a bar was paid over \$9,000 while on leave and will receive \$37,834 in wages after he resigned last month.

Mark A. Leonard, 61, is charged with operating firearms while intoxicated, carrying a handgun into a place where alcohol is sold and consumed, and disorderly conduct in connection with a June 10, 2021 incident at Ripp's Bar in Waunakee. The court case is pending.



Mark Leonard

Leonard was placed on paid leave from his city attorney position on June 11. The city council accepted Leonard's resignation on Sept. 10.

Leonard received \$9,211 for 21 days of paid leave between June 11 and Aug. 27, 2021. Leonard used paid time (vacation and sick) for the remaining days, city human resources director Brenda Suke-nik reported. The Sun Prairie Star obtained the information

through two separate open records requests from the City of Sun Prairie.

Leonard will be paid \$37,834 through the end of the year and will be covered under city health insurance until Dec. 31, 2021.

City records show Leonard's wages for 2021 are \$115,730 and \$24,638 in benefits.

The city appointed Matthew Dregne as the interim city attorney on July 6. Dregne's billing rate as interim city attorney is \$225 per hour.

Leonard was hired as the city attorney in September 2013. City Administrator Aaron Oppenheimer described Leonard as a

dedicated and loyal employee in a letter written after Leonard's resignation.

Leonard is scheduled for an Oct. 29 pre-trial conference in Dane County Circuit Court.

On June 10, patrons at Ripp's Bar reported that Leonard appeared to be intoxicated and was showing handguns to other customers.

Waunakee Police made contact with Leonard at Ripp's Bar and removed a Glock 34 and a Glock 43, from Leonard's hip holster and his waistband, along with a full 9mm magazine on the top of the bar where Leonard reportedly was sitting,

according to the criminal complaint.

A bartender at Ripp's Bar told Leonard that he could not have guns at that bar but that she was afraid to call police because she feared for her safety, according to the criminal complaint. The bartender said she did not see Leonard point the guns at anyone. A bar patron called 911, according to the criminal complaint.

Leonard's preliminary breath alcohol test was 0.17 — twice the legal limit for Wisconsin motorists, according to the criminal complaint.

COVID-19

Alders not ready to let public back to in-person meetings

By Jennifer Fetterly

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Alders concerned about the spike in delta variant COVID-19 cases and their safety won't let the public back to in-person city hall meetings.

Alders have been meeting in person since July but public access has been restricted to virtual since spring 2019 when the pandemic began. And it's not clear when the public will be welcomed back as city alders made no change last month on public access.

Although the public has the option to attend meetings virtually, the Wisconsin Open meetings law state, "It is declared to be the policy of this

state that the public is entitled to the fullest and most complete information regarding the affairs of government as is compatible with the conduct of governmental business. To that end, the law requires that, "All meeting of all state and local governmental bodies shall be publicly held in places reasonably accessible to members of the public and shall be open to all citizens at all times unless otherwise expressly provided by law."

Last month, some city alders said if people are allowed back into city hall for meetings, they will attend virtually. An idea to allow a limited number of people to attend meetings also

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LET'S GO CARDINALS!



Chris Mertes

2021 Sun Prairie Homecoming Parade

These Sun Prairie High School students kicked up their heels in an effort to fire up Sun Prairie fans during the Thursday, Sept. 30 Sun Prairie Homecoming Parade in advance of the Oct. 1 Sun Prairie High School Homecoming Football game against Madison East. The parade traveled from Cardinal Heights Upper Middle School at 220 Kroncke Drive east along Main Street to Market Street on the same evening as Downtown Sun Prairie's Wine Walk held at a variety of locations in the downtown.

CITY OF SUN PRAIRIE

Stonewood Crossing fire displaces 10 people

By Chris Mertes

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A fire Thursday night, Sept. 30, displaced 10 people on Stonewood Crossing in the City of Sun Prairie.

According to Asst. Fire Chief Bill Sullivan, Sun Prairie Fire & Rescue (SPFR) responded to the 1100 block of Stonewood Crossing in the City of Sun Prairie for a multi-family apartment fire shortly after 6:30 p.m.

Upon arrival, Sun Prairie Engine 3 found a four-unit apartment building with heavy fire from one of the unit

garages. Immediately, a box alarm was requested for additional units from neighboring communities while Engine 3 began putting water on the fire from the truck mounted deluge nozzle.

Sullivan said SPFR Engine 3 connected to a fire hydrant in front of the building and used a hose line to complete fire extinguishment.

Sun Prairie Engine 1 connected to the fire hydrant on the corner, and searched the units to confirm everyone was out of the building. City of

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SUN PRAIRIE

Sunshine Place officially cuts ribbon on 'new' addition

By Chris Mertes

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Roughly 100 people — including city, county and state dignitaries — showed up along with unseasonably warm temperatures in the 80s on Friday, Oct. 1 for the ribbon cutting for the Sunshine Place expansion at 18 Rickel Road.

Sunshine Place Executive Director Ann Maastricht not only thanked the volunteers, but also former executive director Joanna Cervantes and current Sun Prairie Emergency Food Pantry president Mark

Thompson.

For those who didn't know what Sunshine Place was all about, Maastricht and others offered tours of the expanded facility that houses the food pantry and other social assistance agencies before the start of the ceremony.

The Sunshine Place expansion project began in 2018 and was completed in 2019, but the opening ceremony was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It's been inspiring for me personally, to witness this community's passion for Sunshine Place, and your willingness to

invest in our future," Maastricht said. "Reaching a milestone like this can only be achieved through incredible teamwork. And I'm honored to work alongside some of the best servant leaders in our community. And I want to publicly acknowledge the dedication and commitment of all of our volunteers and staff."

Among those speaking at the ceremony: Sun Prairie Mayor Paul Esser, who remembered when the July 10, 2018 explosion devastated downtown Sun

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