

**On County S**

## Rider is killed in cycle crash

Crawford County Sheriff Dale McCullick reported that on Friday, June 17, at approximately 11:56 a.m., the sheriff's department was notified of a single motorcycle crash with injuries, located on County S at the intersection of Little Haney Road in Haney Township.

Larry Klotzbuecher, 68, Scandinavia, Wisconsin, was operating a 2007 Honda motorcycle westbound on S, when he attempted to make a right turn onto Little Haney Road. Klotzbuecher lost control of the motorcycle, causing him to be ejected onto the pavement and land in the east-bound lane of S.

Klotzbuecher, who was wearing a helmet at the time of the crash, was transported from the scene by Ocooch Mountain Rescue Squad to Vernon Memorial Hospital for treatment of his injuries.

Klotzbuecher ultimately died from the injuries he sustained in the crash. Klotzbuecher was riding with a group of other motorcyclists. Speed was determined to be the cause of the crash.

Assisting the Crawford County Sheriff's Department on scene were the Gays Mills Fire Department and Ocooch Mountain Rescue Squad.



THE SWAMP PROJECT PEOPLE really rocked the Soldiers Grove Fun Days Parade, with their swampy float. The float featured Sammy Goodwin holding a chicken to support her plea to the village board to allow village residents to keep backyard chickens. The float also featured Dorothy, the pot bellied pig, and a kayak donated by Rutabaga that will be one of the raffle items at Swamp Fest, coming up on Saturday, October 1.

**Seneca Schools**

## Wages are increased

By CHARLEY PREUSSER

It shouldn't have been much of a surprise, but most of the important decisions at the Seneca School Board involved the impact of inflation being felt throughout the economy.

Maybe the biggest bullet for the district to bite was increasing staff wages in light of inflation. Historically, the district has used the Consumer Price Index as a guideline for raises. The index varies with the economy, and has usually reflected a one or two percent increase in the cost of living. Sometimes, it has crept a bit higher.

Some years, the Seneca School District Board has decided to increase the wages a bit more than the CPI. Monday night was different story.

The Consumer Price Index is set at 4.7 percent as of January 1, 2022. Earlier, the board requested the school district administrator Dave Boland to find out what other schools in the area had done.

At the meeting Monday night, Boland shared his findings—almost every school among the 33 schools in CESA #3 had raised their staff wages by 4.7 percent.

A few schools around the state, had gone even higher.

Boland did note that the LaCrosse School District had held their increase of staff wages for the coming school year to just two percent. That school district explained that they are looking to combine their two high schools into one building and when that project was completed there would be savings that could be shared in wage increases.

Nevertheless, the two percent increase has not been well received in LaCrosse.

See SENECA Page 8 Col 1

**Soldiers Grove Village Board**

## Chickens and sewer plant on agenda

By GILLIAN POMPLUN

Following a presentation by Bart Nies of Delta-3 Engineering about potential upgrades to the village's wastewater treatment plant, the Soldiers Grove Village Board decided to hold a public hearing about the project. For this reason, the date of the July board meeting has been changed to Thursday, July 14.

The public hearing about the project will start at 6 p.m., and the board meeting will begin at 7 p.m. Also on the agenda for the board meeting that night will be the topic of whether the village should adopt a backyard chicken ordinance. If adopted, the ordinance would allow village residents to keep chickens within the village limits, which is currently prohibited.

The ordinance, if adopted, would likely define how many chickens residents could keep, what kind of structures and maintenance of the bird would be required, and how the ordinance would be enforced.

**Treatment plant**

Bart Nies of Delta-3 Engineering explained to the board that current and upcoming regulations for phosphorous and E.coli, as well as the deficiencies in the sludge storage area, mean that the village must pursue upgrades to its wastewater treatment plant.

Nies said that there a series of relevant deadlines that the village will be required by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) to meet. Those include:

- March 31, 2023: phosphorous reduction plans and specifications for the plant are due,
  - April 30, 2025: plant is required to be compliant with regulations governing E. coli in effluent
  - September 30, 2025: plant is required to be compliant with regulations governing phosphorous in effluent
- "Last fall, our team produced a report on deficiencies in the village's wastewater treatment plant, and formulated a preliminary capital improvement plan proposal for the facility," Nies said. "You could do all of the needed upgrades piecemeal, but if you choose to pursue them all at the same time, we estimate that you could save \$35,000 to \$40,000 on the project."

Nies said that the average daily flows per sewer plant customer is about 40 gallons per day, and that when the plant was built, it was engineered to accommodate average daily flows of 114 gallons per day.

"The capacity of your plant is adequate for your current needs, but WDNR won't allow you to design for the lowest average daily flow – their minimum is 60 gallons per day," Nies said. "Your current sludge storage area can accommodate 43,750 gallons, and so you will need to add 110,000 gallons of storage as well."

**E.coli reduction**

Nies told the board that there are two options to achieve compliance with E.coli in effluent regulations. He said the board could optimize the current chlorine disinfection system, or replace it with an ultraviolet light (UV) disinfection system.

"I recommend going to the UV disinfection system because it is much more efficient," Nies said.

**Phosphorous reduction**

Nies said that to meet phosphorous in effluent regulations, the village has three options.

The first option would be to continue with the current system, which he said "is not allowed."

The second option would be a filtration system with chemicals. He said the system is basically a big filter to which chemicals are added to precipitate out the phosphorous. Nies said that these kinds of systems are very expensive.

The third option would be 'Biological Phosphorous Removal' combined with pursuing 'Water Quality Trading' credits through upstream streambank improvement projects.

He said this option would allow the village to continue to use the existing aerated tank area, but would modify it from coarse to fine air. He said that the first of two tanks would be baffled off, and would be anaerobic (without air).

See GROVE Page 8 Col 3



LOCAL MUSICIAN DYLAN HARRIS played in the parking lot at Soldiers Grove Fun Days last Saturday. Harris demonstrated a deep repertoire for those who enjoyed his performance.

**North Crawford**

## Referendum survey presented to board

By GILLIAN POMPLUN

Representatives of FEH Design presented results of a 'referendum survey' to the North Crawford School Board at their June 15 meeting. FEH is the architectural firm the district has contracted to help evaluate district facilities for needed capital improvements.

The school board will make a decision about what operating and capital improvement referendums to place on the ballot in the November 2022 election at their July 20 special meeting.

In addition, FEH detailed the services their company can provide for 'marketing of bond referendums.' Beyond the survey/research, and graphics/floorplans services already provided, they also offer 'get out the vote,' brochures/videos, and media management services. The board will also consider what, if any, bond referendum marketing services they want to contract from the firm at their July meeting.

**Survey results**

According to FEH, a total of 261 members of the community responded to the referendum survey. Of those, 207 had not participated or had a family member participate in any of the community 'Advisory Task Force' meetings.

The executive summary of the FEH report said:

"The outcome of the survey was a significant level of support for addressing 'urgent and required' maintenance items, including a roof replacement, a window replacement, walls surface replacement, exterior insulation and finish system (EIFS) on high walls above the roof, a new ag lab, and updates to career and technical education spaces (CTE)."

Specifically, in the executive summary, levels of support for the proposed projects, as a result of input from community meetings and the survey, was as follows:

See BOARD Page 8 Col 3

**Early Deadline for Fourth of July**

The Crawford County Independent will have an early deadline for the 4th of July holiday. The deadline for the July 7 newspaper will be Thursday, June 30 at 12 noon.

Earlier material will be appreciated and also more certain of publication.

We will mail the newspapers on Wednesday, July 6. The office will be closed Friday, July 1 and Monday, July 4.

**Tips sought**

## Rural museum is vandalized

By JOE HART & CHANDLER BRINDLEY

Martha Querin-Schultz and her husband were enjoying a quiet evening at home Saturday June 11, when their dogs started to go nuts.

Querin-Schultz curates the Museum of Unremarkable Objects, a gallery of artworks housed in a garden shed on her property along Sleepy Hollow Road. As the name implies, the gallery celebrates things like postage stamps and safety pins—simple objects otherwise unnoticed.

On Saturday, her dogs alerted her to a burglary-in-progress at the museum. She caught a glimpse of a silver sedan as it peeled out, leaving behind an empty beer can in the road, and a mess of smashed art in the museum.

"I cried, I screamed, and I said more naughty words than I have in a long time," said the curator.

The vandals also stole two artworks. Anyone with information is urged to call Crimestoppers or the Crawford County Sheriff's Department.

See MUSEUM Page 10 Col 4



# Cost-of-living increases at local school districts have stressed budgets

## SENECA from Page 1

“It has created some bad publicity and it has created some bad feelings,” Boland told the board.

Board member Mark Johnson indicated he felt it was necessary for Seneca to remain competitive with the wages of neighboring schools to retain and recruit the quality staff the district needs.

Board member Crisse Reynolds said there was more at stake than just competing with neighboring school districts. Reynolds said it’s about paying people what they’re worth for the job they are doing. She noted the district must respect the staff’s education, their dedication to the job, and their value in delivering a quality education to the students.

Johnson was quick to acknowledge Reynolds. He noted the fact the district has always had a good relationship between the staff, the board and the administration.

Boland noted some year’s the CPI has been as low as one percent.

Board member Charles Clark added more perspective. He pointed out giving a 4.7 percent increase in wages was actually not giving an increase at all. It was keeping the employees’ buying power where it was, since everything will cost more going forward.

Board member Adam Green made a motion to increase the wages of support staff, teachers, administrators and supervisors by five percent for the coming school year. The motion was seconded by Britney Joy and passed unanimously by the board with Clark abstaining. Charles Clark’s wife, Erika Clark, is employed by the district as a part-time school bus driver, a softball coach and the school’s athletic director.

**Summer school wages**  
In a related matter, the board approved paying summer school staff at the regular wage rate. Teachers were being paid \$25 per hour regardless of their regular hourly wage.  
In speaking in favor of paying the teachers their regular wages for summer school work, school board president Shawn Lenzendorf said it didn’t make sense to not pay them their regular wages.  
Charles Clark moved to pay the summer school teachers their normal wages. The motion was seconded by Crisse Reynolds, and passed unanimously by the board.

**In other business**  
In other business, the Seneca School Board:

- approved the 2022-23 school calendar with an optional fifth snow day that can be converted into a spring vacation day if it is not used
- voted to keep lunch and breakfast price at last year’s rate
- approved an occupational health service contract with Crossing Rivers Health
- approved a contract with Johnson and Block for the 2022-23 financial audits
- discussed and tabled a Hudl video package for sports teams and live streaming
- renewed a \$500 annual membership fee in the Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance
- renewed the 2022-23 Wisconsin Association of School Board membership
- renewed the 2022-23 Association for Equity in Funding membership
- gave approval to concrete pad installation for track jumping events near the softball field on Seneca Township land, to be paid for by an individual donor

- learned about design development of the new school logo for the ‘Royals’
- learned the 2021-22 budget was coming in on target for expenses and to some degree for revenues, which are harder to predict
- presented the Seneca Area School District Monthly Recognition Award to the Conference Champion

## At North Crawford

# School board to make referendum decisions on July 20

## BOARD from Page 1

- EIFS high wall replacement, 94 percent (\$170,000)
- Window replacement, 93 percent (\$150,000)
- Roof replacement, 84 percent (\$2,900,000)
- Ag tech lab addition, 61 percent (\$700,000)
- Media Center updates, 52 percent (\$100,000)
- Childcare space, 50 percent (\$360,000)
- Outdoor concessions and restroom area, 50 percent (\$175,000)
- South parking lot replacement, 48 percent (\$175,000)

## Dollar amounts

FEH Design reported that 84 percent of survey respondents supported a capital improvements referendum dollar amount of \$4,500,000, with support dropping off to 50 percent at the \$5,500,000 level.

“Based upon a bond consultant information provided to the district, a referendum at the \$4.5 million level would equate to an annual property tax increase of \$140 for a \$100,000 property.”

In the executive summary, the report from FEH states

## In Soldiers Grove

# Village board to hold public hearing on sewer projects

## GROVE from Page 1

The second tank would be aerated.

“We will have to conduct a study to see if this kind of system will work for the village’s sewage,” Nies said. “If it works, this system will reduce phosphorous in your effluent from 3.5 milligrams-per-liter (mg/L) to 1.0 mg/L, but it still won’t get you all the way down to the 0.1 mg/L standard.”

Nies said that to get from 1.0 mg/L to 0.1 mg/L, the best option is for the village to pursue water quality trading credits through upstream streambank restoration projects. He said that a quick, preliminary calculation indicates that the streambank

restoration projects would need to reduce streambank erosion, which contributes phosphorous into the water, by about 47 pounds per year. This would mean the village would need 94 water quality trading credits.

## Project funding

Nies said that his team has estimated the cost of the project at about \$3.9 million, with no grant funding. He said that last year, the project would have come in at \$3.5 million, and the prior engineering consultant had estimated it at \$4 million in 2018.

“In the next five years, funds available for projects like this in the WDNR Clean Water Fund are expected to be increased by \$48 million

per year,” Nies said. “About half of those additional funds are earmarked to be distributed in the form of grants – about \$24 million. But we are also hearing that small rural communities are likely to be prioritized for the funding, and that the grant/loan percentages could be more favorable than the standard 50/50.”

Nies said that these additional funds are made available as a result of passage of the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

“If the stars align, and you receive both a Clean Water Fund grant and loan, and possibly also a Community Development Block Grant, it is possible the village might only have to pay 25 percent of the total cost of the project or about \$1million,” Nies said. “Your share could be paid for through a Clean Water Fund loan, which is a 20-year, locked rate loan at a very favorable interest rate.”

Nies said that currently, the interest rate for WDNR’s Clean Water Fund loans is running at 2.04 percent.

The board voted to approve the draft facility plan provided by Delta-3 Engineering, and to schedule a public hearing about the proposed project on July 14, followed by a board meeting where the board might vote to contract with Delta-3 to move forward on the project.

## In other business

In other business, the board:

- accepted the resignation of first grade teacher Hannah Swenson, who took a position in another district
- accepted the resignation of phy ed teacher Diane Yager, who worked in the district for 32 years
- accepted the resignation of Stace Anderson, who served as Director of Special Education and School Psychologist

- accepted the resignation of bus driver Louis Prew
- hired Shannon Kriel as a first grade teacher
- hired Shelly Davidson as a phy ed teacher
- hired Jesse Jackson as the Director of Special Education and School Psychologist
- signed a shared services agreement with LaFarge for the services of Jesse Jackson

## Based on our space need

evaluation that reviewed enrollment, projections, curriculum, and delivery compared to state and national standards, the district has a space shortage compared to national standards of over 20,000 square feet.”

## In other business

In other business, the board:

• heard that due to a sizable donation, the district will be able to work with elementary counselor Max Moderski to secure a therapy dog for the district

• reviewed the district’s ‘End of Year Achievement Gap Report,’ which in all cases showed improvement between fall and end-of-year scores for reading and math for kindergarten through third grade students

• approved COLLEDGE up applications for seven students, allowing them to enroll in classes at Southwest Technical College that will prepare them for careers after graduation. Those students are Allie Chamberlain, Cody Burke, Lexi Deckert, Corianah Jensen, MaKinzi Kemp, Angelica Morga, and Nathan Zirk.

# Stream eco-system services suffering on a global scale

Agriculture, loss of habitat or wastewater effluents -- human stressors negatively impact biodiversity in streams and rivers. Very little is known yet about the extent to which their capacity for self-purification and other essential ecosystem services are also impacted.

An international research team lead by the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research (UFZ) has synthesized the globally available research on this topic in a meta-analysis recently published in Global Change Biology. This study provides new initiatives for improved water management.

Streams and rivers are the lifeblood of our planet, biodiversity hotspots and essential for human life: They provide drinking water, offer flood protection and are used to irrigate agricultural areas. But humans are impacting freshwaters and their ecological functions through actions such as altering the structure of waterbodies, agriculture or discharging wastewater.

“Of course this leads to a variety of adverse ecological effects,” says Dr. Mario Brauns, a scientist at the UFZ Department of River Ecology. “Most studies deal with the effects on biodiversity, but this may only be a part of the problem. Although a loss of biodiversity can be an indicator that freshwaters are affected by human stressors, the question of whether and to what extent its ecological functions suffer remains unanswered.”

An essential ecosystem service of streams and rivers is their natural self-purification service. This can be assessed based on ecological functions such as nutrient retention or leaf litter decomposition. But how do human stressors affect these ecological functions that are essential for the natural self-purification capacity of a river or stream?

“In this meta-analysis, we compiled the current status of research on this question,” says Brauns. The international research team evaluated the published literature

for studies investigating the effects of human stressors on the ecological functions of rivers and streams. “We reviewed the research available worldwide and found a total of 125 studies -- which is not much given the global scale,” says Brauns. “This again underscores how little research has been done to date in this area. And: The studies found were conducted primarily in Europe or North America. Hardly anything is known to date for Asia or Africa and we see an urgent need for research and action in these geographical areas.”

Evaluation of the data revealed that the efficiency at which streams retain nitrates is nearly five times lower for streams draining agriculture catchments than for streams in pristine catchments.

“This is surprising,” says Brauns and explains:

“Rivers and streams affected by agriculture are impacted by high nutrient concentrations and a degraded structure and can no longer adequately fulfil their ecological function and lose a major portion of their purification service.”

Another important result is the comparative stressor analysis: Which stressors have the greatest impact across all ecological functions?

Wastewater ranks first and is followed by agriculture and urbanization.

“These stressors are areas where we must take urgent action,” says Brauns. “The ecological functions of rivers and streams are reliable indicators that allow a functional assessment of streams and rivers and implementation of appropriate management strategies, as demonstrated by our study. We advocate for more studies on the ecological functions of streams and rivers, preferably over a broader geographical area. If the stressors persist in contemporary intensity, we will lose the functional backbone of streams and rivers and ecosystem services essential to humans.”

Source: Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research – UFZ

**Cost overruns and administrative fees in the North Racoon River Management Coalition’s \$750,000 water quality project have exposed Buena Vista County, Iowa’s general fund to tens of thousands in outstanding liabilities that could come due as early as the end of the month.**  
Source: Storm Lake Times

## BLM to hold wild horses/burros event

The Bureau of Land Management is holding a wild horse and burro placement event July 8-9, offering approximately 60 excess animals gathered from western rangelands at Windom Arena, 1480 8th Avenue, Windom, Minnesota.

Adoptions and sales will be held by appointment only from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. on Friday, July 8, and from 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. on Saturday, July 9. On both days, placements will occur in one-hour increments (five appointments per hour). Appointments can be made via email at BLM\_ES\_NSDO\_WHB@blm.gov. The BLM requests buyers and adopters to disclose their top three preferred time slots when making appointments.

**NOTICE**  
**MANNING CEMETERY**  
The Manning Cemetery ANNUAL PICNIC will be held at Noon on Sunday, June 26. Everyone is welcome. A dish to pass is optional. The church cleanup and annual meeting will be on Saturday, June 25, 2022, 9:30 a.m. For information call Buzz Guist 608-637-2934 (Pub. 6/23/22) WNAXLP

**NOTICE OF OPEN BOOK**  
**VILLAGE OF GAYS MILLS**  
The Assessor will hold Open Book on Thursday, July 7, 2022 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Community Commerce Center Board Meeting Room. The purpose of Open Book is to give the taxpayers a chance to discuss his or her property assessment with the Village Assessor in a less formal setting than a Board of Review. Dawn R. McCann, Clerk (Pub. 6/23/22) WNAXLP

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The board voted to approve the draft facility plan provided by Delta-3 Engineering, and to schedule a public hearing about the proposed project on July 14, followed by a board meeting where the board might vote to contract with Delta-3 to move forward on the project.

## In other business

In other business, the board:

- voted to pay JI Construction LLC the final invoiced amounts for the sewer system upgrade project just completed, contingent upon the date that the construction punch list items are complete, and Delta-3 receipt of final contractor lien waivers. Nies told the board that despite some unanticipated costs in the project, it had still come in about \$75,000 under budget
- heard a proposal from Delta-3 Engineering to extend sanitary sewer lines in the village during the Highway 131 construction project, currently scheduled for 2025. Lines would be extended from the bridge over the Kickapoo River, and along Highway 131 up to the County Shop. Should the board decide to move forward with this project, a public hearing would be held prior to approval, and plans for the project would have to be submitted to Wisconsin Department of Transportation by November of 2023.

**Public Notices**  
**Miscellaneous**  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources will be conducting non-native phragmites control at Rush Creek State Natural Area during July - September, 2022. Treatment will only spot treat precise locations of phragmites totaling less than one acre. If you have questions, contact WDNR at 920-360-1463. (Pub. 6/16/22, 6/23/22, 6/30/22, 7/4/22) WNAXLP

**Crawford County Public Hearing For Livestock Facilities Siting Permit**  
The Crawford County Land Conservation Committee will hold a public hearing on July 12 from 12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. in Suite 236 of the Crawford County Administration Building, 225 N Beaumont, Prairie du Chien Wisconsin. The purpose of this hearing is to receive public testimony and comment on the issuance of a livestock siting permit for Roth Feeder Pig II, Harvest Lane, Wauzeka, WI. Input received at this public hearing will be used by the County in making its final decision on the application. Written comments will be accepted until 3:00 p.m. Monday July 11, 2022 at the Crawford County Land Conservation Department, Suite 230, Crawford County Administration Building, 225 N Beaumont, Prairie du Chien, WI, 58321. A copy of the application and worksheets are on file with the county and are open to public inspection at the Land Conservation Office in the Administration Building or available to view online. Virtual attendance will be possible for the first 100 people who register. If attending virtually you must register by 12:00 p.m. on Monday July 11, 2022. To register or to view application materials online visit our website at www.crawfordcountywi.org/land-conservation-home.html (Pub. 6/16/22, 6/23/22) WNAXLP