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JANESVILLE

County board, community speak out against harassment of supervisor

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JANESVILLE — Rock County Board members and most of the audience in attendance offered Supervisor Brian Knudson resounding support Thursday following harassment tied to what he’s called a “slip of the tongue” at a recent committee meeting.

Following a prepared statement read at Thursday’s board meeting, Knudson received a standing ovation. An audience member called out, “Way to go, Brian,” after his remarks, in which he denounced the harassment. He reported being chased in his car and called names in business after not clearly stating his stance against sex trafficking at a May county committee meeting.

He has since been contrite about misspeaking, and stated that he is against sex trafficking.

“Shame on you for using God in your slander campaign. The lord I know would

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NEIL JOHNSON/NJOHNSON@GAZETTETEXTRA.COM

Late-afternoon traffic passes over the Center Avenue bridge on the city’s south side. The bridge’s surface and its crumbly concrete medians and barriers will be replaced as part of a 1.4 mile span the state Department of Transportation plans to repave along Center Avenue. The project area spans the Rock River between the Five Points intersection near downtown and Nicolet Street on the south side. Work is expected to be done in 2024 and 2025.

Center Avenue rebuild will span 2024-25 construction seasons

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JANESVILLE — The Wisconsin Department of Transportation’s expansive tear-up and resurfacing of Center Avenue from the Five Points near downtown, and on south to Janesville’s south side, is coming soon. However, the work will last a bit longer than initially expected.

The project is now being split between two road construction seasons — the upcoming spring, summer and fall of 2024 and the 2025 road work season.

By the end of 2025, design consultants on the state Department of Transportation’s road project say, the 1.4-mile stretch between Center Avenue from Five Points south to Nicolet Street in the heart of the city’s south side business

district will have new pavement. And at many of the major intersections, the upgraded road will have improved traffic signals and lane upgrades.

That includes a major repaving of the badly worn Center Avenue bridge surface over the Rock River. This will entail a reworking of crumbling concrete barriers along the bridge’s

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Beloit casino opening timeline remains unclear
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UW-Whitewater announces local graduates
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C.J. Dupuis strikes out 16 for Janesville Legion team at Plover tournament.

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KYLIE BALK-YAATENEN/KBALKYAATENEN@GAZETTETEXTRA.COM

This empty lot on South Jackson Street near Monterey Park, is the proposed site of an \$11 million new Boys & Girls Club of Janesville. The proposed 32,000 square-foot building is about three times larger than the current building.

Boys & Girls Club enters next phase of campaign for new site

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JANESVILLE — Just past the Monterey Park sign and over the bridge on South Jackson Street stretch four abutting vacant city lots marked by an empty concrete semi-circle.

Formerly the foundation for batting cages, the concrete pad now appears to hold a makeshift skate park set up by neighborhood kids.

This is the proposed site of an \$11 million new Boys & Girls Club of Janesville.

Across the street is a grassy field that the club is eyeing for a green space play area.

The city of Janesville owns the property on both sides of the street. The Boys & Girls Club is currently negotiating with the city, in hopes of all the property being donated to it.

The \$11 million would include

construction costs, furniture, equipment, and an endowment to support the operation costs.

Boys & Girls Club CEO Rebecca Veium said the club hopes to be in the new building by June 2025.

Bill Kennedy, chair of the project’s campaign committee, said the committee is almost ready to launch the public phase of the campaign. It has received

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never guide me to doing something evil and spread hate," Knudson said.

Board member Jim Farrell, who was also the target of distributed flyers, spoke with a more spirited tone, saying that he does not approve of either child sex trafficking or illegal immigration.

"The attacks on Supervisor Knudson and myself are the lowest form of politics I've ever seen. The cowards or coward who wrote this pamphlet is really stooping to the lowest level," Farrell said. "Those of you who have misinterpreted or misled that we are like child sex traffickers and we approve

of that: we don't. Those of you who misled, or misinterpreted my comments or Supervisor Knudson's comments, neither one of us approve of sex trafficking or illegal immigration."

The flyers encouraged people to demand Knudson and Farrell resign from the board.

"In this piece of crap flyer, it says I should resign. To that coward, I'm not resigning at all. I'm not deterred by you whoever the coward is that did this. I'm going to serve the best I can for Rock County. I think it's horrible that a fine supervisor like Brian Knudson has to be harassed by idiots," Farrell added before crumbling it up and throwing it away.

Knudson also said he would not resign.

Most public comments supported Knudson and fact-checked the flyers.

Rock County Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force Chair Carrie Wyatt said she was in attendance to dispel misinformation circulating across the county about sex trafficking. The group works with 35 multi-jurisdictional agencies in the county, including in education, law enforcement, human services, advocacy and health groups. The work provides resources, education, prevention, and intervention to youth who are at risk for being sex trafficked or who have been.

"We have an expansive and very cohesive group of professionals that serve on our task

force and we want our community to know that we have educated over 6,000 adults and students throughout Rock County since 2017, and one of the pieces of misinformation we really want you to understand is we are very effective, we are experts in our communities and we do have fabulous resources in our communities," Wyatt said.

Board member Genia Stevens, also a target in the flyers, did not comment during the meeting.

Rock County Board Chair Rich Bostwick called the flyers "hateful."

"I truly believe all of us condemn this in the strongest way. I also believe anybody responsible for this should be held

accountable," Bostwick said.

Bostwick went on to say that the process the board followed used to be "discuss, vote and then move on. I'd like to see that start tonight."

Sheriff Curt Fell had increased security at the courthouse because of the recent harassment to Knudson. Normally one deputy is at the metal detectors at the front door. On Thursday there were two prior to the start of the board meeting. The board met on the fourth floor, with four deputies and Fell stationed there. After the audience started to dwindle and Fell and the deputies gave a slideshow presentation regarding recent training, two deputies left.



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