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101st YEAR

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2024

PHONE: (216) 441-2141 • EMAIL: NNEWS1923@AOL.COM

FREE



Zoning change on agenda today for proposed G.H. jail site

At a meeting of the Garfield Heights Zoning Board of Appeals tonight, Wednesday, Jan. 3, at 7:30 p.m., a request from Craig Realty Group will be considered for a U-8 Special Use District zoning overlay to develop its property at the former Bridgeview site on Transportation Blvd. The meeting will be held at the Garfield Heights Civic Center.

Craig Realty Group, represented by Matthew Montecalvo, DiGeronimo Companies, is also seeking confirmation that it can develop the parcels in question for a jail to be owned and operated by Cuyahoga County.

Garfield Heights Law Director Tim Riley clarified that the property owner has requested the special use approval to build the county facility as the city's municipal code stipulates the special use approval has to be granted by the Board of Zoning Appeals.

OverDrive donates to G.H. Food Pantry



OverDrive representative Mande Strefas, shown above, presented a \$10,000 donation recently to the Garfield Heights Food Pantry. OverDrive employees donated funds and the company matched their contributions. Also pictured are Mayor Matt Burke, Laketia Gaston, Anessia Dailey, Senior Center Director Paul Birk and Manager Jennifer Sopkovich.

OverDrive, with its headquarters located off Granger Rd., in Garfield Heights, is the leading digital reading platform for libraries and schools worldwide, delivering the industry's largest catalog of ebooks, audiobooks and other digital media to a growing network of 92,000 libraries and schools in 115 countries.

Blackwell withdraws tax increase bill at special Maple Heights Council meeting

By Judith Goldsworth

Stating that "in good conscience" she could not put a proposed half-percent municipal income tax increase before Maple Heights voters at the present time, Mayor Annette Blackwell took legislation out of consideration that would have authorized placing the increase on the March ballot.

Council held a special meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 19, to consider the legislation, and during the course of that meeting Blackwell made the decision to withdraw it, which she announced at council's last regular meeting of 2023, held on Wednesday, Dec. 20.

The proposed ballot issue to raise the city's current income tax to 3% for a 10-year period from 2024 to 2034, had been initially introduced at a council meeting earlier last month. The intent was that if the issue was passed by voters, the revenue would be earmarked to pay higher salaries and wages to police officers, firefighters and service department employees in the city, as a means of retaining existing personnel in all of these departments as well as attracting new ones.

Blackwell said she had looked at the situation and given that gas and electric rates would be going up in 2024, and that it was a reappraisal year so property values would increase, she knew what a hardship raising income taxes would be for her residents.

She said that she was aware that many heads of households in the city were working two or three jobs just to make ends meet, and reiterated that this was not the time to consider an income tax increase. "That should be my last resort," she said.

Salary ordinance passes

An ordinance to amend an existing salary ordinance in the city, to add and delete certain job positions in the Finance and Human Services departments, and fixing the

(Continued on Page 2)

Suspect in Bedford murder turns himself in

A man wanted for the murder of 45-year-old Seritha Ballantyne on Natalie Dr., in Bedford, on Saturday, Dec. 23, turned himself into police Dec. 28, accompanied by his attorney, according to Bedford Deputy Police Chief Rick Suts.



Joseph D. Bowman

The suspect, Joseph D. Bowman, 41, also known as "JD," was expected to have his initial appearance in Bedford Municipal Court the morning of Dec. 29, with a video arraignment.

According to the Bedford Police Report, officers were dispatched to Natalie Dr., about 2:25 a.m., Dec. 23, when someone heard a shot inside the residence. Police located Ballantyne in an upstairs bedroom with a gunshot wound to her head. They began lifesaving efforts until Bedford Fire arrived on scene, and the victim was pronounced deceased.

Deadline to pay property tax bill extended

Cuyahoga County property owners will now have more time to pay their tax bills. The Cuyahoga County Treasurer's Office has changed the county's tax bill due date to Feb. 15, 2024, as well as its mailing policy.

Taxpayers wishing to make early payments for income tax purposes remain able to do so. Tax bills can now be accessed online and via phone at 1-877-738-1212.

Physical copies of tax bills will be mailed in early January 2024. Taxpayers can also receive a courtesy copy of their tax bills by calling the Treasurer's Office at 216-443-7400, Option 1. Property tax payments must be paid online, in-person, via phone or postmarked by February 15, 2024. For more information, please visit cuyahogacounty.gov/treasury.

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Blackwell withdraws tax increase bill at special Maple Heights Council meeting

(Continued from Page 1)

salary for these positions was passed by council and will take effect within 30 days.

The positions of Payroll Coordinator and Purchasing Agent are being eliminated and the position of Finance Specialist with a salary range of \$40,000 to \$65,873.60 will be added.

Also, Blackwell and the city's Human Resources Department "desire to eliminate the positions of Recreation Programs Coordinator, Human Services Coordinator, and Food Service Aide from the salary ordinance, and to add the job position of Human Services Program Manager with a salary range of \$30,000 to \$65,873.60," according to the legislation.

Other legislation passed at last month's meeting included:

- Ordinance to pass the city's budget for the fiscal year ending Dec. 31, 2024, for a total of \$41,129,534.84, according to Finance Director Tinita Tillman. Also passed was an ordinance for final amendments to the 2023 budget, which has been documented at about \$45 million.

- Ordinance authorizing Blackwell and Planning and Development Director Joe Duffy to provide a forgivable loan through the city's Small Business Performance Grant

Program to Maple Heights Hardware, in the amount of \$11,250 from the city and a matching amount of \$33,750 from Cuyahoga County, for a total loan amount of \$45,000. The funds will allow Maple Heights Hardware to purchase inventory and make interior and exterior enhancements to the business at 16460 Broadway Ave.

- Resolution authorizing Blackwell to apply to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for funds from the Ohio Urban Forestry Grant Program "to enhance the quality of life of the residents of Maple Heights by supporting and strengthening existing comprehensive community tree care programs and promoting urban forestry benefits through the proper planting and care of trees."

- Resolution authorizing a sales order agreement and customer care agreement with Lake Business Products for the lease of seven Canon copiers for a term of 60 months, at a monthly rate of \$799, and a maintenance contract for a term of 12 months.

- Resolution overruling the decision of the Planning and Zoning Commission, which denied the application of Armar Anderson for a variance, to permit an existing shed to remain in place 18 inches from the rear property line on a residential property at 16005 Corkhill Rd. Council's passage of the legislation means the variance will be granted.

- An ordinance to waive the 100% escrow requirement

to correct violations resulting from Point of Sale inspections, for the period of Jan. 1, 2024-Dec. 31, 2024, to offer an incentive to residents who purchase, renovate and occupy their own homes, was placed on first reading.

- Also placed on first reading was an ordinance to amend the codified ordinances, concerning renewal of rental registrations and establishing fees, effective Jan. 1, 2024.

- A resolution to overrule the decision of the Planning and Zoning Commission, which denied the application of Connie Freeman for approval of a Conditional Use Permit to operate a Doggie Day Care and Overnight Boarding business in the Central Business District at 15450 Broadway, failed by a 4 yes-1 no vote.

Trojanski honored

Richard Trojanski, who lost his re-election bid for his District 6 seat to challenger Tina Stafford-Marbury in November, was presented with a plaque by council members and officials at the meeting honoring him for his 14 years of service to Maple Heights in various capacities, as Councilman, Council President, and Civil Service Commissioner, before being elected to another term on council in 2019.

Blackwell and council members praised and thanked Trojanski for his commitment and service to the Maple Heights community.

During his final report at the meeting, Trojanski said it had been his privilege to represent the District 6 residents and pledged to remain involved in the city. "You have a lifelong champion," he promised.



Happy New Year!
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Garfield Heights
Councilman Ward 4



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Sunday Service: 9:00am

St. Monica Church
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Garfield Heights 216-662-8685
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Saturday Vigil Mass: 4:00 pm
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Property valuation complaint filing now open

Cuyahoga County property owners wishing to challenge their property valuations for tax year 2023 may now do so as the new year has begun. The Cuyahoga County Board of Revision will accept complaints through April 1, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. EST.

All complaints must be filed with the Board of Revision by 11:59 p.m., or bear a United States postmark of April 1, 2024. Other postmarks are not valid.

There are several ways to file a complaint:

- Filing online is free and easy. Complaints can be filed online using a valid email address, which bypasses the requirement for a notary.
- Print a hard copy of the Complaint Form, which requires notarization.
- Contact the Board of Revision at 216-443-7195 to

request a Complaint Form be mailed.

• Pick up a Complaint Form from the Board of Revision Office located at 2079 E. 9 St., Second Floor, Cleveland.

Complainants can visit the Board of Revision website to find additional instructions for filing as well as examples of different types of evidence that can be submitted to support their opinion of value. The more evidence provided, the stronger the case.

The Board of Revision is conducting hearings in-person, by Zoom and by phone. Its office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. For more information, visit online, email BOR staff at BORinfo@cuyahogacounty.us, or call 216-443-7195.

Public input sought on Rockside bridges project

The Cuyahoga County Department of Public Works, the city of Independence, the Village of Valley View and the Ohio Department of Transportation invite the public to provide comments by Jan. 10, 2024, regarding the repair and replacement of two bridges on Rockside Rd.

Bridge One is over the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad tracks. The repair project will include wider piers, new superstructure and a new deck.

Bridge Two is over the Cuyahoga River. A replacement structure will be built in a similar alignment on Rockside Rd. The project will add a new 6-foot-wide sidewalk on the north side of Rockside connecting to Brecksville Rd.

Questions and comments can be submitted by email or mail. Email: mpastorelle@cuyahogacounty.us

Mail: Cuyahoga County Department of Public Works, 2079 E. 9 St., Cleveland, OH 44115 ATTN: Matt Pastorelle

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Public Hearing Notice

The City of Garfield Heights will have a public hearing at 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, January 3, 2024, at the Garfield Heights Civic Center, 5407 Turney Road. The purpose of the meeting is to consider the request to the Board of Zoning Appeals by Craig Realty Group Cleveland LLC for approval of a Special Use to allow the Cuyahoga County Campus which will include a jail facility and related public uses on the property located at 5400 Transportation Blvd, Garfield Hts., Ohio, 44125 (PPNs: 542-23-012; 542-23-004; 542-23-001; 542-14-004; 542-15-002; 542-14-002; 542-22-022)

For additional information contact Tylon Hilt at 216-475-110 Ext. 2426.
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2024

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2024

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From The Elkins Family

Community Police reports

(All information is preliminary and subject to change pending investigation.)

Garfield Heights

Menacing

On Dec. 6, at about 8 p.m., an officer was dispatched to Open Pantry, 4541 E. 131 St., on a report that a male customer who lives in an apartment across the street from the store was making threats over the phone to blow up the business. Officers had been to the business just an hour earlier when the same male was being disorderly and throwing goods on the ground before leaving. The store owner said the man had called at least twice before threatening to blow up the business. He was referred to the prosecutor regarding potential charges.

Felonious Assault

On Dec. 5, about 10 a.m., an officer was notified by staff at Garfield Heights High School that a student had been badly assaulted the day before. They said the student was currently in the hospital with a jaw broken in multiple places with an air pocket or fluid in his lungs and was currently going into surgery. His mother had brought him to the police department yesterday to have the incident documented before she took him to the hospital. Due to the severity of his injuries he was transported from Marymount Hospital to MetroHealth Medical Center. The incident occurred in the yard of Hudec Dental, 5046 Turney Rd., and was captured on a cell phone video. According to the police report, the video shows the victim standing on the sidewalk and the suspect, another student at Garfield Heights High, coming up to him on the right side, and blind-siding him with a punch to his face/jaw

area, then grabbing the victim's waist and taking him to the ground and continuing to punch him. The suspect was placed under arrest for felonious assault and transported to the city jail. Juvenile Detective Bureau advised of the incident. Suspect turned over to the custody of Cuyahoga County Juvenile Detention.

On Sunday, Dec. 10, at 8:34 p.m., officers were dispatched to the 12900 block of Littleton Rd., for a report of three gunshots being fired but they could find nothing. A second call was received shortly after 7 p.m., about a girl's three teenage brothers hiding behind their home in the 13300 block of Littleton Rd., because they had been shot at. Officers talked with the children's parents, who had just returned home from a church function. The brothers told police they had been walking home from a gas station at the corner of Turney and Rockside rds. When they reached the back of Rockside Tavern Bar & Grill, 12929 Rockside Rd., a blue four-door sedan with tinted windows and rear end damage turned off Rockside onto E. 130 St., northbound. Once the car was in the area of the side entrance of the bar's parking lot, about five shots were fired from the car at the brothers, who ran in different directions. None were hit. Police found no evidence of the shooting at Rockside Tavern. Report forwarded to the Detective Bureau.

Child Endangering

On Dec. 7, police were called to investigate a 6-year-old boy in the 6000 block of Andover Blvd., who neighbors said was playing alone outside the apartment building on that date at 1 p.m., and when the neighbors returned to their home over two hours later the boy was still outside alone and was now crying. The couple took him into their home to warm him up and called police. The boy said his brother was supposed to be watching him but left to buy groceries and hadn't returned. The boy was taken to the police station while an officer stayed in the area of the apartments waiting for the youngster's mother or brother to return, which they did sometime about 4:30 p.m. The brother said he left the boy alone and went to Marc's, Save-a-lot and a convenience store to buy peanut butter but

couldn't find any. He gave police no valid reason why he had left his brother alone in the residence for more than five hours. Both the boy's mother and brother were given a summons for child endangering and a court date set.

Traffic Offense

On Dec. 10, about 7:45 a.m., police arrived in the area of E. 86 St. and Birchwood Ave., for a report of a blue Hyundai that had run into a couch set out for trash pickup on a tree lawn. Police found the car in the 4600 block of E. 86 St., and the driver asleep behind the wheel with the car running and in drive. An officer had to reach in through the passenger door and place the car in neutral because the driver could not get his foot on the brake to put it in park. He told police he was drunk and appeared to be visibly intoxicated. He was placed under arrest and taken to city jail, where he refused to take field sobriety tests or a breath test. An officer searched the E. 86 St. area where the car was found and learned that the driver had run over the tree lawns and front lawns of 10 houses there. He was cited for OVI, driving under suspension, failure to control, driving over lawns and seatbelt violation.

Animal Cruelty

On Dec. 11, at 3:48 p.m., police were dispatched to a home in the 13700 block of North Rd., for a call that two puppies on the front porch of the home appeared to be very malnourished. Police found the female dogs to be very friendly but they noticed both dogs had their ribs, shoulders and hip bones showing and were without food or water. Officers knocked on the side and rear doors of the home several times but got no response. For the dogs' well being, they were taken to the Garfield Heights Kennels. A note was left on the front door explaining the situation.

Shots Fired

On Dec. 14, at 5:55 p.m., police responded to the area of the 13200 block of Rexwood Ave., for a report of seven gunshots being fired. Officers located a group of young males at the corner of Forestdale Dr., and Cranwood Park Blvd., and ordered them to put up their hands and remain calm. Police observed one of the males had a bulge coming from the front part of his hoody pocket and appeared to be very nervous. An officer grabbed his wrists and attempted to pat him down but he broke free and began to run. The officer attempted to Tase him but was unsuccessful. Other officers gave chase. A woman who was the mother of some of the other juveniles appeared on scene and became agitated and irate. Some of the boys told police they were "only shooting a rap video" and "that was my brother." Additional GHPD units arrived and deployed a drone and a K-9 to locate the runaway youth. A loaded black Glock 19 was found in the backyard of a home in the 13100 block of Cranwood Pk. Blvd. Police learned it had been stolen out of Cleveland. The suspect who fled was never located.

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LIBRARY SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Bedford (Bedford Heights/Oakwood Village) Branch Library

Here are some of the **FREE** programs coming up in January at the Bedford Branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library, located at 70 Columbus Rd., Bedford, Ohio 44146. For more information, or to register for any program, please call 440-439-4997.

Family Storytime -All ages with caregiver, Tuesday, Jan. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, 6 p.m. Join us for stories, songs and fingerplays.

Homeschool Hangout -Grades 2 - 5, Friday, Jan. 5, 19, 2 p.m. Join us for fun, engaging, STEM-based activities. Perfect for homeschoolers looking to connect with other students.

Teen Tuesday -Grades 6-12, Tuesday, Jan. 9, 3:30 p.m. Join us after school for fun activities for teens!

Ellenwood Book Discussion- "The New Husband" - Adults, Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2 p.m. Attend our monthly book discussion at Ellenwood Community Center. This month we're reading and discussing "The New Husband" by D.J. Palmer. Copies of the book will be available at the Bedford Branch and at the Ellenwood Center one month before the date of the discussion.

Engineering Hour -K-5, Thursday, Jan. 11, 25, 3:30 p.m. Use your imagination and the materials provided to build, play, create and learn.

Garfield Heights Branch Library

Here are some of the **FREE** programs available in January at the Garfield Heights Branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library, 5409 Turney Rd. Call 216-475-8178 to register or for more information.

Adult Programs

Innovation Center Orientation Learn about the equipment and policies of the Innovation Centers throughout

Cuyahoga County Public Library. Attending this orientation allows users to utilize the Innovation Centers throughout the library system. For adults 18 years and older. Upcoming sessions: Thursday, Jan. 4, at 3 p.m.; Tuesday, Jan. 9, at 6 p.m.; and Saturday, Jan. 27, at 11 a.m. Registration required.

(Continued on Page 8)

Best Wishes for a Happy, Healthy... **2024!**



Cuyahoga Heights Mayor Jack M. Bacci & Family

With Best Wishes for a Happy and Prosperous New Year!



from the City of Maple Heights

Mayor Annette M. Blackwell



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from
Slavic Village Development Board and Staff

Marilyn Mosinski	Interim Executive Director
Tim Verba	Board President
Kate Vinciguerra	Vice President
Jennifer Robock	Treasurer
Joy Cummings	Secretary

New Year's GREETINGS

The time has come for us to wish you much happiness and success in this exciting new year.

Best Wishes in 2024
From the Ferfolia Family and Staff

Ferfolia

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(continued on next page)

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LIBRARY SPECIAL PROGRAMS

(Continued from Page 5)

Independence Branch Library

Here are some of the **FREE** programs being offered in January at the Independence Branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library, located at 6361 Selig Dr., Independence. For more information or to register for any program, please call 216-447-0160.

Adult

Quick Yeast Bread – Adults / Registration required. In this hands-on program, learn how to make a quick yeast bread dough that you can take home for baking. For beginners. Friday, Jan. 5 / 11 a.m.

It's a New Year for New Job Seekers! / Registration required. Ring in the New Year by learning tips for reorganizing your 2024 job search. Monday, Jan. 8/6 p.m.

Children

Baby & Toddler / No registration required. Join us for rhymes, songs, fingerplays and books. Birth – 35 months with caregiver. Mondays and Wednesdays / 10 a.m.

Family / No registration required. Join us for stories, songs and fingerplays. All ages with caregiver. Mondays / 6:30 p.m.

Preschool / No registration required. Join us for rhymes, songs, fingerplays and stories. Ages 3 – 5 (but not yet in kindergarten) with caregiver. Thursdays / 10 a.m.

Toddler / No registration required. Join us for rhymes, songs, fingerplays and stories. 19 – 35 months with caregiver. Thursdays / 11 a.m.

Focus on 4's and 5's / Registration required. Preschool children 4 and 5 years of age and their caregivers can join us for stories, songs and a focus on skills to prepare for kindergarten. Wednesdays, Jan. 10 - Feb. 14 / 11 a.m.

Booktalkers (grades 5-8) / Registration required. Chat about your recent reading adventures with Ms. Dottie and Ms. Kathy. Group members can share books they've enjoyed and will walk away with some great book suggestions! Tuesday, Jan. 9 / 3:15 p.m.

Kindergarten Countdown / Registration required. Join us as we help build kindergarten readiness skills in a program aligned to Ohio's Early Childhood Standards. Each session will focus on a different topic. Wednesday, Jan. 10 / 10 a.m.; Thursday, Jan. 11 / 10 a.m.

Maple Heights Branch Library

Here are a few of the **FREE** programs being offered in January at the Maple Heights Branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library, located at 5225 Library Lane, Maple Hts. For more information or to register, please call 216-475-5000.

Adults

Deep Fakes, Chat Bots, Voice Clones and Assorted AI Trickery, Tuesday, Jan. 9, 7 p.m. Are we racing toward a future where it's impossible to tell reality from simulation? Or are we already there?

Mental Health 101, Saturday, Jan. 13, 11 a.m. Explore the mind and body and what's at the heart of mental health conditions with Dr. Terry A. Webb.

Small Business Speaker Series: Networking Event, Tuesday, Jan. 16, 6:30 p.m. Network with entrepreneurs and discover resources to help your small business grow.

Children and Families

Science Storytime, Friday, Jan. 5, 10:30 a.m. Ages 3-5, with a caregiver. Explore the wonders of the natural world with books, songs and rhymes.

Bejeweled, Mondays, January 8-29, 4 p.m. Make some jewelry to wear or share! Registration Required.

Brick Builders, Wednesdays, January 10-31, 4:30 p.m. Grades K-3. Show off your LEGO skills with weekly challenges.



Wishing Everyone a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

From Mike, Bruce, Ronald, Kevin and Kevin and our mascots Zhara Marie and Brewtus Brew

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2024

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