

Fairbank ISLANDER

SERVING FAIRBANK AND THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

FEBRUARY 4, 2026 Compiled by Fairbank Community Club - Designed by Waverly Newspapers and Printed by Oelwein Publishing Co. VOLUME 7, NO. 2

K C's VALENTINE BREAKFAST

SUNDAY, FEB 15

9:00AM - 11:30AM

Immaculate Conception Parish Hall,
Dine-in or Carry-out

'ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT'
PANCAKES

with sausage,
eggs, toast, fruit,
coffee, milk, and juice

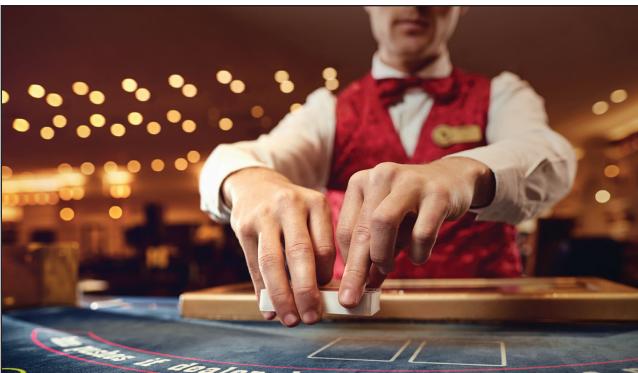


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50% of the proceeds go to IC Cemetery Board

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Fairbank American Legion's annual Casino Night held Feb. 7



Black jack, spinning wheel, dice game, left right center and more at the annual Fairbank American Legion's Casino Night on Feb. 7 starting on 6:00 p.m.

Kayser retires from United States Air Force



LIEUTENANT COLONEL
JOHN KAYSER

On July 31, 2025 Lieutenant Colonel John Kayser, formerly from Fairbank, Iowa and a 1987 Wapsie Valley, Fairbank alumni, retired from the United States Air Force. A formal ceremony was conducted October 18th at the 243rd Engineering Squadron in South Portland, Maine. Lt Col Kayser is Squadron Commander at 243 Engineering Installation Squadron. He is responsible to

See KAYSER, A4

The warrior way: Modernizing where we learn and where we play

BY CHRIS HOOVER

Wapsie Valley Superintendent

The Wapsie Valley Community School District is taking a historic step forward in student comfort and athletic excellence. In a decision during its most recent session, the Wapsie Valley Board of Education officially approved a comprehensive facilities upgrade package that includes building-wide air conditioning for the Junior and Senior High Building and a total transformation of the track and football complex. By modernizing our learning spaces and our athletic facilities simultaneously, we are ensuring that Wapsie Valley remains a premier destination for academics and extracurriculars alike.

See WARRIOR, A6



COURTESY PHOTO

A community field, by moving to synthetic turf, the field becomes an "all-weather" resource. Not just for football but daily use like PE classes, marching band practice, youth sports and community events.

Robo Warriors advance to state championships February 27



COURTESY PHOTO

The Wapsie Valley robotics team: Carter Stewart, Drake Russell, Daniel Matthias, Dylan Matthias and Coach Vaughn Gross. (Not pictured Coach Kyle Zimmerman.)

The Wapsie Valley Robo Warriors robotics team will head to the 2026 FTC Iowa Championship for a multi-day tournament.

The event takes place on Friday, Feb. 27 and Saturday, Feb. 28 at the Xtream Arena & GreenState Family Fieldhouse, 200 E. 9th Street, Coralville, Iowa 52241.

Team entrance: TruNorth Plaza of the GreenState Family Fieldhouse.

Team vehicles will need to go from 1st Ave to 7th St. At the round-about, take the second right, this is 2nd Ave. This will lead directly to the entrance of the GreenState Family FieldHouse. Teams will need to

ensure this is for drop-off/pick-up only. Vehicles will not be able to park at the plaza. Team parking is in the parking lot off of Quarry Rd.

Guest entrance: Main doors at intersection of E. 2nd Ave & E. 9th St.

A NOTE FROM THE MAYOR



MAYOR JASON KAYSER

February puts city leaders deep into budget season—a time when needs, wants, expenses, and revenues all collide on spreadsheets and in long meetings. It can be a challenging process, but our experienced staff and council members navigate it with skill. Still, if there's a service you'd like expanded, or a project you believe would benefit the community, now is the time to speak up. Once a budget is approved, opportunities for new initiatives become much harder to fund later in the year.

In past articles, I've talked about the public services that help keep our commu-

nity vibrant. This month, I want to focus on something equally essential: the private businesses that anchor small towns and help them grow. Grocery stores, hardware stores, restaurants and bars, and accessible health care—these are not luxuries; they're lifelines.

We're fortunate to have all of these in Fairbank. Not every community can say the same, and the consequences of losing them are real. For example, the Centers for Disease Control has shown that people without access to grocery stores face higher risks of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, and even mental health problems. Without fresh food options, families often rely on convenience stores where nutritious choices are limited. Over time, that reliance leads to chronic health issues, especially in children.

Hardware stores play a similarly underestimated role. When residents have to drive miles to big box stores, the local economy suffers. Houses also tend to show more deferred maintenance simply because supplies aren't readily accessible. The same is true for restaurants and bars—they're more than places to eat. They're gather-

ing spaces where neighbors connect, friendships form, and a sense of belonging takes root. These small social moments are what help communities stay healthy, welcoming, and informed.

We're also lucky to have a quality health clinic connected to a hospital only eight miles away. Communities without local health care access face delayed diagnoses, worsening chronic conditions, and preventable hospitalizations. Losing a clinic doesn't just create inconvenience—it harms long term community wellness.

I highlight all of this not just to praise what we have, but to emphasize our role in keeping it. No one expects you to buy every cart-full of groceries, source every board, nail, and paint locally, eat out every weekend, or visit the clinic for every ailment. That's not practical. But it is vital that we support these businesses whenever we can. Their success is tied directly to the strength and future of our community.

Small towns thrive when their residents choose to support the places that support them. Fairbank is no exception. Our entire community depends on it.

Fairbank American Legion Friday Fish Fry

FEBRUARY 20
APRIL 3 (GOOD FRIDAY)



From 5-7 p.m. \$15 Adults and \$7 under age 12. Serving Alaskan Pollock, baked potatoes, fries, coleslaw, baked beans, rolls and dessert.

Fairbank American Legion is located at 109 E. Main St., Fairbank.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9TH, 2026

WVHS MULTIPURPOSE ROOM
1:00PM - 6:00PM

American Red Cross

winter Blood Drive

SCHEDULE YOUR APPT

Deadline for the March publication is Feb. 23

Please contact Melaine at 319-404-7116 or email fairbankislander@gmail.com



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4th annual Wapsie Writing Contest

Betty Brandt Passick is a Fairbank, Iowa native and award-winning author, currently residing in the Twin Cities in Minnesota. She founded the Annual Wapsie Writing Contest four years ago and notes her reason behind the decision to give a small amount of money, beginning with last year's contest winners.

"Early in my writing career in the 1980s, I submitted an unsolicited article to an Iowa magazine that was accepted and published, for which I was paid \$10.00. I still have that check. It really encouraged me as a creative writer. Thus, in 2025 I announced a small monetary prize would be given to winners of the Wapsie Writing Contest. That practice will continue in 2026."

The 2025 contest winners stated what prompted them to write the stories and poems they sent in:

Johanna J. Nelson, 10, "The Longest Train Ride," Bloomington, MN - I enjoy writing because I can make my own world and do things that I could never do in real life. I entered this contest to write a story where you



COURTESY PHOTO

Betty Brandt Passick

never know the next move and to just have fun with it!

Keelan Savoie, 12, "Point Nemo Extended," Burlington, IA - I chose this story for the 2025 contest because it acts like a part 2 of a previous story I made for a Halloween competition for my school. I decided it needed some more detail and background. The names of some characters

Wapsie Writing Contest

Do you consider yourself a storyteller? Do you have a great story you've always wanted to put to paper and share with others? Showcase your storytelling ability in the

4th Annual Wapsie Writing Contest.

Subject: Of your choosing

Length: 100-1500 Words

Genre: Short Story, Poetry—Fiction or non-fiction

Format: MS Word

3 Age Categories:

Adults — 19 years and older

Youth — 12 to 18 years

Children — 11 years and under

Judging: By Committee

Cash Prizes! (each age category)

Submitted for publication in *regional newspapers*

Submissions: bbpassick@comcast.net

Contest Rules: BettyBrandtPassick.com

CONTEST STAGES:

- 1) Submission: **Jan. 1st**
- 2) Deadline: **March 15th**
- 3) Judging: **After March 15**
- 4) Winners* Announced: **May 15**

were the names of my friends in class.

Dianne Osmun, Adult, "Wapsi Memories," Manchester, IA - The name of the competition, Wapsi Writing Contest, was the inspiration for the topic of my story. The name immediately had me reminiscing about my childhood experiences at our family cabin on the Wapsipinicon River. It was a natural evolution to turn those reminiscences into a narrative of

my adventures. I really enjoyed the opportunity to not only look back on a carefree time of my life but share it with others.

Submissions to the 2026 Annual Wapsie Writing Contest are accepted January 1 through March 15th in three age categories: adult (19 years and older), youth (12-18 years), and child (11 years and under). The contest seeks to provide opportunity and encouragement to express

and share creative writings. The previously unpublished poems and short stories are judged based on writing, mechanics/organization, and clarity/storytelling. Judges look for the most creative and original, and demonstrated quality of beauty and intensity of emotion for their age category. Judging is done by published authors, poets, creative writing teachers, and avid book readers. Complete contest rules are posted at www.BettyBrandtPassick.com.

Betty Brandt Passick's historical crime novels, a gangster series, are all set in northeast Iowa and have won numerous awards. Most recently, her premier novel, Gangster in our Midst, Bookkeeper, Lieutenant and Sometimes Hitman for Al Capone (2017), won the 2025 Editor's Choice Award of Literary Excellence from Reader's House magazine in the United Kingdom. Read more at www.BettyBrandtPassick.com.

She notes: "I urge everyone to consider writing a poem or short story and submit it to the contest. It's my hope to double the number of entries in 2026."

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Lew Boehme
319-415-5547

Mitch Coffin
319-415-2472

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Kayser retires from United States Air Force

CONTINUED FROM A1

organize, train, and equip members, and to deploy high demand specialized cyber engineering resources and associated support assets to accomplish design and implementation of fixed Air Force and Department of Defense Command, Control, communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (CAISR) infrastructure and meteorological/navigational-aid "airfield" systems. At the request of the Governor, he also provides a ready militia for protecting life, liberty and property, preserving peace, order, and public safety.

Lt Col Kayser entered the Air Force in May 1992 through ROTC from Iowa State University. His first duty assignment was in October 1992 at the 416th Civil Engineer Squadron at Griffiss AFB, NY. While there, Lt Col Kayser held several positions in the squadron including Electrical Design Engineer, Readiness Flight Officer and Chief of Maintenance Engineering. During this time Lt Col Kayser led a team in the construction of a three-room schoolhouse in Sata Rosa de Copan, Honduras. In November 1994 Lt Col Kayser joined the 823rd RED HORSE Squadron in Hurlburt Field, FL. As a project engineer in RED HORSE, Lt Col Kayser designed several projects and supported exercises and contingencies. He led a 95-person team in the construction of a 5,000-person tent city at Cairo West Air Base, Egypt in support of Exercise BRIGHT STAR. Lt Col Kayser also deployed to Tuzla

AB, Bosnia in support of Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR supporting the construction of five base camps in Tuzla Valley housing over 6,000 deployed troops. He joined the Maine Air National Guard in November 2010 as a member of the 101 Civil Engineer Squadron serving as the Readiness Flight Officer and Commander. He deployed to Bagram AB, Afghanistan in 2014 as Chief of Engineering in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Prior to his current position Lt Col Kayser was a Plans Officer at Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ), Camp Chamberlain. While at JFHQ worked on several key initiatives and supported the Maine Air National Guard's COVID Task Forces. In 2021 Lt Col Kayser deployed in support of Operation Allies Welcome at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst.

EDUCATION

1992 Bachelor of Science, Electrical Engineering, Iowa State University, Ames, IA

2010 Squadron Officer School, Non-residence

ASSIGNMENTS

1. October 1992-November 1994, Electrical Design Engineer, 416th Civil Engineer Squadron, Griffiss Air Force Base, NY

2. October 1993-November 1994, Chief of Maintenance Engineering, 416th Civil Engineer Squadron, Griffiss Air Force Base, NY

3. November 1994-July 1997, Project Engineer, 823rd RED HORSE Squadron, Hurlburt Field, FL

4. November 2010-May 2014, Readiness Flight Officer, 101st Civil Engineer Squadron, Ban-

gor, ME

5. May 2014 June 2017, Commander, 101st Civil Engineer Squadron, Bangor, ME

6. June 2017 March 2023, Plans Officer, Joint Force Headquarters, Camp Chamberlain, Augusta, ME

7. March 2023 - Present, Squadron Commander, 243rd Engineering Installation Squadron, South Portland Air National Guard Station, South Portland, ME.

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

- Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters
- Air and Space Commendation Medal
- Air and Space Achievement Medal with oak leaf cluster
- Meritorious Unit Award with oak leaf cluster
- Air and Space Outstanding Unit Award with three oak leaf clusters
- National Defense Service Medal with service star
- Afghanistan Campaign Medal with service star
- Global War on Terrorism Service Medal
- Armed Forces Service Medal with service star
- Humanitarian Service Medal with service star

EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION

• Second Lieutenant May 16, 1992

- First Lieutenant July 30, 1994
- Captain January 21, 2005
- Major October 1, 2012
- Lieutenant Colonel October 1, 2019

Celebration of Life Dave Bentley

July 14, 1956 - January 8, 2026

Dave Bentley, age 69, passed away on January 8, 2026 in Cedar Valley Hospice Care within the Buchanan County Health Center in Independence, Iowa. He was born July 14, 1956, at Mercy Hospital in Oelwein, IA, the son of Gordon and Patty (Jeger) Bentley. Dave attended and graduated from Wapsie Valley High School class of 1974. After graduation Dave started working full time in the family car business where he worked in sales at his family owned Bentley Chevrolet of Fairbank. Dave entered in to marriage in October of 1979 with Julie Kaufman and later divorced in 2018. When the family dealership closed in 1986, he continued his career long journey of automobile sales. Dave spent many years working in a variety of General Motors dealerships within the Cedar Valley, most notably Dunlap Motors of Independence, and Community GMC/Buick of Waterloo where he finished out his sales career. His love for automobiles did not stop there, his deep roots in stockcar racing was always his biggest passion. Once an avid dirt track racer himself of the famed #35, ranging from $\frac{1}{4}$ midgets and modifieds to late models all over the state. After his racing career was over, he stayed involved in the sport by being a local race track official for numerous years, until two of his three sons ventured into their own racing adventures, which ultimately took his full attention and guidance along the way. Dave enjoyed spending time with family and friends whether it be celebrating a special occasion or just sitting around watching a NASCAR race on television. Dave loved his family and was a proud parent and grandparent.

Dave is survived by his three sons, Kyle and Klint (Keri) Bentley of Fairbank, Kaleb (Kyla) Bentley of Jesup, 8 grandchildren, 1 great grandchild, his mother Patty of Earlham, a brother Duane offairbank, a sister Mary (Joe) College of Earlham, along with 5 nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by his father Gordon, a daughter Lou Ann Bentley, and brother-in-law Ron Little.

Visitation took place: 4:30-7:00 PM Thursday January 15, 2026 at Woods Funeral Home, Fairbank

Graveside Services were on: 10:30 AM Friday January 16, 2026 at Immaculate Conception Cemetery, Fairbank

Memorials: may be directed to the family for later designation.



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Iowa Quarter Horse Association reveals top honors for 2025

The IQHA Banquet was held recently in Des Moines that included a local cowboy receiving a top award.

Dave Albrecht of Fairbank earned the 2025 Champion Versatility Ranch Horse Amateur Ltd. All Around award.

Dave and his horse, Smooth Talkin Jay, better known as Jay Bird is owned by Dave Albrecht & Kris Klingaman. Jay Bird won 1st place in individual classes of: Ranch Cutting, Ranch Reining, and Ranch Conformation, and had the highest overall total points to win the All Around.

Congratulations Dave!



Why God? Why Christian? Why Catholic? Evidence for faith featuring Anthony Digmann



Join us for our 2026 mission at Immaculate Conception Church, 106 Iowa St. S, Fairbank, IA.

Anthony Digmann, speaker, author, educator and YouTuber will be talking at the Immaculate Conception Church on Sunday, Feb. 22, Monday, Feb. 23 and Tuesday, Feb. 24 at 7 p.m.

For more information visit www.AnthonyDigmann.com


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Church Services



United Methodist Church
107 2nd Street
Fairbank, Iowa 50629
904-505-5230
Pastor Daniel Search
Worship Service: 9:15 AM



St. John Lutheran Church
(MISSOURI SYNOD)
208 N. 4th Street
Fairbank, Iowa 50629
319-635-2181
Pastor Grant Tapken
Worship Service: 10:00 AM



Immaculate Conception Catholic Church
302 W. Main Street
Fairbank, Iowa
319-635-2211

Father Ray Atwood

Sunday Mass: 8:30 AM
Wednesday Mass: 8:30 AM
1st Saturday Mass: 8:30 AM



Lord of the Harvest
Prayer and Praise Center
101 South 4th Street
Fairbank, Iowa 50629
Saturday Night 7:00 PM
Sunday Service: 9:00 AM
Worship Service: 9:00 AM



First Baptist Church
304 Grove Street
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Rev. Mike Anderson
Worship Service: 9:00 AM
Sunday School: 10:00 AM



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The warrior way: Modernizing where we learn and where we play

CONTINUED FROM A1

Keeping Our Classrooms Cool

We know how difficult it is for our students to stay focused during those sweltering Iowa days. This HVAC project ensures that every classroom and gym space in the Junior and Senior High building will finally be climate-controlled. This isn't just about comfort; it's about creating an environment where our Warriors can focus on their schoolwork without the distraction of a hot classroom. It is also an opportunity where our community can enjoy events in spaces such as the gymnasiums and auditorium and remain comfortable.

Smarter Technology, Lower Costs: The Efficiency of Modern HVAC

When looking at the numbers, it is clear that today's HVAC technology has made a massive leap forward compared to the systems many of us grew up with. Modern units are typically 20% to 40% more efficient than those installed just 15 years ago, and in some cases, a new high-efficiency system can reduce energy consumption by as much as 50% to 80% compared to an outdated model. This is possible because of "smart" components like variable-speed motors, which adjust their output based on the exact temperature needed rather than just blasting air at 100% capacity and then shutting off. For a school district, this means we aren't just gaining the comfort of cool air; we are doing it with a much smaller carbon footprint and lower expenses, allowing more of our budget to stay where it belongs: in the classroom.

A New Home for Warrior Pride

This project isn't just a "face-lift"—it's a total reimagining of how our community uses our athletic spaces. Whether you're a student-athlete, a member of the band, or a fan in the stands, the new stadium is built for you:

A True Community Field: By moving to synthetic turf, our field becomes an "all-weather"



COURTESY PHOTO

A community field, by moving to synthetic turf, the field becomes an "all-weather" resource. Not just for football but daily use like PE classes, marching band practice, youth sports and community events.

resource. It won't just be for Friday night football; it can be used daily for PE classes, marching band practice, youth sports, and community events without the mud and wear-and-tear of natural grass.

No More Running in Hallways: Our new 8-lane track will be a game-changer. Our track athletes will no longer have to train in parking lots or hallways during the rainy season. Plus, Wapsie Valley will finally be able to host regional and district-level meets, bringing families from all over Iowa to support our local businesses in Fairbank, Readlyn, and Oran.

The Best Seat in the House: We are installing a brand-new bleacher system with a "built-in" press box. By integrating the press box directly into the top of the stands, we've created a sleek, modern look that gives our coaches and media a bird's-eye view while keeping our fans closer to the action.

Zero Property Tax Impact

The best part for our residents? This project will not increase your property tax rate. Because of careful long-term planning, the Board is funding these upgrades using SAVE (the "Statewide Penny" sales tax) and PPEL (Physical Plant and Equipment Levy) funds. These are existing "buckets" of money that Iowa law requires us to spend only on buildings and equipment. By

using these dedicated funds, we are delivering a world-class facility to our students and families without asking for a single extra penny in property taxes from our communities.

We are incredibly excited to embark on this journey toward a more comfortable, modern, and high-performing Wapsie Valley. These upgrades represent more than just new equipment and surfaces—they are an investment in the daily lives of our students and the long-term pride of our communities. We can't wait to see our Warriors competing on a world-class track and turf, and our students thriving in climate-controlled classrooms.

To learn more about the specifics of the project, the construction timeline, and how our funding works, please read the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) below.

Project FAQ: Everything You Need to Know

Q: If there is no property tax increase, where is the money coming from?

A: The project is funded by SAVE and PPEL.

- **SAVE (Statewide Penny):** This is a 1-cent sales tax collected across Iowa. These funds cannot be used for teacher salaries, only for buildings and infrastructure.

- **PPEL (Physical Plant and Equipment Levy):** This is an existing levy already in place. We

are simply using these "infrastructure-only" dollars to pay for these specific upgrades.

Q: Why do we need synthetic turf instead of just keeping the grass?

A: Natural grass can handle far less traffic than turf before it begins to show wear, damage, or becomes unusable. Synthetic turf can be used 24/7. This means our PE classes, marching band, youth programs, baseball, softball, speed and agility can all use the field without ruining the surface for Friday night football.

Q: Why an 8-lane track?

A: Most high-level regional and district track meets give preference to an 8-lane track to host. By expanding to 8 lanes, Wapsie Valley becomes a destination for major events, which brings hundreds of visitors to our local area. Also, more lanes allows for quicker, more efficient track meets and allows all of our JH/HS athletes to practice at the same time.

Q: When will the Air Conditioning be finished?

A: Because HVAC work is highly invasive (requiring work inside ceilings and walls), we are phasing the installation to minimize disruption to classes. While the stadium will be ready for the Fall 2026 season, the full building-wide AC is scheduled to be completed by the start of the 2027-2028 school year as long as everything goes as planned.

Q: Will the community be able to use the new track?

A: Yes! We remain committed to being a community-centered district. We will publish "Community Walk/Run" hours for the new track once construction is complete, ensuring everyone has a safe, high-quality place to exercise.

Q: Will we still be able to watch the football games from the back of the end zone?

A: Yes! The track will have a fence around it but we still plan to give our fans a choice of where they would like to watch the game. You can stand behind the fence, sit in the bleachers, or hang out behind the back of the end zone.

Q: Will I be able to walk on the track during football games?

A: Unfortunately, the track will be off limits during football games and other activities. There will be designated areas of the track to walk across to get to the back of the end zones but the majority of the track will be roped off. We will publish "Community Walk/Run" hours for the new track once construction is complete.

Q: If I wanted to walk while an activity is going on where could I do that?

A: The track will have a sidewalk that goes all the way around the perimeter of the fence. If you would like to walk you can do so on the sidewalk during activities.

Q: Who can I contact if I have other questions?

A: You may contact Chris Hoover @ choover@wapsievalleyschools.org with your questions. You may also contact any Wapsie Valley Board member.

Q: Where can I see pictures of the proposed improvements?

A: Some renderings have been included with this article. Please understand that the specifics of colors and fonts have not yet been decided.

Q: Where can I look for updates on how the project is progressing?

A: We plan to post regular updates on social media pages like Facebook and our website.

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4-H ATOM BOMBERS

BY ALIVIA WEEPIE REPORTER
AND JENSEN BECK PHOTOGRAPHER

The January 4-H meeting of the Atom Bombers was held on Jan. 11 at the John Deere Tractor and Engine Museum in Waterloo.

13 members attended the meeting that began with a short

film about the history of John Deere and then a self-guided tour of the museum. The Sweeney family served as the host and provided the treats. Everyone enjoyed learning more about how Waterloo and the people that work at the John Deere plants

have changed over the years.

The next meeting will be held Feb. 1 at the Wapsie Valley High School and Gavin Gross will serve as the host. Please check out the County 4-H newsletter for upcoming events and deadlines.



JENSEN BECK PHOTOS

The 4-H Atom Bombers visited the John Deere Tractor and Engine Museum in Waterloo on Jan. 11.



Celebration of Life

Evelyn Brickman

December 5, 1933 - January 24, 2026

Evelyn "Evie" Amelia Brickman, 92 of Oelwein passed away Saturday January 24, 2026 at Grandview Care Center in Oelwein. Evie was born December 5, 1933 in rural Buchanan County the daughter of Charles Walter and Leta Bell (Wrotten) Ohl. She attended Dunkerton Community School and graduated with the class of 1952.



Evie married Francis Earl Zuck in 1954 to this union four children were born, they later divorced. Evie remarried on August 6, 1972 to Owen K. Brickman. Evie and Owen made their home in rural Oelwein, they also had a second home in Harpers Ferry. Evie worked her entire life, most notably at John Deere as a warehouse worker and at Oster Communications where she was a top salesperson. She worked at Oster until she made the decision to retire. After retirement they decided to move to Harpers Ferry permanently since that is where they spent most of their free time fishing and enjoying the peace and quiet on the Mississippi River.

Evie is survived by her four children; Linda Trumblee of Independence, Beverly (Lonnlie) Lehs of Randalia, Jim (Terri) Zuck of Oelwein and Tim Brickman of Harpers Ferry, along with Owen's four children, Kelly Brickman of Cedar Rapids, Dodie Brickman of Cedar Falls, Darcy Ott of Marion and Brent Brickman of Anchorage Alaska. She is also survived by several grandchildren and great-grandchildren along with many nieces and nephews and a sister-in-law, Bernice (George) Wikstrom.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, Owen in 2017, four sisters; Wyona (Marshall) Rankin, Velma Ohl, Ida Mae (Robert) Blanchard and Virginia (Richard) Steen, seven brothers; Donald Ohl, Martin (Marlene) Ohl, Arthur Ohl, Floyd "Mike" Ohl, Ralph Ohl, Alfred Ohl and Leonard (Mary) Ohl.

Visitation was: 10:00-11:00 AM Saturday January 31, 2026 at Woods Funeral Home.

Funeral Service was: 11:00 AM Saturday January 31, 2026 at Woods Funeral Home.

Memorials: may be directed to the family for later designation.

Lunch was served after the service at the Fairbank American Legion.

Online condolences can be left at www.woodsfuneral-home.net.

February POTLUCK

Please Join Us!!!

Please bring a vegetable, salad or dessert

February 11, 2026 @ 11:30 AM

Immaculate Conception Parish Hall, Fairbank

Sponsored by IC Parish Life Committee

COME JOIN US FOR

**COFFEE
DONUTS &
FELLOWSHIP**

SUNDAY

FEB. 1, 8 & 22

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
CHURCH
IC PARISH CENTER
106 IOWA ST., FAIRBANK, IA 50629

**EVERYONE WELCOME
FREE WILL OFFERING**

FISH FRY

sponsored by
Immaculate Conception Church

Friday, March 27, 2026

at the
**Immaculate Conception
Parish Center, Fairbank**

**Cod, Baked Potato,
baked beans, Coleslaw, Roll,
Dessert, Drinks**

Dine in or Carry Out



Fairbank Elementary Student News

Chess Day success for Fairbank Elementary TAG Students

What do you know about the game of chess? Chess is a game that requires skill, strategy, and quick thinking. Recently, Fairbank Elementary TAG students in grades 4-6 traveled to Denver, Iowa, to participate in a Chess Day event.

Ninety-nine students were in attendance. Each one had the opportunity to compete in a chess tournament or enjoy friendly games with students from other area schools. It was an extraordinary day filled with learning, collaboration, and sportsmanship as

students connected with peers from schools near and far.

Out of 28 students in the competition, one of our own, Kasen Mangrich, earned an impressive 3rd place finish. Congratulations, Kasen!

We are very proud of all the students who attended. Some were new to the game and learned the basics, while others discovered new strategies and developed an even deeper love for chess. It was truly a great day for everyone involved.



Cambree

Leader In Me: Habit #4

BY CAMBREE HAPPEL

Recently, Fairbank Elementary has adopted school "jobs", leadership roles, empowering students to take ownership of their school functions, from daily tasks (like running announcements, helping other students, decorating the school, cleaning the grounds, math and reading go time guides, equipment managers, lost and found managers, art ambassadors, birthday buddies, principal helpers, and light house team etc) fostering responsibility and life skills beyond the classroom

encouraging students to be a leader in the school's culture.

We recently spent our FF45 reviewing Habit 4 which is, Think Win Win. What that means is you build your emotional bank account with others. So when you disagree on something you talk it through and find a solution for the both of you. When practicing this habit, you are balancing courage and consideration of others feelings. I find myself using this at recess when we disagree on what to play. My friends and I have learned to talk about our options and come up with a compromise.



Kasen

Introducing Mrs. Reinking

BY KASEN MANGRICH

Mrs. Reinking is a superstar associate in our third grade at Fairbank Elementary. She previously worked at Fairbank Elementary from 2016-2018 and is excited to be back again this year. We are so lucky to have her!

Mrs. Reinking enjoys helping students grow and succeed. One important lesson she hopes students learn from her is to believe in themselves and their abilities—and to never stop learning. Her favorite part of working at Fairbank Elementary is the peppy atmosphere and strong student involvement.

Mrs. Reinking has two children: her son, Case, who is six, and a

daughter who is three. She also has many animals at home, including two dogs—Oakley, a white boxer, and Enzo, an English Golden Retriever puppy—as well as a Maine Coon cat named Tortoise. In addition, she cares for 20 chickens and three turkeys, keeping her very busy!

When she was in school, Mrs. Reinking's favorite subjects were art and science. Her favorite book is *The Anybodies* by N. E. Bode. In her free time, she enjoys gardening and camping. Some of her favorite foods include pizza, wings, homemade pretzels, and Diet Mountain Dew.

If Mrs. Reinking was not a paraprofessional, she would like to be a neu-



roscientist. One surprising fact you might not know about Mrs. Reinking is that she is a Type 1 diabetic.

Meet Mrs. Stessman

BY KASEN MANGRICH

Mrs. Stessman is an amazing teacher here at Fairbank Elementary! She has been teaching for 12 years. Before coming to Fairbank, she taught reading at Wapsie Valley Rural Schools. Since joining Fairbank, she has taught both 1st and 2nd grade.

Mrs. Stessman went to Wartburg College and grew up in New Hampton, Iowa. One thing she loves most about teaching is seeing how excited her students get

when they are learning. She hopes her students learn that school can be fun and that learning is meaningful.

Mrs. Stessman says the best part about teaching at Fairbank Elementary is the incredible support from the school and Fairbank families. She doesn't have children yet, but she jokes that she is busy "raising her mother-in-law's son!" Just kidding—she says her husband, Carl, is amazing.

Her favorite subjects in school were always reading and writing. When she is not at school, Mrs. Stessman enjoys learn-

ing about flower gardening and playing games with her family. Her favorite snacks are pretty much anything cheesy. As she says, "It ain't easy being cheesy!"

If Mrs. Stessman weren't a teacher, she would like to be a reading curriculum writer. One surprising fact about her is that she loves to sing! In college, she was part of the jazz choir called the Castle Singers and even traveled around the world performing in concerts.

We are lucky to have Mrs. Stessman at Fairbank Elementary!





Important school Feb. dates

Feb. 4 - NO SCHOOL
 Feb. 6 - FF45
 Feb. 13 - ART
 Feb. 16 - SNOW MAKE UP DAY
 Feb. 18 - NO Preschool
 Feb. 26 - ART
 Feb. 27 - ART



Cael

RECIPES WITH BODIN

Chocolate chip cookies

Ingredients

3 tablespoons unsalted butter or salted butter
 3 tablespoons light brown sugar firmly packed
 1-1/2 tablespoons granulated sugar
 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
 1 large egg yolk
 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
 1/2 teaspoon cornstarch (optional)
 1/2 cup all-purpose flour see note 3
 6 tablespoons chocolate chips I love milk chocolate!

Flaky sea salt for topping, optional

Instructions

Use exact measurements and level off the tops of measuring cups/spoons for best results.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Add butter to a ceramic/porcelain bowl and microwave until just melted but not hot. Let butter and bowl fully cool to room temperature.

To the cooled butter, add both brown and granulated sugars. Stir



briskly with a fork until well combined. Add the egg yolk and vanilla. Continue to whisk with a fork until the mixture is emulsified and appears very creamy.

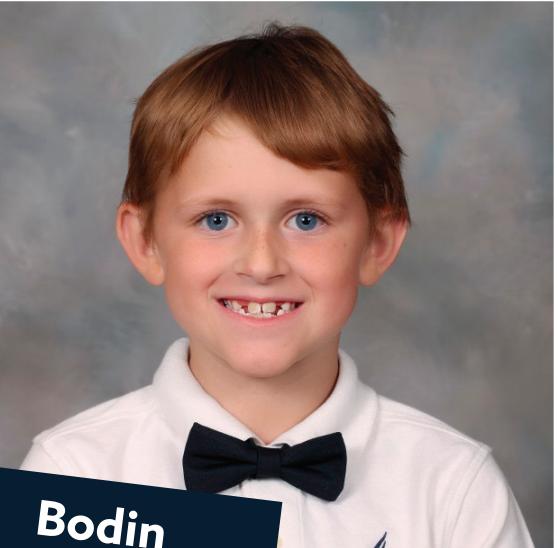
Add baking soda, salt (if using unsalted butter), and cornstarch. Mix thoroughly with a fork. Add flour and chocolate chips. Continue stirring with a fork until it becomes difficult, then switch to a silicone spatula and fold until the dough is uniform without dry streaks.

With the dough, fill up a 1/4 cup measuring cup and level off the top. Roll into a large ball. Repeat until you have 3 dough balls. (Anything left over is your treat!) Place the balls

on a parchment or silicone-lined baking sheet. Freeze for 5-10 minutes while the oven heats.

Bake for 10-12 minutes or until the edges are lightly browned and the tops are set but soft looking. Immediately after you pull the tray from the oven, use a metal spatula to press the edges of the cookies inward if needed.

Optional: press additional chocolate chips into the tops and sprinkle with sea salt. Allow cookies to cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes before enjoying.



Bodin

Mug Cake

BY BODIN SANDER

A great single serving treat for students, seniors and everyone!

Spray your mug with nonstick spray.

In a separate bowl:
 Pour 6 tbsp of any dry

cake mix
 1 tbsp of vegetable oil
 3 tbsp of water
 Mix well

Pour mix in mug and heat for 1 min. and 15 sec.

I added sprinkles for fun if you like

Enjoy your treat!

Remember to put the cake mix in another bag or clip bag to stay fresh!

JACE'S JOKES

What do you call birds in love? Love birds!

What is a groundhog's favorite drink? Hole milk!

What flowers give kisses on Valentine's Day? Tu-lips!

What do you call George Washington false teeth? Presidentures!

What did the farmer give his wife on Valentine's Day? Hogs & kisses!



Jace

Looking back: A tree's long history



MASON SCHARES

Hi, my name is Mason Schares, son of Marty and Lisa Schares. I live about a quarter mile south of Fairbank with my wife, Ashley, and our two children, Killian (7) and Adaline (3). Both Ashley and I work at Geater Machining and Manufacturing as a machinist and her in the quality department.

When I'm not at work, you can usually find me outdoors along the Big Wapsipinicon River, fishing for walleye or northern pike, or exploring the woods studying deer trails and learning the transitions between bedding areas and food sources. I also enjoy coaching the Wapsie Valley Archery Team and crafting soft plastic fishing baits, jigs, sinkers, turkey calls, and deer calls.

I currently run a YouTube channel, Instagram and Facebook pages named Wapsie River Rat Adventures where I showcase my baits and fishing, and I'm planning to start recording hunting adventures as well.

As the new year begins, we are excited for new beginnings and the plans and opportunities the year ahead will bring. At the same time, we look back and reflect on the growth our children have made and the challenges they have overcome—not only as individuals, but as a family together. The same can be said for wildlife and nature as a whole. Animals face constant obstacles, from finding food during the winter and water during times of drought, to escaping floods in wet seasons and avoiding predators in order to survive. Every day. Every Year.

But what about something we often overlook in our daily lives—something we depend on to survive and use every single day? Trees. Now, I'm not the Lorax, but I do have a deep passion for trees. I studied Natural Resource Management in college, where I discovered my appreciation for forestry. Trees are living organisms that every animal on Earth depends on. They provide food—such as fruits, nuts, leaves, and the insects that rely on them—along with shelter and habitat in the form of nests, dens, and cover from predators and harsh weather. Beyond that, trees sup-



port entire ecosystems by influencing water cycles, maintaining soil health, and helping regulate the climate.

So what do trees have to do with a new year? Trees tell their own story through time. I found myself thinking about this during the most recent bow season as I sat in a treestand attached to a hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*) tree next to an incredibly old bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) in a quiet, secluded stretch along the Big Wapsipinicon River. I wish I had captured a better photo than I did. Even if I had taken a perfect picture, it wouldn't truly do such a magnificent tree justice. Still, if you look closely at the photo with my bow in it, you can see the burr oak standing in the background. You can see the branches stretching far out and away from its massive trunk. I would estimate that it would take at least six to eight people, arms outstretched, to wrap all the way around the base of this tree. This tree could be no less than 200 years old.

Bur oaks (Also, Iowa's State Tree) are a type of white oak, known for their slow growth and exceptionally thick bark that protects them from the many elements nature throws their way—wind, floods, drought, snow, ice,

and even fire. They have relatively few vulnerabilities, especially as they mature, with oak blight and oak wilt posing the greatest threats during their early years attacking their thick green circular lobed leaves. Bur oaks also play a vital role in supporting wildlife, producing acorns nearly enclosed by their distinctive "burly" caps, which provide an important food source for squirrels, deer, turkeys, ducks, and various rodents.

As I waited for the deer, my thoughts kept drifting to everything this tree must have endured. What was the flood of 2008 like for it? How many storms had it swayed through, fighting to keep its heavy branches from tearing away from its massive trunk? How many nights had turkeys roosted safely among its limbs? Has a squirrel or raccoon ever made a home in a hollow where a branch once broke away? Has a bald eagle ever landed at its crown, scanning the river below for a fish swimming near the surface?

My thoughts then drifted to a chapter from a book of essays I read in college, *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold. In one essay, Leopold writes about a man chopping through a tree, with each swing of the axe exposing the tree's timeline—its growth rings, year by year. These rings form in the cambium, the living layer of the tree responsible for growth. The cambium produces xylem and phloem, the tissues that transport water and minerals upward from the roots and carry nutrients throughout the tree.

I imagined a man walking up to this tree with a chainsaw, measuring how many board feet of lumber it could yield—furniture, tables, cabinets, doors, trim, and more. If he fired up the chainsaw and let its teeth start chewing through the wood, what years would he cut through? What happened during those years,

from today all the way back to when this tree was just a sapling? Suppose the tree is around 225 years old—starting from the fresh cambium in 2025, the saw would have to cut through every ring back to 1800, each one holding a piece of the tree's long history:

2022 – Russia invades Ukraine.
2020 – COVID-19 pandemic.
2011 – U.S. military kills Osama bin Laden
2003 – U.S. invades Iraq
2001 – September 11 attacks; War on Terror begins
1999 – Columbine High School shooting
1991 – Gulf War
1989 – Fall of the Berlin Wall
1974 – President Nixon resigns after Watergate
1973 – Vietnam War Ends with the signing of the Paris Peace Accords

1969 – Apollo 11 Moon landing
1968 – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. assassinated
1965 – U.S. Sends troops to Vietnam
1963 – Assassination of John F. Kennedy
1954 – Brown v. Board of Education ends school segregation
1950 – U.S. sends troops to Korea

1947 – Cold War begins
1945 – The first atomic bomb drops on Hiroshima, Japan. The Nazis officially surrender. World War II ends

1941 – Attack on Pearl Harbor; U.S. enters World War II
1929 – Stock Market Crash; start of the Great Depression

1917 – 1918 – U.S. involvement in World War I

1910 – Eastern Wild Turkey extirpated from Iowa until Reintroduction efforts were successful

1906 – Devils Tower becomes first National Monument under Theodore Roosevelt

1901 – Theodore Roosevelt becomes president

1898 – Spanish-American War
1891 – The City of Fairbank of

ficially incorporated

1890 – Wounded Knee Massacre

1877 – White Tail Deer extirpated from the state of Iowa until reintroduction efforts were made in the late 20th century

1872 – Yellowstone becomes the first National Park

1870 – 15th Amendment grants voting rights to Black men

1869 – Transcontinental Railroad completed

- 1868 – 14th Amendment grants citizenship and equal protection to past slaves

- 1865 – Civil War ends; Abraham Lincoln assassinated; 13th Amendment abolished slavery

1863 – The last wild Bison in Iowa shot in Pocahontas county

1861 – American Civil War begins

1854 – Fairbank was laid out by F.J. Everett and C.W. Bacon.

1846 – Mexican-American War; U.S. gains western territories

1846 – Iowa Becomes a state
1838 – 1839 – Trail of Tears

1837 – John Deere invents the first commercially successful self-scouring steel plow

1836 – Davy Crockett and James Bowie die at the Alamo

1832 – Blackhawk War begins with Chief Blackhawk over land in Illinois which now Iowa

1830 – Indian Removal Act leads to forced relocation of Native American tribes

1812 – 1815 – War of 1812 against Great Britain

1804 – Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1804

1803 – Louisiana Purchase doubles the size of the United States

1800 – Thomas Jefferson elected president

Assuming this tree is as old as its size and appearance suggest, the only way to determine its exact age without harming it is to take a core sample and count the rings. It may be hard to believe that a single organism can survive for centuries, enduring everything that nature throws at it. Bur oaks, for example, have been recorded to live up to 500 years. Other well-known trees, like the Giant Sequoias (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) and Redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*), can live between 1,200 and 3,000 years, while lesser-known species like the Bristlecone Pine (*Pinus longaeva*) can reach 4,000 to 5,000 years. However, the environment in Iowa cannot provide the conditions these trees need to reach such extraordinary lifespans.

I can only imagine what this incredible bur oak has endured over the years, all that it has lived through. If a tree could talk, I would love to hear the stories it could tell—what animals it has sheltered, what creatures have fed from it, and, most of all, the moments in history that have gone unrecorded.

Fairbank Public Library



LIBRARY STAFF

Angela Berg, Director
 Susan Frost, Librarian
 Therese Steggall, Librarian
 Erin Hill, Librarian
 Brock Berg, Custodian

212 E. Main Street, P.O. Box 426, Fairbank, IA 50629
 Phone: 319-635-2487 Fax: 319-635-2487

Email: library@fairbank-ia.org Website: Fairbank-ia.org

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Monday 1-5 pm
 Tuesday 1-5 pm;
 Wednesday 9-11 am
 1-5 pm
 Thursday 1-6 pm
 Friday 1-5 pm
 Saturday 9-12



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Using your Fairbank Library card, you can access Kanopy. With an expertly curated collection of narrative and documentary films we think you'll enjoy, we're pleased to bring this streaming service to our community.

Go to kanopy.com to get started today or visit the Library!



In Loving Memory

MONETARY DONATION
 in honor of Linda Letson
 by Ted & Jan Vorwald

Moonshine By Moonlight & Her Name was Mary Katharine
 donated by Sue & John Frost

Linda Letson
The Women of Oak Ridge from Sue & John Frost

The Harvey Girls from Paula Farrington

The Second Story Bookshop from Rob & Sharon Maricle

Overdue from Rob & Sharon Maricle

Riches Beyond Measure
 from Amos, Angela, Brock & Braylee Berg

Bob Byersdorfer
Great American Sports Babe Ruth from Sue & John Frost

The Bakery Dragon from Gary & Irene Peyton

How To Catch a Dream from Brian & Dorothy Ott

The Bakery Dragon & the Fairy Cake
 from Ann Thomas & Ben Byersdorfer

Cupcake Diaries Mia in the Mix from Greg & Joyce Pitlik

Still Life from Juliann Woods

Scarred from Mike & Sandy Tagtow

The Color of Hope
 from Randy, Jodi & Carson Woods

Forever Ripley from Gary & Irene Peyton

Lost Roses from Mike & Viv Rourke

Old Money from Brian & Dorothy Ott

Prowl from Mike & Sandy Tagtow

Simply the Best from Rick & Cindy Woods

Departure 37 from Paula Farrington

Denied Access from Larry & Laura LaMasters

Delivering the Wow from Rob & Sharon Maricle

The Gales of November from Rob & Sharon Maricle

The Widow from Amos, Angela, Brock & Braylee Berg

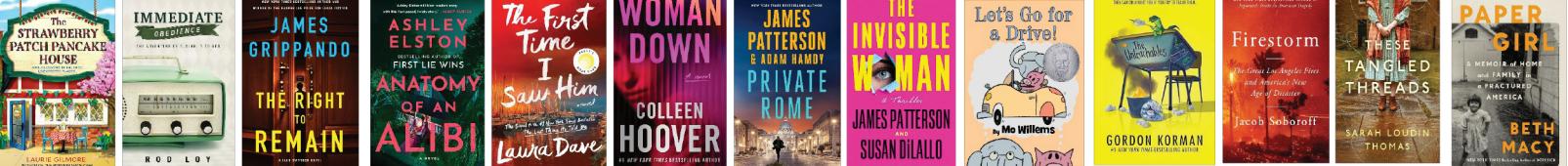
Dave Bentley
The Girl From Devil's Lake from Gary Fink

Let's Go For a Drive from Charlie & Cleo Joerger

Quick Silver from Randy, Jodi & Carson Woods

THANK YOU!

JUST ARRIVED



REGULAR MEETING

The Fairbank City Council met in budget workshop at 5:00 pm and then regular session following at 6:00 pm on Monday January 12, 2026. Members present: R. Woods, Williams, Erickson, and T. Woods. Absent: Gruetzmacher. Also, present at City Hall: Nick Kuker, Public Works; Michelle Laube, Deputy Clerk; and Brittany Fuller, City Clerk.

During the budget workshop, the council discussed potential FY2027 budget numbers with the police, library and fire departments. The council was presented a budget timeline showing meetings and deadlines for this budget season ending April 30, 2026 and were also shown some of the latest revenue and expenditure projections for this upcoming budget year. Mayor Kayser called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance. Motion by R. Woods, second by Erickson to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

There were no public hearings. Erickson/Williams to approve the following consent agenda items as presented with an amendment to the time of the next scheduled budget meeting: December 8th Regular Meeting Minutes, Treasurer's Reports for December 2025, Setting the 2nd budget workshop for January 26th at 5:30 pm, Approving Resolution 2026-01 – A Resolution Approving and Adopting the updated Operations and Maintenance Plans and the Operator Qualification Plan for the City of Fairbank Natural Gas System, Approving the Fire Department Officers and Appointments, Approval of EMA and 911 Boards - Chris West, Bremer County and Buchanan County; and Drake Mangrich, Fayette County; Landfill Commission – Mayor Kayser; and the Payment of Bills. The bill listing will be placed at the end of the minutes. Ayes: Four. Nays: None.

Treasurers Report for the Month of December 2025: Revenues - General, \$53,283.21; Special Revenue, \$40,843.10; TIF, \$2,897.76; Capital Projects, \$73,830.71; Permanent Funds, \$18.99; Proprietary, \$199,679.70; and Transfers In, \$42,574.13. Disbursements - General, \$33,421.59; Special Revenue, \$6,847.93; Proprietary, \$164,399.39; and Transfers Out, \$42,574.13. Balance on hand at close of business on December 31, 2025 was \$4,709,540.75.

There was no one present for the informal public comment section. After the last meeting, Amy Rechkemmer with VanDaele Insurance, LLC was asked to see about getting a quote from Health Partners for the city's employee health insurance. She called and stated that Health Partners does not provide health insurance for municipalities. As discussed at the last meeting, United Healthcare was more expensive. T. Woods/Erickson to approve the employee health insurance renewal with Wellmark, the dental plan renewal, and the vision plan renewal. Ayes: Four. Nays: None.

Councilman Woods was able to present the council with a sketch of the possible shelter for Veteran's Park. The council reviewed it and thought that the size was good along with the bathroom placement. Nick asked about adding a urinal. Those changes will be looked into and quotes can be calculated now for review at future meetings.

The council is still reviewing options for the 657A property at 506 Patterson Street.

There was no new discussion on the personnel manual flow chart. Motion by Williams, second by Erickson to table the chart until more information can be reviewed. Motion carried.

Cleaning and televising the sewer main in the Lakeside Drive neighborhood was discussed. Nick would like to get the whole neighborhood jetted and televised in order to see what kind of shape it is in and to get a better idea on where, if any, the issues are. He received two quotes. One from Roto-Rooter for \$695.00 an hour with no minimum and one from CIT Sewer Solutions for \$990.00 an hour with a six-hour minimum. R. Woods/Williams to approve Roto-Rooter and their quote to do the jetting and televising. Ayes: Four. Nays: None.

Chris West, Fairbank Fire Chief, attended the meeting to discuss the Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP). He noted that the council has until the end of February to decide whether to move forward with the program. Karla Gavin, an employee of Knox Financial Services out of Decorah, was present to assist in answering questions. Chief West stated that he has spent time developing a proposed LOSAP structure. The council discussed the possibility of contributing \$50.00 per volunteer, with the contribution being matched or tripled depending on the gross amount of the fire department's annual operating budget, as a potential benefit for members of the volunteer fire department. It was noted that specific program stipulations still need to be finalized. The proposed program would be set up as a 457(e) (11) plan for volunteers with no earned income. It was also clarified that the fire department cannot contribute funds from the Fireman's Fund due to its

501(c)(3) status. Ron Miller was present and asked the council to consider not jumping on it right away, as it is a new program with lots of changes happening every day. More information will be researched and discussed at future meetings.

Vehicle insurance valuation options for the ICAP renewal were discussed. Although the ICAP representative was not present, the council reviewed two options: maintaining replacement cost valuation, which would result in increased premiums, or switching to an actual cash value basis reflecting the current market value of each vehicle, which would reduce insured values and premiums but would not allow for full vehicle replacement in the event of a loss. It was discussed that if the actual cash value option is pursued, current vehicle values would need to be determined. The council agreed that additional review was necessary and requested that the fire department review their vehicles and all items currently insured before a decision is made.

The Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing on Monday December 8, 2025 for a rezoning request for the property located at 605 West Main Street from Kaleb Bentley. The request was asking to rezone the property from R-1 to R-2. After that meeting, the Council received a written recommendation from the board to consider approving the request and continue the process of amending the zoning ordinance to reflect that change. Kaleb was present and explained the plan to build a two-unit zero entry condo that is planned to be geared towards anyone seeking a retirement home to purchase. T. Woods/R. Woods to approve the recommendation from the Planning & Zoning Commission and continue with the process of amending the ordinance for the rezoning request. Ayes: Four. Nays: None.

After the council approved the recommendation to allow proceeding with the zoning change from the Planning and Zoning Commission, a public hearing would need to be set to allow for public input. Erickson/T. Woods to approve Resolution 2026-02 – Resolution of the City Council of the City of Fairbank, Iowa Setting a Public Hearing Regarding the Rezoning of a Property. Motion carried. The public hearing was set for Monday January 26, 2026 at 6:00 pm at Fairbank City Hall.

The city appointments will be discussed at the next meeting. Mayor Kayser stated that Ron Woods will serve as Mayor Pro-tem again. An anonymous donation was given to the Fairbank Development Corporation to give to the city to get a new Christmas banner to replace the old over the road Christmas banner. Also, the rest of the donation was requested to use for some garbage cans to be placed along East Main Street. Williams/T. Woods to approve the purchase of the Merry Christmas over the road banner and to use the remainder of the money to buy more garbage cans from DHK Welding like the cans that were previously bought.

Order as many cans as possible to spend the remainder of the donation and the city would pay the difference. Half of the new cans requested to be WV cans and the other half requested to be City of Fairbank designed cans. Ayes: Four. Nays: None.

There were no comments under the council/mayor comments.

During the department reports, Chris West thanked the council for their continued support. Nick reported that the fire station generator was serviced and should be good to go and that the safety classes through IAMU will be held at City Hall this year for city employees and surrounding city employees to attend. He also stated and wanted to thank the council for the ranger because during the last icy weather conditions, the ranger worked so well to get the salt down.

Williams/T. Woods to adjourn the meeting at 6:59 pm. Motion carried.

Bills for the Month of January 2026

Access Systems, Copier/Printer Maintenance

\$213.35

Amazon Capital Services, Supplies

\$253.56

Arnold Motor Supply, Supplies

\$184.72

Olivia Becker, Services

\$60.00

Bodensteiner Implement Co., Supplies

\$226.62

Bound Tree Medical, LLC., Ambulance Supplies

\$14.88

Lonnie Brewer, Cell Phone Reimbursement

\$75.00

Butler County Rec, Electric

\$62,447.43

C and C Welding Inc., Supplies

\$288.47

Calystra Dixon, Utility Deposit Refund

\$200.00

Casey's General Store, Gas

\$669.72

Clayton Energy Corporation, Natural Gas

\$4,975.04

Clayton Energy Corporation, Reservation

\$13,267.83

Jeremy Crawford, Utility Deposit Refund

\$103.39

Davis Lawn Service, Services

\$1,576.00

Delta Dental of Iowa, January Premium

\$1,291.96

Don's Truck Sales, Services

\$1,608.37

Electrical Engineering & Equip, Supplies

\$896.96

Ayes: Four. Nays: None.

Chris West, Fairbank Fire Chief, attended the meeting to discuss the Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP). He noted that the council has until the end of February to decide whether to move forward with the program. Karla Gavin, an employee of Knox Financial Services out of Decorah, was present to assist in answering questions. Chief West stated that he has spent time developing a proposed LOSAP structure. The council discussed the possibility of contributing \$50.00 per volunteer, with the contribution being matched or tripled depending on the gross amount of the fire department's annual operating budget, as a potential benefit for members of the volunteer fire department. It was noted that specific program stipulations still need to be finalized. The proposed program would be set up as a 457(e) (11) plan for volunteers with no earned income. It was also clarified that the fire department cannot contribute funds from the Fireman's Fund due to its

501(c)(3) status. Ron Miller was present and asked the council to consider not jumping on it right away, as it is a new program with lots of changes happening every day. More information will be researched and discussed at future meetings.

Vehicle insurance valuation options for the ICAP renewal were discussed. Although the ICAP representative was not present, the council reviewed two options: maintaining replacement cost valuation, which would result in increased premiums, or switching to an actual cash value basis reflecting the current market value of each vehicle, which would reduce insured values and premiums but would not allow for full vehicle replacement in the event of a loss. It was discussed that if the actual cash value option is pursued, current vehicle values would need to be determined. The council agreed that additional review was necessary and requested that the fire department review their vehicles and all items currently insured before a decision is made.

The Planning and Zoning Commission held a public hearing on Monday December 8, 2025 for a rezoning request for the property located at 605 West Main Street from Kaleb Bentley. The request was asking to rezone the property from R-1 to R-2. After that meeting, the Council received a written recommendation from the board to consider approving the request and continue the process of amending the zoning ordinance to reflect that change. Kaleb was present and explained the plan to build a two-unit zero entry condo that is planned to be geared towards anyone seeking a retirement home to purchase. T. Woods/R. Woods to approve the recommendation from the Planning & Zoning Commission and continue with the process of amending the ordinance for the rezoning request. Ayes: Four. Nays: None.

After the council approved the recommendation to allow proceeding with the zoning change from the Planning and Zoning Commission, a public hearing would need to be set to allow for public input. Erickson/T. Woods to approve Resolution 2026-02 – Resolution of the City Council of the City of Fairbank, Iowa Setting a Public Hearing Regarding the Rezoning of a Property. Motion carried. The public hearing was set for Monday January 26, 2026 at 6:00 pm at Fairbank City Hall.

The city appointments will be discussed at the next meeting. Mayor Kayser stated that Ron Woods will serve as Mayor Pro-tem again. An anonymous donation was given to the Fairbank Development Corporation to give to the city to get a new Christmas banner to replace the old over the road Christmas banner. Also, the rest of the donation was requested to use for some garbage cans to be placed along East Main Street. Williams/T. Woods to approve the purchase of the Merry Christmas over the road banner and to use the remainder of the money to buy more garbage cans from DHK Welding like the cans that were previously bought.

Order as many cans as possible to spend the remainder of the donation and the city would pay the difference. Half of the new cans requested to be WV cans and the other half requested to be City of Fairbank designed cans. Ayes: Four. Nays: None.

There were no comments under the council/mayor comments.

During the department reports, Chris West thanked the council for their continued support. Nick reported that the fire station generator was serviced and should be good to go and that the safety classes through IAMU will be held at City Hall this year for city employees and surrounding city employees to attend. He also stated and wanted to thank the council for the ranger because during the last icy weather conditions, the ranger worked so well to get the salt down.

Williams/T. Woods to adjourn the meeting at 6:59 pm. Motion carried.

Bills for the Month of January 2026

Access Systems, Copier/Printer Maintenance

\$213.35

Amazon Capital Services, Supplies

\$253.56

Arnold Motor Supply, Supplies

\$184.72

Olivia Becker, Services

\$60.00

Bodensteiner Implement Co., Supplies

\$226.62

Bound Tree Medical, LLC., Ambulance Supplies

\$14.88

Lonnie Brewer, Cell Phone Reimbursement

\$75.00

Butler County Rec, Electric

\$62,447.43

C and C Welding Inc., Supplies

\$288.47

Calystra Dixon, Utility Deposit Refund

\$200.00

Casey's General Store, Gas

\$669.72

Clayton Energy Corporation, Natural Gas

\$4,975.04

Clayton Energy Corporation, Reservation

\$13,267.83

Jeremy Crawford, Utility Deposit Refund

\$103.39

Davis Lawn Service, Services

\$1,576.00

Delta Dental of Iowa, January Premium

\$1,291.96

Don's Truck Sales, Services

\$1,608.37

Electrical Engineering & Equip, Supplies

\$896.96

Ayes: Four. Nays: None.

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Happy New Year!

As with any holiday, there are many traditions that people around the world perform to align themselves with a positive, cleansing outlook for their year ahead.

Some eat grapes or lentils to promote cleansing.
Some make noise by ringing temple bells or banging on pots to ward off bad spirits. Some wear specific colors like white for peace or red for love.

...Some (like me) simply go to bed early and forget to write 2026 on checks until about mid-February!

No matter how you celebrate the fresh start, I wish the best for you and your family in 2026!

There are interesting studies that suggest the natural human tendency is to lean into optimism, or having a positivity-bias, when looking into the future. When it comes to finances, however, humans have a more mixed view.

If you are someone who makes resolutions, as with any goal, I would encourage you to set financial goals that are easy to maintain and improve on.

So, where to begin?

If you're trying to pay off debts, start by over-paying on your loans by rounding the payment up to a number you can absorb. If you're trying to build savings, open a separate account where a percentage of each paycheck goes in "sight-unseen", at a rate you can afford. If you're getting serious about long-term retirement savings, start with maxing out tax advantaged accounts and adding to a brokerage account with anything over and above those limits. Small daily habits can add up to exponential growth. As the saying goes, "Rome wasn't built in a day, but they were laying bricks every hour."

First, just start. Be consistent, and earn your confidence from there. With confidence, comes optimism. With optimism brings hope, creativity, and excitement. Once you have confidence in those areas, taking time to discuss what to invest in is the next best step you can take.

If at any point you feel stuck in the process, we are just a phone call away. We are passionate about helping people just like you achieve their next level of financial security.

A financially literate, successful, and confident community is something that benefits all of us for generations to come.

Let's make 2026 great!

Ashlea (Kleitsch) Jones

Financial Advisor
Prime Capital Financial
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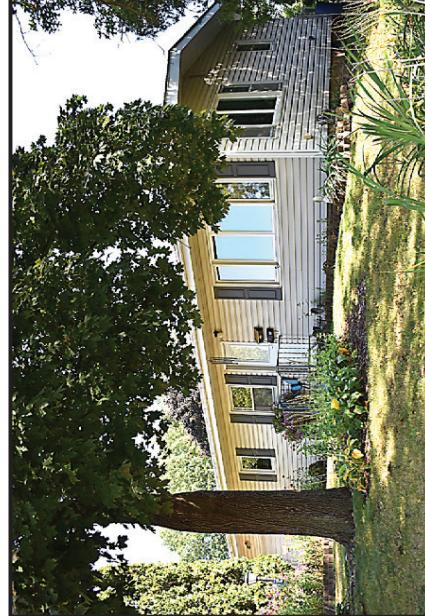
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