



BELLEVILLE - AREA INDEPENDENT

Vol. 32.5 Thursday, January 29, 2026

Serving the Communities of Belleville, Sumpter and Van Buren

FREE



Independent photo by James Oztman

The closed Denton Road Bridge is seen covered with snow on Monday after about three or four inches more fell Sunday night. This photo was taken from the cemetery side of the bridge and shows the homes along North Liberty and part of the shopping center in the background. Birds are seen in the areas of water open on Belleville Lake.

School board approves new FAA Drone course at BHS

By Rosemary K. Oztman
Independent Editor

At Monday's regular meeting, the Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education voted unanimously to approve a new FAA Part 107 Drone Course at Belleville High School starting with the fall semester.

Teaching both the first and second semesters of the unmanned aircraft systems course will be Aaron Watkins, who is a certified instructor and also is in the final steps of being certified for credentialing.

Each semester counts for one credit in elective credit. Wayne RESA (Regional Education Service Authority) is working with the state to get the courses certified as Career Technical Education.

Twelve small drones will be provided by RESA and there will be blowup cages for classroom use. Outside areas will be used where accessible.

Jill Marvaso, director of curriculum and instruction, presented the details of the class to the board.

It is expected that students in the class take advantage of several opportunities to promote STEM, Robotics, and Mechatronics in the school. Participation in at least one of eight opportunities listed is required. The list includes being on the Robotics team, a member of the Science Olympiad, or a member of the computer programming club at school.

Fields trips to local airports and guest

speakers is a part of the program, with potential internship placement.

The class is for those in 10th through 12th grades. Aviation 1 and 2 classes are planned to be added in the future, so the 9th graders can get on track for the drone class.

RESA is backing a county-wide aviation initiative and has established four consortium within the county to carry out this initiative. Van Buren Public Schools is the central consortium and has been designed as a hub for surrounding schools to send students to for aviation CTE courses, such as this drone course.

In other business at the 35-minute, Jan. 26 meeting, the board:

- Received another round of gifts, since

it is still School Board Recognition Month. School Supt. Pete Kudlak said each board member was provided with a seat cushion and there is a bouquet of flowers from a school. The board was informed each school had a poster that proclaimed School Board Recognition;

- Approved the employment of Kelly Paton as sixth-grade teacher at Owen Intermediate School as of Jan. 21;

- Approved the retirement of bus driver Marquis Hobson after 19 years as of Jan. 30; the retirement of bus aide Sharon Lesniak after 27 years as of June 12; the retirement of Belleville High School secretary Kris Spillman after 11 years as

(continued on page 3)

Postal Regulations Require
This Space On The Front Page.



The Denton Road bridge has been closed by Wayne County for 1,215 days as of today. (That's 3.33 years or 29,160 hours)



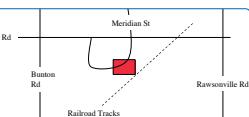
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SECOND FRONT PAGE

School Board

(continued from page 1)

of Jan. 31; and the resignation of Esther Walker as BHS secretary after 2.5 years, as of Jan. 14;

- Approved the employment of Megan Darket as BHS secretary at a time to be determined; the employment of Ja'Kobe Watkins as a paraprofessional at Owen as of Jan. 12; the employment of Latosha' Beard as a paraprofessional at McBride Middle School at a time to be determined; the employment of Kelly Murphy as a paraprofessional at Edgemont at a time to be determined; and the employment of Yahya Nasser Eddine as a paraprofessional at Savage Elementary at a time to be determined;

- Heard curriculum director Marvaso announce that last Friday was a professional development day for staff and there will be another PD day on Feb. 10. She said the district has 133 students who are multilanguage learners;

- Heard financial director Priya Nayak report that the per-student amount received from the state for this school year is \$10,050;

- Heard human resources director John Leroy note there are quite a few new secretaries on the staff now and he is sending up supports for them since, "They do run the schools";

- Heard director of student services Julien Frazier announce that student Jamie Jones has been named the state winner of the "Yes, I Can Academic Award" and is scheduled to be honored in Grand Rapids by the state for all his hard work. Frazier said the first unified basketball game of the season was postponed, but there is a game with first responders on Feb. 17 and a game at Little Caesar's Arena on Feb. 21. He said the district now has a unified cheer team, robotics team, and horticulture group;

- Heard superintendent Kudlak explain, "We try to always have school." He said a windchill of negative 20 is the cutoff. He said in the morning is when they finally decide whether to have school and it was easy on Monday because of the snowfall overnight. He announced Edgemont teacher Ms. Mastie was named Jay Towers in the Morning Teacher of the Week that morning;

- Heard board president Amy Pearce said social media has a lot to say about calling off school for weather. She said Kudlak gets up at 3 a.m. to drive here from his home to check on the weather when others are warm in bed. "Our job is to have kids in school," she said, noting parents can keep their kids home if they want. "You're the parent. It's your decision";

- Heard Kudlak report the KLAA is merging with the Southeastern Conference (SCC) and now Van Buren will be in a

larger conference with Ann Arbor, Saline, Tecumseh, Lincoln, Dexter, and others; and

- Heard Pearce announce that McBride had its spelling bee and first-place winner was Everette Skinner, second was

Annabella Shall, and third Chloe Wooten. He also said on Sunday, Feb. 22, there will be a regional color guard competition at BHS as a fundraiser for the marching band. Also, 2026 marks the 100th year of having a Belleville band. It will be celebrated next

school year and they are looking into ways to celebrate. Pearce also said she would like an update on school security from director Dan Wright, sometime over the next two months.

VBT Life Saving Award goes to Everett, Pierce

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent Editor

Van Buren Township Fire Chief David McInally honored fire fighters Rachel Everett and Christopher Pierce with a life saving award at the Jan. 20 regular meeting of the Van Buren Township Board of Trustees.

Chief McInally said the two were able to enter a home that was on fire and quickly find and rescue occupant Robert Halabut. After treatment at a hospital, he is back in his home residence, McInally said.

On Dec. 27 at about 1:40 p.m., the fire department received a call for black smoke coming out of a home at 8124 Belleville Rd.

A coordinated effort by the police and fire department made it possible for the first two firefighters on the scene to quickly enter the home and rescue the occupant by the time the second engine and ambulance arrived, McInally said.

A number of firefighters, including deputy chief Andy Lenaghan, attended the meeting in support of the two firefighters.

In other business at the brief meeting on Jan. 20, the board:

- Approved the legal services contract for Butzel Long to serve as the township's employee relations and labor attorneys,

as recommended by Human Resources Director Nicole Monia. Firms applying were "grilled" by Monia, the full-time electeds, and three directors, along with providing information on their labor cases with final decisions. Butzel Long attorneys Rebecca Davies, Craig S. Schwartz, and Kevin Lynch were present at the township board meeting to be hired. Their reduced hourly rates for VBT are: \$300 for shareholders, \$225 for other attorneys and associates, and \$175 for paralegals;

- Approved moving \$1.6 million in the 2026 Fire Department budget for the purpose of administering a FEMA Assistance to Firefighter Grant for six fire departments. Chief McInally said Van Buren will save \$200,000 on new, high-standard air packs, and will pay 10%. Van Buren will get grants on other equipment, as well, he said;

- Approved the 2026 Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART) contract for \$28,433 for van/bus operations. The local match of \$65,817 is met by the township general fund and in-kind services. The total budget is \$94,250;

- Approved a budget amendment to the 2026 Supervisor and Assessing Department's Capital Outlay Budgets in order to purchase a new RICHO high-task

printer for \$9,995. The current printer in use had been in the clerk's office mail room and some of the toner it uses in no longer being made;

- Approved the supervisor's reappointments of regular members John Herman and Charles Larocque to the Board of Zoning Appeals with terms to expire Dec. 1, 2028;

- Heard clerk Leon Wright, who was chairing the meeting in the absence of supervisor Kevin McNamara, say that the board just had a closed-door session on four contracts concerning public safety; and

- Heard two residents say they would like the township board to issue moratoriums on data centers and make sure the Cannoli project now under consideration is included in the moratorium.

Before the regular meeting began, the board went into closed-door session to discuss the strategy and negotiations of a collective bargaining agreement.

The board met with a bare quorum of four: Clerk Wright, treasurer Sharry Budd, and trustees Donald Boynton and Will Frazier. Absent were supervisor McNamara, and trustees Kevin Martin and Bryon Kelley.

Council gives Faull \$5,000 raise, permanent title

By Rosemary K. Otzman
Independent Editor

Belleville police chief Kris Faull, who also has been serving as interim public safety director since November of 2024, was elevated to permanent public safety director with a \$5,000 increase in salary applied retroactively.

At the Jan. 20 regular meeting of the Belleville City Council, mayor Ken Voigt said Faull has done a phenomenal job in the interim role and deserves to be put in it permanently.

Faull was paid an extra \$3,000 in salary for the interim role and it was suggested that she get her raise retroactively for the 14 months she served as interim director.

Mayor Voigt explained that would mean \$2,000 more than the \$3,000 she was paid extra for that interim time.

The council voted unanimously to the mayor's proposal for the change in title and the raise.

In other business, the council:

- Voted unanimously to approve a one year

extension of the fire department's union contract with a 5% increase in pay and the addition of two holidays, Juneteenth and Martin Luther King Day. The contract had expired Dec. 31;

- Held the second half of the public hearing on the City Parks and Recreation Plan, which lasted two minutes and had no public speaking, and then approved the plan. The approved plan needs to be sent to the state by Feb. 2 for the city to be eligible for state park grants. The first part of the public hearing was held at the last city meeting and then the rest of the hearing was scheduled for Jan. 20, all in an effort to comply with proper state timing of publication for its meeting announcement;

- Approved an expenditure of \$12,269.35 for the low bid of Kerry Brothers Downriver to repair the city's leaf vacuum by installing a whole new diesel engine. The bid from Hudson's was \$15,808.37, which involved taking the engine apart;

- Approved the mayor removing from the agenda without comment Tax Incentives

for City Economic Development, for the second meeting in a row;

- Approved the mayor's board and commission appointments: Planning commission, Gerald Keeder III and Alvis Brigit, with terms to expire Dec. 31, 2028; Parks and Recreation, Sydney Moorthy, Jason Mida, Quentin Gerwolls, expires Dec. 31, 2029; Construction Board of Appeals, John Hennessey, Mark Davenport, William Osier, and Andrew Lenaghan, expire Dec. 31, 2027; Downtown Development Authority, Sabrina Richardson-Williams and Chris Donley, expire Dec. 31, 2029; Board of Review, Hannah Rodriguez and Judy Jordan, expire Dec. 31, 2028;

- Approved naming Nathaniel Johnson, the city's director of the Department of Public Works, as street administrator in all transactions with the state Department of Transportation;

- Heard DPW director Johnson give credit to DPW employee Nate Fogel, who was present, for all the hard work he does.

(continued on page 6)

OPINIONS

Editorial:

Great idea: No cell phones in the classroom

The House and Senate in Michigan seem to agree on the idea of keeping cell phones out of the hands of students in the classrooms.

That's a great idea. The governor says she will sign it into law once their work comes to her.

Have you ever seen the students hunkered over their cell phones with their hoodies pulled up over their heads, ignoring what the teacher is teaching? No wonder the scores are so low in Michigan.

They should not allow them to be brought into the school buildings at all. If a parent wants to reach a child for an emergency or vice versa, they can go through the office.

National Heritage Academies, which manages Keystone Charter Academy in Sumpter Township, already has a rule that cell phones don't come to school at all. All correspondence between families goes through the office and everyone seems to be surviving just fine.

Once the students are freed of having to keep up with friends or games on their phones they can listen to what the teacher is saying and learn what they are expected to learn. Scores should soar.

Parents are sure to complain about this new law because parents, themselves, are addicted to their cell phones. Look around. For most young people, all you can see is the tops of their heads as they walk along with a phone in hand.

EXTRA THINGS I KNOW

...By Rosemary K. Oztman

The Michigan Department of Transportation has announced it will begin upgrading I-94 between I-275 in Romulus and US-12 (Michigan Avenue) at the Detroit border in late February. Work will be extensive and is expected to be done by 2029. This is a heads-up for those who travel that busy route.

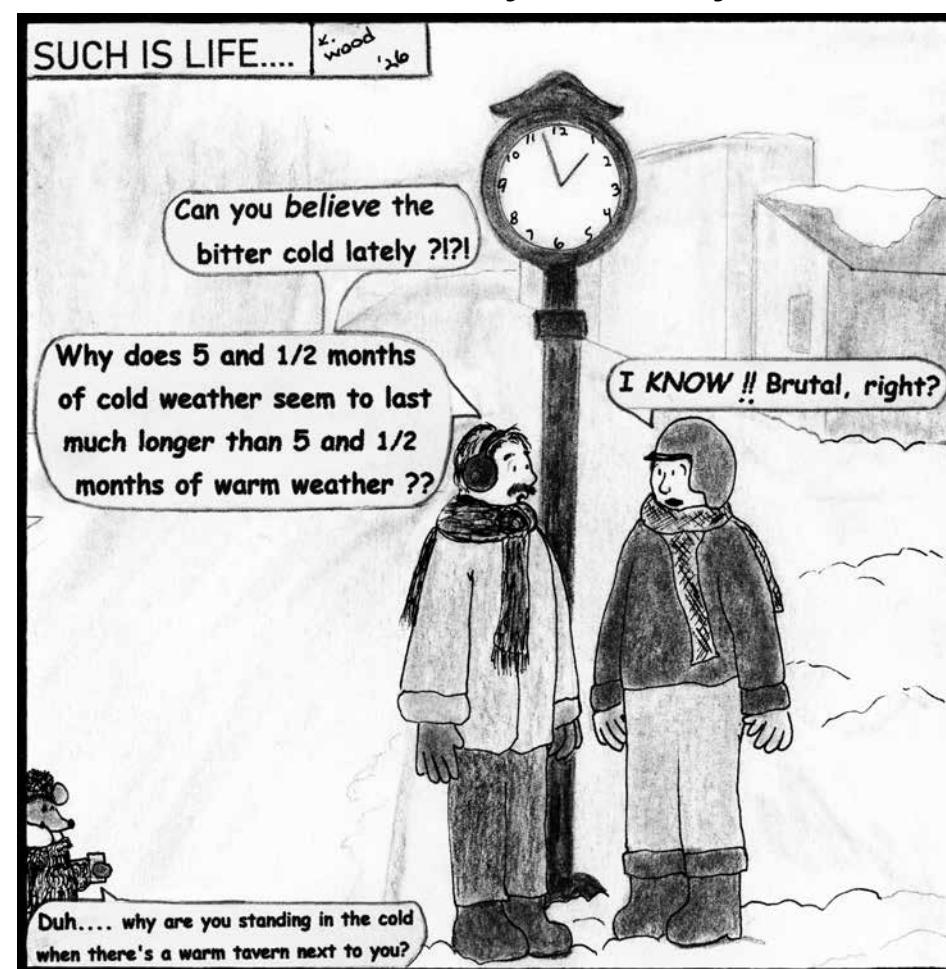
A Romulus resident just alerted us that the Nov. 6 issue of the *Independent* sent to him on Nov. 5, just arrived in his mailbox. The Post Office is driving everyone crazy. Where has that paper been for so long?

My payment to Blue Cross Blue Shield, mailed before Christmas didn't get to the company before its due date in January. I'm using email payments wherever I can, but I don't want to pay extra for using a card. Those payments with charges for paying by card I will still put into the mail.

On Monday, it was announced the *Detroit Free Press* plans to acquire *The Detroit News*. The two had just severed a 35-year joint operating agreement and *The News* had announced it would release its first Sunday edition in decades on Jan. 18, but that didn't happen.

Instead the two organizations signed an agreement to continue to share some operations through March. That's when the new agreement will be finalized, I guess.

USA Today, now the owner of the *Free Press*, said the two newspapers will continue to publish separately despite the same ownership. I'd much rather they competed.



We thought the Van Buren Public Schools meeting of the board of education on Monday might have been canceled, since school was canceled that day. Wrong. The board met as usual. Just one item was on the agenda for action and that was to approve a class to teach drone skills.

Have you noticed how high the value of gold and silver has climbed recently? At last look, we saw gold at more than \$5,000 an ounce and silver more than \$100 an ounce, the highest ever for both metals. They are valuable because of their use in computer chips, we're told.

We read the report about someone driving right into the McNamara Terminal at Metro Airport at about 7:30 p.m. last Friday, but didn't visualize what had happened until some bystanders posted their pictures.

The vehicle drove through the glass windows at the Delta Airlines entry and headed right up to the airplane ticket counter and hit it. The airport said the fire department treated six people for injuries. They said there are bollards by the doors, so how did the vehicle get by them?

The driver is in custody and the investigation continues.

At Monday's school board meeting, board president Amy Pearce described a BHS New Tech Bio-lit project with a Farm-to-Plate Showcase. It starts when farmers



come and explain how the food grows and then students select food and fix it and bring the farmers back to help eat it. The farmers also explain why it is important to eat food that is grown near where they live.

Those of us older folk remember the days

we worked in the fields around here to

grow precious food for our families, which

our mother's canned and put in the cellar

in jars for eating year-round.

We've got to teach our young people how that all works, since they don't see it firsthand any more.

During and after the Great Depression people moved from cities out to the countryside so they could feed their families with fresh food. The land was very precious to them and the whole family worked to grow what they ate.

It's been pretty cold these days, but after all, this is Michigan and it's wintertime. Spring will come as it always does, but it does seem quite far away at this moment. I've just been layering up and walking like a penguin to keep from falling. So far, I'm surviving.

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Established Dec. 3, 1994

First Edition Jan. 5, 1995

The Belleville-Area Independent is a free, weekly newspaper published each Thursday in Belleville, MI.

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Musings
 By Janet Millard
 Independent Advertising Director


Are you cold enough yet? If not, maybe it is time to try the annual Polar Plunge! It will be held at the BYC on E. Huron River Drive on Saturday, Feb. 14. What a way to celebrate Valentine's Day! Just go online and type in Wayne County Polar Plunge – 2026 to register or donate to this worthy

Don't forget the annual meeting for the Friends of the Belleville Area District Library on Saturday at 11 a.m. Joining this group will probably be one of the best things you do in 2026.

Did you see the letter last week about starting a Lion's Club again? I can't figure out why we can't keep one going. I remember back in the day when Meijer would let non-profits do fundraising on their property, spending some time collecting for our local club. Those were the days when we all helped each other and hopefully that could happen again. I was a member of our local Optimist Club and we eventually disbanded because no one had time to take over the officer position. However, it was a breakfast club (I do love having breakfast at a restaurant) and for many years we continued to meet just for the food! I think a few might still be at Sam's on Tuesday mornings.

If anyone signed up to be a member of the new Lion's Club last week, please let me know so I can refer others. Each club has its particular calling and the Lion's Club is saving sight, supporting youth, providing disaster relief, and meeting humanitarian needs.

The old Glass Ranch building on South Street has become a home to many small businesses. The latest to start cooking in that commercial kitchen is The Original Meat. It is long past time that we had a vegan option. Many of you may remember Julia from the Belleville Farmers Market in 2024. She didn't participate last summer but will be returning this year. Look for her ad in the paper this week. Welcome, Julia, to the Belleville business community.

Do you have an item you would like to see in this column? Call Janet Millard at (734) 699-9020.

It's Pothole Season

The Wayne County Department of Public Services said it can't fix potholes unless it knows where they are. Report Wayne County potholes to 1-888-ROAD-CREW.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

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cause for Special Olympics.

Last week I gave you one of the Demo Teams scheduled for Thunder Over Michigan on July 17, 18 and 19 and today I'm adding to that list. Joining the MV-22 Osprey Demo Team is the Jack Aces P-51 Demo Team, Melissa Burns in her Edge 540, the Smoke-N-Fire Jet Truck, and last but never least, the USAF F-16 Viper Demo. I'll elaborate more on all these as we get closer to the event but for now be sure to purchase your tickets while they are discounted.

Don't forget the annual meeting for the Friends of the Belleville Area District Library on Saturday at 11 a.m. Joining this group will probably be one of the best things you do in 2026.

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City of Belleville

(continued from page 3)

Johnson said he lost another crew member last Sunday at the water main break and he wanted to honor Fogel for his work. Fogel said later that the reason he is still working at the DPW is because of the leadership of Johnson;

- Approved accounts payable of \$1,592,314.11, which includes \$500,451.67 to Davenport Construction for 330 Charles project construction;
- Heard councilman Priest ask about the dead tree on North Liberty, which is still in place. Public safety director Faull said the property owner has been ticketed;

• Heard interim city manager Jones thank the DPW director for going down in the basement to fix the boiler after it went down twice that day. "We might only have one more council meeting here," said mayor Voigt. "And I'll be here to push the plunger", and

• Heard the mayor say he really appreciates the 90-day stint by DPW worker Rick who gives the city some breathing room to find new workers. He said he appreciates the DPW now fixing water mains instead of contracting that out. He thanked councilwoman Kissel for the hundreds of hours of work in organizing the move to the new city hall. He noted that he joined Van Buren Township supervisor Kevin McNamara and Romulus mayor Robert McCraight in a roundtable discussion about hazardous waste landfills and their effect on the community.

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Court Watching

Kaleb Augustus Chelli

Kaleb Augustus Chelli of Van Buren Township was charged with domestic violence on Nov. 5 in Van Buren Township. He was scheduled for remote arraignment/pre-trial at 34th District Court on Dec. 17 and the arraignment was held virtually. The defendant is in rehab in Colorado. Personal bond is \$5,000. A final pre-trial was set for Jan. 13 and the defendant and the complaining victim must appear.

On Jan. 13, a final pre-trial was set for Feb. 17. The complaining victim said she

was not "fully interested" in pursuing the prosecution unless the defendant follows through with treatment.

Chad Michael Jones

Chad Michael Jones of Sumpter Township was charged by Western Wayne Narcotics with being in possession of controlled substances (narcotic or cocaine less than 25 grams) on July 31, 2024. That charge was reduced in a plea deal to use of controlled substances and sentencing was set for Jan. 15. The defendant was in custody, so Judge Martin adjourned sentencing until March 2.

Jason William Beesley

Jason William Beesley, 45, of Belleville

was charged with operating while reading, typing or sending a text message on Dec. 17, 2025 in Van Buren Township. At an informal hearing before Judge Teresa Patton on Jan. 21, the charge was reduced to double parking. He was fined \$300.

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Obituaries



Sharon Tontalo

SHARON TONTALO

October 24, 1954 – December 29, 2025

Sharon "Sherry" Tontalo, age 71, of Belleville, MI, passed away on December 29, 2025, with her two sisters and brother-in-law, Patti (Dennis) Graham and twin sister, Sandy Tontalo Vye, by her side. She was born on October 24, 1954, to Robert and Betty (Cawthon) Tontalo in Ypsilanti, MI. Sherry graduated from Belleville High School in 1972 and then went on to become an airline flight attendant for many years. She loved reminiscing about her travels to Europe, Mexico, and throughout the United States. She was proud to achieve her life-long desire to work in the airline industry and travel the world.

Sherry was a true Belleville Booster and was actively involved in many of the city's events and veteran's organizations, selling poppies and assisting at VFW bingo games and outings. She supported local community events with her father Robert, who served as a councilman, fire commissioner, and mayor-pro-tem. As members of St. Anthony's church, Sherry and her family participated in many activities over the years. Sherry also worked with her mother Betty, who became known as Belleville's Easter Bunny in Victory Park, where she passed out

baskets to the children of the city. Sherry loved music, collected antiques, and was a talented home decorator.

Sherry lived in her home in Belleville until 2017 when she suffered a stroke which resulted in speech aphasia. Following that, Sherry resided at Westlake Health Campus in Commerce, MI. She became a part of that supportive community and continued to perform many service activities; she loved helping the staff decorate for holidays and events. Sherry passed away from consequences of recently discovered cancer and a stroke during Christmas week. The hospice team lovingly cared for her during the last month.

Sherry is survived by her siblings, Patti (Dennis) Graham of Commerce, MI, Sandy Tontalo Vye of Belleville, MI, and Rebecca Tontalo of Sherman Oaks, CA; her nephew Trevor (Ruba) Vye of Belleville, MI; and her four great nieces and nephews. The Cawthon and Tontalo cousins, friends, neighbors, and Westlake's caregivers will miss Sherry's beautiful heart and bright spirit. Sherry was preceded in death by her parents.

According to her wishes, dignified cremation rites have been accorded with the David C. Brown Funeral Home of Belleville. A memorial celebration of life will take place in the summer with her burial at Hillside Cemetery in Belleville, MI.

www.davidcbrownfh.com

BHS at-home games

- **Thursday, Jan. 29** – Girls Basketball vs. Franklin JV at 5:30 p.m. and Varsity at 7 p.m.
- **Friday, Jan. 30** – Co-Ed Bowling vs. Churchill, 3 p.m. at Lodge Lanes
- **Tuesday, Feb. 3** – Boys Basketball vs. Fordson Freshman at 4 p.m., JV at 5:30 p.m., Varsity at 7 p.m.
- **Wednesday, Feb. 4** – Wrestling (KLAAC Crossover) 5 p.m.

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Pursuit of Excellence

Belleville council holds workshop on what to do about city manager post

By Rosemary K. Oztman

Independent Editor

Belleville mayor Ken Voigt said the 90-minute city council workshop on Jan. 22 was just to discuss how to fill the vacant city manager post and not to make any decisions.

But, after much discussion on the lofty goals for a city manager, at the end of the meeting the council informally approved having the mayor propose some recruitment firms to help it find the right candidate.

At the beginning of the workshop, retired city police officer Bart DeVos said the Belleville position is a stepping stone for someone who wants a bigger position and the city should hire someone local.

Huron Clinton Metropark Police Lt. Jim Cayce, who lives in Belleville, said he agrees with DeVos that the city manager should be a local person.

Takisha Henry, who works at city hall in accounts payable and taxes, said when a DPW employee quit, the interim city manager worked on the water main being repaired. "What else does he need to do?" she asked.

They all were referring to interim city manager Steve Jones, who lives in the city. Jones was not present at the meeting.

But, Voigt said this discussion was not about individuals, but about what qualities the council wanted in a city manager. Once that is decided, they could look at who they want, he said.

He said the city charter is the city's guiding document and he read the training required as "He shall be selected solely on the basis of his executive and administrative qualifications with special reference to his training and actual experience in municipal administration."

Voigt apologized for the "he" used in the wording, saying that it hasn't been updated.

He said since state law changed, the city manager no longer has to live in the city, as the charter requires.

Mayor Voigt said he invited Belleville

property owner Phil Miller to come to the workshop since he has the training and experience for a city manager, but is not interested in this Belleville post.

Miller said he has an undergraduate degree in public administration and political science, with classes in economics, human resources, and history. He holds a master's degree in administration.

Miller said they could look at someone with an IO (industrial and organizational) psychology degree, which would have skills on how to squeeze a lot of work out of few people, like the person would have to do in Belleville.

He said councils often allow departments to make their own policies. He said the council should make the policies and the department heads put them into practice.

Miller said the candidates should be informed of the demographics and challenges of the position and have blunt discussions. Candidates don't have insight in the local issues.

Lt. Cayce said perhaps they should have two interviews with candidates, with one being with department heads.

City clerk/treasurer Briana Papin said she has been employed by Belleville for nine years in August and over that time there has been six city managers. She said employees want to have input on the questions the candidates will be asked.

Voigt had been writing what council members called out as what they wanted in a city manager on big post-it notes stuck on the wall. Councilwoman Julie Kissel wrote "Staff Ideas List" on a big post-it and carried it back into the city offices to post.

Miller said at one interview process he went through there were two sessions, with different staff members. Then he had to attend a city party to see if he fit in. He suggested Belleville could have a meet and greet session to get to know members of the community.

Mayor Voigt said there are a number of different recruitment firms and costs range from \$7,000 to \$14,000 for communities the size of Belleville, "If that is the route we want to go and I firmly believe it is."

Voigt continued, "This is not a process I want to rush, but I don't want to drag it, either." He said a firm would help with the details of a search.

He suggested they interview firms during the second meeting in February. Voigt said he would vet the firms before inviting them to apply and they could give the city guidance on salary.

Miller said, "Belleville is notoriously low in city manager pay. It's a donut hole in a larger community" and it has the schools, library, museum, and other things inside it for the greater whole. "You're punching way above your weight. I would never apply here

-- not enough money."

He suggested they put together a special contract concerning time "to stop the revolving door."

He said the council wants someone with the skills of a mid-career candidate, but those candidates are looking for larger towns.

Mayor Voigt said maybe they could get a city manager in four to five months. He said they hurried last time and were "trying to do it on the cheap."

DPW director Nathan Johnson said, "You need to tell the person all the plates they need to handle. So it's not a jack in the box job." He referred to the surprises he found in his new job.

A man in the audience pointed out that if the expenditure is more than \$10,000, they have to go out for bids.

Clerk Papin said they also need to do better background checks.

"This has to be better than anything done in the past," councilwoman Kissel said of what they were doing.

"Any group is a work in progress," added mayor pro-tem Kelly Bates.

Miller said they might want to look into job sharing, where they take a successful city manager in another community and use that person with an appointed deputy to make it work.

Bates said the city wants its own city manager.

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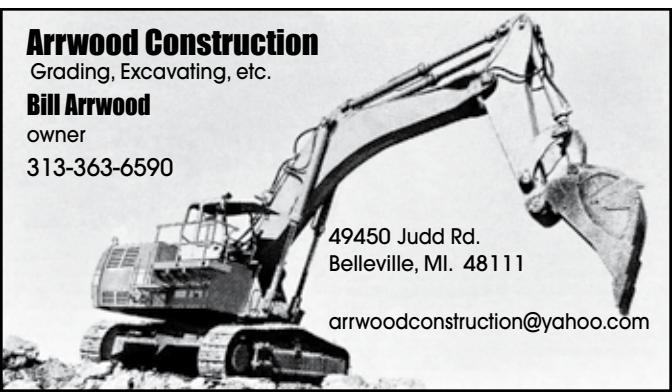
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Searching for Rosie the Riveter stories to help shape Rosie Day 2026

Michigan's manufacturing leaders and community partners have united to plan the annual Michigan Rosie the Riveter Day, to be held on Friday, March 13, at the Capital Region International Airport in Lansing.

The event will spotlight Michigan's legacy in manufacturing, aerospace, and farming -- industries sustained during World War II by women who built planes, tanks, engines, and tools while keeping agriculture strong at home. Their work reshaped the American workforce.

"Michigan Rosie Day honors the women whose skill and resolve kept Michigan moving during wartime," said Cindy Kangas, executive director of the Capital Area Manufacturing Council. "We hope their example inspires today's women in STEM and the skilled trades to pursue bold careers, and that these stories continue to shape how we teach, recruit, and remember."

Event organizers are seeking descendants, relatives, and community members with connections to WWII-era manufacturing, aerospace, military service, or farming. Families are invited to share photographs, letters, uniforms, factory stories, farm records, and memories for inclusion in a scrolling historical slideshow and curated displays at the event.

"We encourage Michiganders to open old boxes, and make a few meaningful phone calls," said Tanya Blehm, event coordinator. "Ask your parents, grandparents, and aunts what your family was doing during the war. Those conversations keep our country's history, our local businesses, and our family legacies alive."

"We are deeply committed to accessibility," said Jeannette Gutierrez, Rosie the Riveter Association of Michigan.

"If a WWII-era Rosie or veteran relative is homebound or unable to attend, our team will work with families to ensure their story and likeness are represented. Children and grandchildren of Rosies are invited and encouraged to speak on behalf of their loved ones during the program so every legacy can be honored and shared," she said.

"When grandchildren share their Rosie's story, they carry forward not just family pride, but the values of hard work and courage that define Michigan," said Wanda Norman, Automation Alley. "Every Rosie's story matters -- whether told in person, through a photograph, or by a loved one. Michigan Rosie Day is committed to ensuring no voice is left behind."

Families with WWII-era stories, photos, or artifacts -- or those wishing to represent a homebound relative -- are encouraged to contact Cindy at cindy@camconline.org. Individuals interested in sharing their family's Rosie the Riveter story or representing a loved one may register as a speaker at <https://mirosieday.org/>. For ongoing announcements, program highlights, and event updates, follow Michigan Rosie Day on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/share/1UHavGPDuz/>.

Upcoming Meetings

- Thursday, Jan. 29 – Planning commissions from the city of Belleville, Van Buren Township, and Sumpter Township will meet together at 5 p.m. at Belleville High School. Open to the public.
- Monday, Feb. 2 – Belleville City Council, 6:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, Feb. 3 – Van Buren Township Board of Trustees, 6 p.m., with 5 p.m. work/study as needed.
- Monday, Feb. 9 – Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education, 7 p.m., BHS Commons
- Wednesday, Feb. 11 – Van Buren Township Planning Commission, 5:30 p.m.
- Thursday, Feb. 12 – Keystone Academy School Board, 5 p.m. Also, Belleville Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, Feb. 17 – Van Buren Public Schools Board of Education workshop, 6 p.m., administration building. Also, Belleville City Council, 6:30 p.m. Also, Van Buren Township Board of Trustees, 6:30 p.m., with 5 p.m. work/study as needed.

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Belleville DDA hires Goose Control for Horizon, Village parks

By Rosemary K. Oztman

Independent Editor

Although the Belleville Downtown Development Authority's plan had been to rehire the Goose Control business to keep Canada geese out of Horizon Park, at its meeting on Jan. 21, the DDA decided to add Village Park as well.

That was in response to a request by mayor pro-tem Kelly Bates, who had talked about the geese at the city council meeting the night before.

Steve Jones, who is DDA coordinator and interim city manager, said the Goose Control information he gave DDA concerning Horizon Park is exactly the same as the last year. It is \$870 a month, which is \$5,220 for six months.

He said their efforts were successful, when there wasn't outside influence.

When Bates, who lives in Victoria Commons, requested that Village Park be added for Goose Control, Jones said he went back to the business and it put together a proposal for Village Park, too.

He said it is the same as Horizon Park, at \$870 a month and \$5,220 for six months.

DDA chairman John Winter said there have been a lot of complaints on droppings at Victoria Commons.

Treasurer Sabrina Richardson-Williams asked if the DDA has the \$10,440 it would take to do both parks and she was told they did.

Jones said the DDA has had a company to chase geese for three years at Horizon Park, although the first company closed and the present company took over.

Mayor Ken Voigt said the program has definitely been beneficial at Horizon Park, but he doesn't know about conditions at Village Park.

Richardson-Williams, who also lives at Victoria Commons, said there are droppings on the walkways. She said this is her backyard, but she doesn't know if it's worth \$5,220.

She said the city agreed to cover half of the cost for Horizon Park last year.

Whitney Beaubien made the motion to approve both parks for Goose Control at a cost of \$10,440 and to ask the city council to kick in a portion, but not necessarily half. The motion was seconded by Voigt and passed unanimously.

In other business at the one-hour-and-17-minute meeting, the DDA:

- Deferred action on a new DDA website until more information could be presented. Jones presented just one proposal, from KSpringer Media Management. But then Beaubien presented a proposal from Leon Goldfish, who services a number of municipalities throughout this and adjoining states, and they are looking for a third proposal. Members didn't have time to read the Goldfish proposal, but it was less in cost. They decided to schedule presentations, possibly in March, by all wishing to apply;

- Went through the follow-up list, line by line, to determine which items could

be pulled, since some had been on the list since 2022. Some items were pulled and some added, including research into having lights at the pickleball court in Village Park since it had been vandalized;

- Discussed the vacant, DDA-owned property at Third and Main streets to determine if the property is buildable. Jones said they still have to get final determination from EGLE (Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy) on whether the former gas station site is clean enough for building.

Secretary Denise Baker said in the worst case scenario it can be a parking lot;

- Heard Valerie Kelley-Bonner propose the DDA set up a Civic Duty Education Night to encourage civic education and voting. She said a group, Survivors Speak, will handle it for the DDA at a cost of \$2,500. The DDA had allocated \$5,000 for a Belleville High School event that didn't work out and this is just half in cost, she said. This program has been put on in a lot of places where voter turnout was low, she said. With the proposed BHS event the goal

was to have youth involved and this is for young people. They could invite the mayor, police chief, judges, League of Women Voters, and others to participate, she said. Kelley-Bonner said she and Richardson-Williams will put together a proposal and bring it to next month's meeting; and

- Heard Beaubien say there will be another committee meeting on Jan. 29 about the "Wharehouse" (vacant hardware store owned by the DDA) to discuss how to make it work or sell it. The meeting is

(continued on page 11)

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Bailey is very food-motivated and a great listener, which makes her easy to work with and eager to please. While she isn't particularly interested in toys, she more than makes up for it with her affectionate nature. She's a bit of a velcro dog who loves being near her people—and yes, she's also a proud bed hog! Bailey prefers not to be petted on the top of her head, but once you respect her boundaries, she happily shows her sweet, loving personality.

She does well on leash but would benefit from continued practice to further build her confidence. Bailey is also a great car rider, making her an excellent companion for outings and adventures.

Bailey is fully vetted - she is spayed, up to date on all vaccinations, heartworm negative, and microchipped. If you're looking for a sweet, loyal, well-mannered companion who enjoys human connection, does well with other dogs, and would thrive in an adult or older-children home, Bailey may be your perfect match.

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Belleville DDA

(continued from page 10)

open to the public. Richardson-Williams said Jones gave them a price of painting the building and repairs have been almost \$80,000;

- Learned the property on the other side of Third Street on Main, owned by Scott Jones, is still for sale and the former proposed project is on hold;

- Heard Phil Miller say there were some good ideas at the last committee meeting and they should put out a call for proposals and see what comes back;

- Heard mayor Voigt thank the audience

for coming to the meeting and said the next meeting could be in the new city hall; and

- Heard Kelley-Bonner say there are porch boxes containing Narcan available and those who want them should let her know.

Belleville City Council approves ten special events for 2026

At its regular meeting on Jan. 20, the Belleville City Council approved ten special events in the city for 2026. They are:

- Tootsie Roll Drive by the Knights of

Columbus, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday and Saturday, March 27 and 28, at the Five Points intersection. This is the annual drive to raise funds through donations for intellectually disabled persons in Michigan and Special Olympics;

- Flop E Bunny Candy Hunt Easter Event for Area Children by the Belleville Central Business Community (CBC) and Belleville Downtown Development Authority (DDA), from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., on Saturday, April 4;

- Third Thursday in the Ville, sponsored by the CBC, where they organize the extended day of shopping in downtown Belleville and provide popup crafters where needed on the third Thursday in April through December, 5 to 8 p.m.;

- Memorial Day Parade to honor veterans who died in the line of duty, Monday, May 25, 10-11 a.m., sponsored by CBC and DDA;

- Belleville Farmers Market, 4-7:30 p.m., Mondays, June 1 through Oct. 19, Fourth Street Place and Square, sponsored by vendor fees, CBC, DDA;

- Taste of Belleville, Thursday, Aug. 20, 6-8 p.m. (rain date Aug. 21), end-of-summer get-together with food by local restaurants, caterers and local non-profits, sponsor is CBC;

- Harvest Fest on Saturday, Oct. 10, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tractor parade at 11 a.m. Old-time games, practices, and harvest events. Sponsored by library, museum, CBC;

- Costumed Monster Mutt Walk, a Booville event, Saturday, Oct. 17 from noon to 2 p.m. On Fourth Street Place. Costumed dogs compete for metals and then take a brief walk on the sidewalks. Sponsor, CBC;

- Halloween, Friday, Oct. 30, 5-7 p.m. Treats for the children downtown with costume contest at 6 p.m. at Fourth Street Square. Sponsor, CBC; and

- Photos with Santa, Saturdays Dec. 12 and 19 from 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., museum, sponsored by CBC and DDA.

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Conference of Western Wayne elects officers for 2026 sessions

Canton Township supervisor Anne Marie Graham-Hudak was elected chairperson for 2026 of the Conference of Western Wayne at its Jan. 9 meeting in Westland.

Circuit Court Judge Sean Cox swore in the newly elected executive team.

Vice-chairperson is Pat McRae, who is supervisor of the Charter Township of Redford.

Secretary is Robert McCraight, mayor of the City of Romulus.

Treasurer is Ken Voigt, mayor of the city of Belleville.

Chair emeritus is Maureen Brosnan, mayor of Livonia.

The Conference of Western Wayne is an organization of 18 Western Wayne County communities that coordinate 911 services for its 730,000 residents and a 340-square-mile region. CWW also represents its residents by meeting monthly to discuss issues such as legislation, transportation, public safety, substance abuse prevention, community and economic development, employment and the environmental health of the region.

CWW communities are the cities of Belleville, Dearborn, Dearborn Heights, Garden City, Inkster, Livonia, Northville, Plymouth, Romulus, Wayne, and Westland, and the townships of Canton, Huron, Northville, Plymouth, Redford, Sumpter, and Van Buren.

The 9:30 a.m. Feb. 13 meeting is the annual CWW/DCC mixer, and will be at the Romulus Athletic Club.

Future meetings are: March 13, Canton Township; April 10, Livonia; May 8, Sumpter Township; June 5, Belleville; Sept. 11, Plymouth Township; Nov. 13, city of Northville/Northville Township; and Dec. 11, Garden City.

There are no July, August, or October meetings. All board meetings begin at 9:30 a.m.

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City Council approves permanent risers in new city hall on 3-2 vote

By Rosemary K. Oztman
Independent Editor

The council meeting room in the new city hall building at 330 Charles St. was intended to be a flex space like the library's Cozadd Room, with the city council table on the same level as the audience.

But, at a recent city council meeting, councilman Randy Priest told fellow councilmembers that he has looked at other communities and studies and found that a raised council table allows residents to better see those they have elected and the council members could see the residents better.

At the regular city council meeting on Jan. 20, interim city manager Steve Jones gave a report on progress at 330 Charles St. and councilman Priest said he was concerned about where the risers would go.

He said the small closet by the door of that room should be knocked out of the way. He said the risers should be there 100% of the time and not be moved back and forth as suggested. It would be cheaper and more solid, he said.

Mayor Ken Voigt said at first he thought the council table should be on the same level as the audience for the "community room" to have a flexible space, but after Priest's comments, he looked into it and now agrees with Priest.

He said he goes to meetings at various municipalities for the Council of Western Wayne and they all have raised council tables.

"I firmly believe having risers is the way to go to have an orderly meeting," mayor Voigt said, adding the risers could be used as a stage, a version of Van Buren

Township's Black Box.

Councilwoman Julie Kissel opposed changing the architect's idea of a flexible room with portable risers, if desired, and a small storage room next to the door for storage.

Councilman Jeremiah Beebe said he opposed the extra cost to permanently install the risers and the removal of the closet.

Mayor Voigt said Davenport Construction said it would remove the 21" closet without cost. When councilwoman Kissel protested about losing the storage space, Voigt pointed out they had "tons of storage" space in the new city hall.

Councilwoman Kissel said it was for storing the electronic gear from the council table because they couldn't watch it when other groups were using the room.

Mayor Pro-Tem Kelly Bates asked who would be using the flexible space and mayor Voigt said, "Many times the Cozadd Room [at the library] is not available and groups could come here."

Mayor Pro-Tem Bates said it wouldn't be for baby showers and Voigt said, no, that they already had problems with scheduling such events at Victory Station.

Voigt noted he got prices for installation of a permanent riser for \$4,100, with two options for portable risers at \$5,500 and \$7,500.

Bates said they should put the permanent risers in to start to save money.

"I'm glad Randy brought it up," Voigt said.

Bates made the motion to install permanent risers at a cost of \$4,100 and eliminate the closet. This was seconded by Priest.

Voting yes were Bates, Priest, and Voigt. Voting no were Beebe and Kissel, with Kissel's vote being a strong "No." The motion passed.

Interim city manager Jones also reported activity at 330 Charles St. that included carpet laid in the main office on the city side, painting in that area, toilets in the women's restroom upgraded to be ADA at a cost from \$1,300 to \$1,400, hanging of doors, bullet-proof window installed in police department, front doors still in Texas and a week and a half out, and other work.

Bates asked Jones, "How much total have we spent on the new city hall?" and he replied that he would send the information to her.

Things to do in the Belleville area...

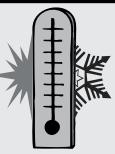
• **Friday, Jan. 30 through Sunday, Feb. 1** – Downtown Plymouth hosts the 2026 Plymouth Ice Festival. More than 150 professionally carved sculptures by world-class sculptors will be on display in downtown Kellogg Park and on sidewalks throughout the downtown area. Demonstrations, warming stations, movies, entertainment, Bingo, family petting farm.

• **Saturday, Jan. 31** – Support the work of the Friends of the Belleville Area District Library by attending their annual meeting at 11 a.m. at the library. They will be honoring many volunteers, hearing annual reports, and electing officers for the year. Members of the public are invited to attend.

• **Wednesday, Feb. 4** – Chief meteorologist Joel Fritsma will tell all about the Michigan Storm Chasers at the Michigan Flight Museum, 47884 D Street, Willow Run Airport. The talk begins at 7:30 p.m., doors open at 6:30. (734) 483-4030. \$10 per person for non-members; museum members free with registration.

• **Friday, Feb. 20** – Van Buren Public Schools Education Foundation is holding a Disney Trivia Night at the Belleville High School Commons (cafeteria). Doors open at 6 p.m., trivia starts at 7:15 p.m. Tickets at \$10 per person for those ages five and up include four rounds of play. This fundraiser will include a raffle for a Disney Trip, prize for trivia winner, mini games, raffle baskets, and a special prize for best-dressed Disney Group. Pizza, drinks and snacks available for purchase.

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Ypsilanti man arraigned on 11 bench warrants for missing court dates

By Rosemary K. Oztman

Independent Editor

Jarell Deonte-Irell-Fitzjeri Seuell, 31, of Ypsilanti and formerly of Sumpter Township, was arraigned by 34th District Court Judge Teresa Patton in custody on Jan. 21 on 11 bench warrants.

Five charges were out of Van Buren Township in 2023 and 2025, five out of Belleville from 2023, and one out of Sumpter Township in 2025. The bench warrants were for contempt of court for failures to appear for court dates on those charges.

Charges are:

- Driving while license suspended, Jan. 9, 2025. Bond set at \$1,000/10%. Remote pretrial Feb. 12;
- Improper use of a handicap permit, Nov. 23, 2023, Van Buren Township. Personal bond is \$500. Remote pretrial Feb. 26;
- Driving while license suspended, Nov. 23, 2023, Van Buren Township. Personal bond of \$500. Remote pretrial Feb. 26;
- Driving while license suspended, July 17, 2025, Van Buren Township. Bond \$1,000/10%. Remote pretrial Feb. 26;
- Driving while license suspended, Sept. 18, 2025, Van Buren Township. Bond \$1,000/10%. Remote pretrial Feb. 26;
- Registration or plate violation, Sept. 18, 2025, Van Buren Township. Personal bond \$500. Remote pretrial Feb. 26;
- Driving while license suspended, March 26, 2023, Belleville. Bond is \$1,000/10%. Pretrial conference in person before Chief Judge Brian Oakley on Feb. 3;
- Two counts of registration or plate violation on March 26, 2023, Belleville. Personal bond \$500 each. Pretrial conference in person before Judge Oakley on Feb. 3;
- No insurance under the insurance code, March 26, 2023, Belleville. Personal bond \$500. Pretrial conference in person before Judge Oakley on Feb. 3; and
- Disobeyed police officer directing traffic flow, March 26, 2023, Belleville. Bond \$1,000/10%. Pretrial conference in person before Judge Oakley on Feb. 3.

He was in custody with Van Buren Township and the court told police to keep Seuell in custody until all his bonds were satisfied.

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It is the responsibility of both the classified seller and buyer to ensure they understand all laws applicable to private gun sales in Michigan. The Belleville-Area Independent is not responsible for the legal compliance of classified buyers and sellers.

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All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Fair Housing Act which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin, or an intention, to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination." Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18.

This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination call HUD toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. The toll-free telephone number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.



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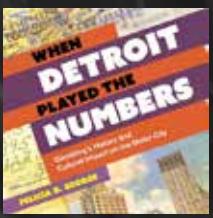
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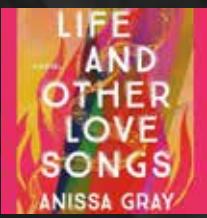
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Michael Dotson re-elected chairperson of VBT LDFA for 2026

Michael Dotson was re-elected chairman of the Van Buren Township Local Development Financial Authority for 2026 at its regular meeting on Jan. 13.

Re-elected as vice chairman was Pete Kudlak, superintendent of the Van Buren Public Schools, and re-elected as second vice-chairman was Alex Dine.

Also on the agenda was the LDFA's review of the 2025 Draft Synopsis of Activities as submitted by Van Buren Township deputy supervisor Dan Selman.

The synopsis explained the original purpose of the LDFA was to finance and construct eligible public improvements for the Visteon Village project which was completed in 2004. In order to complete the public improvements, the LDFA established a development plan and tax increment financing plan which identified the improvements, estimated the costs of the improvements and estimated the amount of tax revenue the authority would capture based on the proposed improvements.

In order to finance the construction of the public improvements, the LDFA issued bonds to cover the costs of the improvements and those bonds were guaranteed by the township's ability to tax. Those public improvements have been completed.

Due to economic conditions, the LDFA was unable to capture sufficient tax revenue to cover scheduled debt service due to the shortfall, which occurred on Oct. 1, 2019. This triggered a continuation of litigation over a longstanding legal dispute with the LDFA and township against the original developer Visteon, over the obligation relating to the Series 2003 Tax Increment Bond, the Series 2006 Tax Increment Revenue Refunding Bonds, and the Series 2015 Tax Increment Revenue Refunding Bonds issued by the township for improvement on certain real property for the development of Visteon Village, now known as Grace Lake Corporate Center.

In 2019, the LDFA and the township

structured a loan agreement with "advances" from the township to the LDFA to cover the shortfall amount of the debt service. As detailed in the loan agreement, the LDFA agreed to pay interest on the township's shortfall payments until they are reimbursed at an annual interest rate equal to the average interest rate that the township is earning on the investment of its General Fund monies.

These "advances" were necessary to meet the bond obligations due on April 1 and Oct. 1 each year until the bond obligation is fulfilled.

In 2023, the township and LDFA reached a settlement agreement with Visteon. The terms of the settlement were that Visteon agreed to pay the sum of \$12 million to Van Buren Township in two installments of \$6 million. In return, the township and LDFA agreed to release Visteon of any future obligations related to assisting in the repayment of the bonds.

On July 1, 2023, the township received the first installment of \$6 million. On July 3, 2024, the township received the second installment of \$6 million.

Per legal counsel, the settlement funds went toward repayment of the "advances" for the debt service. The principal and interest among paid off was \$8,216,264.35. The LDFA is currently paying semi-annual debt payment with the remaining Visteon settlement money supplemented by semi-annual tax capture revenues.

With the terms of the settlement agreement satisfied, the Visteon matter is now closed.

As of Dec. 31, 2025, the LDFA's cash balance was \$1,044,611.40 which will continue to be directed toward future debt obligations.

As specified in the most recent annual audit in 2024, the primary focus of the LDFA is payment of debt obligations from tax captures. Due to this, there were no other capital or promotional projects by the LDFA in 2025.



Court Watching

Rebecca Martell

Rebecca Martell of Westland was charged with two counts of possession of controlled substances on April 24, 2025 in Van Buren Township. She was video-arraigned in custody at 34th district court on Jan. 2, 2026 and a Jan. 13 probable cause conference and a Jan. 27 preliminary exam set. Personal bond was set at \$5,000. On Jan. 13, she pled guilty to reduced counts of use of controlled substances. Her file was sent to probation for an interview and a recommendation on sentencing.

Lamar Allen Respress

Lamar Allen Respress of Detroit was video-arraigned in custody on Oct. 29 on a charge of larceny by conversion, \$1,000 to \$20,000, in Sumpter Township on June 6, 2023. Bond was set at \$20,000/10%. A probable cause conference was scheduled for Nov. 12 and a preliminary exam for Nov. 19. The exam was removed from the calendar and reset for Dec. 3. On Dec. 2, he called the court to say he had a family emergency in Georgia and had to go be with his ill grandmother. He asked for his

exam by zoom and was told the court doesn't do it that way. The exam was reset for Dec. 22 and he failed to appear. A bench warrant order was issued.

Raven Symone Walker

Raven Symone Walker of Detroit, and previously of Sumpter Township, was video-arraigned in custody on Dec. 11 on a charge of domestic violence – second offense notice on Dec. 9 in Sumpter Township. Personal bond is \$1,000.

A remote pretrial was held Dec. 22 and a final pretrial set for Jan. 6, 2026. The

complaining witness must appear. On Jan. 6, the complaining victim failed to appear and the charge was dismissed.

Benjamin David Mee

Benjamin David Mee, previously of Van Buren Township and now of Riverview, was video-arraigned in custody on Nov. 3 on a charge of domestic violence in Van Buren Township on Oct. 31. Bond was set at \$5,000/10% and a remote pretrial on Nov. 19. He then had a final pretrial set for Dec. 17, when it was dismissed on a motion of the defendant. Case closed.

Public Notice

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Charter Township of Van Buren, Michigan
STS Hydropower, LLC

Project No. 9951-058

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR NON-PROJECT USE ACCEPTED FOR FILING, SOLICITING COMMENTS, MOTIONS TO INTERVENE, AND PROTESTS

(January 20, 2026)

Take notice that the following hydroelectric application has been filed with the Commission and is available for public inspection:

- a. Application Type: Non-project use of project lands and waters – construction of two docks
- b. Project No: 9951-058
- c. Date Filed: April 22, 2025, and supplemented November 24, 2025
- d. Applicant: Charter Township of Van Buren, Michigan, and STS Hydropower, LLC
- e. Name of Project: French Landing Hydroelectric Project
- f. Location: The project is located on the Huron River in Wayne County, Michigan. The project does not occupy federal lands. The Bellville Yacht Club is located on the north side of Huron River Drive, between Martinsville Road and Edgemont Road, Belleville, Michigan 48111.
- g. Filed Pursuant to: Federal Power Act, 16 USC 791a - 825r
- h. Applicant Contact: Melissa Rondou, STS Hydropower, LLC, P.O. Box 167, Neshkoro, WI 54960, Melissa.Rondou@eaglecreek.com, (920) 293-4628 ext. 347
- i. FERC Contact: Mary Karwoski, (678) 245-3027, mary.karwoski@ferc.gov
- j. Cooperating agencies: With this notice, the Commission is inviting federal, state, local, and Tribal agencies with jurisdiction and/or special expertise with respect to environmental issues affected by the proposal, that wish to cooperate in the preparation of any environmental document, if applicable, to follow the instructions for filing such requests described in item l below. Cooperating agencies should note the Commission's policy that agencies that cooperate in the preparation of any environmental document cannot also intervene. See 94 FERC ¶ 61,076 (2001).
- k. Deadline for filing comments, motions to intervene, and protests: **February 20, 2026, 5:00pm Eastern Time.**

The Commission strongly encourages electronic filing. Please file comments, motions to intervene, and protests using the Commission's eFiling system at <http://www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/efiling.asp>. Commenters can submit brief comments up to 6,000 characters, without prior registration, using the eComment system at <http://www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/ecomment.asp>. For assistance, please contact FERC Online Support at FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov, (866) 208-3676 (toll free), or (202) 502-8659 (TTY). In lieu of electronic filing, you may submit a paper copy. Submissions sent via the U.S. Postal Service must be addressed to: Debbie-Anne A. Reese, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street NE, Room 1A, Washington, DC 20426. Submissions sent via any other carrier must be addressed to: Debbie-Anne A. Reese, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 12225 Wilkins Avenue, Rockville, MD 20852. The first page of any filing should include

the docket number **P-9951-058**. Comments emailed to Commission staff are not considered part of the Commission record.

The Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure require all intervenors filing documents with the Commission to serve a copy of that document on each person whose name appears on the official service list for the project. Further, if an intervenor files comments or documents with the Commission relating to the merits of an issue that may affect the responsibilities of a particular resource agency, they must also serve a copy of the document on that resource agency.

- l. Description of Request: Charter Township of Van Buren, Michigan, and STS Hydropower, LLC are requesting Commission approval to permit Belleville Yacht Club to construct two 85-foot long by 4-foot-wide open pile docks, with each main dock consisting of three 20-foot long by 4-foot-wide finger docks, and an associated parking area. The total dock frontage would be 90.6 feet, and each dock would accommodate up to eight 28-foot-long watercraft (16 total), and the parking area would consist of six internal 90-degree parking spaces and two parallel spaces. The proposed use would be considered a marina.
- m. Locations of the Application: This filing may be viewed on the Commission's website at <http://www.ferc.gov> using the "eLibrary" link. Enter the docket number excluding the last three digits in the docket number field to access the document. You may also register online at <http://www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/esubscription.asp> to be notified via email of new filings and issuances related to this or other pending projects. For assistance, call 1-866-208-3676 or e-mail FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov, for TTY, call (202) 502-8659. Agencies may obtain copies of the application directly from the applicant.
- n. Individuals desiring to be included on the Commission's mailing list should so indicate by writing to the Secretary of the Commission.
- o. Comments, Protests, or Motions to Intervene: Anyone may submit comments, a protest, or a motion to intervene in accordance with the requirements of Rules of Practice and Procedure, 18 CFR 385.210, .211, .214, respectively. In determining the appropriate action to take, the Commission will consider all protests or other comments filed, but only those who file a motion to intervene in accordance with the Commission's Rules may become a party to the proceeding. Any comments, protests, or motions to intervene must be received on or before the specified comment date for the particular application.
- p. Filing and Service of Documents: Any filing must (1) bear in all capital letters the title "COMMENTS", "PROTEST", or "MOTION TO INTERVENE" as applicable; (2) set forth in the heading the name of the applicant and the project number of the application to which the filing responds; (3) furnish the name, address, and telephone number of the person commenting, protesting or intervening; and (4) otherwise comply with the requirements of 18 CFR 385.2001 through 385.2005. All comments, motions to intervene, or protests must set forth their evidentiary basis. Any filing made by an intervenor must be accompanied by proof of service on all persons listed in the service list prepared by the Commission in this proceeding, in accordance with 18 CFR 385.2010.
- q. For public inquiries and assistance with making filings such as interventions, comments, or requests for rehearing, contact the Office of Public Participation at (202) 502-6595 or OPP@ferc.gov.

(Authority: 18 CFR 2.1)

Debbie-Anne A. Reese,
Secretary.

Bush, Caballero, Byrnes named to dean's list at University of Olivet

Kaylee Bush and Manny Caballero,

both of Van Buren Township, and Kaylee Byrnes of Belleville have been named to the dean's list for the fall 2025 semester at the University of Olivet in Olivet, MI.

Those earning a place on the dean's list have a 3.5 grade point average or higher.

Charter Township of Van Buren Public Notice



CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN BID INSTRUCTIONS FOR FIREWORKS DISPLAY

VAN BUREN CHARTER TOWNSHIP

The Charter Township of Van Buren will receive bids for the Van Buren Township Fireworks Display at the Office of the Township Clerk, 46425 Tyler Road, Charter Township of Van Buren, MI 48111 until Thursday, February 19, 2026, at 1:00 PM local time. No bids will be received after that time.

Bid documents will be available on the Township website and at the Office of the Township Clerk. Bids will be accepted only on provided forms. Bids must be sealed in an envelope marked, **"TOWNSHIP CLERK / FIREWORKS DISPLAY BID"**, and submitted to the office of the Township Clerk. Bids will be publicly opened at 1:00 PM on Thursday, February 19, 2026.

The Charter Township of Van Buren reserved the right to waive any discrepancies or irregularities in the bid. The Township reserves the right to reject any, and all bids, and is not required to accept the low bid. Bidders should direct questions and correspondence to Jennifer Zaenglein at jzaenglein@vbtmi.gov.

Published: 1-29-26

Charter Township of Van Buren Public Notice

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

MINUTES -- January 20, 2026

Clerk Wright called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Room. Present: Treasurer Budd, Clerk Wright, Trustee Boynton, and Trustee Frazier. Others in attendance: Deputy Supervisor Selman, Recording Assistant Beaudry, Director of Community Services Renaud, Deputy Director of Community Services Dohring, IT Director Barbaza, DDA Director Coburn, HR Director Monia, Director of Municipal Services Akers, Director of Water and Sewer Lawrence, Fire Chief McInally, Deputy Fire Chief Lenaghan, and an audience of 25.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE AGENDA: Clerk Wright outlined the items appearing on the agenda.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA: Budd moved, Frazier seconded to approve the agenda. Motion Carried.

ADOPTION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA: Boynton moved, Budd seconded to approve the Consent Agenda: Board Meeting Minutes of December 16, 2025, Prepaid List of December 18, 2025, Prepaid List of January 8, 2026, Prepaid List of January 12, 2026, Prepaid List of January 15, 2026, Voucher List of December 23, 2025, Voucher List of December 30, 2025, Voucher List of January 20, 2026, Approval of the reappointments of regular members John Herman and Charles Larocque to the BZA with terms to expire December 1, 2028, Approval of the 2026 Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART) contract. Motion Carried.

PUBLIC HEARING: None

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E / ANNOUNCEMENTS/PRESENTATIONS:

Chief McInally presented a Life Saving Award to Firefighters Rachel Everett and Christopher Pierce for saving a resident's life during a house fire on December 27, 2025.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Unfinished and New Business): A resident inquired on the progress of a potential moratorium on Data Center.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Boynton moved, Frazier seconded to approve the legal services contract for Butzel Long. Motion Carried.

Boynton moved, Budd seconded to approve a budget amendment to the 2026 Fire Department Capital Outlay- FEMA Expense and Capital Outlay- FEMA Reimbursement for the purpose of administering a FEMA- Assistance to Firefighter Grant. Motion Carried.

Budd moved, Boynton seconded to approve a budget amendment to the 2026 Supervisor and Assessing Department's Capital Outlay Budgets for the purchase of a new RICOH printer. Motion Carried.

REPORTS: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS: A resident expressed opposition to data centers being built in the Township. Motion Carried.

BOARD COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS: None.

ADJOURNMENT: Boynton moved, Frazier seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:22 p.m. Motion Carried.

Leon Wright, Township Clerk

Kevin McNamara, Supervisor

Publish: January 29, 2026

Morgan Vaughn named to Ohio Wesleyan Univ. fall semester dean's list

DELAWARE, OH -- Morgan Vaughn of Belleville has been named to the 2025 fall semester Dean's List at Ohio Wesleyan University.

To earn Dean's List recognition, Ohio

Wesleyan students must achieve a grade point average of 3.5 or better on a 4.0 scale in all applicable classes.

Founded in 1842, Ohio Wesleyan University is one of the nation's premier liberal arts universities. Located in Delaware, Ohio, the private university offers more than 70 undergraduate majors and competes in 24 NCAA Division III varsity sports.

City of Belleville Public Notice

CITY OF BELLEVILLE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, January 5, 2026 - 6:30 pm

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & MOMENT OF SILENCE

2. ROLL CALL

Mayor Voigt Present

Mayor Pro-Tem Bates Absent - Excused

Council Member Kissel Present

Council Member Beebe Present

Council Member Priest Present

3. PRESENTATIONS & CITIZENS COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

• Presentations

• Citizen Comments

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Motion by Kissel, supported by Beebe to approve the agenda as presented, with the removal of items A & B under General Business, and adding item 10, Closed Session.

Motion Carried.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda groups routine meeting discussion points into a single agenda item. In so doing, the grouped items can be approved in one action, rather than through the filing of multiple motions.

• Approval of Minutes

i. December 15, 2025 – Regular Meeting Minutes

• Budget report

i. None.

• Communications

i. None.

• Council Follow-up list

i. As of January 2, 2026

• Police Stats

i. None.

• Fire Stats

i. None.

• DPW Report

i. None.

• Special Events

i. None.

MOTION: Motion by Kissel, supported by Beebe to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Motion Carried.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

a. City Master Plan

MOTION: Motion by Priest, supported by Beebe to open the Public Hearing at 6:40 p.m.

Motion Carried.

MOTION: Motion by Kissel, supported by Priest to approve **Resolution #26-001**, as presented.

Motion Carried.

MOTION: Motion by Kissel, supported by Priest to close the Public Hearing at 6:49 p.m.

Motion Carried.

b. City Parks and Recreation Plan

MOTION: Motion by Kissel, supported by Beebe to open the Public Hearing at 6:50 p.m.

Motion Carried.

MOTION: Motion by Kissel, supported by Beebe to approve to close the Public Hearing at 7:14 p.m.

Motion Carried.

7. INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

• None.

8. GENERAL BUSINESS DISCUSSION

a. Discussion/Update – 330 Charles

i. Interim City Manager Jones provided status updates on the construction at 330 Charles.

b. Discussion/Update – Liberty Water Main Project

i. Interim City Manager Jones provided status updates on the Liberty Water Main Project.

9. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND DEPARTMENTAL EXPENDITURES

Wesleyan students must achieve a grade point average of 3.5 or better on a 4.0 scale in all applicable classes.

Founded in 1842, Ohio Wesleyan University is one of the nation's premier liberal arts universities. Located in Delaware, Ohio, the private university offers more than 70 undergraduate majors and competes in 24 NCAA Division III varsity sports.



Van Buren Township Police Dispatch Log

There were 237 dispatch calls reported by Van Buren Township police this week including the following.

Sunday, Jan. 18:

0142 – motorist assist, Ecorse Rd./Hannan Rd.
0218 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Haggerty Rd.

1812 – mental subject, Martz Rd.

1851 – juvenile complaint, Sheldon Rd.

1823 – retail fraud, Belleville Rd.

2026 – vehicle lockout, Parkwood Dr.

2028 – assist other dept., W. I-94/Haggerty

2134 – larceny, E. Archwood Dr.

2156 – vehicle lockout, Locust Dr.

2303 – disorderly, E. Schooner Dr.

2316 – 911 welfare check, Morton Taylor Rd.

Monday, Jan. 19:

0217 – family trouble, S. I-94 Service Dr.
0313 – domestic, Pine Dr.

0318 – welfare check, N. I-94 Service Dr.

0408 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Maude Ct.
0434 – intrusion alarm, Belleville Rd.

0847 – leaving the scene of a property damage accident, Winding Pond Dr.

0924 – intrusion alarm, Ecorse Rd.

0943 – lost property/child, Oak Ln.

xxxx – repossession, McBride Ave.

1237 – family trouble, Martz Rd.

1415 – welfare check, Beck Rd.

1457 – civil matter, Wildrye Ct.

1459 – civil matter, Martz Rd.

1535 – civil matter, Tyler Rd.

1555 – fight, N. I-94 Service Dr.

1607 – assist fire dept., Timberland Dr.

1928 – property damage accident, Hannan Rd. / Van Born Rd.

2021 – property damage accident, Belleville Rd.

2333 – holdup alarm, Brookside Dr.

2341 – personal injury accident, W. I-94/Belleville rest area

Tuesday, Jan. 20:

0114 – intrusion alarm, Sumpter Rd.
0436 – intrusion alarm, Van Born Rd.

xxxx – unauthorized driving away of auto, Van Born Rd.
1007 – property damage accident, Denton Rd. / Michigan Ave.

1037 – intrusion alarm, Marlowe Ave.

xxxx – animal complaint, Park Estates Dr.

1101 – welfare check, Belleville Rd.

1216 – prisoner transport, S. Wayne Rd.

1208 – animal complaint, Alden Ave.

1307 – larceny, Andover Dr.

1355 – welfare check, Belleville Rd.

1429 – larceny, Parkwood Dr.

1529 – intrusion alarm, Barnwell Dr.

1840 – juvenile complaint, Rawsonville Rd.

1839 – leaving the scene of a property damage accident, Belleville Rd.

1956 – welfare check, Belleville Rd.

2025 – assist citizen, Sheldon Rd./Ecorse Rd.

2044 – assist other dept., Carmell St.

2050 – civil matter, Estate Dr.

2150 – malicious destruction of property, Westlake Cir.

2203 – domestic, Winchester St.

xxxx – repossession, Chaney Ave.

2245 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Ecorse Rd./Haggerty Rd.

xxxx – repossession, Parkwood Dr.

Wednesday, Jan. 21:

0052 – intrusion alarm, Belleville Rd.
0059 – intrusion alarm, Sumpter Rd.

0402 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Rawsonville Rd.

0609 – repossession, N. I-94 Service Dr.

xxxx – repossession, N. I-94 Service Dr.

0718 – property damage accident, Huron River Dr.

0821 – intrusion alarm, Lancaster Dr.

0925 – assist other dept., Martinsville Rd.

1003 – intrusion alarm, Haggerty Rd.

1151 – retail fraud, Belleville Rd.

1152 – retail fraud, Belleville Rd.

1158 – hospice death, S. I-94 Service Dr.

xxxx – private property impound, Ironwood Dr.

1235 – fraud, Union St.

1346 – fraud, Andover Dr.

1425 – property damage accident, Water's Edge Ln.

1436 – family trouble, Chaney Ave.
1517 – road hazard, Ecorse Rd./Denton Rd.
xxxx – intrusion alarm, Coca-Cola Dr.
1553 – harassment call, Lighthouse Dr.
1643 – parking complaint, Belleville Rd.
1651 – parking complaint, Belleville Rd.
1729 – welfare check, Van Buren St.
1812 – intrusion alarm, Burlwood Ln.
1845 – welfare check, Birch Dr.
1847 – assist fire dept., Van Buren St.
2009 – welfare check, Sheldon Rd.
2014 – retail fraud, Belleville Rd.
2124 – intrusion alarm, Harmony Ln.

Thursday, Jan. 22:

xxxx – repossession, Jeremy Rd.
0046 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, N. I-94 Service Dr.

0131 – animal complaint, Stratford Dr.

0238 – disorderly, N. I-94 Service Dr.

0436 – assist fire dept., Dewitt Rd.

0558 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Stratford Dr.

0925 – family trouble, S. Ponderosa Trl.

1011 – disorderly, Belleville Rd.

1029 – intrusion alarm, Pinewood Ln.

1046 – 911 welfare check, Village Green Ln.

1308 – hospice death, S. I-94 Service Dr.

1253 – traffic offense, Belleville Rd./N. I-94 Service Dr.

1409 – larceny, Hardwood Dr.

1417 – trespassing, Belleville Rd.

1434 – property damage accident, Belleville Rd. / Westlake Cir.

1519 – prisoner transport, 34th District Court

1553 – intrusion alarm, Morton Taylor Rd.

1519 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, McBride Ave.

1714 – juvenile complaint, Rawsonville Rd. / Capitol Dr.

2005 – animal complaint, Fret Rd.

2027 – juvenile complaint, Quirk Rd.

2157 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, rest area

2212 – intrusion alarm, Ecorse Rd.

2236 – disorderly, Belleville Rd.

Friday, Jan. 23:

0021 – road hazard, Ecorse Rd.

0144 – welfare check, N. I-94 Service Dr.

0710 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Bemis Rd./Martinsville Rd.

0926 – assist other dept., Edwards Rd.

1141 – animal complaint, Robson Rd.

1328 – property damage accident, Haggerty Rd.

1404 – motorist assist, E. I-94/Rawsonville I-94 ramp E., motorist assist

1517 – threat, Belleville Rd.

1610 – property damage accident, Haggerty/Ecorse

1818 – assist fire dept., Borgman Ave.

xxxx – misc. complaint, McBride Ave.

1820 – warrant arrest, Tyler Rd.

1835 – animal complaint, Riggs Rd.

1943 – assist fire dept., Borgman Ave.

2200 – motorist assist, N. I-94 Service Dr. / Belleville Rd.

Saturday, Jan. 24:

0011 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Briarwood Dr./Greenbriar Dr.

0050 – domestic, Maple Dr.

0225 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, N. I-94 Service Dr.

0528 – property damage accident, Quirk/McBride

xxxx – property damage accident, Chatsworth Dr.

0830 – civil matter, Quirk Rd.

xxxx – private property impound, Belleville Rd.

xxxx – repossession, Denton Rd.

1234 – harassment call, Peachtree Ln.

1246 – intrusion alarm, Ecorse Rd.

1259 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Belleville Rd.

1350 – lost property/child, S. I-94 Service Dr.

1425 – parking complaint, Belleville Rd.

1506 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Oak Ln.

1609 – motorist assist, Belleville Rd.

1723 – road hazard, W. Huron River Dr. / Rawsonville Rd.

1917 – retail fraud, Belleville Rd.

1922 – assist other dept., S. I-275 Ecorse ramp / Ecorse Rd.

2039 – domestic, Haggerty Rd.

2106 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, E. Huron River Dr. / Haggerty Rd.

2111 – domestic, Berkdale Dr.

2321 – disorderly, Belleville Rd.

2350 – assist citizen, W. I-94/Haggerty
Also, on this log are 89 traffic stops, 12 of which are on the I-94 freeway.

Belleville Police Dispatch Log

Sunday, Jan. 18:

0531 – disorderly, Carmell St.

1109 – welfare check, N. Aberdeen Ct.

1326 – assist fire dept., San Carlos St.

2017 – assist fire dept., E. Huron River Dr.

Monday, Jan. 19:

1301 – assist fire dept.

1312 – misc. complaint, Main St.

1333 – intrusion alarm, E. Waterbury Ct.

1543 – missing person, South St.

2248 – 911 welfare check, W. Columbia Ave.

Tuesday, Jan. 20:

0850 – property damage accident, Main St.

0946 – intrusion alarm, Sumpter Rd.

1436 – intrusion alarm, E. Huron River Dr.

1512 – personal injury accident, South St. / E. Davis St.

xxxx – vehicle lockout, Sumpter Rd.

1544 – sexual assault, Victorian Ln.

1650 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Carmell St.

1935 – warrant arrest, Washtenaw Co.

1950 – civil matter, Carmell St.

2043 – breaking & entering, Carmell St.

2215 – intrusion alarm, W. Columbia Ave.

2352 – intrusion alarm, W. Columbia Ave.

Wednesday, Jan. 21:

0805 – property damage accident, Main/N. Liberty

1003 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, Carmell St.

1315 – suspicious person/vehicle/circumstance, N. Liberty St.

1601 – assist fire dept., Greylock St.

2132 – noise complaint, W. Columbia Ave.

Thursday, Jan. 22:

0927 – property damage accident, Main St.

1549 – traffic offense, Edison/W. Columbia Ave.

1624 – animal complaint, E. Columbia Ave.

Friday, Jan. 23:

0848 – larceny, W. Columbia Ave.

1109 – welfare check, Harbour Pointe Dr.

1131 – motorist assist, Angola/E. Huron River Dr.

1516 – domestic, Charles Ct.

1932 – intrusion alarm, E. Huron River Dr.

Saturday, Jan. 24:

1805 – property check, Village Park

1813 – property check, Lakeview Mobile Homes Court

2154 – property damage accident, Main St.

2327 – property damage accident, Belleville Rd. / N. Liberty St.

There are 67 reports on this week's log, 30 of which are traffic stops.

Sumpter Township Police Dispatch Log

Sunday, Jan. 18:

0906 – fire dept. assist, 43000 bl. Clay Rd.

1036 – alarm, 22000 bl. Martinsville Rd.

1234 – fire dept. assist, 18000 bl. Martinsville

1754 – fire dept. assist, 13000 bl. Rawsonville

1933 – family trouble, 43000 bl. Judd Rd.

2058 – 911 hangup, 44000 bl. Wear Rd.

2136 – harassment complaint, 46000 bl. Bontekoe Ave.

2229 – fire dept. assist, 45000 bl. Willis Rd.

Monday, Jan. 19:

0855 – fire dept. assist, 8200 bl. Rawsonville

1311 – fire dept. assist, 47000 bl. Wear Rd.

1322 – 911 hangup, Wayside Dr.

1337 – traffic complaint/hazard, Sumpter Rd. / Wear Rd.

1525 – family trouble, 44000 bl. Clay Rd.

1550 – identity theft complaint, 22000 bl. Fenster Ave.

From Jan. 18, 1996 edition

12-week, police-news blackout to Independent newspaper finally ends

We are looking back at the Jan. 18, 1996 edition of the *Belleville-Area Independent* and the big, front-page headline that reads: "VBT news blackout over."

The 12-week police news blackout to the *Independent* ended on Jan. 16, 1996 after Van Buren Public Safety Director Mark Perkins read a statement indicating all news agencies will receive news in the same manner.

The statement came during the regular

board meeting of the Van Buren Township Board of Trustees, when the *Independent* spoke to the board on the issue, as promised in the open letter published on the front page of the Jan. 4 edition.

The discussion of freedom of the press, the Constitution, and the adversarial relationship of the *Independent* to the township government lengthened the meeting about an hour.

After Director Perkins read his statement,

John Lange of Westland asked for clarification. "Will Rosemary be given the same information as the other papers?"

Perkins replied, "Certainly."

Lange explained he has been considering moving to the township.

Also in that edition of the *Independent* was the copy of a letter from State Rep. Deborah Whyman in which she asks the state attorney general to offer an opinion on the news blackout.

On page two of the Jan. 18, 1996 edition, there is a police report of Van Buren Police arresting a man in the Juniper and Quirk road area who was lurking in the bushes next to the house of a family who had just left on vacation. The blue vehicle he parked in the drive turned out to be reported stolen in Dearborn, according to police.

A story about Mo Cheaid, the owner of Haggerty House, tells of him opening the business formerly known as Roxy's and before that as Rogalle's.

Also, a story on page 3 tells of Bill Wolters, who graduated from Belleville High School in 1966, and had recently moved his flourishing go-kart business from Ypsilanti into the building he knew so well, right across from BHS. He said he remembers sitting in the classrooms across the street from his new business location, never dreaming what the future would bring. His businesses there were Stoney Creek Motorsports and Birel USA.

The building formerly housed the Atchinson Ford dealership and Barber Dodge, before it was leased by Morgan's Collision.

Wolters, who said he was a cut-up in high school, went to Eastern Michigan University where he got a business education degree. He taught part time at Henry Ford Community College and became a permanent substitute at BHS.

Although the story doesn't mention it, Wolters also is a highly praised military veteran.

A long letter from Vesta Losen also was printed on the failings of the Van Buren Public Schools board of education, especially when it voted to include abortion as a method of birth control in its High School Health Class.

She said although abstention is listed, so were birth control devices, which she said was confusing for a student.

Franklin, Thomas named to Dean's List at U. of Maryland Global

ADELPHI, MD — Sherron Franklin and Lelsie Thomas, both of Van Buren Township, are among more than 18,700 University of Maryland Global Campus students named to the Dean's List for the fall 2025 term.

To be eligible for the honor, a student must complete at least six credits during the term, earned a grade point average of at least 3.5 for the term, and maintained a cumulative GPA of 3.5 at UMG.

University of Maryland Global Campus was founded more than 75 years ago specifically to serve the higher education needs of working adults and military servicemembers.



summer starts here.

Early access for residents: Jan 5
General reservations open: Mar 2

Van Buren Park, French Landing, or Riggs Park.
(Quirk Park pavilion closed for 2026 renovations.)

Reserve at: bit.ly/vbtpavilions
Or visit the Van Buren Community Center
46425 Tyler Rd., Van Buren Township, MI 48111



2026 PAVILION RENTALS

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FOR LEASE Zoned M-2 for many uses. Best location with 16,800 SqFt For Lease. 20 Foot Ceilings, Large Offices Huge Work Area. Close to I-94 & I-275. \$6,900. Mo Triple Net

28503 MARGARET LN , HURON TOWNSHIP
THIS BRICK HOME HAS IT ALL 3,828 Total Square Feet of finished living space, 4 Bedrooms, 3 Baths, Hot Tub, 14x27 Family Room, 2 + 1 Car Garages .85 Acres Short Sale \$385,000

11012 JACKSON, VAN BUREN TOWNSHIP
FOR LEASE IMMEDIATE OCCUPANCY Super Clean, freshly painted with new flooring throughout. 3 Bedrooms, 1 Bath Ranch. Two car garage. No Smoking or Pets \$1,600 mo



29515 CHARLES, ROMULUS
COMING SOON. It's Loaded with 4 Bedrooms, 2 1/2 Baths, 1,647 Square Feet, Fireplace, Deck and More. On 1/2 Acre with Huge Garage. 1996 Construction Just \$200,000

48620 WEAR, SUMPTER TOWNSHIP
BEAUTY WORTH CELEBRATING 3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths (One New) 1,690 Sq Ft on 1.3 Acres. Deck and Large Pole Barn room for a workshop and more. Extra Clean \$325,000

46083 REED, SUMPTER TOWNSHIP
Amazingly Affordable 3 Bedroom One Bath Ranch with New Carpet, Large Patio, Big Garage with New Roof, Fenced Yard, City Water and Sewer on Paved Street. A Best Buy \$234,900

209 MAIN STREET, BELLEVILLE
IT'S A POSSIBLE ANYTHING! 7,000+ Square Foot Building on High Traffic Main Street. Large Rooms Everywhere Finished Basement 6 plus Car Attached Garage. \$749,000

84ACRES OAKVILLE WALTZ ASH TOWNSHIP-MONROE COUNTY. 1268 FRONTAGE ZONED LIGHT INDUSTRIAL AND RESIDENTIAL. NEAR I-275 Great Investment \$795,000

3 PARCELS 22530 Bohn Road Sumpter Twp One is 10.7 Acres at \$120,000 and 2.37 Acres at \$45,000 and 1.87 at \$45,000 **SHERWOOD** **SOLD** Acres \$60,000

GRANT & WAHRMAN 4 ACRES LT IND BY METRO AIRPORT \$250,000
WILLIS & MARTINSVILLE 1.64AC PAVED ROAD WATER & SEWER AT STREET \$65,000

MARIO ANN COURT ROMULUS Finest Private Area in Romulus. Perfect location with City Water and Sewer at the Street. \$35,000
GRANT ROMULUS 1.8 AC LT IND \$29,500

***** BELLEVILLE LAKEFRONT *** 2405 RAWSONVILLE 99X328 .74 AC \$99,900
NORTHLINE ROMULUS 1.1 ACRES 208 FT FRONTAGE LT INDUSTRIAL ZON \$59,900**

ATCHINSON

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(734) 697-9161**

WWW.ATCHINSON.NET

**WELCOME,
JIM DAVID**
USED CAR MANAGER