



STAFF PHOTO BY EMILY GEDDE

A firefighter of the Kabetogama Fire Department is surrounded by smoke from a fire at Ash-Ka-Nam Restaurant and Bar Tuesday.

FIRE

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down,” she said, adding her brother, Cole, was a firefighter on the scene. It appears the fire started inside the unoccupied restaurant, according to a news release from the St. Louis County Sheriff’s Office. The cause of the fire is under investigation by the sheriff’s office and

the Minnesota State Fire Marshal. No other information was available as of press time. Hraban said the tragedy was especially difficult this time of year as the business heads into one of its busier seasons. “We just got snow and we were just getting started,” she said. “I’m thinking about all my customers. How do I call them?” On the same note, Hra-

ban credited friends and family members for the support they’ve already given her family. “We’re getting so many kind words,” she said. “I’ve already gotten so many calls – some from people I haven’t talked to in months telling me they’ll come help in any way they can. I’m so thankful for all the support. We’re a strong family, we will get through this.”



STAFF PHOTO BY LAUREL BEAGER

Falls Councilors Harley Droba and Cynthia Jaksa pose for a photo Monday after taking the oath of office. Each were elected to their positions in November.

COUNCIL

continued from A1

other appointments had been made with separate consideration. The two appointments were separated and Worth’s reappointment was approved unanimously with little discussion. However, the appointment of Thompson, after much discussion by the council and some audience members, failed on a 2-2 vote. Mayor Anderson said the appointment will be reconsidered at the Jan. 20 meeting.

At issue was the lack of recommendation by Anderson to reappoint Brian McBride to the district board. Past precedent in making appointments has shown reappointments to represent the city when terms expire and those serving who want to continue, Jaksa said. She said their reappointments are made because of the experience and knowledge gained while serving previously.

“Why break with tradition?” she asked Anderson. Anderson said he’s looking for a change in what’s happening in the district. He said the district has been a “high-cost item” to the city and he believed it would be helpful at this time to bring someone to the board with business acumen.

Anderson said Thompson has been in business in the community for a long time and understands the issues of interest to the community. Kalar reiterated his concern about not reappointing McBride to the district board. Changes at the district and the construction project there should be overseen by the existing board, which includes McBride, he said. “Now is not the time for change,” he said, adding McBride has done nothing wrong in the position.

Anderson agreed his recommendation is not a reflection on McBride’s service, and he’s done nothing to cause concern. From the audience, Mc-

Bride said he’s served six years on the board and has more than 27 years of wastewater experience in the local paper mill. “I am more qualified for this than 99.9 percent of the people in International Falls,” he said. McBride, who also serves as a Koochiching County commissioner, told the council he has been accused by people within the Falls Municipal Building and in letters to the editor published in The Journal of a conflict of interest on the board. McBride’s brother, Tim, serves as executive director of the district.

He said he was disappointed by the mayor who has appeared to “throw on me” the problems of the district. Anderson said he had not accused McBride of a conflict of interest and wanted to give other people in the community the opportunity to serve. David Farmer, district board member appointed last year, said a “power grab” is being made by Tim McBride and district attorney, Joe Boyle.

“It’s all political,” Farmer said. Kalar said he believed there was no conflict of interest and that’s when character and judgment of board members comes into play.

The November election was about change, Droba said. The real discussion should surround discussion of why Thompson should be appointed rather than the lack of reappointment of McBride, he said. There is no reason not to appoint Thompson, he said. Anderson also noted the timing of the appointment had been called into question in a letter from Boyle. Boyle had said the appointments to fill the expiring terms must be made prior to Jan. 1. A letter dated Dec. 31 sent by Boyle to District Judge Kurt J. Marben asked him to follow the enabling legislation that created the district and make appointments.

Anderson pointed out that appointments to the district board had been made in January in 2007, 2009, 2011, and 2012, during which Boyle served as city attorney. He said Boyle has “forgotten or turned his head, I am not sure which.” Kalar said he had no objections to the timing of the appointment, just the appointment itself.

**Airport commission** Anderson’s appointment of Paul Nevanen to the airport commission was approved on a 3-1 vote, with Jaksa voting no. Jaksa said Nevanen’s position as director of the Koochiching Economic Development Authority may pose or may be perceived to pose a conflict of interest. She stressed her concerns were not about Nevanen’s competence or integrity. She said that conflict may arise from the KEDA’s relationship with the airport in its operation of the cold box there and providing administrative assistance to the airport. Jaksa asked for an opinion from city Attorney Steve Shermoen, who said he, too, could have a conflict because he serves as the attorney for the airport commission. However, Shermoen passed out a definition of conflict of interest from Wikipedia he said should guide the council. That definition, in part, said a conflict of interest can be diffused before any corruption occurs.

Kalar said he agreed with the opinion. “I have no worries with Paul doing the right thing and staying out of conflicts,” he said. He was joined in the opinion by Anderson, who said there are plenty of checks and balances in the operations and he had no concerns about his service. Droba, too, said Nevanen has the option to abstain from discussions and voting when a conflict is perceived. “That’s where personal integrity comes from,” he said.

SNOW

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“It’s not a record by any means, but it was a significant amount of snow,” she said.

A winter storm warning was issued prior to the first flakes falling and Lovin said warnings are typically put out if more than 6 inches of snow is expected to cover the ground.

“In the case for last weekend’s storm, we knew it was going to be a solid snow storm,” the meteorologist told The Journal. She said the storm carried a lot of strength and moved slowly across the area, lingering for several hours. The combination, she said, is a perfect recipe for several inches of snow.

“On top of that,” she continued, “it needs to be cold enough for snow crystals to develop. That way when precipitation falls, it falls as snow and not freezing rain.”

And while it’s likely residents didn’t want to spend a Saturday morning plowing, blowing and shoveling snow, it was a good idea. A cold front that trailed the snow storm ushered in arctic air with temperatures and a wind-chill amounting to -47 degrees.

“Especially in January, it is typical to experience that blisteringly cold air,” Lovin said, adding the forecast shows “pretty cold” temps for the rest of the week with a warmup of 5-10 degrees as a high for early next week.

**Play safe** While outdoor winter enthusiasts may have been drooling over Saturday’s surplus of the white stuff,

More information

The National Weather Service offers the following tips to prevent and alleviate frostbite:

Until you can get indoors:

- Don’t rub or massage cold body parts.
- Put your hands in your armpits.
- Hold onto another person or animal.
- Drink warm liquids.
- Put on extra layers of clothes, blankets, etc.
- Remove rings, watches, and anything tight.

Once indoors

- Don’t walk on a frostbitten foot. You could cause more damage.
- Get in a warm, not hot, bath and wrap your face and ears in a moist, warm, not hot, towel.
- Don’t get near a hot stove or heater or use a heating pad, hot water bottle, or a hair dryer. You may burn yourself before feeling returns.
- Frostbitten skin will become red and swollen and feel like it’s on fire. You may develop blisters. Don’t break the blisters — it could cause scarring.
- If your skin turns blue or gray, is very swollen, blistered or feels hard and numb even under the surface, go to a hospital immediately.

it is important to be aware of the dangers associated with extremely cold temperatures.

Exposure to cold can cause frostbite or hypothermia and become life-threatening, according to the NWS website. Infants and elderly people are most susceptible, but anyone and everyone can be affected.

What constitutes extreme cold varies in different parts of the country, the site said. Here in the north, extreme cold means temperatures well below zero.

Wind chill is the term used to describe the rate of heat loss on the human body resulting from the combined effect of low temperature and wind. As winds increase, heat is carried away from the body at a faster rate, driving down both the skin temperature and even-

tually the internal body temperature. Animals are also affected by wind chill; however, cars, plants and other objects are not.

Frostbite is damage to body tissue caused by extreme cold. A wind chill of -20 degrees will cause frostbite in just 30 minutes, the site said. Frostbite causes a loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in extremities, such as fingers, toes, ear lobes or the tip of the nose.

Hypothermia is a condition brought on when the body temperature drops to less than 95 degrees. Warning signs include uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness and apparent exhaustion.

For more cold weather tips and a complete forecast, visit [www.crh.noaa.gov](http://www.crh.noaa.gov).

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