

BONDS

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Mattson said the concern of the market caught Northland Securities by surprise. “We had indications of interest for most of the bonds as of last week, but when the calls were made to the banks this morning they said they had little interest in the International Falls bonds,” he wrote in October.

At that time, Mattson said the delay may be a blessing. He reminded the

commission the existing bonds are not callable until October 2014. “If we refunded in early 2014, we will not spend as much on the government escrow and will save money because we have less negative arbitrage,” he wrote.

That, he said, could save the EDA another \$100,000 if interest rates do not rise over the next three months.

In May, the EDA Commission agreed to empower Mason, Mike Katrin, as chairman of the EDA Advisory Board, and two EDA

commissioners to make the decision to move forward with refinancing should an analysis and determination need to occur in between EDA Commission meetings.

The May motion was contingent upon Northland Securities and bond counsel Briggs and Morgan providing the EDA with letters stating they will share in the risk of this action and will not bill the EDA for expenses incurred if the market condition proves to be unfavorable for refinancing.

COUNCIL

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Anderson also noted as mayor, he is tasked with ensuring the provisions of the charter and the ordinances of the city are observed and enforced.

The mayor stressed the move to find members to appoint to the sewer board outside the city’s employment is no reflection on the work Mason and Meyers have done on the board. They will continue to serve on the sewer board until someone else is appointed to take their places, he said.

Mason and Meyers have been sent letters by Anderson explaining the reason for their replacement on the sewer board, which also thanks them for their service to the citizens of International Falls.

Councilor Cynthia Jaksa said she believes it’s important to have an elected city official on the sewer board and asked to be appointed.

She distributed 2013 operating results of the water and sewer funds, which she said show a cash deficit of \$178,000 at the end of 2013, a vast improvement from the 2012 year end deficit of \$354,000.

Increasing water rates by 25 percent and tripling sewer rates haven’t been enough to keep up with costs, she said.

Anderson suggested she apply as a citizen of the city, but Jaksa said she would represent the city’s financial interests as an elected official.

Jaksa withdrew a motion to appoint her to the board and seek an at-large member from city residents after asking about the make up of the sewer board. She said she believed a county commissioner, Brian McBride, is serving on the sewer board representing the county. But Anderson said he was unsure whether that was a county board appointment, or McBride was serving as a citizen representative.

Eklund suggested the council consider whether the sewer board bylaws call for members to be from the at-large community or representatives of other organizations or governments.

He added he, too, believes it would benefit the city to have a councilor appointed to the board.

Meanwhile, Anderson said he has asked Tim “Chopper” McBride, executive director of the sewer district, to attend a March council meeting to answer questions about the activities and finances of the district.

Minnesota Rep. David Dill attended Monday’s meeting. “I came to see what I could do for you,” he told the council. “It may be the last time I can be here for a while.”

The Minnesota Legislature is set to convene Feb. 25.

The council discussed bonding requests from the community and Dill reviewed other funding issues.

Lawmakers voting for gay marriage raised more cash

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — Minnesota lawmakers who took a political risk by supporting same-sex marriages have seen big increases in their campaign coffers.

The Star Tribune analyzed reports made public Saturday and found that House members whose 2013 votes went against most in their party took in as much as quadruple the cash they raised in 2011. The influx of cash could be helpful if these lawmakers face strong challengers or backlash for their votes.

Richard Carlbom, a spokesman for Minnesota United, which lobbied for same-sex marriages, said his group and its allies helped raise \$500,000 to support officials who voted for same-sex marriage. The new reports show that some lawmakers saw a clear impact.

When comparing all funds raised by House members in 2011 with those in 2013, the numbers double. But 13 lawmakers who voted for same-sex marriage in Republican districts or in districts where voters didn’t approve of legalizing gay

marriage brought in 21/2 times as much in 2013 as they did in 2011.

For example, Rep. Pat Garofalo, R-Farmington, supported same-sex marriage against the majority of his district. He took in nearly \$54,000 last year — four times what he raised in 2011. The cash could help against a potential challenger, he said, and could also help other Republicans as the GOP tries to take majority in the House this year.

Republican Rep. Dave FitzSimmons of Albertville also voted to legalize same-sex marriage. He raised \$26,000 last year — and gave almost all of it to GOP groups.

“I believe that my No. 1 job is to represent the interest of my district, and their interests would be best represented with a change in leadership in the Minnesota House,” FitzSimmons said.

DFL Rep. Joe Radinovich of Crosby started this year with about half of the \$44,000 he’d raised left in the bank. He also voted in favor of same-sex marriage, even though 62 percent of the voters in his district voted

to ban it in 2012.

Radinovich said donors appreciated his vote on same-sex marriage, and other votes that “took some courage.” But his chance of re-election don’t rest on fundraising alone.

“I don’t think that raising a lot of money is what’s going to keep me in office,” Radinovich said.

House members of both parties have well-financed caucus campaign committees heading into elections.

Reports filed last week show that the House Republican campaign committee raised \$1 million and had \$523,000 left to spend. Television and radio billionaire Stanley Hubbard donated \$75,000, while former Target CEO Robert Ulrich and Starkey Labs CEO William Austin each gave \$25,000.

The House DFL campaign committee raised \$1.2 million and had \$638,000 left. It raised \$70,000 from the Laborers District Council of MN & ND, \$30,000 from the Minnesota Association for Professional Employees union, and \$100,000 from DFL donor Alida Messinger, Gov. Mark Dayton’s ex-wife.

Credit union sues Target over data breach

PITTSBURGH (AP) — A western Pennsylvania credit union is suing Target Corp. for the cost of reissuing debit cards to about 75 customers whose account information was compromised by computer hackers who stole 40 million credit and debit card numbers from the retailer’s customers.

The federal lawsuit filed Friday by the First Choice Federal Credit Union in New Castle seeks class action status, claiming there will be far in excess of the 100 victims and \$5 million in damages needed to justify a class action under federal law once other financial institutions come forward. The Pennsylvania credit union is located about 45 miles northwest of Pittsburgh.

The lawsuit doesn’t say how much the credit union has spent to reissue its customer cards and take related precautions, and the law firms that filed the suit didn’t specify in a statement released Monday.

“The complaint alleges that Target knew or should have known that its payment processes were vulnerable to this sort of attack,

yet the company failed to take adequate measures to protect sensitive data and did not inform customers or financial institutions about the ongoing attack for several weeks after it was discovered,” according to the statement from the three firms, Carson Lynch, Del Sole Cavanaugh Stroyd, and Berger & Montague.

A Target spokeswoman repeated the Minneapolis-based chain’s assurances that customers aren’t liable for any fraudulent purchases.

“They need to continue to watch their accounts and promptly report any fraud to their issuing bank,” spokeswoman Molly Snyder said. “I can’t speak to the reimbursement process as that is between Target and the banks.”

Snyder declined to comment specifically on the lawsuit, which was filed electronically in U.S. District Court in Pittsburgh.

Target has said hackers stole about 40 million debit and credit card numbers and the personal information, including names, email addresses, phone numbers and home addresses of as many as 70 million customers.

Banks, credit unions and other entities that issued debit and credit cards have borne the expense of canceling and reissuing cards, closing transactions or accounts, refunding or crediting cardholders for unauthorized transactions, and notifying customers of the Target data breach in the first place.

But according to the lawsuit, Target should be responsible because the company allegedly stored and maintained data from the magnetic stripe on customers’ cards for longer than 48 hours before the data was stolen. The 48-hour limit is imposed by Minnesota law.

The lawsuit also contends Target failed to “adequately protects its’ customers’ data, and its misconduct regarding the confidential debit and credit cardholders’ information constitute deceptive acts and unfair trade practices.”

The lawsuit seeks unspecified monetary damages, attorney’s fees, and a finding by the court that Target violated Minnesota law by maintaining customer account information longer than 48 hours, among other damages and remedies.

STARS

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He’s not being selfish, however, and is open to letting whoever wants to look through his telescopes to stop by when they can. As it’s the only private observatory in the area, Hamly said, it’s a unique opportunity to get a look at the night sky.

His favorite thing to look at through his telescopes are globular clusters, Hamly said. A globular cluster is a collection of stars that orbits a core, and looks like a cotton ball, he said. There’s quite a few things he can observe with his telescopes in the summer, he said.

“In the summer, Mars will be here, and Saturn and Jupiter,” Hamly said. “I can see galaxies, star clusters, nebulas, and sure, if anybody wants to come by, they can.”

His life-long fascination with the stars started in elementary school, he said, when his father got him his first telescope. He

combined what he learned about the topic in general science courses in school with his own hands-on study, and has even been to a few astronomy conferences, he said.

“A lot of reading, and looking online,” he said he said of learning about his hobby. “Since I’ve never known anyone who’s been in astronomy it’s pretty much been on my own.”

Even though International Falls is far from the bright lights of the Twin Cities or Duluth, Hamly said being in town is still not ideal for star-gazing. There’s lots of light pollution, he said, and he also gets distortion from heat rising off of houses in town.

“Late at night, like at midnight or so, a lot of the city lights are turned off,” he said. “Plus I have black tarps on either side that will take out all the street light.”

There’s also not an astronomy fan community in the area, Hamly said, so most of his connections

with other astronomers comes from “Astronomy” magazine and the Internet. Rainy River Community College has a dome, he said, but he’s not sure if they’re using it.

RRCC’s observatory facility is closed and out-dated due to a lack of funding and campus interest, RRCC Student Services Director LeAnne Hardy said. There’s also not a staff member with the knowledge to operate it and get it up and running, she said. The dome and telescopes were going to be donated to Voyageurs National Park, but that fell through, so the facility remains dormant, she said.

“Two years ago they updated it, installed flooring and a new telescope because we had a student who was interested in it,” she said. “But it’s not being utilized at this point.”

For now, Borderland residents who want to take in the stars in the night sky can join Hamly in his home observatory.

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