



Watson St. house escapes damage following fire, p. 3



Officials provide winter safety driving tips, p. 4



Tigers search for chemistry to begin season, p. 15

Ripon puts dispatch decision on hold

Emotions run high as Ripon Common Council tables decision on moving dispatch center to Fond du Lac County

by Jonathan Bailey
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The Ripon Common Council put the decision of whether to transfer the city's dispatch center to Fond du Lac County on hold last week Monday night during an emotion-filled meeting.

After seven members of the Ripon Guardian Ambulance Service spoke during the public communications and comments portion about why the communication center should remain in Ripon — and why at the very least no decision should be made at the meeting — the Common Council voted to table the discussion to a later date.

The issue of whether to move the service to Fond du Lac County was brought to the council in August and was re-visited earlier this month. It was then that Police Chief Bill Wallner asked the council if it could make a decision on the matter at its next meeting so that the dispatchers

who have been in limbo that past several months could have some peace of mind and so that Fond du Lac County can know whether Ripon plans on joining.

Right now, Ripon is the only city in Fond du Lac County that has its own dispatch center. The issue of whether to move to Fond du Lac County came up as Ripon will be due for some major upgrades in its communication center and Fond du Lac County is going to be upgrading its system and it would be a natural and cost-efficient time

for Ripon to join.

NOT READY TO DECIDE

While there was some urgency presented by Wallner at the last meeting, Ald. and Council President Al Schraeder made it clear from the start Monday he was not ready to vote.

"We are dealing with people's lives and the decision that they [the EMS members who spoke during public comments] clearly pointed out that if this dispatch

center goes away, it's not coming back," Schraeder said. "So we better make dang sure we are doing it right the first time. And I understand that we need to make a decision sooner than later, but tonight is not the time. I would urge you, beg each of my colleagues, if you have questions, if you don't understand something, if you need clarification, take the time to talk with one of our chiefs, take the time to talk with one of our people. Get their perspective."

He added that "in 18 years of sitting my fat rear end in this chair, I have never been contacted more than I've been contacted on this issue, and overwhelmingly people said two things: 'Make sure you're looking at this closely and it's got to make sense for the people of Ripon, no one else.'"

Schraeder continued by saying that if the circumstances required him to get up and leave so the council would not have a quorum and couldn't vote on the issue that night, he would do so.

"I think we need to go in a very orderly fashion, understanding the nature of this discussion and this decision for the long



RIPON GUARDIAN AMBULANCE Service Assistant EMS Chief Ryan Huser speaks to the Common Council Monday about his concerns about moving Ripon's dispatch center to Fond du Lac County as fellow EMS personnel sit behind him. Seven members of the ambulance service spoke against moving the service to Fond du Lac County. *Ripon Channel screenshot*

term, when we're probably not sitting here in chairs," he said.

Alds. Benjamin Morrison and Howard Hansen agreed with Schraeder's take on the issue.

Morrison, who is a healthcare worker, noted that he agrees with what the EMS members said about how a switch to Fond du Lac County could cause the response time to be slower and that "minutes account for everything

in our service" when it comes to saving lives.

He added while he had a pre-arranged idea of what was going to happen Monday, he was thankful that the council received information that Ald. Paige Kane and Jim Werch were not going to be at the meeting and he didn't think it would be fair to vote on

See DISPATCH/ page 7

Former RHS student sentenced for leaving 'hit list'

by Joe Schulz
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A former Ripon High School student was convicted Monday for leaving a "hit list" in a school bathroom nearly a year ago.

Lillian Cavell, 19, formerly of 932 Watson St., pled no contest in Fond du Lac County Circuit Court to two charges: making terrorist threat, a class I felony, and disorderly conduct, a class B misdemeanor. This

comes after she entered a not guilty plea back in January.

Due to a deferred judgment agreement, however, her felony conviction will be erased if she doesn't commit any crimes for the next 18 months and completes



Lillian Cavell

several requirements, which include performing 30 hours of community service, apologizing to the victims and seeking mental health counseling.

Additionally, Cavell was sentenced to 40 days in the Fond du Lac County jail for the disorderly conduct charge.

The case originated Dec. 4, 2019 after a student found a note in the bathroom containing the names of 17 students and one teacher, which read: "Gonna f*****

kill them," according to the criminal complaint.

The complaint also stated that investigators ultimately matched the handwriting on the note to Cavell's old homework assignments and matched the paper the note was on to one of her notebooks.



LILLIAN CAVELL'S ATTORNEY Jeffrey Kippa, left, discusses the case with Fond du Lac County Circuit Court Judge Robert Wirtz. Cavell, a former Ripon High School student, was convicted and sentenced after a leaving a "hit list" in the school bathroom last year. *Joe Schulz photo*

Cavell, who now resides in Illinois, initially denied the accusation, allegedly telling authorities, "I didn't write [the note] and I'm

sticking to that," before entering a "not guilty" plea in January. During Monday's court proceeding, however, she admitted the

criminal complaint accurately described the events of Dec. 4, 2019.

See STUDENT/ page 6

