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Fire captain retires after nearly 36 years of service.

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CHAMPLIN:

Construction to begin in fall on new memory care facility.

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DAYTON:

Mobile Hope is helping out members of the community.

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Osseo School Board approves gender inclusion policy

By SAM JOHNSON
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Inside the Osseo Educational Service Center Board Room, an impassioned debate reverberated off the walls for almost the entirety of the July 20 Osseo School Board meeting.

Community members filled the available seats in the room to participate in a discussion surrounding a new gender inclusion policy the board was set to vote on that night. After roughly 90 minutes of public comments and board dialogue, the school board voted 4-2 in favor of the gender inclusion policy.

Nearly a dozen audience members took the podium to voice either intense support or

disapproval of the policy, and some simply spoke to calm any tension between both viewpoints.

Katie Zieba, a social studies teacher at Park Center and Osseo Senior High, spoke in favor of the proposed policy. An alumnus of the Osseo School District, Zieba credits what she learned in the district for who she has become.

"This district truly formed a lot of who I am as an educator, a deep value of diversity, inclusion, a commitment to serving all members of the community, and pride in who we are," Zieba said.

Zieba also discussed a concern from some that teachers will have a tough time remembering

children's pronouns, but for her, it will be as simple as remembering kids' nicknames, allergies, or some of their favorite things that make them who they are.

"All students deserve a structured environment where they can feel safe to ask questions, express themselves, and share aspects of their identities," she said. Zieba will be teaching an LGBTQ studies course next year at Maple Grove and Osseo senior high schools.

Another community member to speak up in support of the policy was Kaitlyn Forster. Forster, the community life pastor at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, said schools need to be a place where kids can be free to be themselves and thrive.

"Schools need to be safe places where students can learn who they are and what makes them come alive," Forster said. "I support this policy because it offers clear statements, guidelines, and support for each student regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or gender nonconformity."

For those who spoke in favor of the gender inclusion policy, many also spoke against it. Kelly Janssen took the podium and said she thinks the policy is dangerous and unsafe. For her, keeping biological boys out of girls' locker rooms was a major reason to say no to this policy.

She also claimed the public had not been properly informed of the policy discussion before

the meeting.

"I am not happy with how the school board is abusing taxpayer dollars by considering a dangerous gender inclusion policy without notifying the public properly," Janssen said.

Tanya Westphal understood both sides that had passionately spoken. A mother of four kids in the district and a nurse of 24 years, she said she thinks the policy is truly about respecting one another, but acknowledged the lack of transparency included in the language and public dialogue, noting she just heard about the policy the day prior.

BOARD... to page 5



Twin Cities Soccer Academy inaugural camp head coach Swen Anderson talks to some of the campers after a scrimmage. Anderson, a native of Germany, used four weeks of vacation time to fly over to the United States to help his sister, Diouf, and coach the academy in Maple Grove earlier this month. (Photos by Sam Johnson)

New children's soccer academy kicks off in Maple Grove

By SAM JOHNSON
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In the back of Maple Grove Middle School stood six miniature goals, with cones surrounding three small fields earlier this month. Exclamations of laughter and joy from kids ages six to nine filled the hot and muggy air as Twin Cities Soccer Academy kicked off its first-ever soccer camp.

Jennifer Diouf, founder and director of operations, initially started the camp in 2019 but was forced to cancel last season due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Diouf, who was raised in Germany before moving to the United States when she was a teenager, grew up loving soccer, or they call it over there, football. She remembers watching soccer matches with her whole family, comparing it to Americans' love of the NFL and how football unites everyone on Sundays.

"Everyone lives and breathes soccer in Germany," Diouf said. "It was a big family event all the time."

However, when she arrived in the U.S., the world's most popular sport seemed sort of like an afterthought. Two years ago, Diouf's 6-year-old son began to express an interest in playing soccer, so she began to research prospective, full-day soccer camps in the area.

To her surprise, there were no options. "To find a soccer camp that goes all day was really rare," she said.

So Diouf, a full-time executive assistant at ECOLab, took matters



Jennifer Diouf, Twin Cities Soccer Academy founder and director of operations, gives instructions to kids during the camp. Diouf founded the academy in 2019.

into her own hands. She did research about how local organizations run soccer camps, contacted the city of Maple Grove Parks and Recreation Department, and reached out to other soccer people, picking their brains about what it would take to create her own soccer camp.

By late 2019, all the big details were accounted for and she was just about ready to launch the camp, except one big hurdle stood in her way: finding a head coach.

She found it tough finding someone who met all the criteria: available four weeks of the summer, previous work with youth, and vast knowledge of the sport. As she pondered one night in November 2019 over who might fit the bill, a thought came into her mind. "Why don't I

ask my brother?"

Nine years older than Diouf, Swen Anderson fit every category she was looking for. Anderson, who currently lives in Germany, has coached youth soccer for nearly 15 years. And like Diouf, his life in the sport began with an interest from his son, Jeremy. "It's funny how it starts with your kid. You get inspired by your kid and then you just continue doing it," Diouf said.

While Anderson had the coaching and soccer love checked off, the biggest issue was the travel from Germany to the US. No problem. He would take four weeks of holiday, or vacation time, and come out to the States to coach the camp.

ACADEMY... to page 8

6 Maple Grove businesses fail alcohol compliance checks

By ALICIA MILLER
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At the July 19 Maple Grove City Council meeting, the council discussed liquor license violations from six different businesses within the city.

Alcohol compliance checks are conducted regularly for all businesses in Maple Grove that have liquor licenses.

"The Maple Grove Police Department conducted liquor compliance checks on July 14, and six license holders failed those compliance checks," City Administrator Heidi Nelson said.

The failure of a compliance check means alcohol was served to a minor undercover/decoy.

The first violation the council discussed was that from Maple Tavern. The most recent violation from Maple Tavern was approved by the City Council in March related to an incident of over-service, disorderly conduct and closing time violation in November 2020.

Brandt Erwin, an attorney representing Maple Tavern asked the council

to only impose a civil penalty of \$2,000 and not to include a proposed consecutive five-day suspension from selling alcohol. He said the business has purchased electronic ID scanners.

"We do not take the situation lightly," said Maple Tavern owner Brandon Besch. "The past year and a half has taken a toll on Maple Tavern and the hospitality industry as a whole."

Councilor Phil Leith asked if the city code dictates the amount of time for a suspension. City Attorney Justin Templin said that the code does say that a second violation within three years results in a five-day suspension, a third violation results in a 10-day suspension, and a fourth violation would result in revocation of the liquor license.

MGCC... to page 5

Westbound I-94 ramp to Weaver Lake Road closes July 29

Starting Thursday, July 29, crews will close the ramp from westbound Interstate 94 to Weaver Lake Road in Maple Grove. Motorists should follow the signed detour to the Maple Grove Parkway exit and proceed to eastbound I-94 to Weaver Lake Road. The ramp will reopen Thursday, Aug. 19.

Motorists should plan ahead and give themselves additional time or seek an alternate route.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation is making improvements to a 39-mile stretch of I-94 between Maple Grove and Clearwater that includes more travel lanes, bridge replacements, new bridges, improved drainage and the resurfacing of deteriorating pavement. Additionally, a new interchange is being constructed on I-94 near the city of Dayton.

The improvements will reduce congestion, improve safety, improve freight movement, enhance economic vitality and provide a smoother ride for users of I-94. The project began in 2019 and is expected to be complete this year.

For more information, visit the I-94 Maple Grove to Clearwater project page at dot.state.mn.us. Questions about the project, contact the project team at 651-456-8205 or info@i94-mg-clearwater.com.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Gender inclusion policy approved by Osseo School Board

BOARD... from page 1

"I don't disagree with a lot of what is in the policy," Westphal said. "What bugs me is the policy-making and how quickly you are doing it without any community feedback...I feel like the language is very broad. It is subjective versus objective."

SCHOOL BOARD DISCUSSION

According to Osseo Area Schools general counsel Tim Palmatier, since presenting the policy for first reading last month, the district received a "significant" amount of public feedback. Palmatier noted that they received roughly 70 responses in favor of the policy and about 20 against it.

School board member Heather Douglass began her comments by saying she supports equal access and opportunity for all students and staff, including gender-nonconforming students. But, like Westphal, she believes the process of creating this policy didn't meet the standard. "Creating a new policy without rigorous input from the affected stakeholder groups is reckless and irresponsible," she said.

Douglass said she believes there have been no community listening sessions for policy feedback. "Bringing this policy forward for a second reading and vote without transparency or due diligence is setting a dangerous precedent," Douglass said. "The leadership of this



Pastor Kaitlyn Forster speaks to the Osseo School Board on July 20. She supported the new policy.

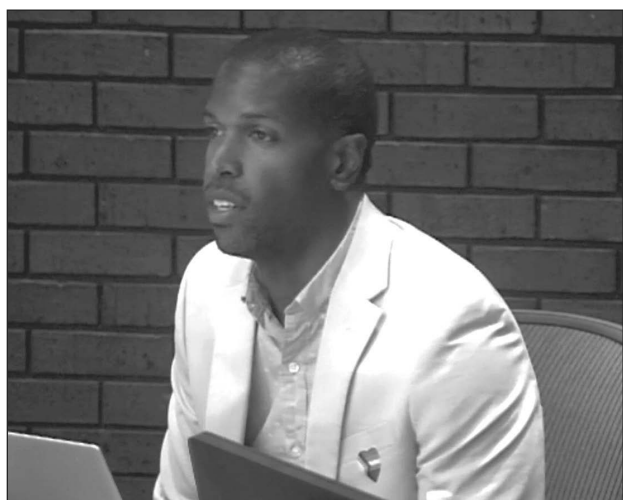


Tanya Westphal, a parent of four students in the district, speaks to the Osseo School Board on July 20. While she did not disagree with the policy, she wanted the community to be able to give feedback on the policy.

board is failing our student body and stakeholders by these standards."

Douglass and fellow board member Tanya Simons both voted against the gender inclusion policy. Simons said the dialogue about whether or not it is good policy has become divisive. "This policy discussion has become very divisive. It has

Board member Thomas Brooks stands on the other side of the aisle. Brooks said he has been promoting the proposed policy on social media and had hoped to get it passed by Pride Month.



School board member Thomas Brooks explains why he supports the gender inclusion policy at the Osseo School Board meeting on July 20. "To say this gender inclusion policy has been a long time coming is an understatement...More work still needs to be done. I plan to stand on the right side of history. I proudly support this gender inclusion policy," Brooks said.



School board member Heather Douglass discusses her thoughts on the gender inclusion policy at the Osseo School Board meeting on July 20. "Bringing this policy forward for a second reading and vote without transparency or due diligence is setting a dangerous precedent... The leadership of this board is failing our student body and stakeholders by these standards," Douglass said. (Photos courtesy of the Osseo School District)

Brooks mentioned during the meeting that he is a "proud, openly gay man" and when he was elected in November, met with LG-BTQ students in the district to let them know he is here. It was then that he told the kids that a policy like this one will happen.

"To say this gender inclusion policy has been a long time coming is an understatement," Brooks said. "More work still

needs to be done...I plan to stand on the right side of history. I proudly support this gender inclusion policy."

Board chair Kelsey Dawson Walton said she understands criticisms regarding the process and engagement with the community, but added she supports the policy because above all else, it's about the students. "It is not about

us as adults, it is about our young people," Dawson Walton said. "We need to get to a place where our district is the premier school district in the state. We do that by ensuring all of our students are safe. We want each and every one of our students to be accepted and feel so good when they walk through our doors and to be supported."

Maple Grove accepts donation

MGCC... from page 1

Councilors Judy Hanson and Kristy Barnett expressed concern with the employees who were concerned about the suspension. "I hate that you are putting it on us that we're hurting your employees, because I feel that it's your business that's hurting your own employees," Barnett added.

The council approved a five-day suspension of the on-sale/Sunday sale liquor license for a second violation within any three-year period and imposed a \$2,000 civil penalty.

The other violations were by Ichiddo Ramen, Grill Hall Brazillian Steakhouse, Bonchon Chicken and Portillo's. The City Council approved a two-day suspension of the licenses for these businesses and \$2,000 civil penalties for each business.

Princeton's Liquor was also in violation, but since it's an off-sale liquor license holder, the council only imposed a \$2,000 fine as the business has not had a violation within three years.

OTHER

In other action, the council: **APPROVED** an amendment to grant a one-year extension to the contract between the city and the Minnesota DEED for the Illume Minnesota Investment Fund award. This will allow Illume one more year to meet the goals outlined in the award application.

ACCEPTED a \$3,767 donation from the Brooklyn Park Mills Fleet Farm to the PUPS impound facility.

APPROVED the purchase of canine agility training equipment from Vinyl Works at the cost of \$22,420. The funds will come from the police K-9 fund and the alcohol compliance fine account.

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