

'Cats crush Cathedral in home opener

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BLAKES AREA REVIEW

Delivered by USPS to more than 6,900 homes in the communities of New London, Spicer, Belgrade, Pennock, Sunburg, and Willmar Vol. 135, No. 36 75¢

Around the Lakes

Mayors bike ride

REGIONAL – Mayors from Spicer, New London and Willmar will be leading a bike ride starting at 5 p.m. in each of their communities. Each group will meet at Goat Ridge Brewing Co. in New London for a picnic around 6 p.m. The ride and picnic are both free, but participants need to register in advance at: info@willmarlakesarea.com. Starting locations are as follows:
• New London: City of New London parking lot (across from the New London American Legion).
• Spicer: Glacial Lakes State Trail parking lot (across from Mel's Sport Shop).
• Willmar: Glacial Lakes State Trail Parking Lot (adjacent to the Willmar Civic Center) OR Glacial Lakes State Trail parking lot at County Road 26 at 5:15 p.m.

Produce distribution

WILLMAR – The Kandiyohi County Food Shelf is hosting a free drive-thru produce and meal distribution event Tuesday, Sept. 13 at the Willmar Civic Center starting at noon. The event is open to all households in need.

Hope anniversary

SPICER – Come join us on Sunday, Sept. 11 to celebrate 50 years of worshipping together at Hope Presbyterian Church. Worship starts at 10 a.m., followed by a program, meal, games and bluegrass music. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Inserts

Teal's
Inserts may cover all or some of the total Review circulation as requested by the business placing the insert.

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“The show will go on” Council says city ordinance cannot prohibit drag show

By Brett Blocker
Editor

A drag show event planned for New London's Little Theatre Saturday, Sept. 10 will take place as scheduled, with the New London City Council concluding that current city ordinances cannot restrict the event from taking place.

The show is part of the Little Theatre's second annual Small Stages Artist in Residency program, which has commissioned artist Dominic Facio to host a “Catwalk Party” drag show similar to those he has hosted throughout rural Minnesota. He plans to host a youth show for ages 13-17 earlier in the day with a Q&A session where the community can meet performers and discuss topics of gender identity, and an 18+ show later in the evening. He said there is no nudity in the adult show, though there will be adult humor.

The show has become the source of community controversy in recent weeks, with supporters contending the event is a means of artistic expression and a means of providing an inclusive space for

the LGBTQ community and those who oppose the show arguing that the production is obscene and could put children at risk for grooming by sexual predators.

The council spoke on the matter during its meeting Wednesday, which took place in the fire hall to accommodate the 97 members of the public in attendance, excluding the city attorney, members of the council and several officers from the sheriff's office who were on-hand to provide security. (However, discussions remained civil and no one was arrested or removed from the meeting.)

For context, Wednesday's meeting follows a similarly-packed council meeting that took place on Aug. 18, in which residents who opposed the show argued that the event violates Chapter 17 of the city's code of ordinances, concerning adult use businesses.

Mayor John Bergman stated that the ordinance was drafted in 2004 as a means of preventing the establishment of strip clubs in New London. However, as it was “a boilerplate ordinance” modeled

from a generic template created by the League of Minnesota Cities and, as such, some wording in the ordinance is open to dispute.

The city's ordinance includes a provision for adult cabarets, defined as prohibiting: “An establishment which provides dancing or other live entertainment if such establishment excludes minors by virtue of age, or if such dancing or other live entertainment is distinguished or characterized by an emphasis on the performance, depiction, or description of ‘specified sexual activities’ or ‘specified anatomical areas.’”

As the issue was brought to the council shortly before the Aug. 18 meeting, the city was unable to make a determination at that time as to whether or not the proposed drag show would be in violation of this ordinance, as comprehensive consultations with attorneys had not yet taken place. However, city attorney John Mack informed city officials ahead of the meeting that the theatre may be in violation of some portions of the ordinance, but also that the ordinance may be

unconstitutional.

Attorney Mack specifically cited the sentence “if such an establishment excludes by virtue of age” as potentially unconstitutional.

As such, the city was unable to make a determination at that time.

In the ensuing weeks, the city consulted with Attorney Mack, and sought additional input from Kandiyohi County Attorney Shane Baker and Attorney David W. Schneider of Schneider & Madsen.

After speaking with these attorneys, Mayor Bergman said during Wednesday's council meeting at the fire hall, “[The city's ordinance] doesn't apply to this particular event to take place on Saturday. It is an adult use business ordinance, and this particular event on Saturday is a show – a one-time show... Our ordinance can not be used to stop it. So at this point in time, the show will go on [barring unforeseen circumstances.]”

Attorney Mack agreed with Bergman's summary. Mack noted that while his full legal advisement to the city was printed in last week's edition

of the Lakes Area Review, he reiterated several key points behind his rationale behind his advisement to the city of the drag show's legal right to proceed.

“The First Amendment applies to shows, it applies to speeches and it applies to attempts to persuade. It applies obviously then to a city ordinance,” he said.

Article Five of the U.S. Constitution declares the Constitution as the “supreme law of the land,” he said, “so obviously, if this particular show is protected by the First Amendment, nothing we can do with the city ordinance, including, quite frankly, amending it substantially, would help.”

“There has been a suggestion that the city should go ahead and use its [current] ordinance to prohibit the drag show. This will never do,” he added.

Because the Constitution is the supreme law, prohibiting the show could open the city up to being sued for damages.

The attorney provided a

Drag show
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County to interview three for administrator position

By Ralph Dickerson
Staff Writer

At Tuesday morning's Kandiyohi County Board of Commissioners meeting, the commissioners whittled down the list of applicants for the soon to be vacant Kandiyohi County Administrator position from eight to four people, and agreed to interview these candidates. Liza Donabauer of DDA Human Resources, the company overseeing the job search, contacted the top four candidates, but one of them withdrew from the process. The remaining three candidates include current Swift County Administrator Kelsey Baker, Healthy Aging and Caregiver Supports Program Manager for the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation Cassandra Harvey and current Kandiyohi County Health and Human Services Director Jennifer Lippert.

The number of total applicants for the county administrator position disappointed board members.

“I had hoped we would have more candidates than this,” board of commissioners chair Corky Berg said. “The pool is extremely small considering what we are looking at and the importance of this job.”

Earlier this year current county administrator Larry Kleindl announced his intention to retire in February of 2023. With the amount of time Kleindl gave to the board to find his replacement, Berg said he wanted to repost the

job opening to see if more candidates applied.

“I feel a little uncomfortable at this point proceeding with interviews,” Berg said.

Berg then asked Donabauer the process for reopening the application process. She encouraged the county to finish the process started with the pool of applicants the county received for the position. She said though the county did not receive a large number of applicants, the ones that did apply were qualified candidates.

“I think by closing this (process) down and reopening it again without giving these candidates an opportunity, I am afraid that may send a message discouraging them from reapplying,” Donabauer said.

Commissioner Rollie Nissen said he thought the county needed to interview the three top candidates from the list of candidates currently before the board. Commissioner Roger Imdieke asked Nissen if he opposed reopening the interview process.

“If Larry (Kleindl) is going to have time to work with the candidate we choose, we can't wait a whole lot longer,” Nissen said. “I don't think we can reopen (the search). I think it would be a bad idea; I think we should proceed with what we have.”

Donabauer said no matter the position or location, previous job search processes in the state returned a limited pool of candidates. She said reopening the search did not guaran-

tee the county a larger pool of qualified candidates than currently exists.

Commissioner Imdieke said he agreed with the other commissioners in that he wished a larger pool of candidates applied for the vacant county administrator position. Imdieke suggested the board interview the top four candidates.

“We have qualified can-

didates, and if we go through with the interviews we will come out with a qualified administrator,” Imdieke said.

Commissioner Steve Gardner also said the small pool of candidates disappointed him, but the list did include two extremely qualified candidates in his opinion. He expressed confidence either one of those two candidates would make an excellent administrator.

“I found quite a difference between the top two candidates and the two below that,” Gardner said. “If we were to proceed, I would not be interested in doing more than the two interviews.”

Commissioner Duane Anderson said he agreed the

County administrator
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Photo submitted

Meet your Homecoming candidates

NLS's Homecoming week takes place Sept. 12-16, with crowning to be held during pepfest Friday afternoon (Sept. 16.)NLS Homecoming candidates this year are, in front from left: Raeann Holmquist, Lily Alundson, Sydney Feist, Layna Tuchtenhagen, Libby Bohlsen, and Ellary Peterson. Back row: Brycen Christensen, Isaiah Halvorson, Carson Sampson, Ian Carlson, Carter Taatjes, and Aedan Andresen



As you celebrate the Fall Festival,
please remember our local heroes
on this upcoming Patriots Day.

Vote for Fernando Alvarado.

