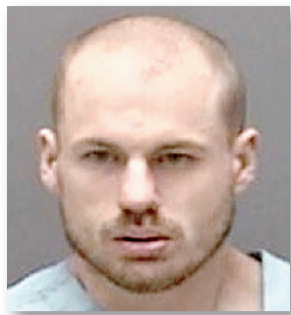


Mora murder suspect in custody

STAFF REPORT
EDITOR@MORAMINN.COM



Jackson Duce Johnson

A Mora man has been charged with two counts of second-degree murder after allegedly strangling a woman to death in their hotel room Friday, Feb. 11.

The suspect, Jackson Duce Johnson, 31, of the Mora area was apprehended Friday and was charged Tuesday, Feb. 15.

The victim was identified as 40-year-old Christeen Jo Massey.

Both Massey and Johnson were homeless and at times living together in a makeshift shelter between the Snake River and the Mora Regency trailer park in the city of Mora.

According to a criminal complaint filed by the Kanabec County Court Administrator's Office, The Kanabec County Sheriff's Office was called to the AmericInn on Frontage Road in Mora at approximately 12:20 p.m. Friday, Feb. 11.

Hotel staff reported they were unable to make contact with the people in one of the rooms and that the door was locked from the inside.

When deputies arrived on scene, they were able to gain access to the room and located Massey's body in the bathroom with a bag on her head.

The Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension was called to assist in the investigation.

Hotel security video showed Johnson and Massey checking into the hotel at 9 p.m. Feb. 9.

Massey was last seen on video placing items outside the room at 1:14 a.m. Feb. 11, then going back inside the room. The video showed no one else entering or exiting the room.

Examination of the hotel room revealed the window screen had been pushed out, and there was a single set of barefoot tracks on the ground outside leading

SEE MURDER, PAGE 15

Heated school board meeting

A number of resignations spurs comments in public forum

BY T.A. LEBRUN
BEDITOR@PINECITYMN.COM

The Pine City High School seventh grade commons was standing room only on Monday evening, Feb. 14. In what some label as the most contentious meeting in their tenure, issues of the recent resignations of administrative and district office staff were addressed in public forum.

The resignations which took place within a two-week period included Troy Anderson (high school principal), Jason Vinaja (administrative assistant), Janel Murphy (payroll/benefits), Jill Nolan (business manager), and Beth Allen (as secondary assistant principal to relocate to a PE job in the elementary school). The resignations were listed for approval on the consent agenda where no discussion takes place unless a board member pulls the item from the agenda for discussion. In this case, the item remained on the consent agenda and was approved by all board members.

A request was made to the school board to comment on the recent resignations prior to



T.A. LEBRUN | PINE CITY PIONEER

A standing round of applause is given by teachers, paras and family members after former assistant to the superintendent, Jason Vinaja, addressed the school board during public forum at the regular Pine City School Board meeting on Monday, Feb. 14.

the meetings given it's placement on the consent agenda. On Sunday, Feb. 13, school board chair Lisa Nos-Tollefson submitted a statement by the school board to the Pioneer regarding the resignations.

"The Pine City School Board recognizes there is concern from the community regarding the significant transitions that are impacting the school district. We acknowledge we are not immune to what is being termed throughout the nation as 'The Great Resignation.' We want to wish those leaving us all

the best, we thank them for their many contributions, and we appreciate and thank those that continue to serve the district," said the school board in the statement.

On Feb. 4, Pine City School Superintendent wrote a letter to the board stating she is declining a potential 3-year contract which was scheduled to be voted for on Monday, Feb. 7. Later on the afternoon of Feb. 4, Foley abruptly relieved Vinaja from his duties. Vinaja was scheduled to work until Thursday of the following week.

During public forum at the Feb. 14 meeting, several people spoke noting a general lack of respect and trust within the district, as well as speaking to the resignations. Teacher Brenda Kloeckl stated that "loyalty, respect and trust have diminished greatly in our schools. Decisions and changes have been made that have hurt these qualities."

Community member and parent, Danielle Davis, spoke saying that she was hopeful and felt that

SEE SCHOOL, PAGE 13

SLEEP SALE

PRESIDENTS DAY LIMITED TIME SAVINGS!

**Beautyrest
BLACK**

OVER
\$300
VALUE

2 FREE

ABSOLUTE RELAXATION™ PILLOWS

with purchase of a
BEAUTYREST® HARMONY LUX™
or BEAUTYREST® HARMONY
LUX™ HYBRID mattress.*

SAVE UP TO \$200

on purchase of any
iComfort by Serta
mattress.

**iComfort
BY SERTA**

L A Z B O Y

LIMITED TIME ONLY!

JAMES RECLINING SOFA

**YOUR CHOICE
\$399**

Each

COLLAGE
ROCKING
RECLINER

CASEY
ROCKING
RECLINER

BONUS RECLINER DEALS

WHILE SUPPLIES LAST!
LIMITED QUANTITIES

**REESE
SECTIONAL**

YOUR CHOICE
\$499 ea.

BROOKS
ROCKING
RECLINER

COLEMAN
ROCKING
RECLINER

YOUR CHOICE
\$599 ea.

JASPER
ROCKING
RECLINER

ROWAN
ROCKING
RECLINER

Since 1956...Find Out Why

JENSEN FURNITURE

101 MAIN STREET
LUCK, WI • 715-472-2487
www.jensenfurnitureluck.com

Custom Draperies • Floor Covering • Complete Home Furnishings

Family Owned For 65 Years

- **FREE SETUP**
- **FREE DELIVERY** (100-mile Radius)
- **INTEREST-FREE FINANCING AVAILABLE** (With Approved Credit)

Hours: Mon. - Fri. 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.;
Sat. 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Now Offering In-Home Carpet, Tile & Upholstery
Cleaning Services! Call Us To Schedule!