



St. Cloud Rox  
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# Paynesville Press



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## CITY OF PAYNESVILLE

### City hires architect for new library project

*Council OKs hiring Widseth despite uncertain project finances*

By Erica Reinke

Baby steps, baby steps. One little step at a time. Now that the City of Paynesville has purchased the lot designated to be the site for the new library, the question is: “well, what is that going to look like?” So, the ad hoc library board – consisting of Friends of the Library, library employees,

and several members of the city and community – have discussed hiring an architect to design and plan the new library. The board chose between two architecture firms, Widseth and HMA Architecture, before making their recommendation to city council. They ultimately recommended Widseth because, “We felt more comfortable with their understanding of what we were looking for in the community and the library itself; they really got what that was and had a vision for the library,” said councilor Megan Brick, who sits on the ad hoc library board. At the council meeting on

Monday, June 23, councilors Neil Herzberg and Paul Thielen brought up the underlying issue...that the city still does not have a firm budget for the library. There have been real donations, and promises of donations, but between the two, it is still impossible to earmark a firm budget. Currently, the city’s library fund has been depleted by buying the land for it. “Unless we get the funding for this library, it’s still a dream,” said Herzberg. Brick replied that going through all these little steps is just a part of that process. “In order to get a large grant or low-interest loan or some-

thing, you need to go through all this...and we didn’t discuss the (overall) budget, we just discussed the architect.” Thielen still wanted firmer financial numbers before moving forward, but there was a 45-day deadline on hiring the architect, which would not have been met by the next council meeting in July. “This has been years and years in the making and a lot of people working hard,” Brick reiterated. The total cost of hiring Widseth was \$15,500, which will be split three ways between the city, the Friends  
CITY COUNCIL – Page 2

## EASTER QUILT

### ‘Broken and Beloved’ banner created at PLC

*At Paynesville Lutheran, prayed-on pieces of cloth become quilt*

By Gretta Lemke

Cheerful voices filled the sanctuary of Paynesville Lutheran Church on Easter Morning. Jesus was risen, the tomb was empty, and the sanctuary was decorated with a new banner made of prayers. These prayers were visualized in the form of fabric. Throughout the lenten season, the PLC congregation received squares of colorful fabric. Each week, a new color was held, and through the service, this piece of fabric was squeezed tightly and prayed into. Each square on the banner holds one or more prayers, coming together in just 40 days to show how quickly prayers add up. The banner was constructed by Nan Mayer, a member of PLC. Every week of Lent after the service, Mayer took the prayed-for squares home, where she pressed them flat, organized them to fit as many as possible, and used a feasible web to connect them together onto poster boards. The design was found and customized by Pastor Paul Shumaker. “The banner was inspired by a preaching series created by the Nourishing Vocation with Children project through the Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn.,” he explained.



Photo by Gretta Lemke

Nan Mayer constructed a prayer banner for Paynesville Lutheran Church to surprise the congregation on Easter morning. Church members prayed on the pieces of cloth during Lent.

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## STATE GOVERNMENT

### New state laws take effect in Minnesota

*Pensions for teachers, cops, and fire fighters get bumps*

This is a listing of selected new laws passed during the 2025 legislative session that took effect on July 1, 2025 (or in the preceding months).

#### Pension Funding

Teachers with decades of experience will be able to retire sooner with a lower early retirement reduction from the full retirement benefit they would have received at age 65. That is a key provi-

sion in the omnibus pension and retirement law. The new benefit for teachers is effective Monday, June 30, 2025. The law provides \$78 million in pension funding for firefighters, police officers, state patrol, and teachers in the 2026-27 biennium. About half is targeted to the Minnesota Teachers Retirement Association. The law reduces the age at which a member becomes eligible for the enhanced early retirement reduction from 62 to 60 and lowers the associated benefit reduction percentage from 6 to 5 percent (which is further reduced by the 2.5 or 3 percent augmentation under current law).

Per a summary from the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement, “This change means that if a member has reached age 60 (instead of 62) with 30 years of service, the member’s retirement benefit is reduced by approximately 2-2.5%.” Minnesota teachers hired before July 1, 1989, have a career “Rule of 90,” meaning they can retire with full pension benefits if their age plus years of service adds up to 90. Educators hired after that date, who elect early retirement (before age 65), have their pension reduced for each year that the start of the pension precedes age 65. The law will also increase employer contributions to the Teachers Retirement Association from 9.5 percent to 9.81 percent for each coordinated member and from 13.5 percent to 13.81 percent for members who do not receive

Social Security based on their teaching service. An appropriation to school districts and other employers in TRA funds the increase. This is effective Monday, June 30. For public safety personnel who are members of the Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) Police and Fire Plan, the law reduces the delay in receiving the first cost-of-living adjustment from three years to two. It also provides a one-time, compounded three-percent cost-of-living increase in calendar year 2026, which thereafter reverts to the one-percent COLA under current law. These changes come with a \$17.7 million cost in each year. At a cost of \$2.3 million per fiscal year, every state patrol retiree will get a 1.25-percent annual cost of living increase – up from one percent. Other parts of the law include: •for peace officers

and firefighters who are members of the police and fire plan and who leave active service due to a duty disability, the period of time that employers must continue health insurance coverage is capped at 60 months, and once a duty disability determination is made, cities and counties are prohibited from challenging the continuation and payment of health coverage; •increasing the multiplier used to calculate the retirement annuity for members of the Minnesota State Retirement System (MSRS) General State Employees Retirement Plan from 1.7 to 1.9 percent for years of service earned after Monday, June 30, 2025; •effective for cost-of-living adjustments on or after Jan. 1, 2026, increasing the cost-of-living adjustment from 1.5 to 1.75 percent for the MSRS general plan, legislators plan, and unclassified employees

retirement program; •effective for cost-of-living adjustments on or after Jan. 1, 2026, increasing the maximum cost-of-living adjustment for the PERA general plan so it is one percent annually unless the Social Security cost-of-living adjustment is greater than one percent, in which case the COLA matches the Social Security adjustment, not to exceed 1.75 percent; •Upping the cap on employer matching contributions to the Minnesota state higher education supplemental retirement plan from \$2,700 to \$4,300 per year; •for defined benefit firefighter relief associations, increasing the maximum lump-sum pension amount for each year of service from \$15,000 to \$20,000 annually; •requiring a working group to be convened to recommend the features of new pension  
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## News Briefs

### Friday, July 4

#### KLA to hold Koronis boat parade

The Koronis Lake Association will hold their annual Fourth of July boat parade on Friday, July 4, with participating boats meeting at 1:30 p.m. at Koronis Ministries. Sign in at the dock. Boats will leave at 2 p.m. Prizes are: first place, \$250; second place, \$100; and third place, \$75.

### Saturday, July 5

#### Annual boat parade on Rice Lake

The Rice Lake Association will hold their annual Fourth of July boat parade on Saturday, July 5. Registration will begin at 1 p.m. in front of Tinnies Tavern’s docks. Please register, get a number, and get your picture taken. The lead boat will leave, leading the boat parade, at 1:30 p.m. Prizes – for creativity and for best decorated – will be announce at Tinnies after the boat parade. Come join the fun!

#### Fourth of July fireworks over Koronis

The annual Fourth of July fireworks will be shot off over First Island on Lake Koronis on Saturday, July 5, at dusk (around 10 p.m.) Boaters, remember to stay 1,000 feet away from the island for safety.

### Coming Events

#### Summer Concert Series to start

The Summer Concert Series at Veterans Park by Lake Koronis will start on Thursday, July 10, with Legacy playing from 6-8 p.m. Other bands and dates this year are: Family By Choice, Thursday, July 17; Wheelhouse Trio on Thursday, July 24; Meire Grove Band on Thursday, July 31; Gig Noonan on Thursday, Aug. 7; and Cimmarron on Thursday, Aug. 14.

### Ongoing Events

#### KLA launches community survey to hear from Lake Koronis users

Whether you live on the lake year-round, spend summers on its shores, or simply stop by to fish or take in the view, the Koronis Lake Association (KLA) wants to hear from you. KLA has launched a new community survey to better understand what matters most to the people who love Lake Koronis. The survey is open to all – not just KLA members – and takes about 10 minutes to complete. It asks about everything from how people use the lake, to opinions on KLA projects, to ideas for how the association could better serve the community. “It’s a simple way to share what you care about,” said KLA board member Joe Burbach. “We’re listening, and your input will help inform our efforts going forward.” To take the survey, visit [tinyurl.com/YourKoronis](https://tinyurl.com/YourKoronis). It will remain open through Thursday, July 3. All input will be reviewed by the KLA board of directors to better understand community priorities.

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