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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2024

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## \$2.5 million forgivable loan to get the lead out

BY ERIC FISHER  
PUBLISHER

The Village of Coal City will borrow \$2.75 million from the Illinois Environmental Agency to replace lead service lines for water users.

The good news is that the village won't have to pay the loan back.

"The expectation is that they'll forgive the \$2,755,000 in principal before we even start," city administrator Matt Fritz

told village trustees during their Feb. 14 meeting. "Lead remediation of underground infrastructure is a federal mandate so this is at the top of their priority list."

Last October, the Coal City board expressed its support for the lead remediation project. The IEPA will provide \$2.75 million of principal forgiveness to complete approximately half of the expected lead remediation of underground lines.

The project will begin with the replacement of lead pipes

for homes west of North Broadway, east of Mary and North of Division streets. Contractors will make their way east toward the BNFS tracks, staying north of Division Street. Eventually the work will swing south in a clockwise order.

Ordinance 24-02 was approved with a full yes vote. It will allow another ordinance to be adopted following 30 days' notice to the public to complete the process of entering into an agreement with IEPA

for necessary capital.

The IEPA provides funding through a loan agreement with the village for the total work to be completed. When the work is completed, the city will receive a letter forgiving the total debt.

"For this purpose, a planned utility rate is predicated that will never take place because the IEPA is focused on getting lead remediation completed with this model," Fritz noted.

The village will seek bids

from contractors who will check every supply line leading from the main into the home. Fritz said the contractor will bore new lines from a pit by the water shutoffs to a pit close to each house, then through exterior walls.

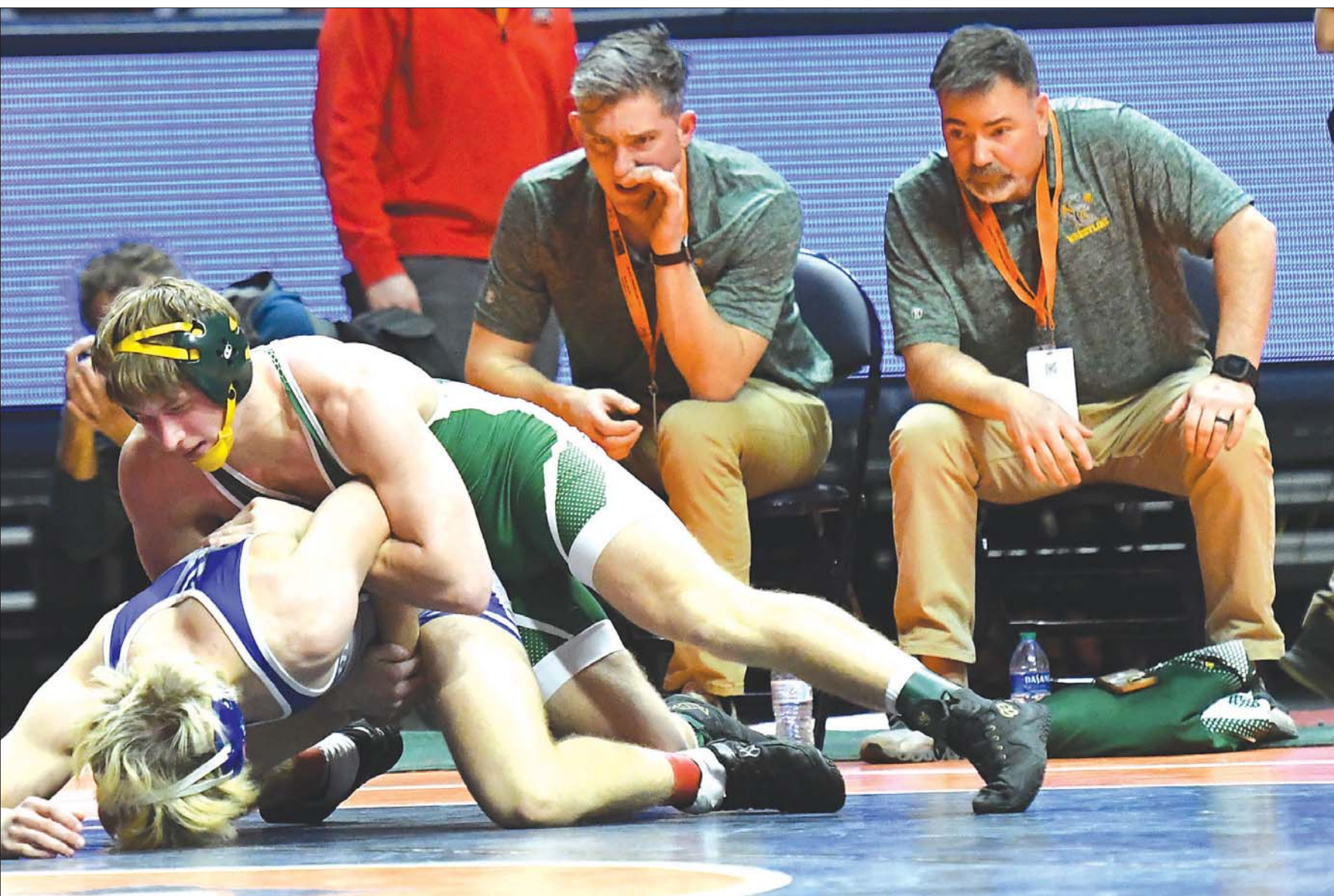
Fritz said it is unknown exactly how many homes presently have lead lines. No construction is expected until the latter half of 2024.

As required by law, the ordinance is being published in detail in this week's Coal City

Courant, giving notice that if at least 371 registered voters petition the village within 30 days, the loan agreement and project would be placed on the Nov. 5, 2024 ballot to let electors decide.

A petition form shall be provided by the village clerk to any individual requesting one.

If no petition is filed then the village may adopt additional ordinances and loan agreement to proceed automatically.



## STATE CHAMPION!

Coal City junior Landin Benson took 1st place at 165 pounds Saturday during the IHSA State Wrestling tournament in Champaign, IL becoming the 17th state champion for Coal City. He was one of five medalist for Coal City. He is pictured during the preliminary round as he gets a little direction from coach Jim Looper (back left) as head coach Mark Masters watches. Hopefully the wrestling Coalers aren't done, winning last night's sectional meet to advance to the Class 1A Dual Team tournament on Friday in Bloomington. For more turn to sports

Photo by Kelly VanDuyne

## Village approves TIF funds for Riverside sewer line

BY ERIC FISHER  
PUBLISHER

The Village of Coal City will commit \$201,219 from its TIF Fund to help extend sewer services to Riverside Healthcare's Coal City clinic on Route 113.

Riverside Healthcare is planning to double the size of its Coal City campus by adding a second story to its existing clinic, a 10,000 square-foot addition, while expanding its parking lot and adding a second entrance off Carbon Hill Road.

The construction will bring more jobs as Riverside adds more health services like oncology and infusion, physical therapy and cardiac diagnostics and rehabilitation.

But with the expansion

comes the need for city services, mainly a hook up to the sanitary sewer system. At present the facility uses a septic system it intends to abandon.

Riverside approached the Village Board back in October seeking a redevelopment agreement to connect to the village's sanitary system. As they prepare to begin the project Riverside has more solid numbers as to how much the installation of the sewer line will cost. They brought their project before the board during the Feb. 14 meeting.

The cost will exceed \$800,000, but Coal City's portion is the first 650 linear feet of the proposed connection which would run along the north side of Oak Street, westward to the west side of Carbon Hill Road. The village

must extend its sewer line toward an end point directly across from the high school baseball field dugout, along third baseline.

This portion will cost \$201,219 for required easements and infrastructure and TIF funds will be used to pay for it.

Riverside will front the \$800,000 for the project, with the village reimbursing its portion of the work in four equal payments.

City administrator Matt Fritz told trustees that any change orders to the project on the village's portion of line would be negotiated and possibly amend the total to be reimbursed by Coal City.

Once the work is complete the village will take ownership of the entire sewer line and the existing water main

that has already been installed.

Riverside guarantees it will share established curb cuts with future users of property immediately adjacent to Riverside on its north, along Carbon Hill Road and east along Route 113.

Fritz said there is an option to extend the sewer and water lines further north from the parking lot to Route 113 if adjacent owners want to tap on to the city services. The village board can be enacted that option until April, after landowners have had time to consider it.

Board members approved the agreement with Riverside unanimously.

Riverside hopes to break ground within the month and have the expanded facility completed within one year.

In other action the board approved the purchase of 18 body cameras for police officers and new dash cameras and equipment for squad cars in order to comply with a state mandate that will start Jan. 1, 2025.

While the 73,213.70 purchase was not included in the current fiscal year budget, Fritz noted the purchase was being timed so that the department could apply for a \$50,800 reimbursement grant in the upcoming Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board.

The board authorized Mayor David Spesia to seek reclassification for Reed Road between South Broadway and Gorman, jointly with Maine Township. The village has engaged in a phase one design on the three-mile sec-

tion of Reed Road between Broadway and Gorman for future federal funding consideration through the Will County Governmental League transportation plan.

However, recently the portion of roadway was identified in the Grundy County Master Transportation Plan as a Tier 2 or high priority project. The village will send a letter to the WCGL noting it as a priority in being able to accommodate future truck traffic.

The board noted that its second meeting in March will be changed to Monday, March 25 instead of March 27 due to the upcoming election.



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