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City Passes Cyber-Bullying Ordinance

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*By Annabeth Miller,
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Cyber bullying is outlawed now in Dexter under a new ordinance unanimously passed by the Dexter Board of Aldermen Monday night.

The board passed the new ordinance at its first meeting of the month after it was introduced by City Attorney Bud Lawrence. The new ordinance prohibits any form of cyber-harassment in the city and provides for penalties if found guilty.

Lawrence presented the ordinance and after discussion with Major Charles Sanders of the Dexter Police Department, decided to go ahead with passage of the new law. Sanders told the board that reports of cyber bullying and harassment occur every week, and that it is becoming a more common crime in the city.

The new ordinance will make it a crime to “harass, alarm, annoy, abuse, threaten, intimidate, torment or embarrass any other person” using electronic devices. The harassment will occur as well if any “lewd, lascivious, indecent or obscene words, images or language or suggestion the commission of any lewd or lascivious act.”

Lawrence clarified for the board that cyber bullying occurs repeatedly a period of time, not a singular incident.

Aldermen also passed an ordinance officially approving the bid from C.A. Walker Construction for \$497,000 for the construction of the addition and partial remodeling of the city police station. Walker submitted the low bid for the project. Work will begin soon on the long-awaited project.

Fire Chief Al Banken reported to the board that his department has received a grant for equipment from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Banken informed the board the approval of a grant of \$76,590 for the purchase of rescue equipment and turnout gear for the local department. The city's share in the project will be \$3,829.

Parks and Recreation chief Lawson Metcalf reported that the spring sports sign-ups for track, soccer, and baseball/softball have ended. Metcalf reported participation in the programs has remained somewhat steady, with slight dips in registration in all three programs.

- Track: 55 registered this year; 58 last year
- Soccer: 71 registered this year; 77 last year
- Baseball/Softball: 421 this year; 423 last year

Larry Manuel spoke to the board concerning the possibility of installing a three-way stop at the intersection of McCormick and East Stoddard streets. Officials reported they would check into the situation and seek a solution to the traffic situation in Ward III.

Library director Pam Trammel reported that April 10-16 is National Library Week, and the Keller Public Library would observe the week by serving cookies to patrons on Monday and would forgive overdue fines if material were returned.

Photo Above: Ward II Aldermen Kent Essner asked questions of Major Charles Sanders of the Dexter Police Department about the implementation of the new cyber-bullying ordinance in the city.

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