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UNION BRIDGE

Leaders to look at \$1.142M budget

Staff to present proposal for next fiscal year to council at meeting tonight

By Sherry Greenfield

Town of Union Bridge staff will introduce a proposed \$1.142 million operating budget for fiscal 2024 to the town council Monday night.

The proposed budget — required to be balanced — includes \$1.142 million in revenue and \$1.142 million in expenditures for fiscal 2024, which starts July 1.

Last April, the town council approved the fiscal 2023 budget with expenditures and revenues of just over \$1 million (\$1,041,289). The town's personal property tax rate remained 75 cents per \$100 of assessed value.

A major portion of the town's revenue

comes from service charges, estimated at \$440,430. Of that, the largest amount is \$202,000 in water fees and \$190,000 in sewer fees. Total revenue from real estate property taxes is estimated at \$299,200 and total revenue from the state is \$167,430. This includes \$70,000 in state income taxes.

Other revenue includes \$300 from zoning fees and building permits, \$1,500 in parking meter fines, \$100 in yard waste bags and \$10,500 in cable franchise fees.

Expenditures in the general government fund include \$63,500 for the mayor and town council. This includes \$16,000 in salaries, \$13,000 in travel expenses, and \$1,000 in public relations work.

The town pays another \$130,050 in administration fees. This includes \$76,000 in administration salaries, \$27,750 in professional fees for the town audit, \$600 for travel

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CBD, delta-8 sellers say cannabis bill will kill their industry

By Giacomo Bologna

Sellers of hemp-derived products such as delta-8 and CBD say a few lines in a recreational cannabis bill making its way through the Maryland legislature will put them out of business.

The bill would establish a regulatory framework for the adult-use cannabis industry, which could launch as early as July. As part of that legislation, lawmakers have set a cap on any products that contain even small amounts of THC — a cap that is significantly smaller than what is currently allowed under federal law.

Anyone who sells a product above that THC cap will need to get a Maryland cannabis license, a competitive and potentially pricey endeavor.

The cap will doom Maryland's fast-growing CBD and delta-8 industries, according to Nicholas Patrick, who leads an industry group for hemp-derived products.

"The entire industry from top to bottom would be relegated to the abyss," Patrick said. "This is a doomsday situation."

Patrick owns three stores called Embrace CBD and said there are at least 60 similar stores in Maryland that specialize in CBD and delta-8 products. Most of the products sold at these stores would be considered illegal under this proposed law, Patrick said.

The delta-8 and CBD industry took off after 2018, when federal lawmakers passed a farm bill that legalized the production of hemp nationwide. The difference between hemp and cannabis is that hemp generally has very low amounts of intoxicating compounds and the plant also has industrial uses. While cannabis remains illegal federally, hemp can be grown and processed as long as the plant and any hemp-derived products are less than 0.3% delta-9 THC by weight.

While many people are familiar with the main psychoactive compound in cannabis — delta-9 THC — there are more than 100 other cannabinoids found within the cannabis and hemp plant, some of which have therapeutic and intoxicating effects.

Through chemical treatments, processors can extract and synthesize some cannabinoids from hemp while removing others, allowing stores to sell products with a variety of different cannabinoids, like delta-8, delta-10, CBD and CBG. Stores featuring these products have popped up nationwide, and some states have since banned or regulated some of these hemp-derived products.

So far in Maryland, the industry has been almost entirely unregulated.

A popular product sold at stores is called "full-spectrum CBD" because it contains several other cannabinoids in addition to CBD. Another product that has become a staple in these specialty shops is delta-8 THC, which has a similar, but weaker, intoxicating effect as delta-9 THC.

Smoke shops, gas stations and tobacco stores also sell these products, and state and federal regulators have said these products — particularly those containing delta-8 THC — could pose a public health risk.

"CBD is a huge part of my business," Patrick said. "Delta-8 is also a massive part of my business."

For more than a year, Patrick has been a vocal supporter of regulating delta-8 and bringing more professionalism to his industry, but he said the current language in the cannabis bill goes way beyond common-sense regulation. Delta-8 is a distinct, mellow product compared with the gummies and pre-rolled joints currently sold in medical cannabis dispensaries, he said, and it attracts a different clientele.

"The dispensaries have absolutely no appetite to sell these products. They are

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JEFFREY F. BILL/CARROLL COUNTY TIMES

Piney Ridge Elementary Science Fair

Top: Fourth graders Andrew Imschweiler, 10, and Jaxon Buckley, 10, demonstrate their science project, "Awesome Elephant's Toothpaste." Their experiment tested the hypothesis that a higher concentration of hydrogen peroxide drastically increases the amount of cleaning foam. Sponsored by the PTA, the annual Piney Ridge Elementary Science Fair was held Friday. It is a noncompetitive event for kindergarten through fifth grade students meant "to encourage students' interest in science, to

develop their inquiry and investigation skills, and to enhance children's pride in completing research projects."

Left: Twin kindergartners Chloe and Lawrence Chukwudebe, 6, pose for a picture in front of their experiment, "Remote Control Car Range."

Right: Second grader Delaney Jenkins, 8, demonstrates her experiment, "Food Power," that tested whether vegetables and fruits conducted electricity, using lemons, potatoes and apples.

WAR IN UKRAINE

Ukrainians demand emergency meeting with UN

'Kremlin's nuclear blackmail' cited for emergency request

By Karl Ritter
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukraine's government on Sunday called for an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council to "counter the Kremlin's nuclear blackmail" after Russian President Vladimir Putin revealed plans to station tactical atomic weapons in Belarus.

One Ukrainian official said Russia "took Belarus as a nuclear hostage."

Further heightening tensions, an explosion deep inside Russia wounded three people Sunday. Russian authorities blamed a Ukrainian drone for the blast, which damaged residential buildings in a town just 110 miles south of Moscow.

Russia has said the plan to station tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus comes in response to the West's military support for Ukraine.

Putin announced the plan in a TV interview that aired Saturday, saying it was triggered by a U.K. decision to provide Ukraine with armor-piercing rounds containing depleted uranium.

Putin argued that by deploying its tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, Russia was following the lead of the United States. He noted that Washington has nuclear weapons based in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey.

"We are doing what they have been doing for decades, stationing them in certain allied countries, preparing the launch platforms and training their crews," he said.

Ukraine's Foreign Ministry condemned the move in a statement Sunday and

demanding an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council.

"Ukraine expects effective action to counter the Kremlin's nuclear blackmail by the U.K., China, the U.S. and France," the statement read, saying these countries "have a special responsibility" regarding nuclear aggression.

"The world must be united against someone who endangers the future of human civilization," the statement said.

Ukraine has not commented on Sunday's explosion inside Russia. It left a crater about 50 feet in diameter and 16 feet deep, according to media reports.

Russian state-run news agency Tass reported that authorities identified the drone as a Ukrainian Tu-141. The Soviet-era drone was reintroduced in Ukraine in 2014,

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