



Thursday, March 19, 2026

Council to Consider Changes to Annual Citywide Cleanup Program

At Mayor Dave Casotti's urging during Monday's regular city council meeting, councilmembers and city officials are scheduling a meeting before their April 6 session to discuss Boone's annual cleanup program.

The program has been the subject of some abuses, including attempts to dispose of prohibited items and people who fail to remove unaccepted garbage from their properties. Casotti said a wide range of options should be considered from keeping the program as it is, discontinuing it for a year or longer or changing the format to a drop-off system that allows better screening of waste.

He noted that the program was started "for the reason of cleaning up properties on the outside, cleaning up yards, making Boone a little bit nicer looking as prospective families came into town," but it has evolved to people using the free program to empty their garages and basements at a large cost to the city.

Public Works Director/Project Manager Waylon Andrews said a review of records indicates the program has cost approximately \$600,000 over the past 15 years.

"It sounds like it's time to tweak it somehow. The purpose of it is to clean up property, not really to clean out houses," Councilwoman At-Large Linda Williamson suggested.

The annual program usually takes place in June as the fiscal year ends on the last day of the month. By that point, the increase in fuel costs and supplies strain the public works department's already depleted budget.

"My concern is, as we get into that first couple weeks in June, my budgets either hurting or it's not. Our fuel goes through the roof those couple weeks, where we have to have another delivery of fuel. So that affects the budget and budget amendments, juggling at the end," Andrews said.

He also said there have been times when important infrastructure work was delayed because public works employees were occupied with cleanup program duties.

The council also gave Andrews its approval to have an Ankeny company repair the city's only street sweeper. City employees perform routine maintenance on the machine, but its near-constant operation has created issues that only the manufacturer can resolve.

City administrator Ondrea Elmquist requested and received approval to submit a Community Development Block Grant request for \$180,000 to help residents who meet financial guidelines to repair or replace their roofs.

Ericson Public Library Director Jamie Williams reported that February circulation totaled 10,884 items. Wi-fi usage totaled 1,053 sessions and the library's website recorded 2,153 visits. This year's summer reading program, which begins June 1, theme will be "Plant a Seed, Read!"

"We are deep in the planning stages for our 125th anniversary celebration. Starting in May, we will embark on a chronological journey through our history, dedicating each month to a 25-year era," she stated in her monthly report. "Our programming and themes will reflect these milestones: May (1901-1926), June (1926-1951), August (1951-1976), September (1976-2001), and October (2001-2026). Throughout the festivities, look for our 'Flashback Friday' posts and 'Special Ericson editions' focused on our unique heritage."

The library will also host a full week of special activities beginning Sept. 28. "It all leads up to our 'big day' on Oct. 2, and we can't wait to celebrate this historic moment with our community and all of you," Williams added.

In other business:

- Councilmembers also set two public hearings on April 6 at City Hall. The first, for consideration of the proposed fiscal year 2027 tax levy will begin at 5:00 p.m. The second, to consider adoption of the Fiscal Year 2027 Capital Improvement Plan, will begin at 6:00 p.m.
- Casotti appointed Jacob Heinz to the Airport Commission for a six-year term, expiring March 31, 2032, to replace Matt Grabau, and Alexa Derry to the Human Service Committee for a three-year term, expiring Dec. 31, 2028, to replace Alex Merk.
- The council unanimously approved the second reading of Ordinance 2325, which amends a section of the city's 24-hour parking regulations to prohibit parking on the south side of 10th Street from Division Street to Harrison Street.

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