

# The Guernsey Gazette



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## Grocery store closes without notice

By Lisa Phelps

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**GUERNSEY** – Guernsey's only grocery store, Lynn's Superfoods, posted a sign on their front doors last week on Feb. 19, stating they were closed for business.

A phone call by the Guernsey Gazette to the grocery store confirmed the closure is permanent, and a direct result of the public comments, and lack of a decision by the Guernsey council at their meeting Tuesday night on the sale/transfer of a liquor license to Lynn's from Ben's Bar. The representative of the store on the phone call refused to give their name, as they didn't want their name to be associated with the decision, but added there was no official comment by the store management, as of Feb. 19.

Lisa Phelps/Guernsey Gazette

*Lynn's Superfoods posted a sign on their front door last Wednesday morning stating they were closed. The store is the only business offering full grocery store services in Guernsey.*

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**Fire chief fired,**  
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## Services for Seniors, Inc. cinches its budget

By Lisa Phelps

lphelps@pcrecordtimes.com

**WHEATLAND** –

Though patrons of Platte County's senior centers have expressed dissatisfaction with the removal of dessert

on the menu for congregate meals, they may be fortunate to have the center at all.

There have been several changes made in the last few months in the operation of Services for Seniors, Inc. following a thorough comb-

ing of the accounting books at the organization which provides meals, activities and transportation services for the senior populations of Guernsey, Wheatland, Glendo and Chugwater.

In July 2024, Community

Action of Laramie County (CALC), a privately owned non-profit 501(c)3 charity operating out of Cheyenne, was approached by the Services for Seniors, Inc. (SFS) board of directors to assist them in understanding financial

difficulties they were experiencing.

"We already provide the Community Service Block Grant of \$20,000 to Platte County to SFS to pay for meals and in-home services.

See **SENIOR** page 12

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# FOR THE RECORD

## STORE CLOSES

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### The meeting

At the council meeting, members of the public, including Lana and Doug Swingholm of Crazy Tony's Bar and Grill protested the transfer of the liquor license to a "large chain grocery store," which could result in the closure of two small business, Crazy Tony's and Kelly's Bar, who rely on package liquor sales to keep their business lucrative and pay the salaries of dozens of employees in the town of approximately 1,200 people. She also emphasized she and her business partners believe in being a part of and supporting the community, pointing out they have given back to the people in the community many times since they purchased the business a little over a year ago, and plan continue to give back as much as they are able.

Community member and local business owner Stacia Cook summed up the sentiment of many of the people at the meeting, both in support of Lynn's Superfoods and potential consequences of allowing the chain grocery store to receive a liquor license. Stacia Cook said she had talked to the owners of both establishments who would be heavily affected by the transfer of the liquor license. Summarizing their concerns, she said, "I would like to take a minute to congratulate all the other small businesses and their owners for staying in business over the last five years. Covid was hard on everyone, and it continues to be difficult in today's economy no matter

how you look at it," she said. "Normally I would say everyone deserves to go ahead and compete at a different level in order to prosper in any way they can. However, that isn't the case here. Moving this license from a small business to a larger corporation isn't equal to being ahead and prospering as a small business. This move would actually do more harm than good in this community."

Cook said, after listening to the concerns of the two small business owners who would be directly affected by the liquor license transfer, "The grocery store sells thousands of items every day that are not liquor related. Thank goodness. We have a great grocery store. I love it, and I would never want it to go away. However, these businesses are limited to what they can and cannot sell. They cannot compete with the bulk orders that a grocery store alone could actually get in liquor sales."

She suggested tourists coming to Guernsey who go to the state park next door to the town will come to town early in the morning, stop by the store and gas stations to get their liquor and supplies without coming further into town. "Unfortunately, this would mean that our tourism will go down. No matter how you look at it. We depend on tourism in this town because we are such a small community. So allowing the store to take over this license would mean that we possibly lose two establishments, lowering the dollars coming in and detract from tourism all together. We are already down to a select few restaurants in town, and if Crazy Tony's and Kelly's were to shut down, that would take two more small business establishments away from our community, one full restaurant, and the possibility of another one that's possibly coming in the

fall. Please think about that."

Stacia Cook urged the council to think about her concerns and urged them to consider holding a workshop "so the entire community could attend, this is probably not the best night to get everyone together because of the weather."

Kelly Augustyn spoke, sharing appreciation for the grocery store, but said he shares the concerns of the townspeople – not necessarily regarding the businesses themselves, but on the employees who work for them. "I urge you to consider how this could affect their employment, housing – their lives if they have to leave here," he said, adding the businesses have all been great supporters of the community with donations in the past. "We are a small town... I've worked with you guys, and you have always endorsed 'buy here, stay here,' you should let that continue."

Long-time resident and business owner for 40 years, Renee Boomhower (Kelly's Bar owner) also spoke, urging the council to have a workshop in order to spend a couple hours discussing the issue that is "so crucial, and so important to the community. This needs further study and thought, and with the weather (tonight), a lot of people couldn't come."

Negating an earlier comment, Boomhower also pointed out her observation over the years that people going to the state park typically bring their own "booze," so it wouldn't impact early morning sales as much as was alluded to.

Guernsey resident Ada Pulos stated, "One of the main problems is we have a businessman who wants to sell, and one wants to buy. They have that right. We have our own opinions, but do we have a right to hold up that sale is my concern?"

She also pointed out there is not much of profit in operating a grocery store, be-

cause there is not much room for mark-ups to make profit.

"I hope we can come to an understanding," Pulos said.

The center store supervisor of Lynn's Superfoods was at the meeting. Myron Kruckenberg addressed the perception of the store being a "multi-million-dollar corporation" who makes a lot of money. He said every store stands alone, and the store in Guernsey has lost money for the last five years. Citing permission from the store's owner, Don Feister, shared some specific numbers. "In 2023 we lost \$153,878...in the first two periods of 2024, ending in August, we lost \$302,407," Kruckenberg said. "While I appreciate Crazy Tony's - I eat there a lot. I appreciate Kelley's. We go there. But I can tell you right now that this is a lifeline for this store (the liquor license transfer). I don't want to hurt anybody. Whatever the sentiment in Guernsey is, we understand."

Responding to questions about the 2017 remodel, it was pointed out, the owner and management had wanted to be a part of the community for 30 years. "Well, through what has transpired in Guernsey, we just can't take the losses anymore. I mean, who wants to lose a half a million dollars. We're better off closing that store. Which is where we are," Kruckenberg said.

He also set the record straight as far as contributing to the community, mentioning they have given thousands of dollars to the food pantry, along with several donations. "I want you to think about something before you get too crazy. We don't want Crazy Tony's and Kelly's closing... The sentiment is overwhelming against us. So what, that we have 15 stores? This store does not get to pull from Custer or

**See STORE CLOSES page 3**

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Lisa Phelps/Guernsey Gazette

Lynn's Superfoods, the only full service grocery store in Guernsey, closed its doors last Wednesday The mayor is reaching out to find another store interested in coming to the rural Wyoming town.

# STORE CLOSES

from page 2

Sturgis or anywhere else. We have to be self-sufficient.”

Addressing a comment by Brad Cook, who questioned whether a decision to pass the liquor license transfer was a “done deal” before the meeting, Kruckenberg said, “I apologize for putting an extension in the store. I can put it back, no big deal, whether this is approved we can change it – or not. We could leave it how it is and close the store... However, unfortunately I can tell you, if this is not approved the grocery store will close within 15 – 30 days. That’s just the reality of doing business. We lost a half a million dollars in two years.”

This prompted several comments supporting the store and encouraging more people to shop locally if there is a problem with the store not making enough money, though there were some who said it was difficult to buy all their groceries locally because of the prices.

Ben’s Bar owner Wayne Perkins said he has weighed the decision whether or not to agree to the sale / transfer of his business’s package liquor license, and finally decided it would be good for his family and his business. He explained he doesn’t make many package liquor sales at his drive-up window, which is used primarily for food sales. After he was approached with the offer by Lynn’s Superfoods to purchase his liquor license, he

“kicked it around for six months.”

Perkins admitted, “Financially this will be a boost. Times are tough. All three bars are suffering – I know that.... and I am doing this because I was approached and thought about it for six months, and we finally decided it was going to be a good move for us.”

“We serve the community, we have served everybody sitting here...The way it is, it’s a move I want to make, and I guess if we want to have a workshop, have a workshop, but I’m not sure how long this is going to last. I wish I could help everybody out, but I can’t,” Perkins said.

He pointed out later in the meeting, he owns the license, and he has a right to sell it by following the law. “...Everyone is threatening to close; [It will do the same thing for my business]. You pour your

life into that (your business). We lost our \*\*\* too. Covid took a toll on all of us, and we haven’t come back. I’ve lost three hundred-some thousand in the last years, too.”

To which Lana Swingholm said she and her business partners felt he went

See **STORE CLOSES** page 4



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# STORE CLOSES

from page 3

behind their backs without contacting the other two businesses to let them know a transfer of the license was being considered. “If we had those conversations, this would be a completely different situation with this,” she said.

Diana Preston, director of the food pantry in Guernsey, said, “You cannot believe the food the store gave us... and they give us a percentage of grocery receipts [back to the food pantry]. I don’t have an opinion on the liquor license, but I want to tell what they give us to help our [community], and we have more and more (people) all the time who need help.”

Councilwoman Penny Wells emphasized a decision concerning the liquor license had not been made prior to the meeting, and she believes businesses have a right to conduct business in a way that makes sense to their own interests. She stated she didn’t see how people can tell other businesses what decisions they have to make.

When it came time for the council

to make a motion on the liquor license transfer, councilman Joe Michaels stated he was abstaining from the vote and leaving the room, since he had a conflict of interest with his position on the board of the Guernsey Food Pantry, and past benefits it has received from Lynn’s Superfoods. “I don’t want my tie-in with that to sway the way I would vote, so I’m leaving the room.”

After Wells made a motion to approve the liquor license transfer, councilman Dale Harris jumped in with a question to the mayor and parties involved, “most of these people are [wanting a] workshop. Could we have everybody agree to do a workshop before moving on this?... This is a pretty small night (because of the weather), and a bunch of the town needs to be here to discuss it.”

“Can everyone live another 10 days to have a workshop,” Harris asked, with no one stating anything to the contrary after a moment’s pause.

Wells responded, “If you wanted a workshop, it should have been requested in the last few weeks.”

While mayor Ed Delgado insisted the council should take a vote, councilman Jeremiah Fields said he liked to the workshop idea. In the end, though mayor Ed Delgado urged the council several times to vote that

night, in the end he agreed to a workshop to be set for a date the following week. That timeframe would be the soonest possible after a workshop advertisement could be posted and verifying with the Wyoming Liquor Division on the proper way to proceed with notifications, etc.

The mayor added, he is also tired of setting workshops to give the opportunity for public opinion, and only two or three people attending. He warned people if they didn’t show up, he would be very hesitant to call workshops in the future.

The Guernsey council came to the agreement of a workshop, after a motion by councilwoman Wells to approve the liquor license transfer did not have a second. A later motion was made by councilman Harris to table a decision until more information from the Wyoming liquor commission and host a special workshop by Feb. 28th. The motion carried with no verbal “no’s.”

It was anticipated the council would make a final decision by the next council meeting.

In final statements by the council at the conclusion of their meeting, councilman Fields said he appreciated everyone’s comments. “It is a very hard decision. As elected officials, we’ve got to watch out for

“Most of what has been said here tonight is speculation to what might happen... What we do know is Perkins’ have the right to sell, and the grocery store has a right to buy.

– Councilwoman Penny Wells

”

our town and watch out for the people in it,” he said.

Field added he looked forward to the workshop and hearing the thoughts of people who were unable to make it to the public hearing. “Their opinion matters,” he added.

Councilwoman Wells emphasized in her closing comment, “Most of what has been said here tonight is speculation to what might happen... What we do know is Per-

kins’ have the right to sell, and the grocery store has a right to buy. I’m real disappointed in the fact the community came out in the way they did.”

Councilman Joe Michaels said he’d hold his comments until the next council meeting, the first Tuesday in March.

### The Response

The following morning, on Wednesday, Feb. 19, Lynn’s Super Foods locked their doors, displaying a “Store Closing” sign on their front door and leaving the town’s residents no other choice but to go to the Dollar General or the gas stations for whatever items they can provide, or to travel out of town. For some who qualify, there are limited items available at the Guernsey Food Pantry. The nearest grocery stores are in Wheatland or in Torrington, a thirty-minute drive either way.

As to the store choosing to close, Ben’s Bar owner Wayne Perkins said it’s a “heartbreak.” Chris Sachanandani, co-owner of Crazy-Tony’s, said, “I know no one in town wanted a grocery store to close. That is not what we wanted when we voiced our opinion last night. If that’s truly the case (closing because of the comments at the meeting), it’s a shame it’s closing.”

“We just wanted to be heard on our viewpoint on the impact the liquor license will have on our business,” Sachanandani continued. “We don’t wish ill on the grocery store or [Ben’s Bar], we just wanted our voice to be heard and have a discussion, but it didn’t work out that way...and we have no ill feelings towards [any of the parties involved].”

See **STORE CLOSES** page 5

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# STORE CLOSES

from page 4

Councilwoman Wells said after hearing the grocery store closed, she's extremely mad and disgusted about the situation. "It's a sad day for Guernsey," she said, adding she felt strongly the council should have made a decision at the meeting rather than tabling it to hold a workshop, insisting there would have possibly been a better outcome.

"I feel bad, people complain about [prices at the local grocery store]. I wish they were lower too, but there are so many elderly people who have no other place to get groceries, and they don't drive out of town. This affects the whole community, not just the bars," Wells said.

"I am so disappointed the other councilmembers were not able to put on their big boy pants and make a decision last night," Wells said, adding, now they need to "tell that lady she is not able to get groceries...maybe gas up a vehicle and offer to take [some of these people] out of town [for groceries] because you were being wishy-washy, you cost us a business in town."

She said, "Do you people (who complained at the meeting) realize what you have done? You have put a nail in the economic coffin of the town."

Wells concluded; the store closing is also one consequence of many people not shopping locally.

## The future

Mayor Delgado said on Friday, he wanted to be clear that he was all for a vote during the meeting last Tuesday night. "The town council is elected to do

a job, and they need to do it whether they like it or not. Since this council could not make the tough decisions, it came to where a decision was made to hold a workshop...it turned out the store had had enough."

He continued, "the liquor license transfer would have kept two businesses afloat."

Mayor Delgado said he is working on trying to convince some other business to take on the task of opening a grocery store in the town, and said he is in favor of seeing if any potential grocery store investor would purchase liquor license from Ben's Bar if it's still available at that time, in order to help them keep viable financially. "This town is lost without a store... it will also be hard on the (food) pantry because they (Lynn's Superfoods) helped donate to the food bank."

He emphasized he believes the council made a bad decision to not make a decision that night.

"I've had a lot of calls from citizens from the town about the store closing," the mayor said, adding Camp Guernsey is one of those calls, inquiring as to where troops will be able to obtain food and supplies in Guernsey during the peak of the summer training program. He also said he was told of a house sale that was canceled – and two less children will be able to enter the local school system – because the family stated they wouldn't move to a town without a grocery store.

"I am working on a couple things, and when I have more answers, I will be having a public meeting to discuss any new changes," mayor Delgado said. "People's lives in this town are affected, and it is terrible for our senior population here."

In the meantime, there has already been a plan set in gear by the local senior center to help. Mistina Smith, site manager for Services for Seniors, Inc.'s senior

cold or icy. The center also keeps a few simple frozen meals that can be purchased by seniors to take home.

With the newness of the situation, it is unknown officially how many (or when) jobs may have been terminated with the Lynn's Superfoods closure. Kim Jenkins of the Wheatland office of the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services stated last Friday after an inquiry from the *Guernsey Gazette*, there had been no communication with her department concerning the closure, but after seeing the situation on social media she has been attempting to reach out with information to any potentially laid-off employees.

"Generally, we assist

employees when a store closes, making them aware of the services and programs we offer. This happened so quickly, (and is still potentially evolving), we have not been involved at this time," Jenkins said.

She encouraged anyone needing employment – or unemployment assistance – to reach out to Workforce services, whether it is connected to the situation in Guernsey or not. She said there are several services and resources her office can provide. For more information, contact Jenkins at 307-322-4741 or stop by 1958 W. Mariposa Parkway in Wheatland.

I am working on a couple things, and when I have more answers, I will be having a public meeting to discuss any new changes...People's lives in this town are affected, and it is terrible for our senior population here.

– Mayor Ed Delgado

center in Guernsey, said arrangements have been made for two shopping trips each month to go to Wheatland to get groceries, starting March 11 and 25. A trip to Cheyenne is also scheduled for March 18.

Smith said there is limited seating, and the priority is for local seniors (60 and older), but if there is room, they welcome other members of the community who need help to get out of town for groceries. They just need to get on a waiting list. Anyone interested in reserving a space or wanting more information can contact Smith at the senior center, or by calling 322-4741.

"Depending on the demand, we may try to get a third trip in," Smith added.

Smith also reminded, there are also hot congregate lunches at the center each day the center is open, Monday through Friday, except for days the weather is too



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# OPINION

## “The snowball”

### Sunset Reflections

By Lisa Phelps

lphelps@pcrecordtimes.com

IN AN UNFORTUNATE SNOWBALL OF A SITUATION last week, Guernsey was blind-sided by a cold, harsh reality.

Some knew this, but others are just learning it: in a small community, we all rely on each other, and everyone is impacted when one of the wheels come off the wagon.

Okay, I'm mixing some metaphors here, but I think the point is made. Last week, Guernsey's only grocery store



Lisa Phelps

closed unexpectedly with no warning. It has left the town reeling from the impact since the majority of the community relies on being able to go to the store to fill their refrigerators and pantry shelves.

Though it was pointed out at a public hearing about a possible liquor license transfer held at the

Guernsey town council chambers last week, the cost of many products in the local store were often more expensive than driving to out of town to a larger store. Sometimes we need to stretch

ourselves a little thinner to help each other out. And I do believe people have been doing that, but there is only so much give that can happen – on every side.

A phrase comes to mind: “life happens.” True, it does. But we are fortunate to live in a part of the world where neighbors help neighbors. Or do we? When did we come to the point where we cannot thoroughly discuss issues and work together to come to a solution?

I would hope people can once again put aside differences and stand side-by-side, like last summer while everyone was fighting for the existence of the town and surrounding homes and ranches during the Pleasant Valley Fire. In a way, this situation is a fire of its own and we need, as a community, to stop

putting the blame at one place or another. Let's tie up our bootstraps and get ready for some serious brainstorming in order to help each other out and make it through this unpleasant situation in a better position than before.

The lifeblood of the community is at stake, and if people aren't careful, the fabric that holds us together can be shredded with unkind or thoughtless words. As was shared at the public hearing: businesses and individuals in the community are hurting across the board. And – (dare I repeat it?) – a lot of it has to do with the economic downturn, increased prices, and reduced patronage of businesses resulting from what is termed the “covid pandemic.”

While we join together to help with the immediate need of fixing the gaping hole the grocery store's closure put in the town, there is a bigger, related issue we should think about addressing.

Maybe it's time to talk about the impacts that are still happening with the trickle-down effect of strict government regulations and arguably knee-jerk reactions to widespread fears. Let's start talking about how life has changed locally over the last five years and start discussing plans for the future, together. I encourage you to send in a letter to the editor (following the rules of course – no slander, sign your name, limited words, etc.) to share how covid has changed your life, your business, your education. Let's start the conversation here, identifying the issues we are struggling with most and start to come up with creative and realistic solutions as the full picture is finally revealed. Then we can work together at identifying the issues and moving together toward a stronger, more close-knit community we will continue to be proud to be a part of.

In times of hardship, the real mettle of our community is revealed. Are we going to go down the ineffective trail of the blame game and gossip, or are we going to stop complaining and help those in need while supporting and assisting those who are trying to make tough decisions?

Let's swallow our pride, share our struggles and our ideas while we work together for a solution to put the wheel back on the wagon.

## The Guernsey Gazette



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Photo courtesy of Mindy Kelley/GSHS schools

### No helmets in class?

Demonstrating their loyalty to the school's mascot, Guernsey-Sunrise vikings Julian Rodriguez (left) and Marcus Swingholm show their disappointment at being told they cannot wear their viking helmets all day at school.



# Guernsey fire chief fired, temporary chief appointed

By Lisa Phelps  
lphelps@pcrecordtimes.com

**GUERNSEY** – In a move directly related to violations of the council policy handbook requiring adequate fire protection, the Guernsey town council voted to fire Jeff Thomas as acting fire chief. They also authorized the mayor to appoint a temporary fire chief in the

interim so the department can conduct elections.

Thomas was not present at the meeting.

In discussion by the council, it was revealed there have not been any officer elections at the department, which by statute needs to occur in November. Additionally, seven firemen chose to walk out on the department in protest, and

mayor Ed Delgado said he understands the fire department's equipment is "far behind on maintenance," which he said he wants to get caught up so they can be pump tested and serviced.

"It has to be done," he said.

"I understand there were seven firemen who walked out. Now without Camp Guernsey, we don't have an effective fire department...and they're not doing what

they're supposed to do as far as the fire chief. It's unfortunate he's not here this evening," councilman Joe Michaels said.

During the vote, councilman Dale Harris abstained from the vote.

Last Friday, mayor Delgado confirmed he has appointed a temporary fire chief, Wes Sterner. The mayor said internal department elections will be held at the fire department this week.

# G-S principals resign, school adjusts to outside influences

By Lisa Phelps  
lphelps@pcrecordtimes.com

**GUERNSEY** – Platte County School District No. 2 superintendent Lisa Weigel confirmed last week, the school board accepted resignations of both principals of Guernsey-Sunrise, effective after the school year is ended.

Weigel said the resignations are not a surprise, with the decreasing enrollment numbers

at the school. There will likely be changes in the administrative structure in the future, and consideration is being given to scaling back staffing to a single principal for the whole school.

"Historically that has been in place for this district," she said.

To give a little perspective, Weigel said, from the superintendent's and school board's perspective with staffing and structure of the school, they seek to always remain competi-

tive with nearby district salary schedules for teachers. "The school is the heartbeat of the community and when we keep having decreasing enrollment, that means funding goes down as well," Weigel said.

The superintendent explained it is part of her job to be looking ahead to the future and helping make plans an entire year or more in advance, and right now there are a lot of unknowns. There have been people moving

into the town, but many of them have been retirement age rather than young families. Additionally, inflation is always a factor – currently Weigel is waiting to hear if the state legislators decide to give cost adjusted funding to districts in the state to compensate for inflation in the supplementary budget, which would be a blessing for Guernsey-Sunrise.

"We have to forecast and be prepared and staffed to adjust

(to the many changes that can occur)," Weigel explained.

She also pointed out the State is looking at possibly closing up to eight schools in the next three to five years and are currently combining some schools in larger towns.

"There are hard decisions and hard conversations that will take place," Weigel said, emphasizing, "This is a special place, and we have great kids and a great staff."

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## Attempt to appoint different representative on tax board fails

**By Lisa Phelps**

*lphelps@pcrecordtimes.com*

**GUERNSEY** – The current Guernsey representative serving on the Platte County Lodging Tax and Tourism Joint Powers Board addressed the council about grievances during public comments of last weeks' Guernsey council meeting.

The lodging tax board, as it is simply called, is responsible for overseeing lodging tax funds allocated to the county, along with other revenue received, ensuring they are distributed properly to promote travel and tourism within Platte County. The board is required to consist of five members from Guernsey, Glendo, Chugwater, Wheatland, and an at-large Platte County representative. Reichert was appointed to represent Guernsey in 2021, then accepted the council's re-appointment for a second two-year term in 2023.

Shawna Reichert addressed the council, stating her position on the lodging tax and tourism joint powers board "is being attacked – illegally, unethically, and without due process."

"The law is clear, only the council that appointed me can remove me, not the mayor acting alone," she said about a letter signed by the mayor to the lodging tax board stating the intention of the governing body of Guernsey to remove Reichert and appoint another individual to the new position, as of their Feb. 18 meeting, stating a majority of the board are required to come from the travel and tourism industry.

Wyoming state statute W.S. 16-1-106(a) governing joint powers boards mandates five members on the board with a majority of them coming from the travel and tourism industry.

"The board requires members who represent tourism – which does not mean working in a hotel, it means contributing to the industry. I do that as incoming state director of Skills USA Wyoming," Reichert said in her defense. "I was appointed by Governor Mark Gordon to a state tourism board and serve on the Wyoming State Chamber board of directors. If the governor of

Wyoming recognizes me as a representative of tourism, who is the mayor of Guernsey to say that I do not."

She added, the notice to remove her through the letter is in violation of Wyoming state statute requiring fair procedures for removal, including a right to respond before removal. Reichert also pointed out, the governing body which made a board appointment is the body which has the authority to remove their representative.

"I have the right to a written explanation and a formal hearing before any action is taken. Neither has happened, putting the town at legal risk. This isn't just about removing me. It's about abuse of power," Reichert said.

She added, "Councilwoman Penny Wells and a town employee who also sits on the board of my former employer have spread false information about me and misused confidential employment details...This breach of ethics exposes Guernsey to legal consequences."

"Beyond the law, this issue is dividing our community. Leadership sets the tone and questionable actions erode trust. I Thessalonians 5:22 (The Holy Bible) reminds us to abstain from all appearance of evil. Leaders have an obligation to uphold the law and protect the integrity of this town," Reichert said. "This council must ensure ethical government. I urge you to reject the illegal removal attempt and address those responsible for these actions."

Reichert gave to the council body copies of a formal complaint she is lodging against "Councilwoman Wells and her employee that is spreading false information."

She also gave a copy of past financial reports which are public record to councilwoman Wells in an attempt to address issues Wells has had with Reichert.

Reichert's husband, Troy, spoke on her behalf to the council. He reminded the mayor he has long held respect and worked side by side with him on many issues and projects in the community. "I believe we share a common desire for what's best in this community...for these reasons I'm willing to give you the

**See APPOINT page 9**



# APPOINT

from page 8

benefit of the doubt. Because when I saw the letter you sent to the lodging tax and joint powers board, I immediately thought you had to have some people talking in your ear, filling your ears with some crap that's not true. I honestly expect better from you," Troy said.

"My wife is not deserving of the mud being slung against her from these incompetent, uninformed, petty, childish and immature people...So mayor... I'm asking you, sir, would you change your position and prove the moral character that I believe you possess," he concluded.

Ada Pulos, manager of the visitor center in Guernsey, spoke up on Reichert's behalf. "We receive grants from the tax board to keep the visitor center running. I don't know everything involved...but just wanted to say Shawna has worked with me very well over the past several years and has gotten us increases starting from \$10,000 and now \$15,000.

Former council member Kelly Augustyn shared his support for Reichert, stating Reichert has "done excellent for

this community. I can't believe that your job's (board appointment) in question."

When the issue of the lodging tax board came up on the council's agenda at last week's council meeting, Penny Wells made a motion to appoint Joan Ibarra to represent Guernsey on the lodging tax board. The motion died for lack of a second.

There were no other statements or issues regarding the lodging tax board.

The mayor told the *Gazette* on Friday he had no comment on the issue at this time.

## In other business

The Guernsey council unanimously chose to set the bar and grill liquor license fees for the town to reflect the minimum required by the Wyoming State Liquor Division, which is \$1,500. There are currently three full liquor retail licenses and five restaurant licenses within the municipality.

A used 2015 bucket truck from WYRULEC was approved to be purchased for \$50,000 in a unanimous decision by the Guernsey council. The truck has complete maintenance records and there has been all-new wiring

installed. The current truck owned by Guernsey has safety issues, requiring manual moving of the bucket, according to public works supervisor Mike Fronapfel. He added a thank you after the vote to WYRULEC for reducing the price from \$60,000 to the municipality.

Ada Pulos gave a department report to the council, letting them know she plans to have the visitor's center open for the season beginning in April. She also said she has a report available, which will be presented to the tax board, showing how the grant funds from the lodging tax board has been used. Pulos also said she will be applying for a new grant.

After being instructed by the mayor at the last meeting to set a date, John Burfeind, town planner and code enforcement officer, announced there is a workshop scheduled for 6 p.m. March 3 at town hall to discuss nuisance ordinance verbiage and get the townspeople's input. Following the workshop, he said revisions to the wording of the ordinance will be made "so everyone is on the same page." The current nuisance ordinance is confusing as to some things it applies to, so Burfeind

is wanting to clear things up with a recommendation to the council after the workshop.

There have also still been issues with dogs at large, Burfeind said. All dogs must be on a leash on public property within city limits. He said there was a good turnout of people at the pet clinic hosted by the town, and dogs were registered, but there are still some people who haven't registered their pets.

Responding to an inquiry by the mayor about some complaints he has heard about people not cleaning off their sidewalks, Burfeind responded, "It was snowing." Then he added, "Apparently in this town we're dealing with a lot of: if you get in trouble for something, you're going to point out your neighbor's issues right away instead of just talking to them. Instead of saying, 'hey this is bothering me.' Communication will be the key in everything. There [are] too many things that just hearsay. We've got to squash that and move on for the betterment of the Guernsey community."

The next meeting of the Guernsey town council will be 6 p.m. March 4 at town hall.

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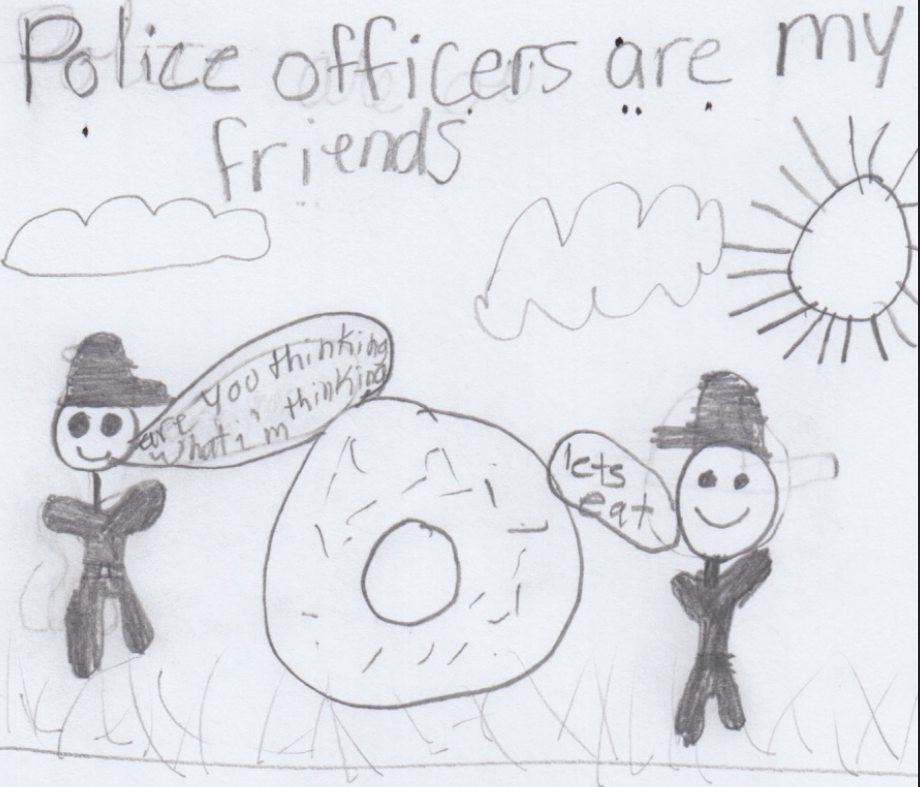
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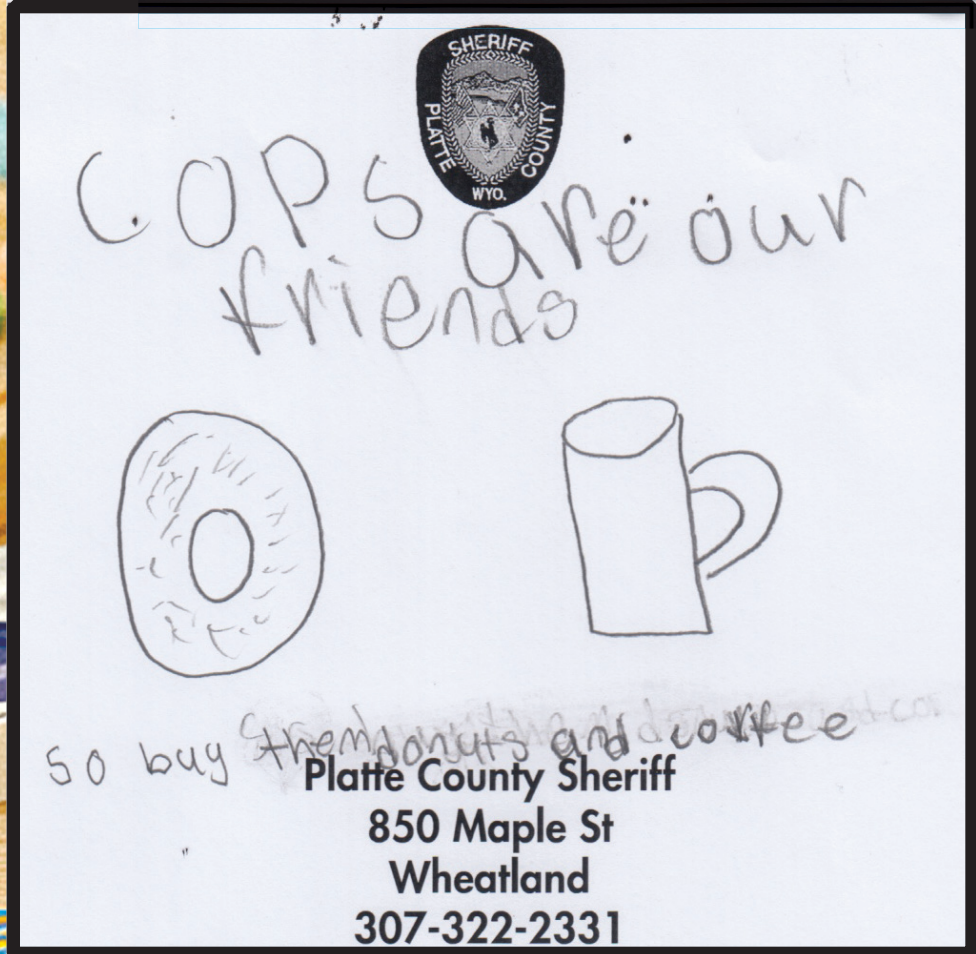


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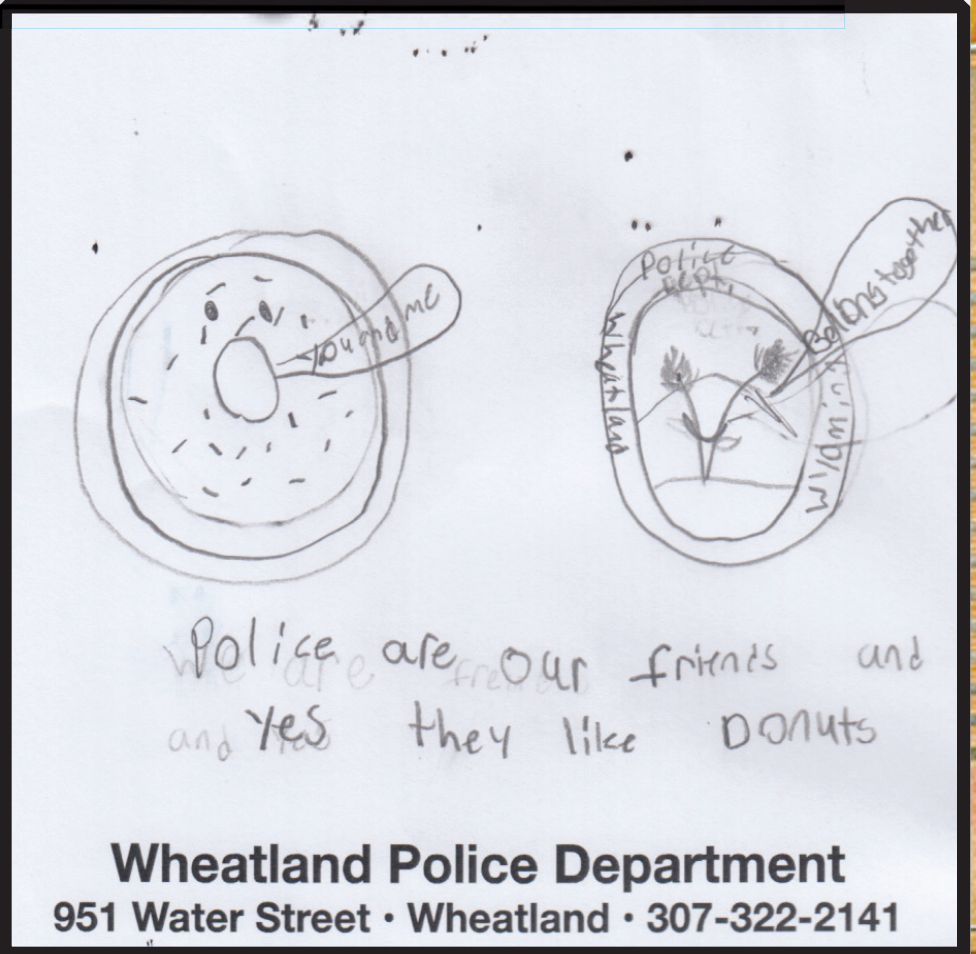


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# SENIOR

from page 1

As we talked, we decided both parties would enter into a management contract

where we would take over the personnel and financial aspect of the center and take care of payroll and pay the bills, with the understanding SFS funding transfers to us to pay

ills,” explained Tim Ernst, CEO of CALC. To be clear, CALC has not taken a dime of funds from Platte County, the board and management believing

strongly in their mission of “reducing poverty by empowering people to achieve self-sufficiency through promoting access to health-care, education, and advocacy with a network of community partnerships.”

Ernst said he and board believe Platte County is an important partner for the organization, and the programs they have contributed to the county over the past few years in connection with the CDBG grant have had encouraging success. Last year, the CDBG grant administrator (CALC) expanded its relationship with the county to administer funds kicking off the Platte County Family Resource Center, overseen by Platte Co. Public Health. The decision to partner with SFS was out of a desire to further assist needy populations within Platte County.

The CALC and SFS partnership began at the begin-

ning of the fiscal year on Oct. 1, 2024. CALC paid bills as they came in while they waited for the financial books to arrive (a month later), which they then started to analyze, Ernst shared. “At that point we looked in depth and saw a bigger problem than the board of Services for Seniors, Inc. realized. Looking at the financials of past years, they were running a deficit of \$45,000 to \$47,000 per year for several years. Much of the issue has been because of increased costs, without adjusting purchases.

In 2012, SFS had net assets of over \$300,000 with a predominantly cash balance of just over \$200,000. In fiscal year 2019-2020 they experienced their last surplus, ending the year with \$21,550 on the books. The last four years have shown more and more of a deficit.

While attempting to unravel  
**See SENIOR page 13**



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# SENIOR

from page 12

el the financial situation of SFS, and with their agreement to pay bills, the CALC board of directors chose to use their own line of credit to the tune of over \$175,000 to help get SFS current with invoices and pay employees.

Platte County clerk Malcolm Ervin is one of two representatives from Platte County on the 14-member CALC board. He confirmed, SFS would not have made payroll in November if CALC had not been willing to assist. CALC has also helped resolve several issues which were threatening grant funds the senior service provider relies on.

“SFS is on track – if they follow the plan set up by CALC – to show a small surplus at the end of the fiscal year, and even be able to work on a plan to pay CALC back for the line of credit they extended,” Ervin said.

CALC and SFS boards have worked together over the last few months to come up with a way to become solvent, which has included tough decisions to cut some jobs, including two part time and two full

time positions, and reducing two full-time positions in Glendo and Chugwater centers to part-time since it is hard to justify a full-time employee to serve an average of 7 to 14 meals.

“It’s nobody’s fault. I want to make that very clear. We are just working on what we see right now. There are too many staff for this size of senior center. To put it into perspective, CALC as an agency covers four counties and employs 18 full-time employees. SFS has 25 employees,” Ernst said. “All employees are valuable, and we appreciate them, but there was a consistent drain of funding.”

He also said there was a dollar increase in the cost of meals (now \$5 for seniors 60+ and \$9 for guests), in addition to much-needed cuts to monthly food purchases. The cooks have also been challenged to make more homemade meals, and the dietitian who is required to approve the menu said the dessert needed to be cut to remain within the calorie intake per day as set by the Wyoming Department of Health’s Aging Division.

Just making those changes reduced food costs from \$30,000 or \$35,000 per month to between \$21,000 and \$23,000.

See SENIOR page 14

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# SENIOR

from page 13

Add to that approximately \$50,000 to \$55,000 per month for payroll, rent, gas, and leases such as for the copy machine and computers.

"When the overhead is extremely high, trying to provide good service and quality service becomes very difficult. That's why the board of directors asked us to see what we can do to help streamline center. Unfortunately, we have a difficult time addressing everything. Nobody wants to lose a job or let anyone go," Ernst said. "And I don't want to close sites – that's the last thing we want to do, so we're looking at what we can do to reduce cost in other places: that is our challenge moving forward."

The state and federal income for the private, non-profit organization, Services for Seniors, Inc. to provide services in Glendo, Chugwater, Guernsey, and Wheatland is as follows: Multiple grants from Wyoming Department of Health Aging Division: \$74,000 for B1, and \$55,000 for C1, \$80,000 for C2, and \$55,500 for home delivered meals.

A WYDOT grant provides \$71,000 for transportation costs, and the Wyoming Senior Service Board gives \$156,500 per year to the center. The 2-mill property tax levy overseen by the county's Senior Citizens Service District board, provides up to \$150,000 each year.

In total, there is just over \$300,000

to handle, but we're not going to give up," Ernst said.

He explained, he and the SFS board of directors have been discussing the contract, and a decision may be made to end the management contract.

"Either way we go, we will still offer to consult, Ernst said. He added, there are

said. "Finding volunteers can be hard, but it is the only way to make things work."

SFS district manager Jeni DeSmith said anyone with questions is welcome to visit with her or call the office at 322-3424. She admits she doesn't know everything but is trying to find answers as best as she can to the questions people have concerning the changes at the center. "People's emotions are high, and I understand, I'll be glad to reach out."

DeSmith said while there will be more changes as needed in the coming weeks and months at the senior centers in Platte County, there will remain some constants. There will be hot congregate meals provided during the week, and home delivered meals in each community. There will continue to be transportation provided (it is funded by a WYDOT grant), and though there have been rumors to the contrary, the Wheatland activities center does not look to be on the chopping block either. There is very little overhead and there is a lot of participation by the seniors to justify its existence.

"There will be challenges, but we can

See **SENIOR** page 15

The whole intent is for us to help services for seniors get into a better place. It's very hard, because I have a soft place in my heart for Platte County.

– **CALC CEO Tim Ernst**

that can be budgeted by SFS.

Ernst emphasized, without changes, there is simply not enough money from state and federal funding to last more than four or five months.

"The whole intent is for us to help services for seniors get into a better place. It's very hard, because I have a soft place in my heart for Platte County. I've worked for this county forever and worked with the SFS board of directors a lot. We have not failed them, but uncovered a lot of stuff we were unable

a lot of funds on the chopping block right now for both agencies, because of the state of the economy, the new administration in D.C., and potential changes from the Wyoming legislature.

"Everybody is feeling it," he said, adding CALC can no longer extend itself financially to SFS and maintain its own long-term stability. But, he said, the question is, "How do we continue services as-is with less money when everything is going up?"

"Ideally we need volunteers," Ernst

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Photo courtesy of Jennifer Waring/G-S School

Be kind, Valentine...

Chase Kelley whips up a bunch of Valentine's Day cookies for the sweet FCCLA fundraiser.

SENIOR

from page 14

face the challenges as they come and make changes that need to be made," DeSmith said. "No one is happy with the layoff, but things are going smoother. Things are streamlined in the kitchen and we all chip in to help. I'm not adverse to main-

taining my own space and helping out as much as possible." "It's going to be hard, but I'm very confident, with the help of community, good leadership, and good communication, we will see some improvements," Ernst said. "We start with the budgets, and by living within our means and putting in a realistic budget. All the boards of directors also need to be upfront and

very transparent." As an aside, since Platte County directly benefits from some of the CALC funds donated through the CDBG grant, the people of Platte County are invited to attend the CALC annual fundraiser at the Atlas Theater in downtown Cheyenne on April 12. For more information, go to [www.calc.net](http://www.calc.net) or [www.calc.betterworld.org](http://www.calc.betterworld.org).

SHAPPS presents: Patten Creek history and updates

For the Gazette

HARTVILLE – The senior archaeologist at Camp Guernsey, Blake V. Griffin, will be giving a presentation on the history and updates at Patten Creek this week.

On Thursday, Feb 27, Griffin will be sharing photos and information of the Patten Creek Site at the monthly meeting of Sunrise Historic and Prehistoric Preservation Society at 6 p.m. at Hartville city hall.

The Patten Creek Site is prehistoric stone tool fabrication site in Platte County. Primary investigation was undertaken at the site in the 1960s. The site was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on September 11, 1989.

The program is free and open to the public. SHAPPS dues are encouraged. For more information, call 307-331-8810 or email [shappsymca@gmail.com](mailto:shappsymca@gmail.com).



Courtesy Photo

Blake Griffin, Wyoming Military Department, WYARNG–CFMO senior archaeologist (right) sifts through material in an archaeology dig at Patten Creek in Platte County.

Wheatland Rural Electric Association  
NOTICE

Members' Annual Meeting  
The 88TH Annual Members' Meeting of the Wheatland Rural Electric Association (REA) is:  
**Wednesday, March 12, 2025, at 11:00 a.m.,**  
at the Platte County Agri-plex  
59 Antelope Gap Rd., Wheatland, WY  
**Registration begins at 7:00 a.m.**

The purpose of the meeting is to elect one director for the position of Director at Large and one position for the position of Director District #3, approving reports covering the calendar year, and for the transaction of such other business as

may properly come before the meeting.  
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The Viking cheer team, including Madison Butcher (left) and Whitley Walker encourage team spirit on the Viking home court.

Lisa Phelps/  
Guernsey Gazette



# Vikings share take on week’s games

By Sally Nichols  
Contributing Writer

**GUERNSEY** – This past week the GSHS Vikings Boys Basketball Team played three games. On Tuesday the Vikings lost to the South-east Cyclones by a score of 58-30. Then on Thursday the Rock River Longhorns edged out GSHS by a close score of 41-38. The Vikings had to finish the week with the Lingle Doggers and fell short 78-17.

It was a tough week with a lot of adversity but GSHS has grown a lot this season. A few players were able to give us their take on the recent games.

Adam Bandalos stated, “This past weekend definitely did not go as planned, as we lost to Rock River and the home court advantage when we will eventually face Hannah on Monday. Although this loss set us back some, our team has not lost any faith in our capabilities and we still believe we can go up to Hannah, win, and keep the season alive into regionals.”

Fellow teammate, Mason Collar summed up the last week’s games, “This weekend didn’t go as we planned or as we wanted. It was definitely upsetting losing to Rock River and the home court advantage. But I have faith in this team to go up to Hannah and get the win and continue on to regionals.”

Conner Bristow commented, “Even though this past week did not go as we wanted, I believe we can make up for it this coming Monday and secure our spot at regionals. I have faith in us boys that we will get it done.”

Nathan VanNatter stated, “Although last week was disappointing for us boys, I know we are committed to making up for it on Monday and securing a place

for ourselves in regionals. I can’t wait to play and I believe we can do well.”

Julian Rodriguez looked toward the future, “I think that last week was a big wake up call for the team to prepare for what we face on Monday. I’m looking forward to competing for the spot in regionals come Monday.”

Current stat leaders for the Vikings include Adam Bandalos, who has hit on 12 of 34 attempts from three-point range for a 35% average; Mason Collar has made 63 of 162 field goals and averages 8.8 ppg, has collected 164 boards for an average of 9.1 rpg, has tallied 11 blocks, and captured 33 steals averaging 1.8 spg; and Nathan VanNatter has earned 23 assists for an average of 1.3 apg.



Lisa Phelps/Guernsey Gazette  
Conner Bristow (12) steals the ball from an opponent.

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SPORTS



Photos by Lisa Phelps/Guernsey Gazette  
Jordan Atwood (no. 23, above) dribbles down the court. Dymond Dimas (left) races down the court for an opportunity to gain possession. Abby Seyfang (right) prepares for defensive action.

Lady Vikings end season with heads high



Shalease Fross keeps the ball from her opponent.

**By Sally Nichols**  
Contributing Writer

**GUERNSEY** – The Lady Vikings took on the Cyclones of Southeast on Tuesday and lost 47- 20.

On Thursday GSHS faced off against the Longhorns of Rock River and came up short 33-21. The last game of the week featured the Lady Vikings against a very strong team, the Lingle Doggers. The Doggers have experienced a lot of success the past few years and it showed as they finished on top, 72-21.

Coach Daeh Kujak summed up the 2024-2025 season, “We ended the season with incredible growth and all skills, confidence,

and a desire to improve during the off-season so that we can compete at a higher level next year.”

Statistic leaders for the season include Alyssa Nyquist leading in total steals at 36; Jordan Atwood averaged 2.9 steals per game and 0.7 assists per game; Dymond Dimas led in rebounds with a total of 72 and averaged 4.8 per game, in addition to nine total blocks on the season; Liberty Whitehead led in three-point percentage at 21% hitting on 18 of 24 attempts, led in free-throw percentage at 57% making 26 of 46, led in field goals hitting on 20 of 127, and scored 120 total points averaging 7.1 per game.

