

Mayor Lou Thurston and Councilmen Blake Beye,
David Loewen, Byron McCarty and Brent Driggers

DELIVERED BY EMAIL

Dear council members:

While it's true that the cost of publishing official notices — like the cost of almost everything else — has risen, the amount spent is relatively small and pales in comparison to the cost of creating an uninformed public.

City Administrator Matt Stiles contends that publishing notices on the city's website would reach more people than publishing them in our paid circulation newspaper. He misses some key points:

- All notices we publish are printed not only in our paper, for which readers need a subscription, but **also are posted, FREE for anyone to access**, on our website and on two other FREE public websites. Their combined reach is far greater than the reach of the city's site. And with us, you don't have to choose. You get **access for everyone**, without leaving out older or less affluent readers who might not use the Internet even if they have it available.
- Publishing notices is not about whether people CAN read them. It's about whether they DO read them. Historically, notices were posted in public squares so people could see them while passing by, **without having to make a special effort** to find them. Putting a notice in a newspaper means average people might discover notices they did not know would interest them. Publishing online basically serves just lawyers and researchers.
- **Permanence.** Try finding something that was posted on a website a couple of months ago. It's hard. Even Internet archives are suspect. Unscrupulous people can insist they be cleared. With newspapers, everything we produce is permanently and independently archived and easily checked in multiple locations — for years, decades, even centuries into the future.
- **Independence.** Who's to say that the text of a notice you view today online is the same as the text of what you'll see if you view it tomorrow? Hackers and unscrupulous employees can change notices with a keystroke, and there's no way to verify, as you can in print, that they haven't been changed.
- **Reliability.** We hope more than one person can post things on Hillsboro's website. In other cities in the county, employees have been unable to update websites because one or two key people were on vacation or abruptly resigned. We're here every week. We're even willing to accept notices voted on as late as Tuesday night for the following day's paper if you can assure us that they're urgent and likely to pass without change.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss in person any concerns you may have

about continuing to publish notices in the *Star-Journal*. We are a proud local business. Money spent with us stays in the county. Where does money you spend on websites go?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'E. Meyer', followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Eric K. Meyer
Editor and publisher