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Nitro health board ordinance clears first reading

By [Aran Jenkins](#), Charleston Gazette

NITRO, W.Va. -- Nitro City Council members unanimously passed the first reading of an ordinance establishing a municipal health board Tuesday following a public hearing on the matter just prior to the regular council meeting.

Councilman Craig Matthews and John Montgomery, head of city ordinance committee, reiterated that the ordinance does not establish an independent municipal health board but provides authorization for city officials to do so.

"If we can provide better services without putting too much of a burden on our taxpayers, then I say we move forward," Matthews said after the hearing.

Matthews described the establishment of a municipal health board as the "last option" in the ongoing struggle to allow smoking at the Mardi Gras Casino & Resort, but he also insisted that the casino wasn't the main reason behind the creation of the new agency.

"Our concern is representation in the county," Matthews said.

Matthews and other council members expressed concern about how the city was going to pay for the proposed board.

"It's going to be an uphill battle," Matthews said.

In other business, Nitro Police Capt. Gene Javins raised an issue concerning overtime pay for officers. According to Capt. Javins, officers who take paid vacation during the same pay period as an overtime shift do not get paid overtime for the extra hours.

There are many shifts where the police force is undermanned, because some officers refuse to work when they are not eligible to receive overtime, he said.

"I don't blame them," Javins said.

Council members agreed to address the problem at the next scheduled meeting on Jan. 4.

Councilman Matthews said that the problem with police pay is similar to a problem with Nitro's fire department pay and should be addressed immediately.

Also, Nitro City Council members chose to honor 5-year-old Josh Shaffer for his charity to the Sissonville Fire Department. Shaffer, son of T.J. and Tiffany Shaffer, of Cross Lanes, donated all of his savings to help the Sissonville's Fire Department in the wake of the Oct. 1 fire that destroyed one of the city's fire stations.

Council members gave Josh Shaffer a large blue piggybank with \$45.85 inside, the exact amount the youth donated to Sissonville.