

Good news for LO audit

The City of Lake Ozark recently got a clean bill of financial health for the 2019 annual audit.

A representative of Graves and Associates CPAs of Jefferson City reviewed the audit via phone during a board of aldermen meeting because of COVID-19 restrictions which prevent no more than 10 people gathering in one room.

Lindsay Graves of the accounting firm told the board that one of the health indicators of a city is the status of its reserve funds. She noted that the general fund, transportation and special allocation funds have about 7½ months of reserves; the proprietary funds have about 37 months of operating reserves.

Four to six months of reserves is what is recommended to handle any emergencies that may arise.

Graves also noted that the city continues to pay down its long-term debt.

"I'm happy with the audit," Alderman Vernon Jaycox said. "I remember a time when it was the other way around."

Mayor Gerry Murawski was equally pleased with the audit results, thanking City Administrator Dave Van Dee and City Treasurer Karen Hughes for their diligence in keeping the city's finances in good order.

The first

Litter Box, LLC, better known as Alley Cats Pizzeria and Pub, was the first Lake Ozark restaurant/bar to take advantage of a change in the city's public alcohol consumption rules through a special caterer's permit

During the height of businesses basically being shuttered because of COVID-19, the board of aldermen voted to allow a change in public consumption of alcohol ordinances to help ease the loss of business. Businesses could extend their property lines into the street in a fenced off area so additional tables could be set up to meet social distancing and gathering rules. It was an opportunity offered to all bars and restaurants, but no one initially took advantage.

Mike Otten, one of the Alley Cats owners, told the board recently when he applied for the special permit that he realized it was a pilot program.

"If it doesn't meet expectations, we will take it down," Otten said. "Thank you for your support. We won't let you down. There are a lot of positive changes going on and we want to be part of solution not the problem."

The plan apparently worked.

Mayor Murawski read a letter of appreciation at a recent board meeting from Otten and fellow Alley Cats owner Jeremy Hall.

"The event was held with minimal disruption of city services and was a tremendous benefit to our business. We were able to generate income in excess of what was produced over the same three-day period during Memorial Day Weekend. Because of this, additional tax revenues were collected for the city," he said.

He went on to thank the mayor, City Administrator Van Dee, Police Chief Gary Launderville and the board of aldermen for allowing Alley Cats an opportunity "that produced so many beneficial aspects for our business."

Also:

- The board of aldermen recently approved a Special Event Permit for a Lake of the Ozarks Shootout Meet and Greet from noon to 10 p.m. Aug. 26 on The Strip. The Shootout is held near Captain Ron's Bar and Grill at the 34.5-mile marker, but the City of Lake Ozark hosts the Meet and Greet.

- City officials recently learned that the Lake Race, previously rescheduled from early June until later this summer because of COVID-19 concerns, has been cancelled. The Lake Race was held near Bagnell Dam for several years before relocating to near the 7-mile marker, with a Meet and Greet held in Lake Ozark. That will not happen this year.