

# The Florida Times-Union

Saturday  
NOVEMBER 5, 2016  
\$2



**BORTLES:  
FANS WILL  
NOTICE A  
DIFFERENCE**  
Sports, C-1

**FALL BACK**  
Standard time returns at 2 a.m. Sunday. Remember to set your clocks back one hour before bed tonight.

## Curry wants to end pensions for future police officers, firefighters

No response from union leaders to mayor's proposal

**By David Bauerlein**  
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Jacksonville police, firefighters and corrections officers hired in the future would not be offered pensions under a plan unveiled Friday by Mayor Lenny Curry.

Curry's pitch for ending pensions of public safety workers means he wants the city to get out of offering pensions for all future city employees, a position that would make Jacksonville among the few cities of any size in Florida taking that approach.

for future hires across the board, he is proposing bigger city-funded contributions for individual investment accounts for public safety workers than for general employees.

The city's match to 401(k) style accounts would start at 10 percent of a police or firefighter's pay and rise in a series of steps to 20 percent after the employee works 20 years.

"I'm going to put an offer on the table today that recognizes the risk that you face every day when you go to work," Curry said in a Friday morning



Randy Wyse president of the Jacksonville Association of Fire Fighters (left) greets Mayor Lenny Curry as he arrives at their meeting hall Friday. (Bruce Lipsky/Florida Times-Union)

While Curry would end pensions **CURRY** continues on A-4

## Grandson charged with murder after attack

Woman, 69, savagely beaten, police say

**By Dan Scanlan**  
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The scene that greeted police officers Oct. 10 when they arrived at a domestic disturbance call in East Arlington's Cobblestone neighborhood was one of mayhem, according to the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office report.

Joyce Ann Courson, 69, was sitting in a puddle of blood in the hallway as fist- and foot-sized holes filled nearby walls in the home on Ashridge Drive, the report said.

It all started with her hiding her grandson's beer, she was able to tell police.

Courson's 18-year-old grandson has been charged with murder after she succumbed to her injuries a week after being pummeled repeatedly, according to police.

Dylan Nicholas Broughman had initially been charged with aggravated battery, but the murder charge was added Thursday after the Medical Examiner's Office ruled the death a homicide.

Tracey Lynn Broughman, his mother, was briefly in tears Thursday morning after learning of the new charge as she stood in



**Broughman**

**HOMICIDE** continues on A-4

## New Town residents organize to fight blight, but city beats them to it



Edward Waters College students Shantanise White (left) and Khenya Peterson write down the address of a home on West Second Street that appears to be abandoned and in disrepair. New Town Success Zone residents and other volunteers gathered last weekend for a training session and then fanned out across the neighborhood listing abandoned homes. (Photos by Bruce Lipsky/Florida Times-Union)

### 495 code violations recorded in 3-day period right before community effort

**By Tessa Duvall**  
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For six weeks the residents of the New Town Success Zone planned to walk the streets of their neighborhood to document dilapidated homes and note the junk-filled yards. They'd settled on the morning of Saturday, Oct. 29, to bring together volunteers and hit the pavement.

**INSIDE** But the city beat them to it. From Oct. 24 to 26, the city's code enforcement department recorded 495 violations for junk vehicles, nuisance properties, boarded-up buildings and other compliance- and blight-related issues, according to records provided by the city.

That is nearly double the number cases the city had opened in the last six months combined in the 3.4-square-mile area that makes up the New Town neighborhood, according to another city document outlining six months of

**NEW TOWN** continues on A-4



Matt Jorns (left) and Christian Wade, volunteers with Celebration Church, get their street assignments from team leader Shanell Davis-Bryant of Habijax before heading out to document dilapidated homes and junk-filled yards. New Town Success Zone residents and other volunteers collaborated on the effort to fight blight in New Town.

Weather Forecast on A-2 **72** Today's high **49** Sunday morning's low

**DAILY DEAL!** MosquitoNix: \$149 for 3 mosquito control fogging treatments **Details, A-2**

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## JAX KID'S MURAL FESTIVAL

SATURDAY, NOV 12TH  
HEMMING PARK

Splash Zone & Tie Dying  
Live Music by The Band Be Easy  
Instaramp Skateboard Clinic  
Food Trucks & Mural Painting

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## CURRY

Continued from A-1

sit-down with the International Association of Fire Fighters.

Union leaders gave no immediate response and will be making their own offers at future meetings.

The collective bargaining talks come after voters supported an Aug. 30 referendum for a half-cent sales tax that would help pay down Jacksonville's \$2.85 billion pension debt.

Before the city can levy that sales tax, it must close at least one of the three pension plans — police and fire, general employees, and corrections officers — to new hires. The negotiations are about the new retirement plan, which could be a 401(k) style version or a different kind of pension plan from what the city offers now.

Fraternal Order of Police local President Steve Zona said union negotiators need more information about how Curry's proposal would affect Jacksonville's ability to attract top-quality employees.

He asked for a side-by-side comparison of what police officers would stand to receive based on current pensions compared to what new hires could expect to bank in their investment accounts in Curry's plan.

"When the mayor says it's competitive, show us



Mayor Lenny Curry, and members of his pension staff, met with Randy Wyse, president of the Jacksonville Association of Fire Fighters, and members of the IAFF local 122 International Association of Fire Fighters at their meeting hall on Nov. 4. (Bruce Lipsky/Florida Times-Union)

how it's competitive compared to what we have right now," Zona said.

Chief Financial Officer Mike Weinstein said the city would provide whatever information it could.

Randy Wyse, local president of the International Association of Fire Fighters, told Curry the union's goal in negotiations will be

to ensure the fire department is a "great department. It's never just been all about what we can put into our own pockets."

He said after the meeting that ending pensions for new hires "can be problematic" in recruiting talented people and keeping them in Jacksonville.

"It's unheard of in the

public safety world to hear something like that be put on the table, so that's something we'll have to look at," Wyse said.

When John Rutherford was sheriff and a Jacksonville task force discussed moving away from pensions in 2014, Rutherford came out strongly in favor of retaining the pension

plan, calling it an "essential tool for law enforcement."

Rutherford said even a hybrid plan combining features of a pension with individual investment accounts would put Jacksonville at a "serious competitive disadvantage in hiring and maintaining police officers."

Sheriff Mike Williams, who succeeded Ruther-

ford, is taking a hands-off stance on the current negotiations.

"The sheriff will refrain from commenting as the collective bargaining process occurs," his spokeswoman Lauri-Ellen Smith said. "He has no role in those negotiations and prefers not to comment in deference to the mayor's activities with the unions."

Curry told union leaders he's confident his proposal "will attract and retain the best and the brightest."

In Curry's proposal, future hires for police, firefighters and corrections officer positions would get their retirement nest eggs from individual investment accounts. The employees would contribute 8 percent of pay toward the accounts.

The city's match for police and firefighters would start at 12 percent in the first five years of employment, then increase to 14 percent in the next five years, followed by a 16 percent in years 11 through 15, an 18 percent match in years 16 through 20 and finally a 20 percent match after that point.

The city's match for corrections officers would start at 10 percent, go to 12 percent in years six through 10, then 14 percent in years 11 through 15, followed by a 16 percent match during years 16 through 20 and then an 18 percent match after 20 years of service.

## HOMICIDE

Continued from A-1

a home that bears the scars of the attack. Calling her mother "my best friend" who took care of them, she looked at holes kicked or punched in three walls near the kitchen and said she felt overwhelmed.

"I am sick for the loss of my mother. I am sick for the loss of my son. I don't feel he deserves to go to prison. I don't feel in my heart that he meant to do this to the severity that he did," Broughman said, burying her face in her hands before continuing.

"It's just so hard. I am so emotional," she said. "I am lost without Mom. We were everything together."

The initial incident occurred just before 8 a.m. Oct. 10, according to the arrest report. Broughman was in the shower when Courson confiscated his beer. Her grandson became enraged when he couldn't find his beer and began yelling, "It's all your fault, everything is your fault!" she told police.

From her hospital bed, Courson told them her grandson caved in chunks of the walls and shoved her to the floor as he followed her into a hallway, the report said. That's when he



This painting of Joyce Ann Courson, 69, hangs in the living room of her East Arlington home on Ashridge Drive. (Dan Scanlan/Florida Times-Union)

held her down and punched her in the face with his fist over and over again, then started kicking her.

Dillon Ross, a 22-year-old roommate, said he had just gone to bed after his night job when he heard the argument, then some banging. He said the grandmother and grandson sometimes argued in the mornings, so he stayed out of it at first.

"She took the beer and he just flipped out and I guess she wouldn't tell him where she put it, so he started punching holes in the wall, then destroying the house pretty much and then blaming her," Ross said. "I didn't think anything of it until I heard this ridiculous crash. That's when it was like this turned into something crazy. After the crash, I heard

the grandmother screaming for help."

Ross said he ran into the foyer and found Courson on the floor, and the 18-year-old was gone.

Officers searching the area found Broughman walking nearby on Kernan Boulevard and took him into custody. He told the officer that when he gets upset, "he blacks out in rage and does not remember what he does," according to the report.

Broughman's mother admitted her son "has some issues." She also said she has since learned that her mother told her intensive care unit doctor not to blame him for her death.

The attack left Courson with severe cuts and bruises on her face and more on her stomach and chest. She



Tracey Broughman looks at the initial aggravated battery arrest report of her son, 18-year-old Dylan Nicholas Broughman, on Nov. 3, after learning that morning of his upgraded charge of murder in the death of her mother. She leans on a wall of their home filled with damage that occurred during the Oct. 10th incident against her mother, also the teen's grandmother. (Dan Scanlan/Florida Times-Union)

died Oct. 18.

In a June 6 battery arrest report of Courson's daughter, the 18-year-old told po-

lice he witnessed his mother batter Courson on more than one occasion. The case was later dropped.

This month it was the grandson being charged.

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## NEW TOWN

Continued from A-1

problem properties.

A city spokeswoman said code enforcement employees routinely sweep old neighborhoods to identify violations, and this time decided to move up its review of New Town after learning of the walk from Councilman Garrett Dennis.

One long-time resident, Brenda Ford, didn't mince words when it came to describing the city's actions:

"They knew about the blight. They did nothing about it for years," Ford said. "And here we are getting ready for a big blight walk ... and the city decided to move. They did it ahead of our walk, but that's OK. We got a response."

She added: "I think it's something they should have done a long time ago."

George Maxey, executive director of the New Town Success Zone, said he doesn't believe the city acted to undercut the residents' efforts.

"The squeaky wheel gets the oil," he said. "I think they're seeing now that the New Town [neighborhood] is taking this seriously."

The New Town Success Zone, located northwest of downtown by Edward Waters College, is an effort to transform the long-struggling neighborhood. It aims to engage residents in advocating for their neighborhood and improve opportunities for



Christian Wade, a volunteer with Celebration Church, checks the property of a home along West Third Street that appears to be abandoned. New Town Success Zone residents and other volunteers gathered at the Center for Health Disparities at Edward Waters College last Saturday to train to identify blight in the neighborhood and how to report it. After the training session they fanned out across the neighborhood listing abandoned homes. (Bruce Lipsky/Florida Times-Union)

area kids as well as bring stores and services to the residents.

Maxey said all of that starts with fixing blight.

"It literally eats at a community like a cancer," he said. "If you don't fix the blight, you can't fix a community."

Blight has been a top concern for residents since they organized into a group called the Vision Keepers, now 80 strong, earlier this year. Ford told the Times-Union in April that cleaning up the neighborhood was a priority.

"Who wants to build a new home when you've got blighted homes on

both sides of it?" she said this week.

On Oct. 29, about 40 residents, Habijax volunteers and Celebration Church started their Saturday with a one-hour training session, then headed out to note possible violations. In all, they identified about 125 properties with issues, Maxey said.

For the residents who need help cleaning up or repairing their homes, Maxey said, neighbors will pitch in to help neighbors. For blight, they want it gone.

"It's not about poverty," he said. "You do have poverty in New Town. But it's

not as extreme as people make it out to be. It looks impoverished because of the blighted homes."

He said it's time the residents demand the city pay attention to them and fix these problems; it's the city's job to make sure that these city ordinances about blight and nuisance properties are enforced.

"We don't expect that in Mandarin. We don't expect that in Southside. We don't expect that at the Beaches," he said of the neglect. "But we expect that in New Town."

He added: "This can be fixed. This doesn't have to be this way."

## College owns several properties with violations

By Tessa Duvall  
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Eight properties in the New Town neighborhood owned by Edward Waters College account for 13 instances of code violations documented by the city Oct. 24-26.

George Dandelake, special assistant to the president at Edward Waters College, said most of the violations relate to overgrown grass and trash on the property.

He gave the example of a two-story home on Grunthal Street that was recently purchased by the college and cited last week. He said the facilities crew was unaware the college now owned the home and failed to pick up trash on the property.

Dandelake said the college wants to help clean up the neighborhood and make it more attractive to students.

"It's to our advantage to clean a lot of this up," he said of the surrounding areas.

Edward Waters College owns 193 properties, according to the Property Appraiser, all located in the 32209 ZIP code, in and around the Kings Road campus that is west of Interstate 95.

Many of the properties were "in bad shape" when the college bought them,

and about 100 are currently vacant, Dandelake said.

A couple of buildings are ready to be torn down, and more may come down, he said. Some will be sold to Habijax for the value of the land, as three recently were. As the college gets money, Dandelake said, it intends to buy more of these old houses and tear them down for green space, or for expansion of the campus, like a stadium, track and more dorms and parking.

The campus overlaps New Town, whose boundaries are Kings Road to the north, Myrtle Avenue to the east, West Beaver Street to the south and a set of railroad tracks to the west.

But the overlap between the college and the neighborhood is more than just shared streets.

Edward Waters College President Nat Glover serves as co-chair of the New Town Success Zone, the years-long effort to revitalize and transform the neighborhood. The New Town Success Zone committee meets in the college's Center for Health Disparities.

Dandelake said when the city began really pushing for blight cleanup last year, the college had a lot of property it had to clean up.

"We got caught up in some of that," he said.