

Rising cost of utilities topic of discussion

By Linda Schneider
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The February City Council meeting opened with a discussion not unlike most households, the rising cost of utilities. With the costs going up, Councilman Loren White requested that Tabetha Ketzner, city clerk, get a 12-month average of usage report from Midwest Energy, Inc.

The council accepted Tabetha Ketzner's resignation as city clerk, effective Monday.

Sheriff report

Sheriff Craig Van Allen presented the monthly duty report (see Sheriff Report) and presented the council with information about new tasers guns recently added to the department.

Interestingly, the taser does not affect blood pressure or heartbeat as some may suspect, said Sheriff Van Allen. Deputy Cody Beeson informed the council on many other misconceptions of the use of tasers and how it has lowered injury incidents 40 percent of both officers who use them and suspects who resist arrests.

Deputy Beeson reported that he is a certified taser instructor who will be not only instructing deputies on how to use a taser, but would make presentation to the public on the use and safety of tasers.

Personnel policy

After several months of discussion on a personnel policy, specifically, personal time, the council is close to adopting one.

Sick leave and vacation time will remain as is; however, full-time city employees with get 16 hours of personal time in a calendar year to be used, as they want in one-hour increments, but without pay.

Mayor Troy Burr will submit the policy to Kari Gilliland, city attorney, to write up and present it to the council at the next meeting for approval.

City pool

The council members once again discussed the public swimming pool that the Recreation Commission had asked the city to take over managing.

With Phyllis Carson, city treasurer, on hand to help in answering the questions of how the billing process could make it possible, and a letter from Mrs. Gilliland laying out the legal steps, the council had a number of options to think about.

The main concern was how to budget for the pool for the 2009 summer. It was suggested that as the city received bills, they could be forwarded to the Recreation Commission to make and sign the checks, and forward the checks back through the council. Councilman White asked if it was legal to do that.

"I suppose it is until the budget for next year is made," said Mrs. Carson.

Mayor Burr mentioned before any thing is done, a written commitment would have to come from the Recreation Commission. In the meantime, he suggested the council start on developing a time line of what needs to be done. No action taken.

New operating hours for landfill

By Karen Krien
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The Cheyenne County Landfill, located east of Wheeler, will be closing at 4 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays.

The early closing is due to the citations received from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. The department official had noted that the compacting of trash and proper coverage were not being done daily. This could be due to last-minute dumping and the supervisor, Ed Garner, not having time to do

the compaction and covering.

In order to solve this problem, the commissioners, at the Friday meeting, agreed to close the landfill an hour earlier. While it might be an inconvenience at first, the commissioners agreed that people will adjust to the earlier closing noting that it is absolutely necessary to keep in compliance with state regulations.

At the Jan. 12 meeting, the commissioners received a letter telling that the county was being fined \$4,500 for not being in compliance.

Eggers emergency building

The council was presented with a change order from McGilvray Farms that would add to the cost of remodeling the fire station. The change order would add an addition \$4,800 to the original bid of \$42,662; however, the council approved only \$1,600 of changes. Furthermore, even with the changes, cost for the remodeling is still under the \$50,000 budget.

Councilman White, who is also an Emergency Medical Technician for Cheyenne County, brought the council up-to-date on the construction and some concerns about the change order.

He reported that \$600 would go to three braces on the west wall and \$3,200 for pre-finished metal liner and \$1,000 for internet, telephone and electrical wiring.

The council approved the change order for \$600 and \$1,000. Tabled until further information is known was the \$3,200 for the steel liner.

Motion carried to pay \$15,916 to McGilvray Farms for work completed up to Jan. 28.

Council did not accept \$300 from Cheyenne County for rent of the Eggers Building. Councilman White feels it is not enough for the equipment and trucks that is stored in the building.

Councilman Wade Carmichael suggested talking with the commissioners at their next meeting.

Miscellaneous items

With most of the discussions over, the council quickly covered ground by doing the following:

- Goal setting meeting set for Monday.
- Will accept applications for city clerk until Feb. 17, then start interviewing.
- Approved the first of three steps for the Kansas Department of Agriculture/Division of Water Resources to assist Bird City in joining with the National Flood Insurance Program towards getting flood insurance for home buyers in the city limits.
- Approved to allow the Boy Scout to have meetings in the Scout Hut in Van Doren Park. Will clean up inside.
- Approved bid of \$13,350 from Don Wright to purchase generator for the lift station.
- Approved the purchase of 150 ton of sealing rock for streets.
- Heard update about Community Development Block Grant for lagoon. City is in compliance with state and federal program requirements and official hearing to close grant funding will be in March.
- Heard a letter from the Cheyenne County Development Corporation co-directors, Charles and Diane Kribs, being angry with the *Bird City Times* newspaper for omitting activity report and will see that it does not happen again.
- Approved Identity Theft Policy to comply with Federal Red Flag Rule of securing sensitive personal information, which is already implemented.
- Discussed out sourcing work compared to having it done by city maintenance.

Next meeting

Next meeting March 2.



IT WAS COWBOY HATS AND SINGING cowboy songs for Cheylin fourth graders, Arais Castillo (L), Serena Lee, Tom Frisbie and Jacqueline Chacon during Kansas Day.

Times staff photo by Linda Schneider

Kansas Day drew young and old alike

There were still patches of snow on the ground for the 80th Kansas Day celebration in Bird City; however, it was 148 years ago that Kansas became the country's 34th state. This year's theme was "Cattle Trails of Kansas."

When the American Legion hall opened the doors at 10 a.m., it did not take long to fill up the seats with both young and old who came to hear some of Kansas' history, look at the displays made by St. Francis and Cheylin elementary students, and be entertained with cowboy music and square dancing.

During lunch, the Swinging Seniors treated the audience to music and after lunch was over, the program started with the St. Francis third grade class singing and dancing to "Turkey in the Straw." With one of the students dressed up like a turkey, it had the crowd tapping their toes.

Next up were the Cheylin fourth graders, dressed in cowboy hats and with the help of the fifth and sixth grade classes, started their presentation. However, they experienced some audio difficulties and had to wait until later in the show to perform. When they did, it was another real toe-tapper as they sang and



Sandy Smull

square danced. Continuing with song and dance were the St. Francis Singers, led by Louanne Isermhagan and accompanied by Sandy Bandel.

Following the entertainment was guest speaker, Arnold Schofield, historian and cultural resource specialist at Fort Scott National Historic Site. He wore a Union uniform that was a replica of the type worn during the battle. He explained each strip and emblem, and how the uniform was properly worn.

Bringing the story alive, Mr. Schofield shared interesting information that separated fact from fiction about what actually happened during the Mine Creek battle. In ad-



ARNOLD SCHOFIELD gave a lively demonstration of the various weapons used during the Mine Creek Battle.

Times staff photo by Linda Schneider

dition, he demonstrated how several weapons were carried into battle and how they were used.

Continuing with the program, special recognition was given to both the eldest Kansas-born man at the Kansas Day ceremony and the eldest Cheyenne County-born man. Meta Dankenbring received recognition for the eldest Cheyenne County-born woman, Otto Bandel for the eldest foreign-born man; Galina Tseruibel eldest born foreigner from Toro-

pels, Russia; Susan Chomor for youngest foreign-born woman from Wurzburg, Germany.

The eldest-man recognition went to Edwin Meyer of Smyrna, Neb., born in 1912 and eldest woman honor went to Myra Miller from Hunter, born in 1910. The youngest girl attending the Kansas Day ceremonies went to Marcelle Ceballes, born in 2006.

Ending the ceremonies was a memorial tribute given by Pastor Jeff Landers, Christian Church, St. Francis.

Muscial scheduled Sunday afternoon

Rebecca Noble's Cabaret Theatre will present the show *I Hear Music 2* at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 8, at the St. Francis Community High School auditorium in St. Francis.

The Cabaret consists of four women and their pianist, and has been traveling as a troupe since 1992. Based in Omaha, Neb., the ensemble is considered four of the metro's most talented singers who are both sophisticated and have an impeccable blend. The ensemble has performed extensively in the Lincoln and Omaha houses, and many out of state Nebraska Arts Councils.

I Hear Music 2 harkens back to the group's first show, opening with a dynamic arrangement of *I Hear Music* and Ellington's *It Don't Mean*

a *Thing*. Another Ellington hit, *Mood Indigo*, shows off the silky alto vocals of Phyllis Noble. It includes a selection of a cappella standards such as *Always*, *Embraceable You*, and Rebecca Noble's tender rendition of *What'll I Do*.

New arrangements of *How Deep Is The Ocean* featuring Camille Metoyer Moten, and *The Water Is Wide*, featuring Beth Asbjörnson, round out the set.

The second act features a salute to the blues, including *Blues In The Night* and *Birth Of The Blues*.

Admission is by Western Plains Arts Association season ticket or at the door.

A performance at the school will be given the following day.

Courthouse steps completed soon

By Karen Krien

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It appears that the replacing of the courthouse steps will be completed in the spring or summer.

Terry Miller, clerk, had the Heritage Trust Fund grant with the Kansas State Historical Society renewed last month. He had contacted Eric Johnson, contractor with Campbell and Johnson Engineers, Concordia, who thought there would be no problem with the bids coming in.

In the Jan. 29 issue of both *The Saint Francis Herald* and *Bird City Times*, a notice for

interested contractors to have their bids in for the steps by Feb. 27 was printed. The work will include taking out the existing concrete steps and landings, restoring the stone landings and steps, and any other stone and brick repairs.

Mr. Johnson told Mr. Miller that after a bid is accepted, the work will probably continue shortly.

The courthouse steps have been closed since November 2007, after the county's insurance had deemed the steps unsafe. Since then, the only entrance to the courthouse has been the west and the handicapped entrances.