

Council gets grant updates

By Linda Schneider
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Before the Bird City Council opened for its regular monthly meeting, a special hearing was called for the purpose of Corina Cox, economic development coordinator for the Northwest Kansas Planning and Development Commission, to update the council members on the Community Block Development Grant that had been awarded to Bird City last fall.

In addition, Ms. Cox requested for the council to vote on a waiver for a conflict of interest in compliance to the requirements of the grant. The waiver was asked to allow Brad Schneider, city supervisor, and his wife, Linda, to apply for the grant for rehabilitation for their home. Motion carried to waive the conflict of interest.

In addition, at the end of the meeting, executive session was called and the council voted to approve the permanent hiring of Eric Bartels as city maintenance with a pay raise to \$11 per hour and benefits.

Rehabilitation/demolition grant
Ms. Cox reported that three homes are ready to be bid on by contractors for the work needed.

She said that on April 1, the bids will be opened, and on April 5, the contract will be awarded to the lowest responsible bid, in accordance to the grant requirements. The contractor(s) will get 30 days to complete the project.

Discussion followed on increasing the “walk-away policy” from \$18,000 to \$20,000. This would allow for more grant money to be for the rehabilitation. An example would be the state appointed inspector would assess the needed work for \$21,000, the owner would have to comply by making the \$1,000 in repairs before the grant money kicked in. Motion carried to increase the policy to \$20,000.

The process of paying for the work done through the grant began with Ms. Cox requesting the second pay request of \$8,200. Motion carried to make payment.

She added that originally, the grant is set up for rehabilitating 12 houses and three demolitions, and so far only four houses have applied.

“We would like to know why the others have not,” said Ms. Cox. “Maybe letters should be sent out to the target area asking why they have not applied.” There was no further discussion.

Emergency training building
Dave Hickert presented a draft of rental guidelines for the training room inside the Eggers Emergency Building.

Mr. Hickert asked for council to make a decision on making the training room available for public use, or keeping it to city and government entities only.

“The building belongs to the city,” said Mr. Hickert. “We need direction on what you want to do.”

After some discussion concerning what it would take to secure equipment and other items, such as providing locks and putting doors in place, motion carried to allow the training room for public use.

Mr. Hickert brought the council up to date on the final touches for the training room such as finishing up on windows, doors and shades.

Members and Mr. Hickert had a brief discussion on rental costs and deposits, saying that they did not want parties lacking responsibility for damage or cleanup. It was agreed to set high fees to keep those who are serious about using the training room. He suggested the rental fees go into a building fund for future use.

Mayor Troy Burr instructed Mr. Hickert to come back to the next meeting with a rental agreement for approval.

Access road request
Brad and Linda Schneider asked the council for assistance in constructing an access road to the property just south of their land on Seventh Street.

Mayor Burr and members informed them that what is being asked for is really a private driveway and the city is not responsible for constructing a road.

“It does have utility poles and lines,” said Mrs. Schneider. “Should we ask the county commissioners?”

Mr. Hickert, who is employed by Prairie Land Electric Cooperative in Bird City, said that the poles belong to Midwest Energy Company and maintenance is wherever they decide and they will just do the work, road or not, they have four-wheel drives. No further discussion.

Lebow Manor
Deb Smith updated the council on what is going on at the Manor. They are currently converting a two-bedroom apartment into handicap accessible and enlarging the parking lot to add a handicap parking spot.

She said the two projects will use up the money from the Manor’s capital funds, but the bills are current. She will bring the plans for the construction to the next meeting. There was no further discussion

Request for horseshoe pit
Mrs. Smith and Willie Martinez proposed building a horseshoe pit in the Van Doren Park. They wanted to be able to do the construction in time for the Bird City 125-year birthday celebration. The members liked the idea.

The council and Mayor Burr were given a diagram of the proposed construction; however, Mayor Burr expressed that he would like a more detailed description and cost of the horseshoe pit.

Mrs. Smith and Mr. Martinez said they would come back to the next meeting with the information.

In keeping in the discussion of the 125-year celebration, Mrs. Smith asked if the council would be in agreement with some kind of street dance somewhere in the city limits.

The council thought it was a good idea and several locations were suggested.

Building permits
The council approved the building permits for Dale Hazuka Sr. for a new constructed garage at 203 Ketchum, and Wade Carmichael for the construction of a new backyard fence.

New addresses
Mayor Burr assigned addresses to the new structures at the 5th Ave. construction site. As follows west to east, 505 S. Demick; 909 E. 5th Street; 911 E. 5th Street; 915 E. 5th Street; 917 E. 5th Street, and 504 S. Penn.

Pool updates
Councilman Wade Carmichael reported from the Pool Committee that a meeting is being scheduled and will report to the council at the next meeting.

He added that Ann Burr, pool manager, will attend and present her requests for the upcoming swim season.

“We will address safety equipment, structure repair and other important items,” said Councilman Carmichael. “At the end of the month, we will begin advertising for pool staff.”

He said they will also be discussing the issues of swim teams and lessons.

City water loss
Mr. Schneider reported that he had located a substantial water loss at the two city wells. He said that he found that the check valves were worn out and allowing water to flow back into the wells.

He added that he has been monitoring and manually operating the wells for over a week. What he found out was that this was causing 30,000 to 40,000 gallons of water loss per day.

Still, he believes that there are discrepancies in the meter as they are read electrically.

While this is good news, Mayor Burr is cautious and wants to see what happens in a month or two. The council agreed with the mayor.

Personnel items
Councilman Dennis Wright received approval to update the city personnel policy, especially in the concerns about paid time off.

The council approved for Linda Schneider, part-time city clerk, to develop a filing system for the city shop records and information.

Next meeting
The next meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Monday, April 5, at city hall.



JORDAN JANICKE (l to r) JOSIE FRISBIE, Bergen Bock, Karen Jones, Tommy Frisbie and Erik Estrada gather around the table in Cheylin’s home economics room to make fruit pizzas.
Times staff photo by Linda Schneider

Students learn about nutrition

Once a month, Karen Jones, program assistant with Family Nutrition Program from Kansas State University Research and Extension office, comes to the

northwest corner of Kansas to teach third through fifth graders in Cheylin Elementary all about cooking. And in the process the students learn about

nutrition. The students work together to make a delicious and nutritious meal from a recipe they get off the website, Kids a Cookin. For

more information about this program and to get mouthwatering recipes kids can cook, go to www.kidsacookin.ksu.edu/Welcome.aspx.

Burning debris in rural area a concern

By Karen Krien
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Spring is just a couple of weeks away and, with the warm days, people are thinking about cleaning up yards, ditches and windbreaks. Much of the time, that also includes burning thistles and other burnable materials.

At the Cheyenne County Commissioners’ meeting on Friday, the commissioners discussed how some

people in the rural areas are not calling in these burns. Firemen reported they had been called to put out a fire which was a controlled burn but had not been called in to the dispatch office.

The problem is, the commissioners said, while the farmer may have the fire under control, people seeing the smoke will just assume there is a fire that is not under control. When the dis-

patch is notified that a farmer is going to have a controlled burn, then, when a call of a sighting is reported, they will automatically know that it is a controlled burn and the firemen will not be dispatched.

The commissioners discussed the fact that there is a resolution which was passed in February 1996 that states, if the fire department is called to put out a fire

and it is a controlled burn which has not been reported, the person starting the fire is liable for repayment for all the expenses with a minimum charge being \$300.

People starting a fire, whether it be a trash fire, or a thistle fire, or burning an old shed, need to notify the dispatch office by calling 911 or be prepared to pay for the expenses of having the firemen come to put out the fire.

Hospice, a service to be looked into

By Linda Schneider
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“If you or someone you love has a life-limiting condition,” said Amanda McKenzie. “Hospice should be looked into as a service.”

On Monday, Amanda McKenzie, volunteer director for Hospice Services, Incorporated, spoke to volunteers over a potluck luncheon in Bird City about the importance of hospice care.

Hospice Services, based out of Phillipsburg and oversees 13 Northwest Kansas counties, is a non-profit community-based organization that has been serving Kansas since 1982, and is funded by local donations, and state and federal.

Local hospice volunteers, Dan Carson, John Finley, Elmer and Dorothy Kellner, Donna Northrup and the Cheyenne County coordinator Edith Walters attended the meeting.

It was business first as Mrs. McKenzie explained to the group the importance of keeping clear and complete records of visits. She then went into more of the services that are provided by hospice.

“Contrary to what most people believe, hospice care is not the last minute service before death,” said Mrs. McKenzie.

She continued by saying that the service is to help not only the client, but family members as well to cope with the end of life issues. There needs to be time to discuss a Living Will and choices the client can make about medical designation and Durable Power of Attorneys.

She added that what most people, and doctors, don’t realize is that the hospice care does not limit itself to just a few days or weeks. Even though hospice service is generally notified just days or even moments before death, there have been times where hospice service is needed for years.

“We like to have at least two weeks with the patient, but we know



AMANDA MCKENZIE talks to volunteers during meeting.

there is no such thing as a time-line in such matters,” said Mrs. McKenzie. “And we have had patients up to 4 years.”

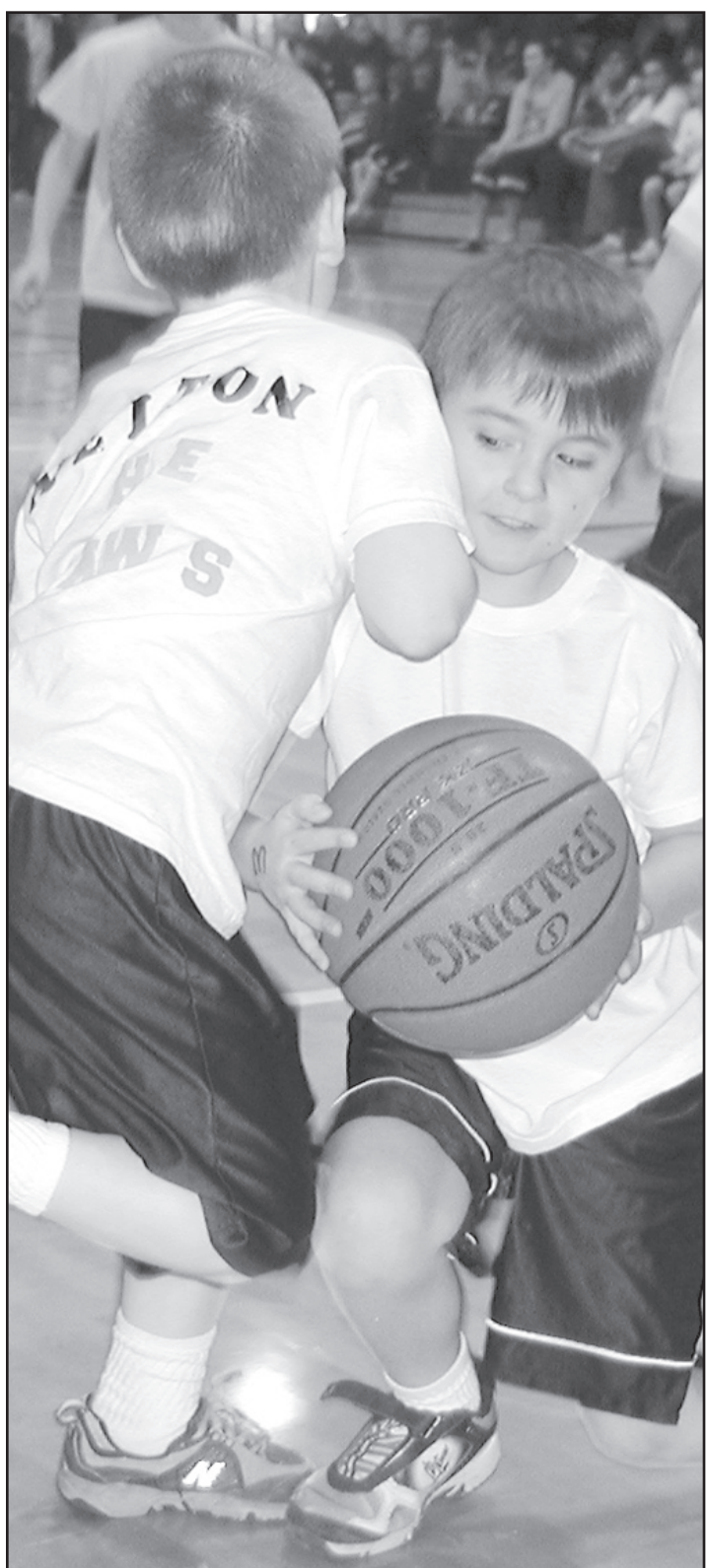
Other services hospice provides are helping with pain management, symptoms, and the emotional, psychological and spiritual aspects of dying that is experienced not only by the patient, but the family members as well. Hospice is more focused on caring than curing.

Mrs. McKenzie told the group that clients don’t have to wait until their physician recommends hospice care; they can make the first contact with the services, and then get their doctor’s assessment and approval.

In addition, hospice care is not limited to just hospitals; the service will go into nursing homes, assisted living, as well as private homes.

“We work as a team with the patient’s doctor, pharmacist, clergy, and nurses,” said Mrs. McKenzie. “And we want to be available for the patient as well as for the family members.”

For more information or would like to volunteer to be a hospice caregiver, contact Hospice Services, Inc. at 785-543-2900.



JOSEPH MELTON (l) AND KEIGAN TAYLOR were on The Claws team during the 3-on-3 basketball tournament held on Saturday. The tournament was a day-long event with 28 teams competing. Read the related story on Page 3.
Times staff photo by Linda Schneider