



OPEN HOUSE HELD — Pictured (L-R): Valeria Acosta, Jesie Frisbie, Jacob Serrano, Granite Bock, Josie Frisbie, Gregor Burr. Destany Clemens is at the hot cider.

Times photo by Darci Schields

## Development group held open house

Bird City Century II Development Foundation held an open house last Thursday in recognition of Community Foundation Week and National Philanthropy Day. Several individuals and couples came in and visited throughout the day and enjoyed coffee, cider and cookies.

Kale Schields, Cheylin sixth grade teacher, brought his class down during the open house to give the kids a tour of the foun-

ation office, along with some history on how the foundation was started, and insight on some of the projects and grants that have been funded all because of donors who have left money for the betterment of our community. The students came up with some ideas of their own on what they would like to see in the community.

## Resident addresses concern to council

Roy Shrader, Roy's Carpentry, was present to address the Bird City City Council at their regular meeting on Nov. 5. He was concerned about remarks made at the prior meeting.

He said he thought the council doesn't realize what an asset the city's maintenance supervisor, Brad Schneider, is for the city. Mr. Schneider, he said, spends a lot of time on the phone ordering parts and seeing about inventory, etc. Mr. Schneider and myself, he said, saves the city a lot of money when doing repairs and general maintenance. Mr. Schneider spends a lot of time talking to homeowners and talking them into changing out their water lines to avoid future issues.

Mr. Shrader admitted that the project of the drainage ditch by U.S. 36 on Bird Ave. took a lot more time than they had originally thought. But, he said, he has donated a lot of time to the city so that projects could get done.

Mayor Troy Burr said that he appreciate all the help Mr. Schneider provided for the city. Councilman Frank Serrano said he likes the way Mr. Shrader cares about the city.

Hal Sager, councilman, said he doesn't think anyone takes into consideration that other cities have more than two maintenance employees. He said Saint Francis has at least six employees so when there's a water leak or other issue; it gets taken care of quickly.

### East 5th Street water line replacement

Mr. Schneider reported that the repair of the valve on East 5th Street was complete. He said they replaced a 2-inch line on Ketchum but did not replace all of the lines they were planning on. He said the service line going to the second house looked okay.

### Line locator purchase request

Mr. Schneider said they accidentally caused some unnecessary damage due to not being able to locate the service lines. He said the Line Locator tool they have doesn't work properly so he'd like to purchase a new one.

Dennis Wright, councilman, asked him if he has been installing metal tracer wires in the plastic pipe they've used to repair leaks. Mr. Schneider said they haven't been, but it would be a good idea to start doing that. He said a line locator costs approximately \$1,200-\$1,500. They use the locator on almost every dig to locate lines.

Mr. Schneider was instructed to bring specific prices to the next meeting. No further discussion.

### Equipment

Councilman Shannon Ambrosier reported that one of the new skid loader tires was accidentally damaged by Mr. Schneider and needed to be replaced.

He said the blue pickup is at Frontier Ag waiting for the replacement of a water pump.

A request was received to change the hose at the bulk station from a 2-inch hose to a 3-inch hose. He said he was told that the well is plumbed with a 3-inch line so installing a 3-inch hose would make

filling tanks less time consuming. Mr. Schneider said he will check into it and report back to the council at the next meeting.

Mr. Ambrosier said he had asked other members of the council to look at the Frontier Ag water line he had discussed at the previous meeting. He said the line has never been metered and needs to be capped by the city.

He said if that line freezes, it would be the city's responsibility because it is a main service line. Other council members agreed.

Mr. Serrano said that something needs to be done because no one is paying for the water that is coming out of the line. Mr. Schneider said he will get the line dug up and capped.

### Streets

Mr. Sager said he hasn't had a chance to create a list of tree limb violations for the Clerk.

He reported that he has received a quote of \$8,500 from Shaw Construction to creating a parking area on the portion of land offered by Nick and Heather Boyson. He said the quote includes curb and gutter, handicap accessibility, and cement.

The homeowner's water meter barrel is in the project area and would need to be moved at the expense of the city. Mr. Sager said the addition of parking in the proposed area would give room for approximately five or six vehicles.

Mayor Burr asked when Shaw Construction would be able to do the job. Mr. Sager said they could begin anytime.

Wade Carmichael, councilman, asked Mr. Schneider how much it would cost the city to move the meter barrel. He said fittings, a yoke, digging, etc. to move the meter and barrel will cost approximately \$500. Mr. Carmichael said he would like to see the project happen but he would also like to see the school share in some of the cost, if they were to proceed.

He asked if the city really should spend \$10,000 for a little bit of extra parking for the school right now. Councilman Wright agreed, asking if that was the best way to spend \$10,000. He said there are probably better ways to spend that much money. Mayor Burr decided to leave the issue for consideration in the future.

### City maintenance

Mr. Schneider reported that he had repaired a water leak at 3rd and Burr Ave. He was able to locate the mainline. The valve was leaking but they ran a new service line and installed a new meter barrel. He said they still have a few connections to complete but the job was pretty much done.

Mayor Burr asked if he was documenting hours spent and materials used for each water leak so they have records of each leak. Mr. Schneider said they have been keeping records of each leak. Clerk DeAnza Ambrosier suggested taking photographs of a water leak before and after each repair so that Miller and Associates will know all the specifics of each repair.

Editor's note: The above article was taken from the unapproved minutes of the City Council.

## People gather in courtroom for meeting

By Karen Krien

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During the last year, the residents in the county have been wondering what the county commissioners were doing about signing a contract with the Good Samaritan Society. And, during the last year, the commissioners have been worrying about signing a contract but, until the Oct. 31 meeting, didn't have a lease.

At the Nov. 15 Cheyenne County Commissioners' meeting, over 60 people gathered in the courtroom to hear what Randy Fitzgerald, director of operations for the Good Samaritan Society, Jeff Paulsen, Good Samaritan Village administrator, and the commissioners were going to talk about.

The proposed lease the commissioners had received from the Society on Oct. 31 had left the board with several questions and requests which Mr. Fitzgerald had come to answer.

The commissioners stressed to Mr. Fitzgerald and Mr. Paulsen that they wanted the nursing home and they wanted the Society in Cheyenne County — that they were just looking out for the taxpayers' money and making sure that all questions were asked and a satisfactory lease would be worked out before anything was signed.

The commissioners requested that the lease with the Society be reviewed every year and that a budget for the nursing home be presented to them by July 1 when the county's budget is being prepared.

Mr. Fitzgerald said they wouldn't have a budget available at that time of year however, they would have a Medicaid audit. The commissioners agreed that this would work.

Another request made by the commissioners was to submit a monthly request for needed money. Again, Mr. Fitzgerald said it was not a problem. He added that he is a good steward of the taxpayer's money.

Mr. Paulsen pointed out in a recent newspaper article, that the proposed contract doesn't read that the county will hand over \$200,000 (or the 6 mills voted in by the people for the elderly).

The money appropriated to the Society is for operations and capital support, and will be spent locally. Mr. Fitzgerald stressed that it will not be going to the Society.

The commissioners said that because the money for the Village is an appropriation, that doesn't mean that there will always be 6 mills given to the Society. It will be handled in a way similar to the appropriation given to the hospital.

Sometimes, Dale Patton, com-



DISCUSSING THE proposed lease during the commissioners meeting were (l to r) Randy Fitzgerald, Jeff Paulsen, Kari Gilliland, Ernie Ketzner, Andy Beikman and Dale Patton.

Times staff photo by Karen Krien

missioner, said, they get the full amount they ask for and other times they don't.

So, said Mr. Fitzgerald, the amount could be changed each year? How do I present this to my leadership when the amount needed is not enough?

Your annual budget is your biggest financial statement, Mr. Patton said. It is not the intent of this board to short change the nursing home, however, if the board does see that the facility can be operated on less, then we will not appropriate the full 6 mills. That is why we need to have that annual audit.

I understand money and budgets, Mr. Fitzgerald said, but we need to be assured that the money is there because we don't know what is happening with Medicare. We are nervous about medicaid reductions in the future — if revenues go down, there are less patients — it makes me nervous that we might not get what we need.

Because there had been no budget submitted by the Society, the commissioners had not put a line item in the 2013 budget for the nursing home. However, they said extra money had been put in another fund to cover needed expenses for the nursing home.

That is the reason for the annual review, said Kari Gilliland, county attorney.

### Funded depreciation

Mr. Fitzgerald referred to the newspaper article which said if the funded depreciation total was taken out of the Society's monthly budget, then the nursing home would be making money. We will continue to look at depreciation as an expense, he said. It helps the Society to purchase capital items and to help with cash flow — that is how we, the Society, need to do that.

Before the fire (October 2010), Mr. Fitzgerald said, we had saved \$800,000 which was used for salaries and other expenses at that time.

We have no funded depreciation at this time, he said.

The Society will pay the liability insurance and workers compensation and the county will be responsible for insuring the building and content. The county's insurance will cost \$440 per month.

### Billing

The accounting and billing will be moved to the Good Samaritan Society headquarters. Karen Moberly, who does the accounting at the Village will have another position.

### Donations

Mr. Paulsen pointed out that the Society's donation for \$1 not only included the nursing facility but also the apartments.

The home health business and building will remain with the Society.

The commissioners talked about capital improvements that would need to be done in the near future. Mr. Paulsen said the asphalt parking areas needed work as did the west entrance. He wondered if the county crew could do some of that work which would save the county money.

Mrs. Moberly said that the Village is still building with its own revenue and the facility has been able to pay the bills. She didn't think that the Society would need to ask for money every month. Mr. Fitzgerald said that the nursing home had only had one positive month. I will continue to challenge Jeff (Paulsen) and the staff to continue to work at keeping expenses down and care up.

### Public comments and questions

Eilene Nolan reported that, after the fire, there had been patients who had gone elsewhere and had not come back after the fire. That, she said, is because they had a private bathroom, better views and it cost less. Their spouses were able to make the drive. She stressed that she was not putting the Village

staff down because she thought they were doing a good job but she thought that maybe some of the rooms could be improved. If improving the rooms is feasible, she said, maybe some of those people would come back.

Mrs. Moberly said that the uncertainty that the facility lifespan might not be open has hurt the numbers of the home.

Ken Krien asked why neighboring nursing home facilities leased by Good Sam required less than 6 mills? Mr. Fitzgerald said those homes were larger with more residents.

Rod Klepper asked if the county had looked into the price of other insurance. Mrs. Gilliland pointed out that the county's insurance at \$440 a month is cheaper than what Good Sam is paying now.

Carl Werner asked, since there is no line item for the nursing home, if, in six months, the Society comes to the board asking for \$100,000, will the county be able to give it to them? The commissioners said that there would be enough money there.

The commissioners asked for a show of hands as to how many people thought there should be public meeting before the lease was signed. They agreed that, while there were several hands showing, there was definitely not a majority so there will be no other public meeting except the commissioners' meetings and residents are welcome.

Mrs. Gilliland said she and Mr. Fitzgerald will continue to work on the changes in the proposed lease. Mr. Fitzgerald said he will have the lease to the commissioners at the Nov 30 meeting and will be at the Dec. 17 meeting to hopefully sign the agreement.

We want to sign before the end of the year, Mr. Fitzgerald said, but, if that doesn't happen, the facility will not be closed.

# HAPPY THANKSGIVING