

City, county move closer to agreement

By VERONICA MONIER

Norton County and the city of Norton are getting closer to an agreement on who pays how much for dispatch services.

The two groups have been feuding over a \$44,000 cap on expenses in the present contract. Last year the city only paid \$44,000 but the sheriff said that the city's part of expenses for dispatch was much higher.

The county canceled the contract but the cancellation will not go into effect until the end of this year.

Meanwhile, both groups have been trying to come together to work out a solution to the problem.

At last night's city Finance Committee meeting, Sheriff Troy Thomson said the Norton County commissioners are willing to agree to an expense cap based on his estimate of what it will cost to run the dispatch service, and also are willing to keep the termination notice at one year although they had wanted to change it to six months..

Sheriff Thomson said he expects the cost of dispatch this year to be about \$25,000 more than the \$44,000 cap. He asked if the city would be willing to pay half of this, or between \$12,000 and \$13,000, while the county picked up the rest.

He also said it could be written in that the new agreement would begin Dec. 4, 2004 and would run through Dec. 31, 2005, which would eliminate the problem of the contract expiring before the end of the year.

"You (the committee) can discuss this with your people (the council)," he said. "Then we can get some paperwork started and get this signed."

"We appreciate you hanging in there," said Councilman Jerry Hawks. "We're all in this together."

He said the sheriff and county

would have the council's answer Thursday morning.

City Administrator Rob Lawson said the city has \$52,000 budgeted for county expenses.

After the \$44,000 goes into the dispatch and other expenses paid, the city would have around \$6,000 to \$8,000 to spare. The rest, he said, will be in the hole.

In other business, the committee:

- Heard from Airport Board Chairman Ivan Kingham about the finances of the City/County Airport. Mr. Kingham told the committee that the airport is going to be about \$10,000 short this year.

- "We have been depleting our reserves and are now getting further and further behind," he said. "Our operating costs have increased to about \$64,000 to \$65,000 and we are not receiving nearly that amount."

Mr. Kingham said there didn't seem to be anything else that could be cut out of the budget.

- Listened to a report from Mr. Lawson about a Municipal Leadership Class he attended.

Mr. Lawson said it was suggested that city look into telephone line franchise fees to make sure all of the companies who use the lines pay for them, and also a storm water fee.

He said if the city charged a storm water fee of \$2 per customer, the city would have about \$53,000 to do some major curb and gutter repair around town. He said other cities have done this and it has worked out well.

Mr. Lawson said at the same meeting, they were cautioned not to rely too heavily on sales taxes, but rather look more towards the mill levy.

Sales taxes are too unpredictable, he said he was told.

He said he was going to begin giving the committee a quarterly financial report, so it would know what money is available.



Lending a hand at the tennis benefit Sunday were Patricia Hagman (above left) and Angela Henderson. Accepting donations were Kayla Juenemann and Chelle Donovan. Volunteers serve the large crowd (below) that came to show their support for the Norton Community High School tennis program. — Telegram photos by Vicki Henderson



Benefit raises cash for courts

Almost 300 people turned out Sunday evening to eat, visit and help save Norton's tennis courts.

Jay Holste, one of the motivating forces behind the effort to save the courts and girl's tennis, said he was pleased with the benefit's turnout.

Mr. Holste said there was a nice crowd of almost 300 people who came to the tennis courts to eat porkburgers and make a donation to help save the courts. Mr. Holste said they raised enough money, about \$2,000, to cover the cost of repairs and the crew hired to do the repairs will start work Thursday.

First, the posts will be removed and replaced. The crew will file away the high spots and fill-in the low spots before three coats of sealers and color coating are applied to the playing surface.

Mr. Holste praised Dave and Lisa Donovan for spearheading the volunteers who sponsored the benefit. He said lots of volunteers worked hard to make the event a success.

School celebrates physical education

Eisenhower Elementary is joining the country in honoring May as National Fitness and Sports Month and will be celebrating National Physical Education Day on Wednesday.

Physical Education Teacher Joan Bolt said people need to be reminded that healthy, physically active youngsters learn better. She said physical educators are concerned about the omission of physical education in the No Child Left Behind legislation.

Mrs. Bolt said she believed many children will be left behind if they do not learn how to achieve and maintain health-related fitness and other healthy behaviors, have opportunities to explore their potential, gain an understanding and appreciation of their responsibilities as citizens, and develop character traits to help them make good decisions.

"Quality physical education programs provide the foundation for healthy, active lifestyles that support all learning and help ensure success in future pursuits," she said. "While families and communities play an important role in the prevention of obesity and other

health risks, schools must help children develop the skills, knowledge and confidence necessary to adopt and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

"This community is very fortunate that families are so supportive of improving the well-being of

its children. With all the possibilities to be active through the school, recreation department, organizations and other programs, the students have a good chance to be fit and active. Along with these opportunities, they receive important experiences that team responsi-

bilities, teamwork, tolerance, dedication, social interactions and other lifestyle behaviors."

To celebrate National Physical Education Day, the students of Eisenhower Elementary will begin the day doing the "Hokey Pokey" together at 8 a.m.

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