

Showers on the way



Earlier this week, storm clouds hung over a farmstead about 10 miles west of Norton.
— Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts

New Almelo roads, trees discussed

Marion Otter talked with the Norton County Commission and Tom Brannan, county road and bridge supervisor, about removing some trees from roadways in the New Almelo area. He also addressed some concerns with the roads within New Almelo, specifically the visibility.

The streets of New Almelo are the county liability since the city is unincorporated. Mr. Brannan stated that he will stop by New Almelo in the near future and they can view the site and trees in question.

County Commissioner Dean Kruse made a motion to go into executive session for a period of 25 minutes and to return to regular session at 2 p.m. for the purpose of discussing non-elected personnel within EMS and the Sheriff's Department and to include County Counselor R. Douglas Sebelius and County Clerk Robert D. Wyatt. Motion passed 2-0.

The commission returned to regular session and made a motion to go back into executive session for a period of 30 minutes and to return to regular session at 2:30 p.m. Motion was made by Commissioner Kruse, and given a second. Motion passed 2-0. No action was taken as a result of the executive session.

Curt Archibald, Solid Waste Supervisor, Pat Cox of Boetcher of BG Consultants along with Sam Sunderraj, P.E. and Mike Simms of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment discussed the county solid waste site and landfill permit. Mr. Cox said that today's business of solid waste sites and permitting has made several changes and it is an exact science. Mr. Sunderraj said that there have been several key changes made in landfill regulations since July of 2001.

Several questions concerning the leachate collection system that is currently in place at the landfill were also discussed. The new regulations are asking the county to revise the design change of the leachate system, however Pat Cox stated the cost would be minimal. Mr. Cox also said that their firm has prepared a renewal plan that will certainly comply with the KDHE regulations.

Mr. Cox asked Mr. Sunderraj and Mr. Simms if they saw anything at the landfill inspection that concerned them and asked for their general comments. Mr. Sunderraj stated that he was very impressed with the facility and the daily operations that serve the residents of Norton County. Mr. Cox

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said that he was happy that the KDHE staff was present today to develop the working relationship between the agencies involved.

Other discussion and information presented to the commission was the upcoming dispatcher service agreement between Norton County and the City of Norton. Sheriff Thomson informed the City of Norton what the proposed estimate for 2007 budget will be. He also gave an update on the reverse 911 call system. He has found a firm that will handle the 911 system that will contract with the county and handle all the equipment needs. An annual fee is paid to the firm to support the call system.

Rich Miller, hospital administrator, Ryan Stover, CFO, and Dennis Gilhousen, board member of the Norton County Hospital were present to discuss the quarterly report. Several reports were given to the commission for review which included patient days; admissions; births; surgeries, outpatient procedures; and the comparative income statement.

Mr. Miller also presented to the commission the new fiscal budget. He reported that the hospital is not figuring any additional increases; however, he will just try to maintain the current year figures. The hospital fiscal year began July 1. In the new budget proposal, the hospital asked that the Norton County appropriations be increased from 2 mills to a 4 mill levy.

Mr. Miller presented to the commission a capital outlay, equipment improvement projects schedule. The schedule included each department and specific needs that they will need in the next several years. The schedule also included the renovation and remodel schedule for 2007 through 2009. Those projects include physical therapy, conference room, board room, cardiac rehab, Doctors Clinic, nursing school and surgery area renovation.

Other areas discussed during the meeting included medical staff recruitment, medicare advantage plan, tobacco free policy and

changes within the staff personnel. Mr. Miller stated that the hospital is actively working on the recruitment of a new medical doctor.

Pat Cox, BG Consultants, the county's engineering firm, spoke with the commission briefly to inform them that he will be meeting with KDHE at 1 p.m. at the landfill site. KDHE has informed the commission and BG Consultants by letter of several changes that they are requiring. The commission and Mr. Cox have several questions concerning the changes since the permit was issued and prior approval has been given by KDHE staff.

Shawn Mortensen of Mortensen Computer Service, and Steve Zodrow of Mapes and Miller Accounting were in with Reggie Beckman to discuss the accounting and report process for the Noxious Weed Department. Mr. Zodrow stated he had some concerns with what the commission needed and wanted to make sure everyone was working for the same goal. Commissioner Miller stated the primary goal was to determine what the cost of operation was to the county. In order to provide the service, the county needs to know what its cost of production, spraying, labor is prior to billing. The commissioners stated they must be much more efficient to continue offering services to the county. The update of providing a cost factor through a spreadsheet or software program will help provide this information.

Mr. Archibald delivered a couple of bids to the commissioners for the upgrading of a new Bobcat. Two bids were delivered, one from Hastings Bobcat in the amount of \$2,000 and the second bid from North Platte Bobcat in the amount of \$700.40. The commission tabled the decision until next week.

There being no further business the commission adjourned. The meeting for the month's ending business was held June 30.

There was no meeting held Monday, July 3 as the courthouse was closed in observance of the Fourth of July.

Funds transfer discussed with county

(Continued from Page 1)

The supervisor also discussed the transfer of Capital Outlay funds to the county health operating fund. The transfer, she said, was due to the transfer of funds at the end of last fiscal year.

Supervisor Frack said she had spoken to Steve Zodrow of Mapes & Miller Accounting to discuss the transfer and to make sure the transfer was proper. A document showing the average for monthly vouchers for the past several months was reviewed for a guide on making a transfer. The commission said they were scheduled to meet later in the morning with Mr. Zodrow and would bring this matter up at that time.

The commissioners went into an executive session at 9 a.m. to discuss non-elected personnel for a period of 30 minutes and to include Ruth Schillig, Norton County ambulance director. the commissioners returned to open session at 9:25 with no action taken.

Winter Khuen, emergency medical technician, discussed an employment issue with the commissioners. She presented several documents for review and also asked that the commissioners give consideration to her request for a review by the board and responsible committees. The commission said they will take the necessary steps to gather the appropriate documents and review the situation.

ate documents and review the situation.

Commissioner Lang moved to go into executive session at 9:45 a.m., for a period of 25 minutes to discuss non-elected personnel. The motion passed 3-0. The commissioners returned to open session at 10 a.m. with no action taken.

An added personal property tax statement was given to the commission for approval. The added statement was for a vehicle that was purchased in 2005, however the taxpayer failed to register the vehicle on time. The statement was approved and signed in the amount of \$149.68.

Tom Brannan, road and bridge supervisor, delivered his weekly report. He said with the recent rains, the crews are staying busy with the road graders. Major road work is being delayed due to harvest.

He said the core drilling rig is back up and running. The rig, he said, is working on a pit just inside Phillips County for the availability of sand. He also reported that all the tractors are running with mowers throughout the county.

According to supervisor Brannan, bridge construction continues on OS70 northwest of Lenora. He said with the recent rains the construction had been sowed due to mud.

The commission also discussed with Mr. Brannan a billing for re-

placement of fencing from Ninemire Construction. The commission agreed to pay for the core drilling of the rock excavation as per agreement. The balance of the billing will be the responsibility of the land owner, according to the commissioners.

Mr. Brannan said he had spoken with a landowner along US 36 for the stock piling of millings. The milling project will begin later this fall and the county needs a location to pile on each end of the construction project. Mr. Brannan has a couple of individuals who have indicated they would be willing to lease the county a site to accommodate the millings.

Troy Thomson, Norton County Sheriff and Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, presented the commission with bio-terrorism information for the next fiscal year. The county is able to purchase equipment through this grant funding that will assist with county security.

Sheriff Thomson also updated the commissioners on the courthouse security and video camera systems. Much of the equipment that is needed to proceed, he said, can be purchased with grant funding. He is working with various firms to prepare bids for a system that will work for the county.

Also discussed with the sheriff was the county burn ban. Following that airing, the commissioners agreed to lift the ban.

Big boy at work



Heavy equipment like this behemoth have moved tons and tons of dirt over the last few months on the highway construction project west of Norton. The project extends from the "six-mile corner" to Norcatur.
— Telegram photo by Carolyn Plotts

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