



COLBY FREE PRESS

Herndon seeking a partner

By KIMBERLY BRANDT

The Oberlin Herald

The Oberlin School Board says it would welcome students from Herndon coming here to school, but the members agreed they aren't interested in "true" consolidation where the larger district would lose its identity.

The board answered 10 questions from the Herndon School Board during a special meeting Thursday night.

The board decided to hold the special meeting to prepare for a joint meeting Monday night with the Herndon board, which is looking at three neighboring districts for a possible merger.

The weighted enrollment for budget purposes at Herndon has shrunk to about 85 students from more than 110 eight years ago, giving the district less money to work with, especially with recent cuts from the state.

The merger candidates are Oberlin, Atwood and Golden Plains. Herndon Superintendent Kim Juenemann said the board has already met with Atwood but the meeting with Golden Plains had to be postponed until 7 p.m. Wednesday in Selden.

The Herndon School District starts at the county line west of Traer and is completely in Rawlins County.

There is a small part in the southeast corner of the county that is in the Golden Plains District. Drive time, it is the same from Herndon to either Oberlin and Atwood, said Juenemann.

Herndon's one school building houses kindergarten through 12th grade, with just over 90 kids enrolled. The state figures there are 11.9 certified staff, with 10.4 of them being teachers.

Oberlin Superintendent Kelly Glodt said he and board clerk Vickie Lippelmann had been putting together numbers to form a packet for the Herndon board.

Oberlin board members went through each question and discussed what they may say at the joint meeting.

Several of the questions, including taxes and technology, the board didn't discuss much because the numbers and information was already in the packets they planned to give to the Herndon board.

If the two districts join, Oberlin Board Member Dan Wasson said, the board member district lines would need to be redrawn, although none of the board members knew exactly where they would be. As it is now, each of the districts has rural areas and a part of Oberlin.

Holiday season ends



DARREL PATTILLO/Colby Free Press

City of Colby workers Mike Brier (on ground) and Jim Helus removed Christmas decorations this morning along Franklin Avenue. Helus and Brier agreed that it takes slightly longer to take the decorations down than it does to put them up.

Legislators to review meetings law

By JOHN HANNA

Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA (AP) — Legislators expect to review the Kansas Open Meetings Act following a court decision that secret meetings by Gov.-elect Kathleen Sebelius' government review teams were legal.

Shawnee County District Judge Eric Rosen ruled Monday that the teams do not fall under the meetings law. Fourteen news organizations who sued Sebelius and her transition office over the closed meetings appealed Rosen's decision almost immediately.

Incoming House Speaker Doug Mays said he worries that county commissions, local school boards and other government groups can

take advantage of current state law.

"I think there is a loophole there — a big loophole," said Mays, R-Topeka. "I think it's been utilized for years but it took this to bring attention to it." Sebelius formed five Budget Efficiency Savings Team groups in November to keep a campaign promise for a "top-to-bottom" review of state government.

Even though he said the teams do not fall under the meetings law, Rosen strongly rebuked Sebelius. Five teams had met a total of 18 times over four weeks.

Sebelius said secret meetings would allow candid discussions.

Rosen said that argument "simply misses the point."

"The time has long passed that

critical public policy decisions can be formulated and based on privately held discussions and secret meetings that hold no one accountable," he wrote. "Thus, had the court been provided with a legal option to do so, it would have most certainly ordered the BEST team meetings open."

The meetings law requires government boards and commissions to have open sessions and notify the public of meetings.

Rosen concluded that while Sebelius is not merely a private individual — something the attorney general's office had argued — she does not have the full power of a governor before her Jan. 13 inauguration.

Sebelius plans to name cabinet secretaries this month

TOPEKA (AP) — Gov.-elect Kathleen Sebelius is prepared to announce more appointments to her Cabinet.

Spokeswoman Nicole Corcoran-Basso said Sebelius would introduce several new Cabinet members during a Statehouse news confer-

ence earlier today. "There will be a number," Corcoran-Basso said Monday. "Not all."

Sebelius' inauguration is scheduled for Jan. 13, the same day the Legislature convenes for its annual session.

Governors appoint secretaries to

11 executive branch departments: Administration, Aging, Agriculture, Commerce and Housing, Corrections, Health and Environment, Human Resources, Revenue, Social and Rehabilitation Services, Wildlife and Parks and Transportation.

County accepts asphalt bid, looks at snow removal

By DARREL PATTILLO

Colby Free Press

The Thomas County commissioners met Monday morning at the courthouse and opened bids for 13,500 tons of cold-mix asphalt.

County roads supervisor Chris Bieker reviewed bids from Hi-Plains Sand of Kanopolis, APAC of Hays, and Heft and Sons of Greensburg.

APAC's bid was for \$6.90 per ton, Heft and Sons' bid was for \$5 a ton, and Hi-Plains bid was \$4.30 per ton. Bieker recommended, and the commissioners approved, the Hi-Plains bid.

Linda Vaughn and Donna Bennett, from Waddell and Reed, presented the commissioners with information on long-term care benefits that may be available soon through the county's benefit package.

The commissioners met with Ken Ptacek, Jon Selley, and Chris Bieker concerning extra manpower required by the county in the event of snow. Ptacek and Selley make up the Noxious Weed Department for the county.

"We're just exploring options right now," Commissioner Ron Evans said. "We going to have an extra 110 miles of roads to clear if there is snowfall." The county will be responsible for Rovohl Township roads this year.

"What we'd like to know," Commissioner Glen Kersenbrock said, "is if an extra man is needed to help with snow removal, can we count on you to help?"

Ptacek said that he would be unavailable to help, as extra snowfall that would require extra help would mean that he would be needed to clear snow on his property so that he could get to his cattle.

"It's not in my job description," he added. "I wasn't hired to push snow."

Jon Selley declined the offer from the commissioners to pay for the cost of obtaining a CDL, which would be needed by anyone driving a dump truck during snow removal.

"Why would I want to get a CDL for the county?" he said.

"If I had a CDL, I could go to work for the state and make 12 or 13 dollars an hour."

The commissioners halted discussion at that point, and moved on to other items on the agenda, which included:

- Approving commission meeting minutes.

- A landfill report from Larry Jumper, Thomas County landfill supervisor. The landfill averaged 15.29 tons of municipal solid waste

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Ken Ptacek

Noxious Weed

Department supervisor

per day last year. "This is consistent with the last few years," Commissioner Evans noted.

- The commissioners reviewed the road department's equipment purchase plan for 2003.

Bieker told the commissioners that he wanted to purchase a pickup truck for Rovohl township, a new tractor for mowing, exercise a buy-back option on a loader, purchase a motor-grader, replace the pickup that he uses, which will have over 140,000 miles on it by June, and replace a John Deere 3-section mower. The commissioners approved the purchase plan.

- Larry Jumper was back to talk with the commissioners about illegal dumping in the early 1980's which may be responsible for contamination of Well #5. Jumper is researching an incident which occurred at the landfill.

- The commissioners appointed Kenneth Johnston as Township Clerk for Wendell Township.

Stella Ziegelmeier had been written in and elected to the position, but declined to accept.

- Mike Baughn was re-appointed to the Economic Development Board.

- The commissioners approved a 2 percent raise for all Thomas County employees.

- The commissioners approved the 2003 information for the county, which included re-appointing Ron Evans as chairman of the commission, designating the Free Press as the official newspaper for the county, set the holidays for 2003, and appointing fair board members.

"We desperately need fair board members for East Hale, and North and South Randall townships," Glen Kersenbrock said.

"Anyone interested in those positions should get ahold of either Mark Miller or Tracey Perkins," he said.

The commissioners will meet again on Monday, Jan. 13, at 9 a.m. in the commissioners room at the Thomas County Courthouse.

WeatherWatch Colby-Oakley area

The numbers

Monday's high-52
Low this morning-17
Soil temperature: 35
Temperature at 11 a.m. today: 48

Record high for today: 72, 1965. Record low, -13, 1988.

The forecast

Tonight, clear and mild. Low near 30. West wind 10 to 15 mph. Wednesday, sunny and continued warm. High near 70. West wind 10 to 15 mph becoming north in the afternoon.

Wednesday night, clear and mild. Lows in the mid 20s. Thursday, mostly sunny, breezy and cooler. High in the upper 40s.

Thursday night, partly cloudy. Low 15 to 20. Friday, partly cloudy. High in the lower 40s. Saturday, partly cloudy and breezy. Low near 20 and high in the upper 30s.

Sunday, mostly clear and windy. Low in the mid 20s and high in the mid 40s. Monday, partly cloudy. Low near 20 and high in the lower 40s.

Briefly

Health Care meeting cancelled

The Area Citizens for Health Care will not have their regular meeting tonight, a spokesperson for the group said. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 21, starting at 7:30 p.m. in the Colby Community Building's Little Theater. The public is invited and urged to attend any and all of these meetings.

Colby reports cards out Friday

Colby Public Schools are reminding parents and guardians that semester grade cards will be sent home with students on Friday. For questions, call the appropriate building level administrators: Colby Elementary School, 465-5100; Colby Middle School, 465-5200; or Colby High School, 465-5300.

Chamber luncheon Friday

The Colby/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce monthly luncheon is scheduled for Friday beginning at noon

at the Quality Inn in Colby. Special guest speaker is Doug Murphy, who is the drug enforcement coordinator with the Quad County Task Force. All chamber members and their guests are encouraged to attend. For questions, call 462-3401.

Medieval life event postponed

The Society for Creative Anachronism, which was planned for Friday at Colby High School has been postponed due to scheduling conflicts, said Jeff Quenzer, assistant principal and activities director. The demonstration is now being planned for the spring, he said. For questions or information, call Quenzer at 465-5300.

Progress Center annual meeting set

The Colby Senior Progress Center will have its annual meeting at 1 p.m., Monday, Jan. 13, said Donna Schlieke, director. The annual meeting will also be the time for re-election of officers and there are four members whose terms expire. Those people are: Mary Sonnenfield, Glenn Weber,

Bonnie Fleckenstein and Don Siefert. According to Schlieke, Siefert replaced Ralph Jones before his term expired; however, he, along with Weber and Fleckenstein are willing to serve another term.

"We do need a replacement for Mary Sonnenfield," Schlieke said, "and those interested in volunteering can call 462-2901 for information."

Genesis annual meeting Jan. 16

The Genesis-Thomas County, Inc. annual meeting will be held January 16th, 2003 at 6:00 p.m. in the Thomas County Office Complex meeting room. The January meeting will follow immediately after the annual meeting.

Share sign up continues

Share sign up for January will be held through Friday, Jan. 6-10 at State Farm Insurance Company, 905 E. 4th St., Colby. For information or questions, call Anna Fyfe, coordinator, 462-3733.

