

# Goodland firm wins contract for Colby fire station

**By Patty Decker**  
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 A Goodland firm will build a new fire station on Country Club Drive in east Colby following approval of bids last week, replacing a downtown station that collapsed under heavy snow more than a year ago.

City Manager Carolyn Armstrong said bid requests had gone out to five general contractors and three had responded. Construction is to take less than a year, she said.

After evaluating the bids last Wednesday,

Armstrong said, the low bid of \$2,507,125 from Miller Construction Services was approved.

Miller's bid included plans to use CB Heating and Jim's Electric, both of Colby, as subcontractors, with completion in 300 days.

The mechanical contract estimated its cost at \$250,425 with the electrical portion at \$215,296.

Other bidders included Paul-Wertenberger Construction of Hays at \$2,530,000, also using CB Heating and Jim's Electric.

Munlake Contractors from Independence, Mo., bid \$2,544,226, using CB Heating and Bates Electric.

Two Colby contractors, Woofter Construction and Stephens Construction, did not bid.

The next step will be to make sure a bond and contract documents are in order, Armstrong said. Work could begin by April 1.

The council is expected to approve temporary notes to finance the project, borrowing with general obligation bonds for permanent financing within the next

two years.

Taxpayers will see an increase in property taxes on their 2009 statements. Armstrong estimated the increase could range from 4 to 5 mills.

The project took more than a year to reach this point, she said, because the city first needed to have an architect design the building and then put specifications together for bids. Then the bidding process took six to eight weeks.

The new facility will sit on 7.2 acres on Country Club Drive between the Co-op

self-fueling station and the state office building.

In other council news:

- Councilman Jim Tubbs resigned at the Feb. 19 meeting, effective Feb. 11. He declined to comment on the reason. Tubbs represented Ward 4, which is south of Pine Street. Mayor Ken Bieber has not named a replacement as yet to fill Tubbs' term. Whoever is appointed will be up for election next April.

# Money paid on credit card creates question for county

**Jan Katz Ackerman**  
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 Personal money applied to a county credit card account was the topic of discussion at the commission meeting Monday.

Commissioner Ken Christiansen asked Public Health Administrator Lisa Molstad whether she was aware of the county policy that capital expenditures over \$350 require commission approval.

"Yes," Molstad said.

At issue is the fact Molstad used \$500 of her personal money to apply to a county credit card so Viviana Gariby, receptionist and medical records clerk, could attend training in Great Bend in mid-February.

At the time Gariby attended training, the credit card in question had \$199 available credit, according to paperwork Molstad presented the commissioners on Monday. The account has a \$2,000 credit limit, but was carrying a balance of \$1,800.08.

When an attempt was made to apply Gariby's meals and lodging to the card, the transaction was declined. Molstad made a \$500 payment out of her personal banking account over the phone to make the transaction go through.

Molstad asked the commissioners on Monday to reimburse her for the \$500, which prompted Christiansen to ask Molstad if she knew about the

policy pertaining to her actions.

Short of a reprimand and despite having submitted an expense voucher for her request, the commissioners told Molstad to submit proper documentation for the reimbursement. She is to provide the commissioners with the credit card statement with attached receipts Gariby received in Great Bend.

Molstad also asked the commissioners for permission to fill a vacancy at the public health department created by the resignation of Kathy Ryan.

Ryan resigned 10 days after the commissioners gave Connie Walden, registered nurse at the public health department, a 48 cent per hour raise. The increase made Walden's pay equal to that of Ryan's at \$20.36 per hour.

Ryan, in a letter to Molstad dated Feb. 20, said she was deeply hurt and could "no longer trust those that I would need to work with on a daily basis." She said it was a "slap in the face" and lack of respect for her knowledge and experience that it was reported in the *Colby Free Press* that she holds "only an associate degree," while Walden holds a bachelor's degree in nursing.

Molstad shared with the commissioners a memo she sent Ryan saying she would offer her a 20-hour work week with flexible hours for a trial period of six months. How-

ever, Molstad said Ryan plans to follow through with her resignation which is effective April 1. Ryan has worked for the Thomas County Public Health Department for more than 27 years.

The commissioners asked Molstad to report back to them in March whether Ryan's vacancy creates a burden for the department. Steele asked Molstad to be sure and track how many billable hours nurses spend with patients.

"This department seems to be one of the few in the county that the budget keeps going up each year," Steele said. "We may soon have a situation of the tail wagging the dog."

Molstad wanted the commissioners to clarify the term "contact hours" so she knows what to report. Steele said the term means time spent with patients which can be billed to either the patient or an insurance provider.

"If we allow billable hours of a professional person to get out of hand we have a problem," Steele said. "We have an obligation to taxpayers to keep things under control."

Molstad said she is considering forming a pool of nurses which can provide services for the health department on an as-needed basis. The commissioners supported that idea and delayed filing Ryan's position.

# Great Bend firm wins Road 16

**ROAD, from Page 1**

March for the pay-out of the road bond money.

County Clerk Janet Rumpel said the county needs to pay more than \$2.2 million by the middle of March to meet the pay-down mark of 70 percent that is part of the requirements in the bond document.

DeBoer suggested not paying Venture any money on the Road 16 project, because if they paid \$300,000 it would be more than 100 percent of Venture's part of the project.

He suggested paying Venture \$1.2 million on the Road 65 project, paying \$1 million to the Kansas Department of Transportation as an advance on the Road 14 project, and possibly paying \$85,000 to Penco for the engineering.

Rumpel said she would contact City Clerk Mary Volk and Darin Neufeld, the engineer from Evans, Bierly, Hutchison and Associates who is handling the Road 14 project, to be sure they have everything covered by the payment deadline. DeBoer said he would check with Rumpel about the details.

The commissioners reviewed engineering construction inspection contracts with Penco for both jobs. Rasure asked to have a copy of the inspection reports sent to the clerk's office.

The contract for Road 65 is not to exceed \$150,000, with a minimum of \$13,500. The Road 16 contract is not to exceed \$100,000 and a minimum of \$19,500.

With the modification, the commissioners approved both contracts unanimously.

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# Road work could close by-pass shared by Logan, Thomas counties

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 Road improvements near Oakley could cause closure of the Eighth Street by-pass if Thomas County Commissioners have their way about a project starting in May.

Commissioners Ken Christiansen, Paul Steele and Byron Sowers at their Friday meeting told Kansas Department of Transportation Engineer Bob Weis they would consider helping pay for improving the intersection of Eighth Street and U.S. Highway 83 if the Eighth Street by-pass is closed.

The north side of Eighth Street in Oakley sits in Thomas County, while the south side of the street sits in Logan County. A curved by-pass at the west end of Eighth Street allows travelers to gain access to the highway. Thomas County is responsible for maintaining the by-pass since it is in Thomas County.

Weis said a road project will improve the intersection of the street and highway, but the city of Oakley is proposing building a turning lane on the east side of the highway. He said a turning lane would not only give better access to motorists, but the three school buses that use the road daily during the school year.

"The gap I have (in the project) is a six-inch layer of asphalt base course," Weis said. "The city is willing to participate, but doesn't want to come up with the entire \$7,100 for it since it's a county road."

Weis wanted to know whether the commissioners would consider sharing the \$7,100 with Oakley.

The commissioners asked Road and Bridge Director Clair Schrock to attend Monday's Logan County Commission meeting to talk to officials there about the project. Sowers said he would plan to attend the meeting.

"We have a project that needs to go in May, and I'm in favor of having Clair go to the meeting and present our position," Steele said.

Schrock asked Weis if doing improvements on the east side of the roadway would mean improvements to the west side would be done in the future.

"Yes," Weis said, adding he did not have a "crystal ball" to quantify his statement.

Weis said while the initial project was prepared to cover all aspects of the road improvement, changing plans so close to the start date was creating a shortage of money.

"When you bid a project, everybody uses a sharp pencil, but when you use change orders, everybody uses a fat pencil," Steele said. "We've all been burned by change orders."

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