

# Start with blank slate on city, county fire protection

PLANS, from Page 1

like to have a 5, 10 and 20 year plan to set some long term goals and feel the goals need to be set together with the city and county commissioners.

Dechant asked if the fire board made the decisions or if they have to be approved by the commissioners.

Cloyd said the fire board serves at the pleasure of the commissioners. Strnad said the commissioners are supportive of the fire board.

Zimmerman asked if the planning was something the groups could do internally or have an outside person come in to help.

"Are we equipped to do it in house?" Cloyd asked.

Gerber said from the city perspective he expected the commissioners would suggest that staff look at what can be done and with Brian he would see what the city could be capable of doing. He said he did not see the city taking on the whole county study.

Cloyd said he felt it would be good to look at it as a blank slate and see what we need, and then look at what we have and what needs to be changed. He said it was looking at it out of the box.

Fairbanks said she liked the blank slate idea of looking at what is good for the county as a whole.

"Who know where the best place to start is," she said. "I feel we need to have assignments and deadlines and get moving forward."

Cloyd said an option was to hire a professional consultant.

Enfield said he felt the city and county had to get some numbers together and then they can sit down

## Fire board sets out pros, cons on options

OPTIONS, from Page 1

Have better trained firemen with both getting the same training.

Save taxpayers money, and save on insurance premiums by lowering the ISO ratings.

Have more equipment available for larger fires.

Gain more points for the ISO ratings. He said the fire board was learning a lot about the ISO rating system.

On the county side he said the benefit would be lowering the ISO ratings around each station if they can put in the satellite stations.

Again not have mutual aid situations.

Save money on duplication of equipment.

Have more manpower.

Have better trained firemen.

Centralized purchasing.

Guidelines for countywide training.

Possibility of another full time person if there are savings.

Centralized leadership philosophy to get everyone on the same page, and countywide research.

City Commissioner Dave Daniels asked what Cloyd meant by research.

Fire board member Kevin Zimmerman said it would mostly be in the grants area and as a combined service might qualify for better grants.

A question was asked if the ISO rating would go down if the city and county combined forces.

Cloyd said the county would gain points.

"If we consolidate it does not save points unless you move one of the county stations," Daniels said.

A question was asked about what the current ISO ratings are for the city and county. City Fire Chief Brian James said the city is at 5 and Chris Bauman, assistant rural fire chief, said some of the county is at 9 and some are at 10. He said Brewster is at 8.

Dechant said with the changes there would be a way to reduce the 10s and have more 9s and possibly 8s.

A question was how much the lower of the ISO rating helped the insurance rates, but Gerber said Starling was not able to say specifically.

Cloyd said he felt if they went with the five mile radius around Goodland it would include the outlying communities of Paxton and Armstrong Additions and improve their ratings.

Daniels asked how Kanorado would fit in and Cloyd said the city would have their own department, but need a Class A pumper to drop the ISO rating.

County Commissioner Larry Enfield asked if the rural fire board was talking about moving the rural station out of Goodland. He said he did like Starling's presentation, but felt it basically went up and down I-70.

Cloyd said it was his feeling there would still be a rural station in Goodland. He said he had taken the idea of the 10-mile radius and used County Road 59 to Road 69 across the county. He said the county could gain quite a bit in lowering the ISO ratings if the put in the satellite stations.

Daniels said Starling had indicated he found the greatest impact based on where the highest number of houses are in that 10 mile radius. He agreed that might be a way to look at where it

might be best to put the stations.

County Commissioner Cynthia Strnad said the ISO is important, but the rural firefighters respond to brush fires. She said looking at Brewster, "We cannot abandon the east third of the county," she said, "there may not be many houses over there, but when we renegotiate we need to make sure they do not feel abandoned."

Mayor Josh Dechant said he agreed and felt there has to be both a Class A and a brush truck to help in the satellite stations.

"My thoughts are not into building another station," Strnad said. "I think we have to have the leadership philosophy of one and train together and purchase together and use each others equipment."

"I think if we are looking at combining and making it more efficient we need to look at a Sherman County Community Fire Department rather than just the city or county fire."

City Commissioner Kevin Rasure said he felt the city and county need to have a plan and a goal. He suggested each side come up with some figures about what they have and what might be possible.

Dechant said he agreed they need to look at total dollars and feasibility of locating stations. He said the might not be looking at it being within five years, but between the city and county budgets they need to be talking about unification.

Strnad said she was not saying to look at consolidation, but to look at one picture.

"We need to look at Sherman County and not the city," she said. "We need to look at the whole picture."

"and see what we need and then figure out what we have and what we can use."

Cloyd said he could contact some consultants.

Daniels said it a consultant is too costly then "we may have to do it in house."

Cloyd said he got a sample consolidation plan from one consultant and was told it would cost \$9,000 to \$10,000.

Daniels asked if Starling did that type of consulting.

Cloyd said he could ask. He said he would make some contacts and get back with the city and county.

Daniels said the city would meet on Monday, and asked if Cloyd could let the commission know what he has found out at least to see who might be available.

Cloyd said he thought he could do that.

Strnad said the commissioners could some listen at the city meeting, but would not meet until the second Tuesday of April.

Dechant asked if that was OK with everyone and got a nod of consensus.

The meeting lasted about 50 minutes.

Those present included fire board members Ken Palmgren, Jerry Bauman and Doug Meissinger; city commission candidates Bill Finley and Gary Farris; volunteer firefighters Travis King, Neil Thornburg, Loren Sheldon and Martin Warnke.

and decide what can be done.

Gerber said he agreed with bring-

ing someone else in to keep the personalities out.

Rasure said he felt it would be good to keep the personalities out.

"We start like we don't have any fire departments," Daniels said,

# Tuesday voters to decide city, school board and bond issue

VOTE, from Page 1

a Kids Voting program to allow students from kindergarten to age 17 vote in a mock election at the VFW on Tuesday at the same time as the adults.

The VFW Ladies Auxiliary will have food and drinks available for those who come to vote with rolls and coffee about 8 a.m. The ladies will be serving lunch from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and supper from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Mary Harper said the lunch will be hamburgers and two kinds of soup including chicken noodle and "soup."

Six Goodland commissioner candidates are on the ballot, and voters will be voting for three with the top two winners getting four-year terms and the third person winning a two-year term.

In the Primary Election held on March 1, incumbent Annette Fairbanks topped the list with 279 votes, Chris Zimmerman second with 263, Bill Finley third 252, Jeff Deeds fourth 236, Gary Farris fifth 227, and incumbent Dave Daniels sixth 220.

Goodland School District has filed for voter approval of a bond issue for \$14.9 million to renovate

North school into a K-6 facility and upgrade the Goodland High school to be a 7-12 facility. The bond issue is for 20 years and would raise property taxes about 12.6 mills in the school district to pay for the capital improvements.

The school district has \$5.4 million in special interest-free construction bonds and anticipates state aid of \$3.2 million to offset the total repayment cost over 20 years to be about \$17.2 million.

The Goodland School Board has four board positions up for election and six people are candidates for the seats for four-year terms.

Those running are incumbent board member Chuck Wilkens, and five others include Mike Brannick, Teresa Sieck, Jessica Cole, Jennifer House and Diane Stiles.

School Board members Gary Slough, Mike Cochran and Amy Sederstrom are the holdovers with two more years on their terms.

Positions open in Kanorado are for Mayor and City Council. Kanorado City Clerk Deb Fahey said current Mayor Dennis Korbek filed and Allan Billenwillms filed for city council. She said the city council has two seats up for election. Kanorado will have an open council seat, Fahey

said, and unless there is a write-in the council will have to appoint a person to fill the second vacancy.

Two positions are open on the Sunflower Extension District board and Melvin L. Crow and Colleen Duell are seeking election to that board.

**Kids Vote on Tuesday at VFW**

Kindergarten to 17 year olds may vote at the Veterans of Foreign Wars on Tuesday, beginning at 7 a.m. and ending at 7 p.m.

The student voters will be voting on the same issues as the adults

including the city commission candidates, school board candidates and the school bond issue.

Members of the Leadership Sherman County class for this year will be handling this event, and will assist student voters while parents or guardians are casting their own vote.

The votes will be cast in an actual voting booth with replicate ballots at the VFW in Goodland. Individual ballots are confidential as with any election, but the overall results will be tallied and reported in the schools and released publicly.

The event is being held in conjunction with the Kids Voting Kansas program that has been engaging Kansas youth in voting and democracy since 1992.

The Sherman County students' votes will not count in the election, but this event gives kids a chance to experience the election process firsthand.

Parents, students will need your help to get there! As you head out the door to go vote, remember to take the student(s) in your life.

If you cast an early ballot, we

encourage you to bring your child to the VFW on April 5th to cast their vote. We hope to see you there!

Hosting Kids Vote in Sherman County are Leadership Sherman County Class members including Brendon Gross, Mike Hamilton, Kelly Hillman, Jeff Mills, Michelle Simoneau, Rich Simon, Ray Smee, LeAnn Taylor, Beverly Trupp and Jason Trupp.

Kids Vote Kansas is a statewide non-profit headquartered at the Kansas Press Association office in Topeka.



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