

City mowing bid goes to the highest bidder

By Tom Betz
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 On the recommendation of the city manager the mowing bid went to the highest of the three bids at the commission meeting on Monday.

City Manager Doug Gerber said he does not usually recommend going with the highest bid, but of the three bids the city received to handle the weed mowing this year Gerber said he was recommending the bid

of Brian Fugleberg because he did a great job last year. Fugleberg's bid was \$30 per hour with a by by Buddy Williams at \$27 an hour and John McGrath at \$25 per hour.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure asked how Gerber could have an hourly rate for the work done, and asked how this compares because people don't mow at the same rate. Gerber said he was not sure how to find a good base line to base a bid on when it comes to mowing the weeds. He agreed it is hard to evaluate, and said it was not good to try to do it by yard because some are going to be larger or more dif-

ficult to mow. Rasure said he could see what Gerber was saying. Gerber said Fugleberg came in last year after the city started with a person who fell behind and was not getting a good job done. Fire Chief and building inspector Brian James said people who bid do not think about what kind of job the mowing is. He said the process last year was the mowing contractor got a list of 25 lawns, and if they did not get then all done they got another list and fell behind.

He said Fugleberg had to use a tractor to go in and cut down some of the weeds that were as high as three feet. Rasure said it is hard, but if the contractor has better equipment and he gets it done quicker it may be better to pay the higher rate. Mayor Josh Dechant said he was not sure the city has had a repeat person and that may be true because of the job it turns out to be. James said he had 100 yards on the list he had to check every two weeks. Gerber said the cost was \$11,891 for 397 hours. He said \$7,944 or about 67 percent was sent to Sherman County to be put on the tax rolls as liens against the property. Rasure asked if Fugleberg doesn't

County gets update from new director

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have someone come look at the facility to give them recommendations.

She said the old units are the original ones that have been there for years. She said visiting with Neil he said the chiller is gas and it takes a whole day to get it changed over for the old ones.

Linin asked if Schmidt knew what the efficiency rating is for the new units.

Schmidt said this would be for 40 rooms and the efficiency is 85 percent.

Strnad said the county might ask James Richmond of Energy Solutions Network, who is designing the courthouse systems, take a look at the Good Samaritan facility.

Schmidt said she will be looking to the county for some help on this project.

She said that was her biggest concern at the time. She said the Sherman County Good Samaritan Society went through a state survey last year and handled quite a number of issues. She said the staff has been doing audits and fine tuning on any issues that might be coming up. She said she expects the state to show up for an inspection any day.

Strnad said in her opinion staffing is critical, and it does not work with a skeleton crew.

Schmidt said the facility is in the

black, and are doing OK. She said Medicare cuts have taken away part of the profit. She asked if the commissioners wanted to see any of the financial information.

Strand said the did not need to see any financial information as they were satisfied with the operation by the Good Samaritan Society.

Schmidt said she was shocked when she got a letter from the State of Kansas assessing a nursing home bed tax of \$1,500 per bed. She said that will cost the Sherman County Good Samaritan facility about \$90,000 total.

She talked a bit about the latest on the St. Francis Good Samaritan Society reopening and that 11 of the 13 who had been brought to Goodland have gone back. She said one of those left will say in Goodland and another will go back to St. Francis in May.

She said the Sherman County facility census is 55 right now, and is looking at admitting a couple more in the next two weeks.

She said the St. Francis fire was an unusual situation and felt the Good Samaritan Society did extremely well in getting it all handled.

She said she is the interim director right now and a decision will be made in June about a permanent director. Schmidt said she has said she would be pleased to be the permanent director. She is currently living in Wallace County.

City, county continue search for fire consultant

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designated he and Kevin Zimmerman to see about the county side of the financing.

Cloyd asked if the financing for the city fire department is from property tax.

Gerber said it is and thinks it is about 5 mills at \$25,000 per mill for the city budget.

Cloyd said the rural fire district is capped at 5 mills, and are currently about 4.3 mills. The mill in the county raises about \$63,000.

Gerber said the fire chief has some preliminary research, but was not ready to talk about it in detail at this point.

The next step will be getting the proposals from the consultants to see whether an agreement at a reasonable cost is possible. Both the rural fire board, county commissioners and city commissioners had agreed to see if an outside consultant could be found to help lead the discussion on what could be the best model for fire service in the county including the city.

On other business the commis-

sioners: • Approved a Charter Ordinance allowing people who live outside of Goodland to serve on the Goodland Cemetery Board. The change would not take affect until after a 61 day protest period expires after the second publication, City Manager Doug Gerber said.

He said he is trying to formalize the city board application process and those who indicate and interest in serving have them come in and fill out a form.

He said the state law says cemetery board members have to live in the city, but he had a person come in and fill out a form for the cemetery board. He said Goodland is a home rule city, and can opt out of the state law and adopt the charter ordinance to allow the seven members of the cemetery advisory board to be appointed whether they live in town or not. He said the city has as current person serving on the cemetery board who has been on the board for years and does not live in the city.

To adopt the charter ordinance Gerber said it requires a two-thirds vote of the commission meaning

with four commissioners present it would take a unanimous vote, and the charter ordinance would be published twice and then there would be a 61 day protest period when someone could file a protest against the ordinance and would require a vote on the issue.

City commissioners agreed changing the cemetery board was a good idea. Commissioner Annette Fairbanks made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Kevin Rasure. The vote was unanimous 4-0.

• Approved installation of an upgraded commercial metering system as part of an agreement with Sunflower Electric Power Corporation.

Mayor Josh Dechant asked if this was different than what the city has.

Rod Blake, power plant superintendent, said is not something the city has currently. He said Sunflower Electric in past years did not require that. He said they had a system of telemetry on the meter, but it was not commercial revenue grade. He said sine the city has requested to possibility of purchasing

from another power plant they are requiring the upgrade.

Commissioner Dave Daniels asked if Sunflower would refund the cost if the city did not get an outside power contract.

Blake said Sunflower should have pushed the upgrade when the city got the hydro power from Western Area Power Authority, but they didn't.

Dechant said Sunflower is offering to finance the installation at 5 percent interest.

Gerber said this is a coming requirement and is similar to what the City of Beloit paid when he was there.

Blake said the cost is in line with what he has found.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure said it appears to be something the city has to do, and made the motion to install the meter. Daniels seconded and asked if the city was going to pay for it rather than financing.

Gerber said the city would pay the \$39,352.

The vote was unanimous 4-0.

County commissioners hear development update

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and not do anything until they see something good coming up.

Solomon said he had been at the meeting with Gov. Sam Brownback in Colby on Monday for the signing of the Rural Opportunity Zone bill. He said this is a good opportunity for people to move to Kansas and they would not have to pay state income taxes for five years.

He said the other part is a program to forgive school loans up to \$15,000. He said it is a program the county would be involved in with the county agreeing to pay half and the state would pay half. He said it is something for the county to look at

and would begin in January.

Strnad said the county would pay the school loan.

Solomon said it would be half and would be a maximum of \$7,500 for the county per person with a maximum total of \$15,000 and the state would pay the other maximum of \$7,500 per person.

He said the question is how to set Sherman County apart to make it more attractive to move here. He said he was working to put together a group of people to see what can be done.

He said one thing that could be done is to talk to business people about job possibilities and go to job fairs in Colorado or other places.

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