

# City holds property tax flat for next year

By Tom Betz  
ne.betz@nwkansas.com

City commissioners spent about three hours on Tuesday reviewing the proposed budget for next year and the commissioners asked the city administration to cut about \$28,000 out to keep the property tax at the same level as last year.

When the discussions on the budget began the proposed budget would have raised the property tax about 1.2 mills or about \$28,000 total taking it from 49.672 up to 50.847.

When the budget discussion was completed the commissioners agreed to find a way to cut the \$28,000 to keep the property tax a level as possible.

The proposed budget was printed in *The Goodland Star-News* on Friday, and based on the property tax formula residential taxes for someone with a \$50,000 appraised value house taxes would go up 24 cents, \$75,000 house would go up 35 cents, and a \$100,000 home would see an increase of 47 cents. Last year the residential tax rates went down more than \$11.

Commercial property rates will see similar changes with \$50,000 appraised value business taxes will go up by 51 cents, \$75,000 business would go up 77 cents, and a \$100,000 business would go up

\$1.03 total. Last year the commercial property taxes dropped more than \$25.

The city commissioners have been working to lower the property tax levy over the past four years and have dropped it from a high in 2008 of 56.4 mills down to 49.7 mills for next year's budget.

City Clerk Mary Volk said Thursday she and City Manager Doug Gerber had gone through the budget and made cuts to keep the property tax as even as possible from last year, and was pleased she had come close.

The budget hearing will be held at 5 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 1, at the opening of the next city commission meeting.

At the budget session on Tuesday Gerber opened the budget session on Tuesday saying he felt Volk had helped produce a good budget the city could live with if the commissioners chose to approve it as it was presented.

He said he had always started budget sessions with that statement, but knew the commissioners would like to go through the budget by department.

The city department supervisors were at the meeting and as each department was discussed were asked for any input or things they wanted to point out.

At the end of the going through the 113 pages the commissioners began to look at the total picture.

"Looking at the budget," said Mayor John Garcia, "the recommendations look good to me. Mary and Doug have put good work into preparing the budget. I would like to see bringing the total down \$28,000 shaving that off the top and calling it good."

"I know we have to be prepared to look into the future, but feel we can find ways to cut that money off."

Commissioner Annette Fairbanks said she felt Mary and Doug did an amazing job.

"We can look at this and talk to the county commissioners about what we are doing," said Commissioner Josh Dechant. "We are being the leaders in keeping the taxes down, and we want to keep it that way. It may not be easy in the future, but we again held the line and feel we can find the \$28,000 and feel good about the budget."

Dechant suggested taking part of the money out of the city manager car item in the municipal equipment reserve fund for \$22,000.

Volk said she would not take it from that because the cars are being used by everyone for trips to meetings and one needs to be replaced. She said she know one is close to or exceeding 100,000 miles.

"I listed it as city manager's car," she said, "but it is not really his car. I would take it from the recreational department pickup. The car is really a staff car."

Dechant said based on previous vehicle purchases he could appreciate Volk's point and maybe not take all of the money out of the pickup.

Gerber asked if the commissioners had a place where the money should come from or just that it comes from somewhere.

"I am against taking it away from a police car," Dechant said. "The wear and tear on those is hard and I would like to keep that five-year rotation."

Garcia said he agrees with Dechant, but feels the city ought to be able to get more than 100,000 miles out of a police car.

He said if the city moves in the way Gerber and Joni Showalter, acting police chief, might get the city more money back.

"My philosophy is to make it as cost conducive for taxpayer to live here," Garcia said. "I want to keep it the way we are and send the message we are staying on top of things. I am proud of the budget, and do not care where the cut comes from."

Commissioner Annette Fairbanks said she felt it was an awesome job by Gerber and Volk on the budget. She said she agreed with shaving

off the \$28,000 and did not have a problem where it comes from.

Commissioner Chris Zimmerman said he did not have an opinion and was taking all the budget discussion in.

Commissioner Bill Finley said it was a job well done in presenting the budget, and he felt it would be good to leave the cuts up to the city staff. He said he was certain both Gerber and Volk had idea about where the \$28,000 could be cut.

Gerber said he didn't want to cut the commission out of the process.

Dechant said he felt there are some easy ones if you are trying to cut a little or a lot.

"I wanted the commission to make some choices," Gerber said.

A question was raised about funding for programs such as the Carnegie Arts Center, Freedom Fest fireworks, Sherman County Historical Society, VFW Christmas candy, Child Advocacy Center and Relay for Life.

Gerber said they did not budget for any of it, but did say the budget includes a couple of line items where these could come from if approved by the commission.

Volk said the Northwest Kansas Animal Shelter \$2,000 was included in the police budget.

Another program that was not directly funded in the budget was

the Invest in the Future scholarship program for Northwest Tech at \$20,000.

Gerber said there is money in the two budget lines to have \$20,000 for the college scholarship program.

As to the other programs he said it was his philosophy to give the commissioners the information and let them decide if they wanted to support these with city tax money.

He said based on last year's budget the other programs are about \$3,550 total.

Garcia said it is not that the programs are not important, but said the commissioners could decide about those later since there was money available in the budget.

Dechant said if you cut all those programs need to cut animal shelter, but said he agreed with Garcia that it appears there is enough in the budget to make those decisions later.

A point made was that the programs are project that citizens have come to the commission to ask for money for, and these are in most cases those same taxpayers who live in town.

The commissioners agreed to approve the budget and allow Gerber and Volk to find ways to reduce the total by \$28,000.

## Swim team has fun night



The Goodland Swim Team had a "Just for Fun" mini swimmers swim meet on Friday night at Steever Water Park. Young kids competed in the wading race where they had to retrieve something from the bottom and wade to the finish line formed by the members of the swim team. Other races included the 25-yard freestyle and butterfly. In the treading race competitors treaded water for one minute, sing a song, then raise one arm, then the other arm and then a leg.

Photos by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

## corrections

The Goodland Star-News will correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at (785)

899-2338 to report errors. We believe that news should be fair and factual. We want to keep an accurate re-

cord and appreciate you calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.

### Doc's Coffee is open for business!

The Goodland Star-News and the Goodland Ambassadors would like to Doc's Coffee to downtown Goodland!

Doc's Coffee, located at 1103 Main in downtown Goodland, is officially open for business! Owner Gary Smith opened the shop in May 2011, which is inside the building with Mann's Jewelry and Smitty's Sports.

Doc's Coffee serves a variety of foods and drinks, including specialty coffees, hot and cold teas, smoothies and Italian sodas. You can order an Avalanche (blended coffee) or a Snowball (no coffee), pastries, cookies, cinnamon rolls or scones...something for everyone!

Doc's Coffee is definitely a place everyone should check out! Stop in and say hello to the gang!

**Business location:** 1103 Main  
**Hours:** M-F 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Saturday 7 a.m. to noon (summer hrs.)

### NOTICE OF BUDGET HEARING

State of Kansas  
Special District  
2012

The governing body of  
**Sunflower Extension District #6**

will meet on August 16 at 4:00 pm at Sherman County Commissioners Room for the purpose of hearing and answering objections of taxpayers relating to the proposed use of all funds and the amount of tax to levied. Detailed budget information is available at Sunflower Extension District #6, Goodland Office and will be available at this hearing.

**BUDGET SUMMARY**  
Proposed Budget 2012 Expenditures and Amount of 2011 Ad Valorem Tax establish the maximum limits of the 2012 budget. Estimated Tax Rate is subject to change depending on the final assessed valuation.

FUND	Prior Year Actual 2010		Current Year Estimate for 2011		Proposed Budget Year for 2012		
	Expenditures	Actual Tax Rate*	Expenditures	Actual Tax Rate*	Budget Authority for Expenditures	Amount of 2011 Ad Valorem Tax	Estimate Tax Rate*
General	341,507	2.141	393,500	2.271	428,300	289,912	2.161
Debt Service							
Totals	341,507	2.141	393,500	2.271	428,300	289,912	2.161
Less: Transfers	0		0		0		
Net Expenditures	341,507		393,500		428,300		
Total Tax Levied	0		286,211		XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX		
Assessed Valuation:	0		126,057,003		134,175,528		

Outstanding Indebtedness,			
	2010	2011	2012
Jan 1,	0	0	0
G.O. Bonds	0	0	0
Revenue Bonds	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
Lease Pur. Princ.	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0

\*Tax rates are expressed in mills.

*Berky L. Vandike*  
Clerk

Page No.

Published in The Goodland Star-News on Tuesday, July 26, 2011.

Visit us on Facebook! The Goodland Star-News