

City to ink 15-year power deal

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while this will help offset the power costs a little, the city will still need to raise rates. The contract will also give the city some limited options to add alternative energy, like a wind turbine.

The commission also approved purchasing and installing combination silencer/catalysts for three engines at the power plant. The silencer/catalysts are needed to comply with new emissions regulations from the Environmental Protection Agency. Once they are installed the city will be able to run those three engines as much as is needed.

The commission approved a contract with Fairbanks Morse for \$367,335. Another bid was received from Midstates Erectors for \$377,180.

"Having to spend this amount of money to accomplish nothing is frustrating," Gerber said. "Nevertheless we want to remain compliant."

Rod Blake said he chose those engines because they are the most efficient ones the city has, they can cover the peak winter demand and because they can still get parts for them. The remaining engines will have be designated as "emergency use only" and the city will only be able to operate them for 60 hours a year.

Blake said the EPA regulations are still up in the air, as some requirements haven't been handed down yet, and there is some effort by Congress to get them changed or repealed.

In other business, the commission:

- Set a meeting at 7:30 a.m. Monday morning to choose a new city commissioner. Chris Zimmerman's last meeting was Monday, and the commission has 10 days to choose a replacement. The city has received four applications, and the commission will conduct interviews at the Monday morning meeting, then make a decision. Zimmerman thanked the commission.

"Keep up the good work and keep moving our city in the right direction," he said.

Mayor John Garcia presented Zimmerman with a plaque recognizing his service.

• Discussed implementing a donation policy for the city. The staff provided a draft copy of a donation policy along with a sample application. Garcia said he would like the commissioners to look at the policy and come back with suggestions at the next meeting.

The city receives numerous requests for donations, and the new policy would formalize the process.

Commissioner Bill Finley said he would be in favor of setting a donation limit, and anyone who wanted to get a donation over that limit would come before the council and negotiate a special agreement.

Randy Whitmore, a representative from Thunder on the Plains, came to ask the city to continue its regular donation to the organization. Thunder on the Plains puts on a professional bull riding event each year at the Sherman County fair. This year it will be Aug. 1.

Whitmore said Thunder on the Plains adds the most money to the purse in western Kansas, so it draws some of the best cowboys along with spectators from all over the country.

"We always have good participation," he said. "We're gaining a lot of notoriety."

Whitmore said the organization usually sells about 2,500 tickets.

Finley suggested the commission wait until it had decided on a donation policy, so the donation was tabled for the time being.

• Appointed Blake to the Kansas Municipal Energy Agency board of directors.

• Approved a mowing contract with Oura Garrett for \$29.50 an hour.

Garrett was not the low bid. John McGrath had the low bid with \$28 an hour. This job includes

mowing for people who don't take care of their own lawns. Gerber said he was recommending Garrett because it appeared that the low bidder doesn't have the appropriate equipment to keep up with the volume of mowing the city requires. City Clerk Mary Volk said the last time the city went with the low bidder, they couldn't keep up.

The commission approved the contract with Garrett by a 3-2 vote with Garcia and Commissioner Gary Farris voting no. Garcia said his concern was that since McGrath has been the low bidder for two years in a row, the city ought to give him an opportunity. Farris said the city ought to go with the low bidder, and if they can't do it, then get someone else.

Finley suggested the city put more specifics into the bid next time so as to only get bidders with the proper equipment.

Gerber said he had also been discussing whether the current fees – hourly wages plus a \$25 administration fee – are enough of a deterrent to encourage people to do their own mowing. He said the city may look at something more punitive.

• Approved bids from Roy's Carpentry to demolish buildings at 1528 Grand for \$3,300, 1512 Center for \$9,400 and 1528 Center for \$6,600 as part of a Community Development Block Grant project. The grant allows up to \$6,500 per property, so the owners of two of properties will have to come up with the remaining money.

Roy's Carpentry was the low bidder out of three. Finley asked if city staff had checked on the bidders' insurance. Gerber replied that to be eligible to submit a bid, all three companies had to be approved by the state, who did conduct checks into the companies before approving them.

The contract was approved 4-1 with Finley voting no.

Apple holds award ceremony for tech college

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hard to replicate everywhere else. They have really figured out how to use the iPad to improve student learning."

Many Kansas leaders attended to express their support for Northwest Tech and educational innovation through technology. Those attending were Caleb Asher, deputy secretary, Kansas Department of Commerce; Re-

gent Janie Perkins, Kansas Board of Regents; Blake Flanders, vice president for workforce development, Kansas Board of Regents; Eddie Estes, member, Technical Education Authority; Sen. Ralph Ostmeier; Martha Gabehart, executive director, Kansas Commission on Disability Concerns; and Dick Short, Midwest Higher Education Compact and Northwest Tech Area Board of Control treasurer.

Oakley trooper gets anniversary car

CAR, from Page 1

us in these. I think it brings back a lot of good memories."

Seventy-five years of service, courtesy, and protection is no small feat, said Patrol Superintendent Col. Ernest E. Garcia.

"Our troopers and other officers take great pride in their vehicles, and we ask the public to join the Kansas Highway Patrol in celebrating 75 years of service," he said. "We've heard from many troopers, past and present, as well as the public, of their love for KHP's old blue and grays, and we hope these vehicles will be embraced by all, as they are something we are very proud of."

Another special aspect of these vehicles is that they are some of the last Ford Crown Victorias ever manufactured. The Crown Vic has been a staple in the law enforcement world, and with Ford ceasing production of the Crown Victoria, agencies across the U.S. will be looking at various models of cars to incorporate into their fleets.

It is important to remind motorists that these blue and gray cars will function as any other law enforcement vehicle. Troopers in these cars will still initiate a traffic stop for those motorists violating Kansas laws. The Move Over law also applies to these vehicles.

Legislature will reconvene for 'veto session' April 25

On March 30 the Kansas Legislature adjourned from the regular session, giving the legislatures a three week break. On April 25 the legislature will return to start the final weeks of the session known as "veto session."

Traditionally the only questions left unanswered would be whether the legislature would override any of Governor Brownback's vetoes. However, this year the Senate has failed to take any action on substantive issues; redistricting maps, mega budget bill. The House and Senate had an agreement on many issues in the omnibus budget bill, all except 36 items which were put off until the veto session. The appropriations chair, Mark Rhoades, discovered the agreement reached on Thursday was not reflected in the final version of the mega conference report. Because this problem was discovered late in the day Friday, the House chose not to agree on the report, which required pushing off the omnibus budget until we return for the veto session.

The House had agreed to fund \$24.6 million for K-12 education out of state highway fund, however, the Senate and the Governor wanted to fund the K-12 education from the state general fund, so this will be negotiated when we return.

Redistricting Map

Back in early February the House passed out a redistricting map for the House and Congressional districts. To date the Senate has failed to pass its own map and has been holding the bi-partisan House map hostage. This week the House passed out our second House map and a Congressional map, known as Bob Dole I, with bi-partisan support and sent it over to the Senate for their consideration.

The Senate which is evenly split even though the Republicans have the majority, voted to kill the maps



rick
billinger

• state rep.

sent over by the House. A number of moderate Republicans continually vote with the minority party making the vote 20 to 20. The maps being worked in the Senate so far are not very fair or equitable. Time constraints require the House and Senate maps must pass the Governor's desk and a mandatory review by the Kansas Supreme Court before the state filing deadline and federally imposed deadline to ensure overseas military ballots are mailed on time.

The Senate's disregard for these important deadlines have compelled the House redistricting committee to consider drawing Senate maps when they return on April 25th. Traditionally the House and Senate do not mess with each others maps, this year may be an exception. House speaker, Mike O'Neal, has proposed that the House draw the Senate map which has some Senators upset about the possibility.

Budget and March Revenues

The Kansas Department of Revenue reported tax only revenues were \$40 million above estimates,

March receipts pushed the state's year-to-date receipts \$72 million above estimates made in November. Corporate and personal income taxes and sales tax were both above estimates. Corporate taxes were \$21.5 million above estimates of \$20 million. Individual income taxes were \$169.6 million, \$14.6 million above an estimated amount of \$55 million. Sales taxes were \$167.3 million, \$2.2 million above the \$165 million estimated.

Liquor and beer taxes were of 13.5 percent for beer and 11.5 percent for liquor in March. Fiscal year to date (since July 1) receipts are \$4.117 billion, \$72 million above estimates of \$4.045 billion. That's \$289.5 million above last year's \$3.828 billion. However, we are not out of the woods yet. At the present time we have many challenges before us including, KPERs which has an unfunded liability of over \$8 billion.

HCR 5006

Governor Brownback, Senate and House leadership all agreed that the citizens of Kansas should have the opportunity to vote on an amendment to the Kansas constitution which would clarify the distinct roles of the Judicial and Legislative

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