

City asked if insurance coverage includes Flatlander special event

By Tom Betz
The Goodland Star-News

Insurance for special events usually is something the people putting on the event need to have, but Monday city commissioners were asked if the city is covered for events held on its streets.

The commission was not clear on what might be covered and asked the city manager to check with the city insurance agent. Apparently, the city has no special coverage for events on its property, while the county usually requires the sponsor of an event to have insurance, which also covers the county.

City Manager Wayne Hill said Thursday a letter from the insurance company recommends that any special event using city property have their own liability coverage, and recommends against the city adding a special event endorsement to the general liability policy.

"I just got this letter this morning," Hill said. "It is what we talked about on Monday, and the Flatlander Fall Festival should have their own liability insurance."

Lincoln Wilson, president of the Flatlander committee, Monday asked if the city has an endorsement on its general liability policy to cover special events.

He said he talked to City Attorney Jeff Mason and the city's insurance agent, Eklund Insurance.

Wilson said he felt the city has some exposure. He said the endorsement would cost \$1,000 to \$1,200 a year.

Mayor Rick Billinger said it made sense but he thought the city was covered.

City Clerk Mary Volk said Commissioner Dave Daniels raised the insurance question last year, but the insurance company did not recommend adding an endorsement.

"I think we have some liability, even it is for things like the homecoming parade in a couple of weeks," Billinger said.

City-county finalize road pact

The bonds have been sold and the money for the joint city-county road project should arrive today.

Design work on the projects is under way and the first bids are being sought for the city's first jobs, concrete paving at the intersections of Caldwell and Eighth and Caldwell and Armory Road.

A final step in the process was completed Monday with the city commission and county commissioners approving an agreement with details about the sales tax collection and payment of bills for the projects.

The pact was drafted by Kevin Cowan, bond counsel from Gilmore and Bell of Wichita.

The \$12 million bond issue was sold in an on-line auction on Tuesday, Sept. 12, and will be paid off by the one-cent sales tax citizens approved in March, which went into effect in July.

Monday, the city commission, at its regular meeting, had the agreement on the agenda. The Sherman County commissioners were present and held a short special meeting during a pause in the city meeting to approve the same agreement.

City Manager Wayne Hill said he had read through it. County Commission Chairman Kevin Rasure asked the city commissioners if they had seen anything in the document that needed to be changed.

The city commissioners each said they had not.

Rasure said some changes had been made, and County Clerk Janet Rumpel said she had received the latest copies from Wichita to bring to the meeting.

The agreement talks about how the money will be divided, with the city getting about 33 percent of the total and the county 67 percent.

Bills for the city street projects will be approved by the city commission and then reviewed and approved by the county commission.

Rumpel said the money should come to the county. She said she expects to see the first figures at the end of this month or in October. She said it takes at least 60 days after a sales tax goes into effect to get the first money back from the state Department of Revenue.

City Commissioner Dave Daniels made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Annette Fairbanks, to approve a city ordinance for the agreement. The vote was unanimous.

"This is a great opportunity for the city and county to work together," Fairbanks said. "I hope we can set another time to work together on other things."

For the county, Rasure made a motion to approve a resolution for the agreement. Commissioner Mitch Tiede seconded, and the vote was unanimous with Commissioner Chuck Thomas in favor.

Rasure said the county treasurer has been asked to keep the city informed about income from the sales tax. He said the investment of the money will be reported to the city as well by the county treasurer.

The county commission adjourned its special meeting after signing all the copies and the city commission returned to its agenda after signing the city's copies.

Goodland bank to handle employee retirement plan

By Tom Betz
The Goodland Star-News

The City Commission agreed Monday to move the city employees' supplemental retirement plan to a Goodland bank, with the city paying one-time costs of about \$3,000.

The city will move the supplemental retirement plan to the First National Bank. Commissioners approved paying setup costs of \$900, plus a one-time \$30 fee for each eligible employee and the \$25-per-month administration fee for the plan.

Trevor Linton, assistant vice president and financial specialist for First National, was at the Aug. 21 commission meeting to talk about talking over the supplemental retirement plan. Monday, Linton was back to talk to the commission about what he had learned at an employee meeting.

"I wanted to follow up and let you know where we were in the process," Linton said. "I have spoken to the employees — spoke to 19 — and 11 are wanting to do this for sure."

"The people I talked to are excited about changing companies. I don't know what we need to do next."

City Manager Wayne Hill said he thought they had a good meeting with the employees.

"This is not something the city went out and solicited like we would do for other things we bid," Hill said. "Trevor came to us after being asked about the plan by city employees."

"From the minutes, the commission was leaning toward paying the \$900 setup fee and going with Trevor."

"What is the next step?" asked Commissioner John Garcia.

"If enough people are involved, the commission can give a nod of approval," Hill said. "The city would cover the base fees to change companies."

"We are coming back to the commission as you asked. There never was a motion to do the \$900 plus the \$30 per person."

Mayor Rick Billinger said he felt the city could agree to do what the employees want.

"I thought we agreed to pay the \$900 and let the employee pay the \$30 if they wanted to participate," Commissioner Dave Daniels said. "I am thinking, what about those who are not going to get into the plan? Let them pay the \$30 per employee."

"The \$30 up front is for all the eligible employees and is a one-time cost," said City Clerk Mary Volk.

Billinger said the cost for all the employees would be about \$2,700.

"What I found in the meeting is there are some employees who are not in the plan," Linton said. "They were excited about being able to talk to me locally. I think you will get more people involved."

"What is the advantage to the city?" Billinger asked.

"Not really anything," Linton said. "You could get rid of the plan and the employees can do what they want. This plan allows the employees to add to their retirement in addition to the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System."

"The employees are putting money into the plan," Volk said, "and we are not getting any help from the company."

"I will stand up for the employees," Hill said. "I think the commission should stand up and do this. We have given something of a stamp of approval."

"I was not here," Commissioner Annette Fairbanks said, "but I know we are saying what great employees we have and this is an opportunity to show our appreciation."

Commissioner Josh Dechant said it appeared there was a consensus to do the change. He made a motion to pay the one-time setup fee of \$900 plus the individual employee cost of \$30 and the monthly administration fee of \$25 for the plan. It passed unanimously.

Linton said there would be a monthly fee of \$1 to be paid by the employees who participate, adding that he would get the paperwork moving.

City provides power to festival booths on Main

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make that decision," Billinger said about putting in the electric meters.

"We are still providing the electricity," Hill noted.

"We are too close to the event to try to make a different decision that might delay us," Wood said. "The meters should be in Tuesday, so our guy (Becker) can bring it down the pole right away."

"So we have it covered?" Billinger asked.

Wood asked if the city would consider helping with the cost of the meters and plugs.

Commissioner Annette Fairbanks said she thought it was something the city ought to do.

"You asking for help on the \$2,000?" Garcia asked.

"Is that their equipment if we put it on the city poles?" Daniels asked.

"We are going to be held liable for anything that happens on city streets," City Manager Wayne Hill said. "I thought the people doing the special event would have an insurance policy to cover them."

"Are we covered or aren't we?" Billinger asked.

"We don't have a special endorsement for things like parades and special events," Volk replied.

"I think we are going to be on the hook," Hill said, "but I think the committee or people putting on the event should have a million-dollar policy."

Wilson said from his research, the city does not have coverage for special events. He said, however, that Mason told him the city is covered if anything happens on the city streets.

Billinger asked Hill to check with the insurance company to be sure the city is covered.

"I expect us to be liable if anything happens," Hill said.

"I am wondering about if something happens where someone is injured on the street," Daniels said. "What if a light pole falls over and hurts a lot of people is there something different about that?"

"I am wondering about someone falling on a broken curb we have," Commissioner Josh Dechant said.

Volk asked County Clerk Janet Rumpel how the county handles special events at the fairgrounds.

Rumpel said the group putting on the event has a certificate of insurance and lists Sherman County as the secondary insured, and the county has a general liability policy.

"That is what I wanted," Hill said.

"Better check with the insurance company," Billinger said.

Fur-harvester classes offered near Goodland

Fur-harvester education classes will be offered near Goodland and in St. Francis, and a hunter education class is scheduled for Goodland.

The classes are required to get a hunting or trapping license in Kansas.

The first fur-harvester class will be from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 28, at Bellamy Farm, 1615 County Road 51. Go 11 miles south of Goodland on K-27 to County Road 52, then two miles west to Road 17, one mile south to Road 51 and three-fourths of a mile west and follow the driveway south. Signs will be posted.

The class in St. Francis will be the same time on Sunday, Oct. 29, at the Cheyenne County Gun Club, one-third of a mile south of town on County Road 14, south of U.S. 36.

Lunches will be provided. To pre-register, call state wildlife officer Mike Hopper at (785) 899-5199 and leave a message.

The only hunter education class this fall in Sherman County will be from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday, Oct. 17 and 19, and from 8 a.m. until it's finished Saturday, Oct. 21, at the National Guard Armory. Lunch will be provided Saturday.

To register, call Troy Mannis at 821-1838 or Hopper at 899-5199.

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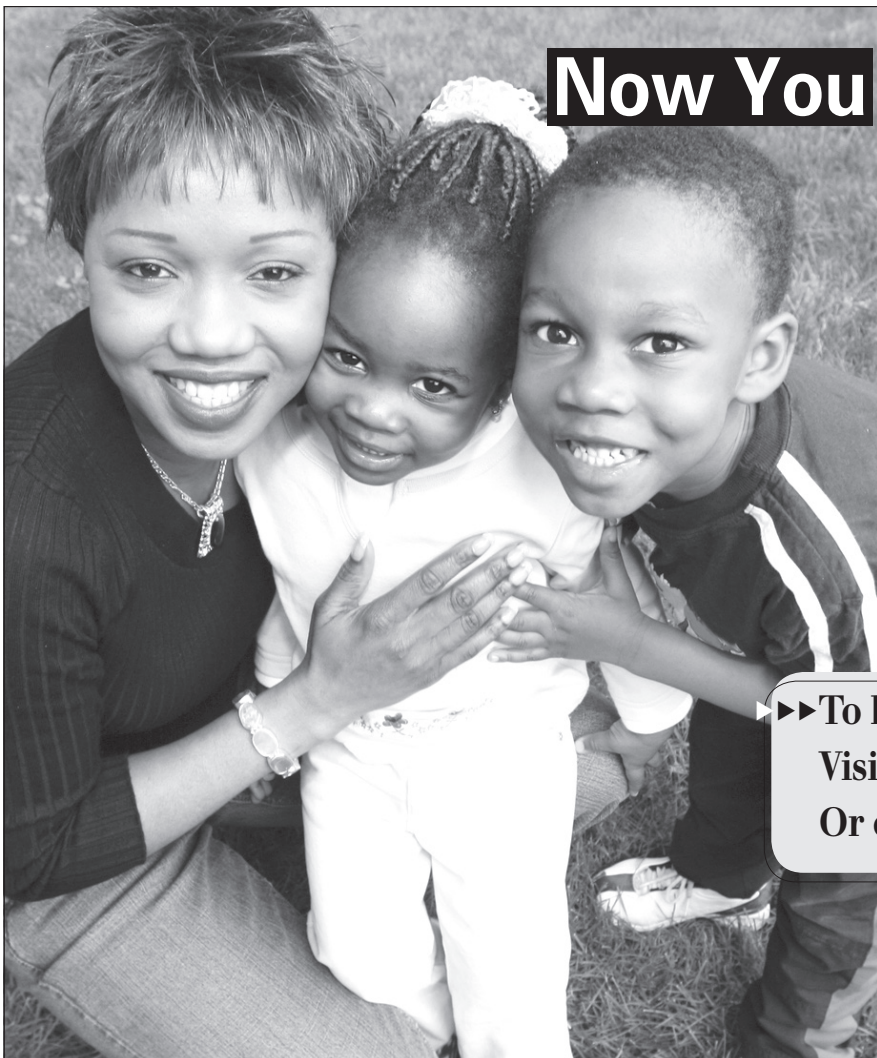
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