



And the band plays on

ON FRIDAY, Kariah Castle (above left) and Molly Jansonius practiced on their saxophones during band class at Oberlin Elementary School. Caitie Shields (left) held her drum sticks in the ready position while McKenna O'Hare (below) played the clarinet.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis



Council seeks help on water

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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The Oberlin City Council asked a volunteer whose been gathering information about a water treatment system to invite a representative from the Kansas Department of Health Environment to come to the meeting next month.

Sid Metcalf said he'd picked up the idea of a reverse osmosis treatment plant and started looking into it. The city is looking at a \$4 million water treatment project to remove arsenic and uranium, he noted, but that isn't going to solve the city's water problem.

He said he serves on a couple of water groups in western Kansas and through that talks of a pilot project for a reverse osmosis system have taken off. The Health Department is saying that there is a grant to cover 45 percent of such a project and then the rest of the cost could be paid for with money due from Nebraska over the Republican River issue.

A reverse osmosis plant will not only help with the quality of water, said Mr. Metcalf, but also give the heavily pumped Ogallala Aquifer a break because they could drill down to the Dakota Aquifer.

A reverse osmosis plant would probably pump a million gallons of water a day and cost around the same price as the proposed treatment plant, said Mr. Metcalf. The city probably needs to talk with an engineering firm to look at the feasibility of the project.

The city currently uses around 170,000 gallons of water a day, but has the capacity to use 1 million gallons a day.

"There's lots of ifs, ands and buts to this deal," said Mr. Metcalf, "but I think it's worth looking into."

Council discusses engineers

The Oberlin City Council talked Thursday about whether the city needs to look at another engineering firm instead of always using the same firm out of McCook.

Councilman Jay Anderson said the city has done business mostly with Miller and Associates, since before he was elected. He said the voters are asking why the city always uses that firm.

If the city were to go with a different engineering firm, asked Dr. Anderson, who owns the records generated over the past few years?

City Attorney Steve Hirsch said he thought the city probably owns those documents, since the city paid to generate them.

Maybe the city needs to talk with other engineering firms, said Dr. Anderson, or maybe Miller needs to work to re-establish people's faith in the firm.

Councilwoman Marcia Lo-hoefener said she has concerns (See CITY on Page 5A)

He said he talked with Dave Waldo at the Health Department. As long as the council is looking (See REVERSE on Page 5A)

City questions bid proposals on weather system

By KIMBERLY DAVIS
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The Oberlin City Council tabled a decision on bids for an automated weather observation system at the city airport on Thursday.

The council discussed the two formal bids at length, but decided it needed some questions answered before making a decision. The bids had a difference of \$19,277.

Phil Fraker, with the city's airport committee, said a local repairman knows how to work on the system offered by Vaisala Inc., of Boulder, Colo., but that equipment costs a little more than \$19,000 more than the other bid. The council questioned whether the extra cost is worth having someone here who knows how to work on the system.

Mr. Fraker said he's talked with people from both Vaisala, with a bid of \$88,325, and All Weather Inc., out of California, with a bid of \$69,048, about buying the equipment and then storing it. Both companies, he said, allow pre-purchasing and then the year warranty wouldn't start until the item is shipped.

Changes at the airport needed to make the equipment work include running electricity and a phone line to the site. The cost of a concrete pad is in the bid, said Mr. Fraker.

The city will get federal money to pay 90 percent of the purchase price, Mr. Fraker said. The city has to buy the equipment first, thought, and then ask for the federal money.

Mr. Fraker said he does like the fact Vaisala is in Colorado.

City Administrator Austin Gilley asked if the Kansas Department of Transportation has or provide the bid specs for the system?

No, the department said the city was supposed to handle that, Mr. Fraker said.

The way the money is going with

Council roundup

At a meeting Thursday, the Oberlin City Council:

- Tabled a decision on two bids for an automated weather observation system at the city's airport. Story at left.

- Asked a volunteer whose been gathering information about a water treatment system to ask a representative from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to come to a meeting next month. Story above.

- Approved an ordinance to include motels and hotels into the allowed uses for commercial-general zones. Story on Page 3A.

- Put off action on a proposed wind-power ordinance to see what happens with two bills in the state House of Representatives that address wind energy. Story on Page 3A.

- Talked about looking for another engineering firm on future projects instead of always using the same McCook firm the city has used in the past. Story above.

the state, said Councilman Jay Anderson, the council needs to make a decision sooner rather than later, because that money might not still be available.

Both of the vendors, said Mr. Fraker, have said they won't do anything with the site until the Federal Aviation Administration, which has the money, gives the OK. He said he talked with Bucher, Willis and Ratliff, the engineers on the project, (See BIDS on Page 5A)

State reps plan to visit

Both state Sen. Ralph Ostmeyer and Rep. John Faber plan to be at the Decatur County Courthouse from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 7, to talk with voters.

The event is being sponsored by the Decatur County Farm Bureau.

Legion to offer Saturday meal

The Oberlin American Legion plans to open its kitchen for dinner on Saturday evenings.

Jim Barrett, a post board member, said the first evening for the kitchen to be open will be Valentine's Day.

Joyce Carlton will be cooking and bringing with her a group of workers.

The Legion used to have the kitchen open for dinners, said Mr.

Barrett, probably 10 years or more ago.

He said the post retained a food license from the Kansas Department of Health Environment so they could operate the kitchen.

He said they have been interested in finding someone to run the Saturday dinners, but haven't been able to until recently.

Mrs. Carlton offered to do the job, he said, and they are more than

happy to let her.

For Valentine's Day, he said, the kitchen will offer prime rib, seafood and steak. Mr. Barrett said the menu will change every week, as will the prices.

Dinner will be served from 5:30 to 9 p.m. on the north side of the building.

Diners 21 and over will be able to buy a drink with dinner if they want, he said.

* Reverse filter might solve water woes

(Continued from Page 1A) ing into something for the city's water, the department will put any enforcement action on the back burner, said Mr. Metcalf.

Did Mr. Waldo say how much of the grant money might be cut from the state's budget? asked Councilman Rob McFee. No, said Mr. Metcalf, but he talked with him before the cuts were talked about.

Engineers with Miller and Associates have said that reverse osmosis water will be too aggressive for the city's old water pipes and might dissolve the gunk off the

inside of them, said Mr. Metcalf. The reverse osmosis water would be tweaked just enough to get it under the federal limits, said Mr. Metcalf. People would still want a system inside their home.

Administrator Austin Gilley said when he talked with Wayne Bossert from the Northwest Kansas Ground Water District four, it sounded like an engineering firm out of Denver might be doing some work on this idea.

The council asked Mr. Metcalf to call Mr. Waldo about coming to talk with them.

* City could look at changing firm for engineering

(Continued from Page 1A) herself and would be interested in looking into other firms.

City Administration Austin Gilley said he understood that Miller and Associates was under contract to design a new water treatment plant. Mr. Hirsch said they need to look at the agreement between the city and the firm.

Another thing to keep in mind, said Councilman Ray Ward, who was presiding as acting mayor, is with past projects, someone had to drive here to oversee the work and the city paid mileage. Mileage from another town could add up fast, he said. That's not a reason to keep the McCook firm, he added, but the city needs to look at those figures, too.

Police Chief Wade Lockhart told the council the city needs an impound lot where a vehicle involved in a case can be locked up. The city is using the old county shop now, he said, but they need a city lot. He said they have pretty much decided to fence in an area by the city shop.

How many vehicles does the city need to impound? asked Councilman Rob McFee. The city has two vehicles now, the chief said.

Mr. Gilley told the council that he's been reading through the city's ordinances and books. Some of the ordinances are not the actual practices the city operates with, he said. There's a lot of those issues that need to be cleaned up. Mr. Gilley

said he's working on revisions.

In other business, the council:

- Approved a new procurement policy. Mr. Gilley said he tried not to deviate from the current practice, but wanted the policy to be a little more clear.

- Heard that Mr. Gilley has talked with the department heads about being good stewards of the taxpayers' resources. The city's future is not necessarily grim or dark, he said, but he wants to highlight things that need to be done.

- Talked about possibly doing a citizen/customer satisfaction survey.

- Heard the city hasn't been able to balance the books for the end of the year yet, through no fault of the staff, said Mr. Gilley. He said city has old equipment and is still using an outdated "DOS" operating system.

- Heard that two more roofers had looked at The Gateway roof. The city will run a public notice asking for bids for the roof and for the heating, ventilating and air conditioning units on the roof.

- Talked briefly about the Kansas Aviation Association meeting in March. Mr. Gilley said he thought he should attend the meeting.

- Approved continued participation in the Kansas Municipal Energy Association mutual aid program, which costs the city \$100 a year. The city has been in the program for the last 10 years.

* Bids vary widely on weather system

(Continued from Page 1A) and they haven't sent the form in to get the OK. The equipment can be approved before the city gets the OK for the site, he said.

Mr. Fraker said he can't explain the difference in the prices.

The money from the state runs out in June, said Mr. Fraker.

"While I understand the urgency to get this money," said City Administrator Austin Gilley, "I don't

think waiting two weeks would be bad."

In that time, he said, he could gather the files on the project, talk with the Department of Transportation and the engineers and figure it out.

He added that he would feel more comfortable, as the project manager, if he had two more weeks.

The council tabled the decision.

Woman flown to Kearney hospital

A 37-year-old Norcaturn women injured in a car accident at the end of January is still in intensive care at the hospital in Kearney, Neb.

Melissa Hadley, 37, was flown by helicopter to Good Samaritan Hospital after the car she was in rolled on the Bohemian Hall Road the evening of Thursday, Jan. 29.

Erin Hadley, Melissa's sister, said she's been in intensive care for 11 days now and is still in critical condition. Both of the sisters are in the medical field, working at the Andbe Home in Norton.

Erin said she's been in Kearney since her sister arrived. Other family members have been there, too, but needed to return home. Erin said she doesn't want her sister to wake up alone and be scared. She said she's been keeping track of everything that's happened in a planner

so that when her sister wakes up, she can fill her in.

Doctors put Melissa in a drug-induced coma soon after she arrived, her sister said. The doctors lifted the medications six days ago, Erin said, and now she's waiting for her sister to wake up.

When Melissa arrived at the hospital, she had a long list of injuries, including a fractured skull, brain bleeding, contusions around her heart, one lung punctured, the other bleeding, a lacerated liver, three breaks in her pelvis and cuts that couldn't be closed up because of glass and dirt.

Since then, said Erin, the doctors have found that there's possibly something wrong with her right knee and there are blood clots in one leg and her upper extremities.

"She is in very critical condi-

Northwest Winds blow strong



ON SATURDAY, the Northwest Winds basketball team beat a team made up of Oberlin volunteer firemen and teachers in an annual game at the grade school. Kyle Hartzog (middle) got ready for a rebound off the line while Matt Farr (left) and Leigh Zodrow watched. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

County bus frame to be straightened

The Decatur County commissioners approved spending \$535 to straighten and brace the frame of Bus 22.

Gaylen Huntley, noxious weed director, said he took the bus to Carl Lyon in Norcaturn, who said he can see that the frame has started to bend.

The commissioners discussed whether the county should pay to get the van fixed or not, since they have talked about purchasing a

used school bus.

Even if the county could purchase the school bus, said Mr. Huntley, the van needs to be used until then and then maybe the school bus could be used to take someone who has to go to McCook. The van, because the county received it through a state program, can't be driven out of state.

With the resignation of Sarah Fredrickson from the weed department, Mr. Huntley said he started

advertising the full-time position. He said he wants to keep it the same with the job being shared with the other departments.

He said he's working on setting up a time for someone to come look at the leaky roof on the old county shop. He said they also need someone to look at the mortar between the blocks of the shop too.

Mr. Huntley said they worked on the 2000 Expedition, which was the first response vehicle. The doors no

longer automatically lock. He said they have also retrieved the code needed for the key pad.

The 2000 Dodge diesel truck was having problems in the steering column. Those have been fixed, said Mr. Huntley, for \$900 with labor. The commissioners had already approved the expense.

The commissioners approved Mr. Huntley going to the annual conference in Lawrence in March and that his wife would ride along.

Health group could get money monthly

The Decatur County commissioners talked with one of the county's representatives on the High Plains Mental Health board last Tuesday about possibly giving money to the agency monthly or quarterly instead of in one payment each year.

The commissioners weren't sure how the \$24,000 that the county gives to the mental health organization goes. It was suggested to possibly give the money monthly or quarterly to help the satellite offices open and the representative coming here as the economy forces groups to tighten budgets.

Sheriff's Deputy Jay Tate, the county representative, said the group plans on keeping all of the satellite offices open. The agency cut five jobs this year, he added.

There will be more challenges ahead with the economy, he said. Deputy Tate said he thinks the agency will ask for the same amount of money from the county during the spring budget meeting.

The commissioners asked County Clerk Colleen Geihlsler to find out how the money is sent.

County countdown

At their meeting last Tuesday, the Decatur County commissioners:

- Talked with the road and bridge supervisor about signs for the county roads, but didn't make any decision. Story on Page 3A.

- Approved a motion declaring items salvaged from the theater and senior center as surplus to give away. Story on Page 3A.

- Heard that it's already been a busy year for the ambulance service,

with over 41 calls so far. Story on Page 2A.

- Approved spending \$535 to straighten and brace the frame of Bus 22. Story on Page above.

- Talked with one of the county's High Plains Mental Health representatives about giving the yearly contribution to the agency monthly or quarterly instead of all at once. Story at left.

Commissioner Gene Gallentine said he attended a Northwest Kansas Energy Collaborative meeting in Oakley to continue talks about wind power in this part of the state. He said Colby Community College hopes to get accreditation to offer a wind energy maintenance program.

The group is mainly an informational source for wind energy and a way for counties to stay in the loop.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said people should be cautious about anything that they are signing in the way of leases on their land. He said he hopes people are taking those to their lawyers to review first.

Mr. Unger said he attended a meeting of the Local Emergency Planning Commission on Monday. Members talked about whether the county wants to blow the all clear whistle when a storm has passed.

County Attorney Steve Hirsch

said there isn't any liability on the county's behalf if the all clear whistle is blown and then something happens. No decision was made.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Signed the letter allowing the clerk to apply for a credit card through the Bank.

- Heard that Register of Deeds Kari Ketterl had hired her predecessor, Judy Gaumer, to be deputy register of deeds. Mrs. Ketterl said there were lots of other applicants, but Mrs. Gaumer had the most experience.

- Approved renting The Gateway for storm spotter training for \$75.

- Approved giving the Northwest Kansas Area on Aging Agency \$4,300, the county's normal contribution.

- Reappointed Greg Long and Dr. Travis Hissong to the fair board. There's still one spot open, held by Sheriff Ken Badsy. Anyone interested can fill out a form at the clerk's office.

- Reappointed Connie Grafel to the hospital board.

Food Check Out Day set for Tuesday at Raye's

The Decatur County Farm Bureau plans to help teach people about the cost of what they eat during the annual Food Check Out Day at Raye's Grocery on Tuesday.

The theme for the day will be "Stretching your grocery dollar with health, nutritious food." Tammy Sporn, with the bureau,

said they will have a cart full of food and people will be able to guess what it cost. All of the food later will be donated to the Decatur County Food Pantry at the United Church.

The person who guesses closest to the actual cost will win a \$50 gift certificate to the store.

Five other names will be drawn, with each one receiving a Farm Bureau cloth tote bag.

