

Plans set to expand

Plans are underway to expand the weight room at the Decatur Community High School.

Superintendent Duane Dorshorst said Josh Williby, the industrial arts teacher, came up with a plan to expand the weight room and remodel the wood shop.

They start the construction the last week of school, he said, giving the students a chance to learn from the project.

Mr. Dorshorst told the school board about the plan at the meeting on Monday, April 12.

Board member Dan Nedland said he thought it would be an awesome thing to show during the open house coming up at the high school. Mr. Dorshorst said it wouldn't be done in time, but the students could show the drawings for the expansion. He said he didn't think the project would cost more than a couple thousand dollars.

Mr. Dorshorst said he's been talking with the recreation group with Decatur Tomorrow about the public using the weight room. With the expansion, the school might be able to put in some cardio equipment for people to use. That's down the road though, he said.

County hires director

The Decatur County commissioners hired a summer recreation director at the meeting last Tuesday, offering the job to the only applicant, Joe Dreher, who has served as the director for the past six years.

They talked with Mr. Dreher and Chris Bailey, recreation commission chair, about the playground equipment and netting next to the Lions Building that's been torn up. They talked about fixing it.

Mr. Dreher asked about the mowing, and the commissioner suggested he check with the city, since the city takes care of that.

They also talked about equipment to drag the infields.

The county pays \$5,000 a summer for the recreation director. During the rest of the year, Mr. Dreher is a teacher, activities director and a coach at the high school.

Agenda includes lagoons

The Oberlin City Council plans to meet at 7 p.m. Thursday at The Gateway.

Monday afternoon, City Administrator Austin Gilley said the agenda for the meeting includes:

- Mixers for the sewer lagoons.
- A proposal from Midland GIS Solutions of Missouri to map the city's infrastructure.
- A report on 10 properties in the city from the code enforcement officer.
- A recommendation for bond counsel for the water treatment plant and a report on the possibility of using "recovery zone" bonds for a new motel.

The meeting, in the upstairs meeting room, is open to the public.

Staffer plans office hours

One of Congressman Jerry Moran's staff members plans to hold office hours here on Monday.

Kelsey Holste will be at the commissioners' room on the second floor of the Decatur County Courthouse from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. Monday.

"Individuals who wish to voice their opinions about the federal government or are experiencing difficulties with Social Security, Medicare, veterans' affairs or other issues are encouraged to attend," said a notice from Rep. Moran's office.



1963 OBERLIN GRADUATE Vivian (Cox) Damratowski read part of the children's book she recently had published. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly

Author stops in hometown

A 1963 Decatur Community High School graduate has published her first book, a children's story about Howie the YorkiePoo, part Yorkshire terrier and part poodle.

Vivian (Cox) Damratowski said she taught school for 27 years, mainly second grade. After that many years around kids, she said she learned what kind of stories they like. The book, "Howie's Super Stupendous, Gigantic Adventure," could be read to and enjoyed by students in kindergarten through fourth grade, she said.

Readers can follow the story of Howard Eugene Plantenberg, also known as Howie, as he goes on his adventures and misadventures.

Mrs. Damratowski and her husband Casey live in Loup City, Neb., and the couple's grown children live in Omaha: son Shawn and his wife Kim, and daughter Tyra, granddaughter Korryn and grand-dog Howard.

Anyone wanting to take a look the book can go to her website at www.vivsvvenue.com.

Township withdraws request

Beaver Township trustees withdrew a request to designate two roads for minimum maintenance at the Decatur County commissioners' meeting.

The commissioners approved the withdrawal for the roads, one six miles north and two miles west on 700 Road and the other three miles west of town on the same road.

The commissioners talked about the roads at a recent meeting. April 20, they had scheduled a hearing for that request.

Commissioner Gene Gallentine said he got a call from a constituent about the roads. Making the road minimum maintenance could reduce the value of his property, the caller said, and it would limit the access to his land. He said residents should get something for their tax dollars, not a minimum maintenance road.

Anyone who looks at property, said Road and Bridge Supervisor

Tim Stallman, is going to go out and look at that road and see the condition it is in. These roads will never be closed, he said, because they are the only accesses to some property.

Mr. Stallman had a picture of the township road which he showed the commissioners. He said that changing the maintenance of the road to minimum isn't going to really change the way it's been maintained, it's just going to change the liability.

The township board, he said, is going to decide how much money is spent on the roads and how they are maintained.

To some degree, said County Attorney Steve Hirsch, the township board has to use its discretion. The board knows how much money it has to spend on the number of roads it has to maintain.

Nine out of 25 of the townships, said Mr. Stallman, have used the minimum maintenance process and

it's worked for them.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said maybe they need to talk to people in the area after the proposal to go to minimum maintenance is published in the newspaper and see how they feel about the change.

The idea of setting standards for maintenance on minimum maintenance roads was discussed.

Once standards are set, said Mr. Hirsch, the liability is back. He noted that the townships operate separately.

Mr. Stallman said the commissioners also asked at a previous meeting if there are any minimum maintenance roads with bridges on them. He said there are a few small wooden structures, and if anything happens to them, they would be replaced with a culvert.

There aren't any major bridges, he added, and none is over a major creek.

Rotary hears speech team presentations

Twenty-one Decatur Community High School speech team members who would be attending the state speech tournament or festival gave the program for the Oberlin Rotary Club meeting on April 27 at The Gateway.

They and their instructor, Leigh

Davis, were introduced by Principal Charles Haag, program chair for the day. Their presentations included informative speaking, prose interpretation and improvised duet acting. Their subjects addressed the new New Orleans, a Halloween tale and a funny take-off on Romeo and

Juliet with a very different ending. Lee Gilliam was named as Oberlin Rotarian of the Year. Kay Brown was a visitor.

Unanimous vote fills open seat on City Council

Members of the Oberlin City Council voted unanimously to approve the mayor's appointment of Richard Kimble to an open seat on the council.

The seat was vacated by Marcia Lohofener, who resigned in March. Mayor Joe Stanley appointed Mr. Kimble at the April 22 meeting.

Mr. Kimble said he and his wife Carolyn moved to Oberlin about 13 years ago from the Denver area.

He was born in Nebraska.

Mr. Kimble said he lived in the Denver area for over 30 years where he worked in construction and as a security supervisor.

The couple runs the Stockman Cafe on Mondays at the Oberlin Livestock Auction barn and on Thursdays, they run the cafe at the sale barn in Norton. Mr. Kimble has served on the board of the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce for over a year.

When the council seat became open, Mr. Kimble said he ap-

proached the mayor about serving. Mr. Kimble said in past years, he worked at the Decatur County Hospital and got to know Mrs. Lohofener, who was then managing

Wheat Ridge Terrace for Decatur Health Systems.

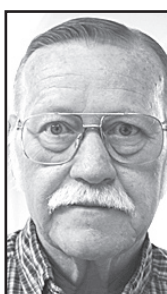
While Mr. Kimble said he's never thought of running for the council, he felt that it was time for him to serve.

The city, he said, is no different than the rest of the country. All government, whether on the federal, state or local level, needs some good respon-

sible thinking on spending and also on promoting progress.

Mr. Kimble said he wants to be sure the people's voices are heard in a positive way. It's important to listen to the concerns and issues that people have.

He also is interested in car racing. He has two children, and his wife, four. Between them, they have four grandchildren and one great-grandchild.



R. Kimble

Traer man suggests airport meeting

A Traer area farmer suggested that the Oberlin City Council bring back its airport advisory committee, which he said has not met recently even though members were appointed to it.

The city-appointed committee is different than the one formed under Decatur Tomorrow now working on the airport project, Jim Wesch, of Traer, said at the meeting April 22.

If the advisory committee was functioning, he said, the council could go to that group to ask questions.

There isn't really any group of people who know about airports, he said. For example it might have been good to have the group in place when discussing the Automated Weather Observation System that is supposed to go in at the airport.

The committee also could have helped with the updated airport plan, said Mr. Wesch. He added that he thinks the council needs an advisory group which operates at the pleasure of the council.

Later, the council approved an updated airport plan which had been discussed at the second March meeting. That's for the redone plan for the existing runway to lengthen the north end and shorten the south end.

The project is estimated to cost \$1,833,948. The estimated started is 2011.

Councilman Bill Riedel noted that the council gets an update at every meeting on at every what's

going on with the airport project.

Mr. Wesch said he isn't talking about those reports, but having a knowledgeable advisory board to ask some tough questions.

Mayor Joe Stanley said Bob Fraker, the fixed-base operator and manager at the airport, had asked whether the weather observation system could be put in sooner than had been planned. He said Mr. Fraker told him pilots need the weather information.

In other business, the council:

- Heard that construction on the new office at The Gateway should start at the beginning of May. When the new space is done, near the west door, the city staff will move there and The Gateway staff will move into the current city office by the rotunda.
- Appointed Sarah Ruf Smith to the board of the Oberlin Convention and Visitors Bureau, which oversees tourism promotion efforts financed by a 3 percent "bed tax" on motel rooms.
- Heard a complaint from a man in the audience, who wanted to know where the city drilled test well looking for higher-quality for water. He said he knows some farmers just outside of town who have eight-inch pumps. That size pump isn't put in unless the well can do 700 gallons per minute, he said.

If the city looked south of town, he said, it would have had to go 20 miles.

Walkway of Flags planned at center

The Decatur County Good Samaritan Center will hold its fifth annual Memorial Day Walkway of Flags from 8 a.m. until sunset on Monday, May 31.

The walkway in front of the building will be lined with flags, memorializing fallen heroes or remembered loved ones.

A total of 150 flags were flown last year, said activity director Lisa Paulson. This year, the center plans

a special section reserved for men and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Flags will be displayed in memory of, or in honor of, a loved one for a donation of any amount. Forms can be found at the center or at Raye's Grocery. Proceeds will go to the center's activities department.

For details, call Mrs. Paulson at (785) 475-2245.

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