



Council to increase water rates

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
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The City of Oberlin has hired an archeologist to investigate a piece of land that the city's water-well field will be built on, and since the city is looking into a Community Development Block Grant to help pay for part of the project, it may need to raise water rates sooner rather than later.

Chris Miller of Miller and Associates, the McCook engineering firm planning the water project, told the council that his firm suggests the city apply for a block grant for the \$7.4 million dollar project. However, he said, if the city goes that route, rates on water use will have to jump a little earlier than the council intended — as much as \$10 per meter per month.

The city got a \$501,000 block grant to repave nine blocks of streets last year. One requirement is that the population meet standards for the percentage of residents in the low- and moderate-income brackets to get the grants.

"You guys had really good luck with the streets," Mr. Miller said,

"so there's a chance you could get it for this one. There's \$440,000 in grants available. We need to modify the engineering reports some to conform to the CDGB application."

Mrs. Larson pointed out that by raising the rates earlier instead of later, the city could get some of the money for the project saved and get the application process going. Councilwoman Fonda Farr noted that the rates will have to be raised sooner or later, and that this way, they could soften the blow to residents.

Later, Mrs. Larson said a motion to do so won't be passed until the next meeting at earliest so that City Attorney Steve Hirsch can do the math and write up the paperwork in a way that applies the increase fairly across the board.

The current minimum rate for water usage is \$22.75 for the first 5,610 gallons and 2.2 cents per gallon after that. The \$10 rate increase would raise that to about \$33 dollars and 4.7 cents per gallon. The council has until August to raise the rate, Mr. Miller said, as that is the deadline for

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City to review old violations

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The Oberlin City Council approved a newly rewritten nuisance ordinance by a 4-2 vote at its meeting Thursday, and decided to have Code Enforcement Officer Jan Ackerman resume her job by first reviewing all of the cases reported last year to see who has complied and whose property still needs to be cleaned up.

Mrs. Ackerman, who lives in Hoxie, hasn't worked since last fall, when the council suspended the job until they could rewrite the ordinance to make it less controversial. Before that, she had a list of 68 violations that were under investigation or had received letters to comply. Now, two people must sign a complaint before she can investigate it.

"We need to know what direc-

tion to tell Jan to go in," said Mayor Rob McFee, "if she needs to go ahead with this list or start over.

"I went by most of these places," said Councilman Rusty Addleman, "and I think there are legitimate areas that fall under these violations. I don't see the point of starting over when the basic groundwork has been done."

The council members looked through the list, noting that only one person on it had said they wouldn't comply, and that Mrs. Ackerman hadn't followed up on the violations since October.

"What if we have her go back and take all of these she's got and look again?" suggested Councilman Tim Bowen. "And if it's still an issue, bring it to the next meeting, and

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Mardi Gras celebrated at Selden church

LUNCH WAS IN FRONT of him but Taitum Schwarz, 2, (above) was having fun drawing on a pad during the Sacred Heart Catholic Church Mardi Gras celebration in Selden on Sunday. Later, Kami Miller (right) handed out beads to the teen-age workers, and Kade Wessel (below) helped Sean Wederski, 4, go fishing.

— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes



Woman killed; boyfriend arrested

A 27-year-old Colby woman was found near death in her burning home Saturday morning and her 11-month-old baby was missing.

The baby was found safe near Logan, when authorities arrested a man wanted in the case. Police canceled a pickup order for the man and the child about noon Saturday, saying both had been located in Phillips County.

Teri Chase Morris, an emergency medical technician with the Thomas County ambulance crew and meat department manager at the Colby Walmart, was found just after 7 a.m. The Colby Fire Department had been called to her home, 125 S. Chickamauga Ave., at 6:59 a.m.

The Colby Police Department and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation were handling the case. Saturday evening, the police department sent out a statement, adding that more information would be released when it became available.

Also assisting in the investigation were the Thomas County Sheriff's Office, the state Fire Marshal's Office and the Kansas Highway Patrol.

According to the police statement, after entering the burning house, firemen found the victim near the front of the home. She was not responsive and was taken to Citizens Medical Center, where she later died.

Family members declined to comment on the woman's death

at the request of police. The Colby Police Department referred all questions to Don Brown, communications director for the Kansas Attorney General's Office. Brown did not respond to telephone calls Monday morning.

Kirby Ross, editor of the *Phillips County Review*, said the Phillips County Sheriff's Office included an item on the case in its regular report of activities. Among the service calls on Saturday, an item says the sheriff's office assisted the KBI in locating an individual wanted in Thomas County. The subject was arrested in rural Phillips County.

William Andrew Shank, 24, of Garden City, said to be Morris' ex-boyfriend, later was charged with first-degree murder in Thomas County. He reportedly was taken to the Phillips County jail and held there over the weekend, but officials at the jail, reached by telephone Monday morning, said they'd been told not to comment on the case. Police and jail officials in Colby said the same thing.

Saturday morning, police had cones blocking the street at the corner of Chickamauga and Webster. Two fire engines, the fire chief's car, a city car, three police cars, an ambulance and a Kansas Highway Patrol car were on the scene.

Fire Chief Bob McLemore said the call came in at 7 a.m. Saturday and the fire was out by 7:15.

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FIREMEN HOSED DOWN a house Saturday morning at 125 S. Chickamauga Ave. in Colby where a woman was found dead.

— Herald Staff Photo by Sam Dieter

Jury may visit scene

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The jury in the murder trial of an Oberlin man may visit the crime scene during the trial next month, according to a notice filed in Decatur County District Court.

Dylan Coryell, 24, charged with the first-degree murder of Airman Corey Cook, 22, on Oct. 16, 2011, has been awaiting trial in the county jail since his arrest Oct. 18 of that year. The trial now is set for March 18 to 29.

Ron Keefover, spokesman for the Office of Judicial Administration in Topeka, said the jury will come from the same pool selected for the trial when it was scheduled for the last two weeks of October. He said notices have been sent to potential jurors.

Mr. Coryell faces charges of first-degree premeditated murder or an alternative charge of felony murder, felony aggravated battery and felony aggravated burglary after the shooting death of 22-year-old Corey Cook. Mr. Coryell allegedly shot Mr. Cook while he lay in bed with a woman who testified she'd had relationships with both men. She was wounded, accounting for the battery charge.

The motion for the site visit was filed by Nicole Romine, assistant attorney general for western Kansas, with offices in Goodland, in Decatur County District Court. District Judge Preston Pratt said in the notice sent Jan. 30 that he will hold a hearing on the request at 10 a.m. Tuesday at the courthouse here.

Banks to close Monday

President's Day, still formally known as Washington's Birthday, is observed on the third Monday of February.

All area banks, the county courthouse, county, state and federal government offices and post offices will be closed Monday in honor of the country's first president, and by tradition, of Abraham Lincoln as well.

City offices, all other businesses, schools and services should be operating as usual. Trash service will be on regular schedule.

The *Oberlin Herald* will keep its regular news deadline of noon Monday, with the paper being printed and returned to Oberlin by early Tuesday afternoon. It will be in Wednesday's mail most places.

Readers should note, however, that because there is no mail service Monday, they need to send news and ad copy early enough to arrive on Friday or just bring it to the office by Monday noon.

