

# Council deems Scout Hut ready for meetings

By Stacy Kaup  
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After months of work and repairs, the Scout Hut is ready for use. The St. Francis City Council members discussed utilization of the Scout Hut and decided that it can be "checked out" at the city office.

Boy and girl scouts will get first priority, with other interested parties reserving usage on a first come, first served basis. Council members agreed that there will be a deposit for the key, and the deposit will be returned when the key is brought back to the city office.

Scott Schultz, mayor, said he knew of a local group that was looking for a regular meeting place. Carla Lampe, council member, added she had been approached by a group as well.

Council members felt the Scout Hut was ready to be opened for public use, and the size of the meeting room was ideal to accommodate many different organizations.

#### Building permits

Building permits were approved for the following: Pat Owens, fence; Roger Neitzel, fence; Rod Lampe, fence; Evelyn Russ, sidewalk; United Methodist Church, concrete.

#### Swimming pool report

Bruce Swihart, councilman and member of the Swimming Pool Committee, will give his last yearly report at the next meeting. It was noted, however, that proceeds from the "slave auction" will be used by the Chamber of Commerce to purchase new benches for the swimming pool.

#### Superintendent report

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment illegal dumpsite application has been sent in, reported J.R. Landenberger, city superintendent, as well as past history and photos of the property located on First Street. Mr. Landenberger thought that the approval processes happened fairly quickly, and once the application has been approved, clean up can begin.

At the previous council meeting, Mr. Landenberger reported there was water in the oil used to lubricate the transformers at the power plant. After further inspection, it appears that the test may have provided inaccurate results due to some variation/error in the temperatures during the test. They will be looking into that.

There is one pump at the reservoir that is completely non-functional and another pump with a bearing issue. He will be looking at those as well.

The Oster property is now owned by the city. Mr. Landenberger reported that the city may not have the appropriate equip-

ment to complete the demolition of the basement. There will be further discussion about this issue at an upcoming meeting.

Also slated for an upcoming meeting is the concern over trash rates. There is some concern about trash services outside city limits. Some residents and businesses have a special exception and have trash removal, however they do not pay other city utilities.

The cost to pick up trash outside of city limits is high, and there is discussion about what is a "fair rate" for those receiving special pick up. Of note, there are some companies available for hire to pick up trash in rural areas. Roger Jensen commented that recyclables are up, and the city has two employees working there four hours each day to keep on top of things.

#### Police report

Shane Guggenmos, chief of police, reported they had hired an new police officer. He started Sept. 16.

#### Attorney report

Mike Day, attorney, reported that he had met with the Keller family and Cheyenne County Wildlife regarding the Keller Pond area. They discussed putting up better fences, developing the east side and working on a circular walk.

Also noted were hearing dates set for the Erskin and Richers properties (Sept. 14) and Sowers (Sept. 16).

#### Other business

In other business:

- Roger Jensen reported that the Frisbee Golf course is up and running at the roadside park.

- Small business incentive was approved for Main Street Java.

- Paula Keller, council member, reported the theatre board was looking into some fundraising ideas.

- Marlene Penton will fill the roadside park maintenance position.

- Scott Schultz said Cheyenne County Cruisers ordered flags for the cemetery.

#### Next meeting

The next city council meeting will start at 7:30 p.m. on Monday at city hall.



'I WILL HAVE IT CLEANED UP BY NOV. 1' was the comment made by Bud Erskin about the lot. The city council is asking him to clean up it up or face charges.

Herald staff photo by Karen Krien

## STORY

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He hired a boy to mow the lot and started moving items to a place he owns east of town and behind the Majestic building.

"A lot of that stuff," he said, "I use. Maybe I don't use it every day but I use it and I can't afford to replace it. Some of the items such as a trailer, he said, are legal to have on the lot."

"The guys at Nobel Energy (the building to the north of the lot) said they didn't have a problem with the stuff on my lot," Mr. Erskin said, "and my neighbor to the south said the same thing."

However, the council felt that the lot was on a well-traveled street and was just not in compliance with the city ordinance.

When Mr. Erskin appeared in District Court with Judge Robert VanAllen, photos of the progress he had made were presented. With the guidance of the city ordinance, Judge VanAllen found him to be out of compliance.

There was a pile of brush on the lot that Mr. Erskin said he planned to burn. He was told by the judge that he was not to burn it but to get rid of it by Monday, which he did.

He was ordered to pay the court cost of \$65. Mr. Day said that he has until Nov. 1 to get the lot cleaned up. If the job is not completed, he will be charged \$5 a day from July 23 and spend one day in jail otherwise, if he meets the Nov. 1 deadline, the fines and jail time will be dropped.

Mr. Day said the ordinance reads that the fine can be \$50 and no more than \$100 and the sentence could be up to 30 days in jail with each day during or on which the violation is allowed to exist constitutes a separate offense. This was not the sentence Judge

VanAllen gave, Mr. Day said.

Mr. Erskin said that he will have the lot cleaned up by Nov. 1.

"I have had several people come in and tell me they will help move stuff and get it cleaned up," Mr. Erskin said.

When it is cleaned up, it will then be a vacant lot.

"I have allowed several people to park their semi trucks on the lot because there is no other place for

them to park," Mr. Erskin said.

With the lot being vacated, there will no longer be a place for the trucks to park.

"I don't want to point fingers but there are other places in town and on the highway that are more unsightly than my lot," he said.

"It's frustrating. I feel that I have helped the city of St. Francis by taking a vacant building on the highway and turned it into a business

that offers a lot of services. I am paying state, federal and, yes, city taxes and, now they are threatening to put me in jail for not moving some things that I consider valuable."

Mr. Day said the city made progress in getting lots cleaned up this year. There were two other property owners who also appeared in court last week and received basically the same instructions with the same fines and jail sentence.

## County policy may change

By Karen Krien

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Changing the policy of not charging companies for boring under the county roads was discussed when the Cheyenne County Commissioners met on Thursday.

In the last few years, there has been gas and oil companies, along with other entities asking for permission to bore under roads. Many of the area counties charge when boring is necessary.

Companies, the commissioners agreed, expect to be charged. Some counties charge up to \$2,000 each time.

Our county, Andy Beikman, commissioner, said needs to generate some revenue. It won't change what is happening in the county. It will help keep up the roads.

Dave Flemming, road and bridge department supervisor, said Sherman and Rawlins counties do not charge for boring under roads. But, added that there isn't the gas and oil activity in those counties. He suggested that there be separate charges between the local landowners and the gas and oil companies - a commercial vs

landowner charge.

He and Terry Miller, clerk, will do some research on charges in other counties and it will be discussed at the next meeting. In the meantime, the commissioners agreed to let Nobel Energy bore under a county road.

#### Road and bridge department report

Supervisor Flemming said one of the older dump truck used in a chip sealing project had broken down and it will cost \$1,100 to repair it. He said that it is only used about 300 miles a year and he won't need it until next year but he felt that it was a decision he would like the commissioners help make.

Mr. Beikman said he will look for the parts that are needed to see if it can be fixed for less. The matter was tabled.

Mr. Flemming said he would be bringing Danny Schlittenhardt back to work part-time on the road and bridge crew.

He also talked about other projects the crew has completed and those being planned.

#### Noxious Weed department report

Justin Lohr, noxious weed supervisor, reported spending \$8,648 in chemicals. Last year, the total was \$5,062. The spraying season is wrapping up, he said, adding that the next week, he would be spraying the cemeteries. There things that, he said, if they are sprayed in the fall, it might take care of some of the weeds that come up in the spring.

The county contracts with the

## RETIRES

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The emergency management service is not the first responder like fire and emergency medical service personnel, Mr. Rogers said. We are considered the resource person and provide information from many different sources.

The good thing about the 9-11 disaster was the fact that it opened opportunities for writing grants. The county was able to get equipment for fire, emergency medical services and law enforcement departments.

Cheyenne County had few major disasters outside some tornados, wind and minor chemical spills. In Rawlins County, there were several spray plane accidents which involved fatalities and chemicals.

There were two Thanksgiving blizzards, each a year apart. The first blizzard in 2005 found over 200 people stranded in St. Francis and on the highways leading to the city.

It involved a lot of coordinating and a lot of cooperation finding places for the stranded travelers to stay. The high school was opened, food and bedding were provided by people in the community.

After the blizzard, plans were made for the next blizzard, if there would be one. The bedding brought in for the stranded was stored at the high school.

The next year, Black Hawk helicopters were brought in to feed cattle after a blizzard. Again, the emergency management director was responsible for service and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) personnel was also present.

Mr. Rogers said one of the people who loved coming to Northwest Kansas because the people know how to take care of each other.

Disaster plans are constantly up-

dated. We are always planning for the "what if," Mr. Rogers said.

Mock trainings are held. A recent training was a "what if" Bonny Dam, located on the Republican River west of St. Francis, would break. Using the prepared plans, people involved in the plan including fire, medical and law, just to name some, spent the day practicing what they would do if there was a flood.

At the dedication of the 1935 flood held in May, it was noted that a flood plan is in place. Mr. Rogers said, while it is possible, it is not probable that Bonny Dam would break. However, if it did, the plan has shown that it would take 21 to 24 hours before it would reach St. Francis. With today's technology and time involved, St. Francis will probably never be caught like it was in 1935.

Mr. Murray was hired last month by the commissioners.

"Ryan already has a great start (as the emergency management director) as he was the emergency planner for the hospital," Mr. Rogers said.

He has already completed the training and is compliant in the National Incident Management System which is required. Recently, there was an oil spill and Mr. Murray spent most of the day making the necessary reports to state and federal agencies.

"There is a lot more to the job than most people realize," Mr. Rogers said.

Now that retirement is almost here, Mr. Rogers is anxious to get on the golf course and work in his wood shop. He and his wife, Carol, may do some traveling but also want to be around to follow their granddaughter, Makayla, in her school activities and be there for their daughter, Natalie.

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