

County commissioners meet with society's director

By Karen Krien

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The Cheyenne County Commissioners met with the Good Samaritan Society's director of operations and members of the community at the Friday meeting. While there was a lot of discussion, no lease was signed.

Randy Fitzgerald, director of operations, along with Jeff Paulsen, Village administrator, Kevin Berens, chairman of the Good Samaritan Village Board, and Tom Keller, member of the Long Term Care Task Force were present for

the meeting. Others in attendance were Diane Kribs, Linda Rogers and Gloria Bracelin.

Mr. Fitzgerald handed the commissioners a letter which outlined the Good Samaritan Society's plans for the St. Francis nursing home. Since the fire on Oct. 19, the Society remodeled the west wing of the home which had little damage and Mr. Fitzgerald said 22 residents now call the Village home.

He said there was a delay because of issues with the roof on the middle section which had

been badly damaged. Completion of the Society's phase two plans will start this summer and plans are to be completed in four months, hopefully in the fall.

While it will take a little longer than expected, the results will find space for 35 residents instead of 32 as originally planned.

Mr. Fitzgerald said the Society plans to lose around \$250,000 to \$300,000 the first year of operation. But, with 35 residents, he believed that Administrator Paulsen and the staff could operate the Village, significantly re-

ducing the operation loss. In fact, he thought the facility could operate at a break-even point.

The Society plans to operate the Village until September 2012. In this length of time, the Society is hoping that the county residents will vote to float a bond to pay for a new skilled and assisted living addition.

It's not just the numbers, he said. It is providing quality of life for everyone. It needs to be available to the citizens and older population.

But, what will the people want?

Even with 35 residents, this is not a long-term solution, he said. More beds and an assisted living facility are needed.

If the county residents decide against a bond issue of the future expansion of services, he said, they the Society will need to seriously consider whether it is able to continue to support the Village. He was quick to point out that they would not just close the facility but they will need to consider other options.

The Society is planning to donate the Village to the county for \$1 which would include all the furnishing, equipment and land. It would also include the apartments but would not include the home care agency. The apartments alone are valued at around \$750,000.

However, the gift of the facility is contingent on the county entering into some type of lease or management agreement with the Society. Included in this agreement, Mr. Fitzgerald said, will be operational and capital improvement support.

Mr. Fitzgerald had a draft of a lease which is similar to those used in other Good Samaritan Society facilities.

Some of the questions asked included:

- Mr. Keller asked about the terms of the lease. Mr. Fitzgerald

Before the meeting

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Before the commissioners met with Randy Fitzgerald, Good Samaritan Society director of operations, they talked with county attorney, Kari Gilliland about how the question on the ballot would read in a special election. Mrs. Gilliland had a prior appointment and was unable to attend the meeting with Mr. Fitzgerald but cautioned them to not sign the lease at the meeting.

While it is not definite, the commissioners and Mrs. Gilliland agreed that the ballot should be plain and simple. They want only one question, asking the voters if they would support an increase of 2 mills and not to exceed 6 mills to subsidize the nursing home.

The people need to have all

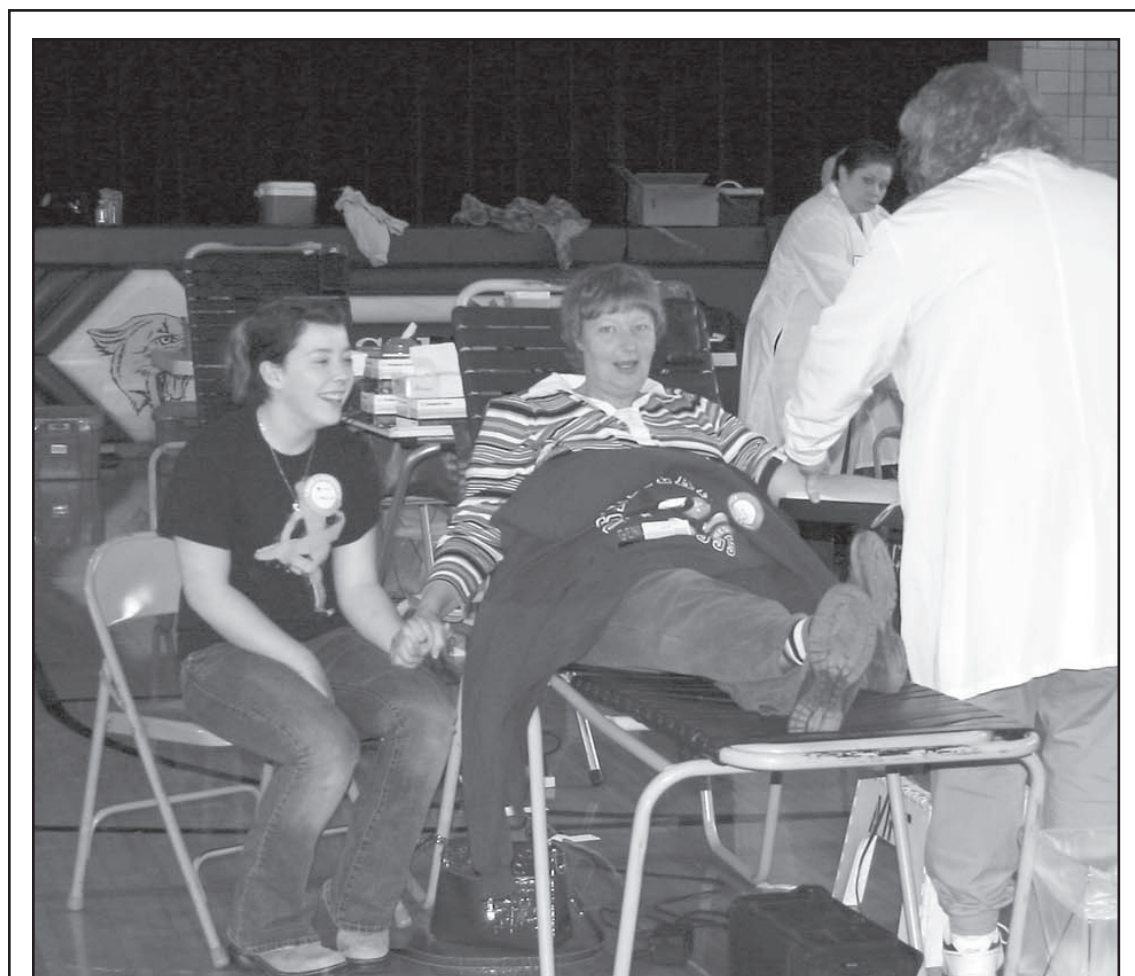
the information available in order to make their decision, said Dale Patton, commissioner.

Terry Miller, election officer, said the election could be held 30 to 90 days after the publication of the resolution and wording for the ballot. However, the election would need to be a special election as there is no regular elections scheduled this year.

If the people voted that they are ready to fund the nursing home, then there will be the matter of expanding the facility.

The special election has tentatively been set for August.

The commissioners accepted the draft of the lease which will be studied. Mrs. Gilliland will have a resolution and ballot question drawn up by the next meeting.



RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE was held in Bird City on Wednesday, April 20. The Cheylin Student Government worked the drive with Red Cross employees. Cassie Rucker gives Deb Smith support as she is giving blood. Photo courtesy of the Cheylin Yearbook staff

Club Clip

Go-Getters 4-H Club

On April 7 the Bird City Go-Getters met at the Lutheran Church in Bird City. Roll call was answered by "What is your favorite candy?" Six members, two tag-a-longs, and four adults attended the meeting.

All the members ordered shirts for the fair this summer.

Members decided to each make a

quilt block for a state 4-H quilt.

The next meeting of the Bird City Go Getters is planned for May 4 at 6:30 at the Lutheran Church in Bird City.

After the meeting the members colored eggs and had an Easter party.

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