



## Council votes against hiring officer

By Amanda Miller  
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The St. Francis Police Department accepted the resignation of Darrell Thomas this month, opening up a full-time city police officer position at the end of April. However, when council members voted on whether or not to fill the open position, the motion fell short of enough votes.

Council member Roger Jensen began discussion by stating that he wants to know why the council has not considered getting rid of the city's police department. The two

police forces could be combined into one, and the Cheyenne County Sheriff's Department can handle all the necessary law enforcement duties of St. Francis and the county, he said. It is a viable alternative, and it would fund the electrical upgrade that the council is currently struggling to find funds for.

At previous city council meetings, Mr. Jensen has argued that simply by getting rid of the police department, the city could fund the electric upgrade. Currently, the city spends \$197,000 on the city police,

and they can contract with the sheriff's department to cover the city for \$72,000, he had said at a December council meeting.

The upgrade will cost \$100,000 - \$110,000 per phase, which lasts approximately a year each, for six years.

Council member Carla Lampe said she has always held that the police department should have less coverage hours. She said it has not been discussed in quite awhile, and maybe it should be looked into further.

Council members Roger Jensen, Carla Lampe, and Dale

Weeks voted against filling the open position.

Council members Paula Keller and Bruce Swihart asked Mr. Jensen if there is anywhere in Kansas that does law enforcement like he is proposing, where the police department is combined with the county sheriff's department. Mr. Jensen said he did not know for sure.

Mrs. Keller told the council that not filling this position, and removing the city police department are very big steps, and they should not be taken without more input from the community.

She would like to hear that input, as well as look at more information on whether or not it would be beneficial. In the meantime, she said, we are going to be operating with only two police officers. That could put our community at risk.

Council members Paula Keller and Bruce Swihart both voted to fill Darrell Thomas' open position on the city police force.

City attorney Mike Day suggested that city clerk Glori Milne check with others cities in the state, and get feedback on what law enforcement structures worked for them.

The council decided to have Sheriff Cody Beeson come speak to the council about what the sheriff's department could cover, what the switch would mean financially, and what role the city council might play in that arrangement. Mr. Jensen said he thought it was possible for there to be a city employee, maybe a "city marshal," that answered to the city council, but works with the sheriff's department. The council will address all their questions when the sheriff visits with them.

The council voted to not fill Darrell's position at this time.

## New director lays out plans

By Karen Krien

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The new emergency medical service director, while still only working part time, was present at the April 15 Cheyenne County Commissioners' meeting to discuss plans for the department.

Reid Raile, director, reported that he had only been on the job for nine days, but it was a joy to be working there. However, the job came with a whole set of new challenges, including priorities, billing, scheduling, and transfers.

In May, Mr. Raile will become full time in the department, and he will focus on billing and accounting. He talked briefly about billing collections and going through a specific company which is also connected with the clinic and hospital. The county already uses the Kansas Setoff program for collections, and some bills are taken care of with write-offs. Ernie Ketzner, commissioner, said the word about "write-offs" has gotten around. Business is business, said Brett Poling, commissioner.

Mr. Raile wanted to talk to the commissioners when the county attorney was present so the matter was tabled.

The next item of business was transfers. Wendy White, emergency medical technician, will carry the transfer phone, and has taken over making arrangements for transfers.

There was only one transfer that the county was not able to take, and that was due to staffing, Mr. Raile said. There are approximately four nurses who are interested in taking transfers when not working. They will start training in May, he said.

He said they will discontinue county cell phones in the ambulances. Everyone has their own cell phone. He will also purchase a rollover 800 number to make sure every transfer call is answered.

The commissioners agreed to purchase emsCharts, a software program, which provides electronic data collection and management. The subscription for a year is \$2,000.

They agreed to purchase the Certified Ambulance Coder online program, with the cost not to exceed \$1,200. The also agreed for Mr. Raile to take 25 hours of training in billing.

There are several pieces of equipment that need repair. Mr. Raile had taken the the Bird City backup ambulance to Yost Ford to have a diesel leak fixed.

The Zoll Defibrillator has failed, and it is not covered by the annual maintenance. The estimate to fix the equipment is \$2,000. The commissioners agreed to have it fixed, with the cost to not go over \$2,500.

Mr. Raile talked about raising mileage fees on ambulance runs. Mr. Ketzner questioned that the ambulance was a service, and not to earn money. The matter was tabled until the next meeting.

Other items addressed:

- Mr. Raile was appointed to the Emergency Medical Service Region 1 Council with Ryan Murray, emergency director, as the alternate.

- The commissioners agreed to change the ambulance expense purchases limit to \$1,500, instead of \$500, and have a debit card with a limit of \$500 in the office to use for purchases.

- The emergency medical technicians will be visiting the grade schools during Emergency Medical Service Week.

- The commissioners agreed to the purchase of a Emergency Medical Service Redline contract for \$500. The service provides items and equipment at a much reduced price. Mr. Raile felt like the contract would pay for it's self several times and would benefit the county.



HEAD START STUDENTS presented a program on Friday but these four students hated to see the curtain fall. Pictured are Fabian Zavala, Caiman Jensen, Eddie Segura and Kaylei Kaburek. Herald staff photo by Amanda Miller

## Musical held Sunday

The final performance for the Western Plains Arts Association's 44th season will be held at 3 p.m. on Sunday in the St. Francis Community High School auditorium. Eddy and Robert Hiebert,

the Hieberts Dulcimers, Etc., from Abilene, will perform a variety of musical selections on varying combinations of dulcimer, guitar, and auto harp, sprinkled with warm vocal harmonies.

## Alumni plans set for June 21

By Karen Krien

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The St. Francis Community High School Alumni celebration is just eight weeks away, set for June 21. With the resignation of Shirley Zweygardt, who had coordinated the event for many years, a committee of volunteers has been meeting and planning. At the Monday night meeting, Linda Ketzner, executive chef, reported on the food committee.

We need people to make their reservations now to ensure you will be able to enjoy a K.C. strip steak dinner, she said. Early reservations, sent with the \$20 fee per person, will help cover the cost of the food as well as stamps, invitations, name tags, equipment, and many other expenses.

The event is being set up with local volunteers wanting to "pay it forward" to ensure the alumni continues each year.

Chef Linda is coordinating the event this year. She plans to create a duplicatable event that can be executed by a coordinator each year. All plans will be arranged in a notebook form with diagrams to follow.

This year's alumni meal will be a "street event" held between both parks. Tables will have green and gold coverings, holding relishes, sour-dough rolls, and family-style tossed salad bowls. Alumni and guests will be

seated in the designated area of their classes. Plans are to have a beer garden, so guests can enjoy a beer with their freshly grilled steak. There will also be bottled water.

In case of inclement weather, the barbecue will be moved to the high school.

### Grill cook competition

There will be 10 grills with 10 grill cooks. Each cook will grill 40 steaks to ensure hot steaks on each plate.

The grill cooks will compete in a competition with their row of 40 alumni guests.

"If you think your steak is the best, 'tip' the grill cook," Chef Linda said. "All proceeds will go back to the alumni association to help pay food expenses."

A special prize will be awarded to the top grill cook.

To add to the fun, each grill cook will be wearing green and gold hard hats, with their grills taped off as a "Danger Zone!"

Come prepared to have fun, Chef Linda said.

### Menu

The menu will consist of 10-ounce K.C. strip steaks cut by Les Doggett, St. Francis high school alumni. Les has "cut" the price to meet our budget, she said.

Chef Linda will be sauteing fresh mushrooms to add to the

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BLOOMING FLOWERS catch the attention of people passing by. The flowers are in front of Don and Carol Gamblin's home at River and Webster streets. Herald staff photo by Tim Burr