



Commissioners take care of business

By Karen Krien

The Cheyenne County Commissioners ended the year on Wednesday in a long, grueling meeting where decisions were made about year-end bonuses, distributing funds and accepting funds to pay for state mandated equipment. However, the general contractor and architect for the hospital remodeling project were denied payments and the original agreement with Bird City for law enforcement was signed.

At the beginning of 2003, the commissioners agreed that, if at the end of the year, there was money leftover in the budget, the county employees would receive a bonus. The commissioners had allowed \$50 a month raises for employees but when the state started pulling back funds which had originally been planned for, the commissioners agreed to hold the raises.

As the commissioners looked over where the county budget stood at the Wednesday

meeting, they agreed that the carry-over funding was already half of what had been planned for and there was no way they could give the bonuses.

The commissioners had found the money to give Christmas bonuses of Chamber scrip money but noted that funds were so tight, they postponed the Christmas dinner usually held at Big Ed's in Bird City.

The commissioners noted that the county has very dependable employees and they

hated not to give the bonus but would plan to budget in raises for this year.

Larry Gabel, emergency medical service director, presented a proposal to the commissioners, noting that the Ambulance Service had brought in \$6,000 over budget. He asked that emergency medical technicians each be given a bonus ranging from \$25 to \$50, depending upon service to the department with total amount being \$980.

The commissioners agreed to give the

bonuses in Chamber scrip but Commissioner Tim Raile stressed that he was agreeing to the bonuses, not because the department was \$6,000 over budget which, he said, was taxpayer's dollars, but because the department was under its set budget for the year.

Commissioner Jane Brubaker brought up the fact that firemen were also volunteers for the county but until the fire chiefs asked for

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Temp drop to -14

It was cold — terribly cold!

Kathy Woodcox, St. Francis weather observer, reported a low of -14 degrees on Monday but the wind chill made it bitterly cold.

Snow accumulated to around 3 inches in town but there was more north of town and less south of town. The snow didn't hit St. Francis until later in the afternoon but in Benkelman, it started early afternoon.

Temperatures varied throughout the week with the high on New Year's Day reaching 62 degrees and the three days before were in the 50s. Lows, however, were cold most of the week with all but one day being in the teens and below.

The snow was welcome and it came with little wind. Streets and roads were slick as it didn't get above freezing to thaw them. That didn't keep the school buses from running and the first day of the new year was held as scheduled. There was also a basketball game held in Colby on Saturday.

The weather forecast is for warmer temperatures toward the middle and end of the week.

Date	High	Low	Prec.
Dec. 30	53	07	
Dec. 31	59	14	
Jan. 1	62	15	
Jan. 2	52	20	
Jan. 3	28	08	.16
Jan. 4	22	-06	
Jan. 5	10	-14	



SHALOM — HELLO/GOODBYE in Jewish greets people at the home of Pastor David and Lucille Rossbach on Jackson Street. The snow covered the birdhouse and greenery.

Herald staff photo by Karen Krien

Pay denied to contractor and architect

By Karen Krien

At the Wednesday meeting of the Cheyenne County Commissioners, they went over the hospital's budget with the administrator and board president, and, then they began discussing a major problem with the new addition to the hospital in St. Francis.

The commissioners had been informed that the new floor in the hospital addition was at least 1.5 inches lower than the floor in the old part. When asked, both administrator Les Lacy and president Rueben Schultz agreed that this was a fact.

The commissioners asked how the contractor and architect planned to correct the problem. It was suggested that additional cement be run all over the floor to bring it up with the other floor but the administrator said that if this were done, the doors would not fit. There was 8 feet to run

cement to taper it off but this would be a "steep" taper but, there could not be a drop in the floor.

Commissioner Tim Raile noted that 1.5 inches slope could make a difference to a person in a wheelchair.

The commissioners took a break in the meeting and made a visit to the hospital. When they returned, they agreed to hold the proposed pay of \$16,501 to the architect, and \$223,053 to the contractor until there were some plans of how they planned to correct the problem. The commissioners also felt there should be some compensation from the architect/contractor for allowing a mistake of this size to happen.

The commissioners plan to attend the next hospital builder meeting on Jan. 15 to further discuss the matter with the architect, contractor, hospital board and administrator.

Accident takes life of Saintly man

By Karen Krien

The roads were snow packed which might have been the cause of an accident on Saturday night which took the life of a St. Francis man.

Ervin Hilt, 76, and his wife, Linda, 65, were coming home from a family gathering in Burlington when Mr. Hilt, coming around the curve onto U.S. 36 about 30 miles west of St. Francis but still in Colorado, slid off the road.

The Colorado State Patrol report noted that the accident happened at 5:53 p.m. mountain standard time. Mr. Hilt, driving a 1990 Ford van, entered the curve, lost control, slid and went off the left side of the road. The van then moved into a roadside slide, struck a fence, then rolled one time, stopping on its right side. Mr. Hilt was ejected, landed just north of the vehicle and was pronounced dead at the scene.

Mrs. Hilt, a victim of multiple sclerosis, was a passenger in the van but was riding in her wheelchair.

She was severely injured, suffering a broken neck, ribs, collar bone, leg and bruised lungs.

Mrs. Hilt was taken to the Wray Community Hospital where, on Tuesday, she remained in serious condition. Her family reported that she is in a lot of pain but encouraged people to visit, make phone calls or send cards to her.

Funeral services for Mr. Hilt are planned for 10:30 p.m. today (Thursday) at Peace Lutheran Church. Burial is in the St. Francis Cemetery.

Mr. Hilt was born and raised in Cheyenne County and attended German Plains county school for eight years. He joined the Army on Sept. 9, 1952, and was honorably discharged July 10, 1954. He then continued in the Army Reserves until 1960.

He married Linda on Nov. 29, 1963, and they had three children Mitchell, Martin and Lorna. He had spent most of his life farming on the family farm north of St. Francis.

Residents urged to give blood on Thursday

The American Red Cross blood drive has been set from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 15, at the grade school gym in St. Francis.

Everyone is urged to give blood now instead of waiting until someone they know needs it. A single trauma patient can use 50 pints of blood very quickly, and it takes 48 hours to test and process blood. It's clear in emergency situations, it's the blood that has already been donated that comes to the rescue.

Numerous events — adverse weather, natural disaster and even holidays — can lead to a significant drop in local blood donations. It is only together — The American Red Cross and citizens in Cheyenne County who can make sure blood is ready to help when someone needs it.

Only 5 percent of the eligible population donates blood. Hospital patients rely on these donors and

need the other 95 percent to help them out.

A single blood donation can help three people — an accident or burn victim, a cancer or leukemia patient, a premature baby and many others who depend on blood products. In fact, every day, about 500 people need blood in Kansas and northern Oklahoma.

All eligible blood donors are needed, especially those with types O-negative and O-positive. Call 1-800-448-3543 to make an appointment or for more information.

Giving blood takes about an hour, with the actual donation lasting about seven minutes. Donors need to be at least 17 years old, weigh at least 110 pounds and be in general good health. All donors should bring some type of identification including a driver's license or a Red Cross blood donor's card.

County-wide law agreement is not what commissioners thought

Sheriff's deputy/contract

The Law Enforcement Agreement between Bird City and the county which would provide law enforcement coverage for the city was reviewed by the Cheyenne County Commissioners at the Wednesday meeting and they did not approve of how the agreement now read. At the end of the discussion, they agreed to sign the original agreement before the changes of equipment had been made.

Attorney Kevin Berens had italicized the changes made in the agreement and the commissioners were disturbed that the changes were not the changes they had agreed on when part of the Bird City City Council had met with the commissioners on Dec. 15.

Attorney Berens explained that the City Council had held a meeting following that meeting and had reservations about giving the city's law enforcement equipment (which was itemized) including a car with 97,000 miles, a bulletproof vest which fit the previous city officer, a

shotgun, pair of handcuffs and keys (there were other miscellaneous items). The city's attorney Leslie Beims said the council noted that elections would be held in 2004 and, if the present sheriff was not re-elected, the council might not want to continue with the agreement. If this was the case, they would not have any equipment to re-establish a city law enforcement.

The commissioners agreed that most of the equipment, within a year, would probably not be worth much (this remark was directed mostly at the vehicle) and there was the issue of liability with the city owning the equipment and the officer being hired by the county. They also noted that the commissioners had lowered the price for the county-wide agreement to \$25,000 if the equipment were given to the county. If the city was going to keep the equipment, the price for the agreement would need to be raised.

Another issue was the fact that the commissioners and county attorney had given the sheriff approval to hire

Bird City Council agrees to sign

By Casey McCormick

After several months of planning, Bird City and the Cheyenne County Commissioners came together with an agreement for county-wide law enforcement. Under the new contract, a Cheyenne County Sheriff's deputy will be stationed in Bird City to provide law enforcement services.

At Monday evening's meeting of the Bird City Council, all three county commissioners were present. Both parties expressed concerns about the final

contract. Jane Brubaker stated the commissioners were "shocked" when they received a revised copy of the previously agreed upon contract.

"We're concerned that if the agreement falls through, in a short time, then Bird City comes out on the losing end," Bird City Mayor David Hickert, said.

The contract is based on a one-year period and will only be renewed with the approval of the Cheyenne County Sheriff and the Bird City Council. The main

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deputy for the city and purchase another vehicle under the assumption that, since the city council mem-

bers had basically approved the agreement at the Dec. 15 meeting,

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Congressman to hold meeting on Monday

Congressman Jerry Moran will be in St. Francis from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Monday at the Windmill Restaurant, West U.S. 36.

This is part of the Congressman's eighth annual "Big First" Listening Tour. During the tour, Congressman Moran will travel more than 5,000 miles and meet with thousands of Kansans while visiting all 69 counties

in the First Congressional District.

"The tour allows me to meet with Kansans to get their thoughts and concerns, which will help me to be a better representative for Kansans in Congress," Congressman Moran said. "The town hall setting has been a useful way to meet with as many Kansans as possible, while getting sugges-

tions to take back to Washington."

Prior to coming to St. Francis, he will be in Goodland from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. mountain standard time, at the Western State Bank, 815 Center Ave.; and in Colby from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the Senior Progress Center, 156 Fike Park.

Those missing the Congressman in St. Francis may want to visit with him in Atwood from

8:30 to 9:30 a.m. on Feb. 17 at My Place Cafe, 305 Grant Street; or in Oberlin from 10 to 11 a.m. at the county courthouse, 120 East Hall Street.

The town meeting is open to the public.

For more information, contact Congressman Moran at (202) 225-2715 or visit his web page at www.house.gov/moranks01/.

BUSINESS

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a bonus, they would not consider it at that meeting. There would also be the matter of money in that particular budget.

Ambulance write-offs

Director Gabel and Janelle Bowers, ambulance bookkeeper, presented the write-off amount of \$989, which insurance and Medicare/Medicaid would not accept. Mrs. Bowers was questioned about how much time was spent filling out forms and billing which she replied "some 20 minutes, others could take all day."

The county's auditor is concerned with the amount of past due billing and said he would like a "patient aging sheet" showing current bills, collections and past-due bills. Mrs. Bowers said she will begin supplying the sheet.

The commissioners again discussed what to do about the ambulance billing. The hospital administrator, at a previous meeting, had offered to have the hospital's billing department take over the ambulance billing for \$6 per run. Commissioner Raile asked that he be given more time to do some investigating before the final decision be made.

State-mandated purchase

Attorney Kevin Berens said the Diversion Fund had accumulated \$11,592 and he wanted to transfer the

money to the Clerk of the District Court's fund so there would be sufficient money to purchase the state-mandated computer equipment.

The purchase of the equipment, \$13,000, was presenting a hardship on the county's budget. The Clerk of the District Court's Fund had \$6,000 which could be put toward the purchase price but the commissioners did not know where the rest was going to come from. The Diversion Fund money would cover the costs after the Clerk of the District Court's Fund had been depleted.

Hospital/county-wide law

The matters of the hospital construction problems and the county-wide law agreement are found elsewhere in this issue.

Road and bridge report

Dave Flemming, road and bridge supervisor, reported that in 2003, the county crew had graveled 140 miles of county roads. The supervisor said that K-161 between Bird City and Benkelman, will be close this summer for highway construction. Traffic will be diverted near Benkelman and Bird City but the supervisor said there would be others taking other routes on country roads.

In other business

In other business:
 • The commissioners approved (2 to 1) to give the Bird City Community

Club \$1,096 for park benches. Commissioner Raile asked Commissioner Brubaker, who is a member of the Community Club, why, when Bird City had so much money in the Century II Funds, did they think it was necessary to take the funds from the county's Drug and Alcohol Fund? She countered that if it was St. Francis asking for the funds, would he think it was ok. He said "yes."

• After discussion, the commissioners voted, 2 to 1, to not allow the Food Pantry to use the Social Rehabilitation Service rooms which were officially vacated the first of the year. Reva Pownell, Food Pantry coordinator, had previously asked to use the rooms located on the basement level if only for just a year until a county attorney would be elected and the rooms would be needed for this use. Commissioner Brubaker was in favor of Mrs. Pownell using the space because it would be easier to load and unload boxes of food. Commissioner Ron Krien thought that, once the Pantry was in the rooms, it might be hard to get them to leave. After some thought, Commissioner Raile agreed with Commissioner Krien.

• The commissioners agreed to treat the undersheriff's overtime hours the same as the county's road and bridge department employees as the overtime was worked during a week where a holiday occurred. The hours will be treated as "straight" time.

• Resolutions to transfer funds from Rural Fire, Road and Bridge Special Equipment and Ambulance funds were approved. Commissioners also agreed to the Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas Agreement apportionment of \$7,804.

• The heating and air conditioning bids for the ambulance barn were tabled until the commissioners talked further to the director.

• The sheriff introduced the new deputy and also asked for two breathalyzers for the department. Attorney Berens said that, while the breathalyzers didn't substitute for a blood draw in cases where alcohol might be in question, he felt like it was a "good asset out in the field." The amount of \$996 was approved for both breathalyzers.

Sheriff Eddie Dankenbring also said undersheriff Cliff Flock and the drug dog had been certified again.

• Ben Smull was appointed, along with Director Gabel, as the official representative to the Region I Emergency Medical Service meetings, replacing Beth Gabel.

Next meeting

The first commissioners' meeting of the year is always held the second Monday in January so the next meeting will be held at 8 a.m. on Monday in the commissioners' room.



LANNY BEVINGTON was led into the county courthouse on Dec. 31 followed by Deputy Terry T. Smith. Bevington is charged with murder in the death of his wife.

Staff photo by Greg Stover

Woman killed in shooting

A 27-year-old woman was killed by what her husband said was an accidental gunshot Sunday morning at their home south of Brewster.



Sherman County Sheriff Doug Whitson said Lanny Bevington, 33, told officers his wife, Kerrie A. Bevington, was shot while he was removing a gun from the pickup she was sitting in. He said dispatch got the report of a gunshot victim at 7 a.m. on Sunday.

The Bevington home is 3 1/2 miles southwest of Brewster on County Road 37 in Sherman County. Whitson said the couple had moved to the county in August.

County Attorney Bonnie Selby said the Kansas Bureau of Investigation was investigating. A search warrant was issued on Sunday for three agents to check the scene.

St. Francis News

Visiting their grandmother and great-grandmother Erna Schleppe over the Christmas holidays, who has been in the hospital, were Corey Davis of Aurora, Colo., and Terry, Wendy, Aaron, Jordan and Dalton Davis of Highlands Ranch, Colo. Also Justin, Kayla, Britney, Christian and Bryna Schleppe of Hays, Jennie Elmore of Waukomis, Okla., Theresa and Drew Halligan of Kearney, Neb., and Cassie McLaughlin of North Platte, Neb.

Christmas dinner guests of Robert and Alma Walter were Merlyn and Vicki Walter, Eddie and Linda Williams of Wray, Ed and Nancy Turner and Tyler of Phillipsburg; Trevor Turner of Colby, Jason and Diane Frazier of Salina and Bob and Tanya Walter of Hastings, Minn.

Christmas Eve through Saturday evening guests of Betty Jean Winston were Dan, Jean and J.J. Winston of Ellsworth.

Joining the group on Friday, Dec. 26, were Shawn and Leigh Legere, Chase and Miles of Overland Park.

On Monday, Dec. 29, the Legere's drove Betty Jean to Denver where she departed from Denver International Airport early Tuesday morning for Fargo, N.D., and on to Valley City. She was a house guest of Grant and Ellen Zwick until returning to Denver, Saturday, Jan. 3.

The Legere's brought her to St. Francis and remained until Sunday

when they returned to Overland Park.

Paul and Edna Roesener and great-granddaughter Oriana Stasser of North Platte, Neb., attended the St. John Lutheran Church children's Christmas Eve program. Afterward they hosted a Christmas Eve get-together with Walt Roesener, Mark, Jackie and Colton Roesener and Jaylene Shrader.

Mr. and Mrs. Jim Walters, Josh and Teri; Crystal Walters of Denver, Sarah Walters of San Diego, Calif.; Tobias Walters of Pensacola, Fla., were Monday supper guests of Donna and Norvin Northrup.

Mr. and Mrs. Norvin Northrup were among guests at a soup supper at the Pete Gienger home Tuesday evening.

A post-Christmas dinner was held on Sunday, Dec. 28, at the home of Robert and Gertie Zwegardt. Guests were Keith, Tana Karr and Zachariah of Beaverton, Ore.; Jim and Verna Miller of Flagler, Colo.; Edwin and Wanda Raile of Stafford, Mo.; Scott Weber of Goodland; Kayla and Kaitlynn Raile, Amy Zwegardt of Garden City; Jon Goossen and Andy Zwegardt of Montezuma; Valisha, Kariah and Alana Kastle of Oberlin; Travis Raile, Pete, Kay, Trent and Kandee Raile; Levi Wassmiller of Goodland; Darrell and Jacque Zwegardt; Bruce, Donita, J.R. and Heath Baird of Brewster; Keith

Zwegardt, Dillan, Drew, Ty and Brock Zwegardt.

The afternoon was spent singing Christmas carols, visiting and playing bingo. It was a very enjoyable day.

Victor and Darlene Zwegardt spent New Year's with their son, Don, Sandy, Max, Dylan and Chandler Zwegardt of Sioux Falls, S.D. Leaving Dec. 28 and through Jan. 2.

All enjoyed a tour in Sioux Falls viewing the pretty Christmas lights, visiting and gift opening.

Victor and Darlene enjoyed the visit and wished them all a blessed New Year.

Wilma Lampe was a guest of her daughter, Linda Gutsch in Denver, Saturday, Dec. 20, for a pre-Christmas get-together. Granddaughter Leah and her friend Mike, joined them for dinner and a gift exchange Saturday evening.

On Sunday, Linda and Wilma flew to Miami, Fla., where they had a short tour of Miami and South Beach, before boarding a cruise ship on Monday. The five-day cruise on the F/S Imagination, took them to the ports of Belize and Key West with Christmas Day being spent at sea.

This was the first cruise for either of the ladies and they enjoyed meeting many wonderful people from different areas and reported a very enjoyable excursion. They returned to Denver on Saturday and Wilma drove home Sunday.

AGREES

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concern for Bird City is that this is an election year and if the current sheriff, Eddie Dankenbring were not re-elected, there is uncertainty that a different sheriff would keep the status quo.

Also the council brought up transferring all of the Bird City police equipment to the county especially the three service firearms. If Bird City did need to replace them, the estimated cost would be close to \$1,500.

"It is a liability concern and that the county must have ownership in the case of an accident or unexpected circumstance involving a county employee," Tim Raile, commissioners, said. "The transfer of equipment also shows a commitment (of good faith) to the county."

He also felt that the cost to the county would be over the \$25,000 that Bird City will pay each year for county-wide law enforcement.

Sheriff Dankenbring and the new deputy officer, Jeff Moser, were at the meeting. Sheriff Dankenbring emphasized that the county has already moved forward and that \$1,000 had been spent outfitting Deputy Moser with uniforms, a service revolver holster and baton.

"The council understands the commissioners' concern but having an-

other officer is a major investment to the county and that an officer at the eastern half of the county would be an added asset," Mayor Hickert said.

Both sides agreed that the time constraint of each party receiving the contract and having to make a "yes" or "no" decision quickly added to the confusion between the commissioner and city council.

After their discussion the Bird City Council agreed to accept the previously written proposal from the Cheyenne County Commissioners to provide for county-wide law enforcement.

LAW

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there were no problems. Sheriff Eddie Dankenbring introduced Jeff Moser, deputy for the city, at the Wednesday meeting. The new deputy had already quit his former job and had moved his family to Bird City in anticipation of starting the new job on Jan. 2.

The commissioners agreed to attend the Monday meeting of the Bird City City Council to see if something could be worked out. However, they had signed the original agreement so it would not be necessary to call a special meeting.

St. Francis News

Dec. 24, Stanley Hilt was a brief caller of Leonard and Mae Rose. Leroy Dungan of Salina arrived at noon and spent the afternoon.

Christmas Day guests of the Leonard Roses were Leroy Dungan of Salina, Mary Walz and Jacy Hilt, Alan Rose, Rick, Lynette and Melissa Burton, Robin Burton and Ray Prentice of Eckley, Colo.

Marie, Elizabeth, Amaya and Malek Dungan of Salina arrived Christmas afternoon.

Phone calls were received from Jo

Taylor, Kissimmee, Fla., Nikki Rose, Olathe, and Helen Phifer, Wray, Colo.

Dec. 26 guests of the Rose's for dinner and gift exchange were Marie, Leroy, Elizabeth, Amaya and Malek Dungan of Salina; Connie, Marcia and Nikolas Willis of Benkelman, Neb.; Mary Walz and Jacy; Tina Zwegardt and daughters Ashley and BreAna; Alan, Dale and David Rose; Charlene and January Fiedler; and Lynette, Rick and Melissa Burton.

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 ENDING DECEMBER, 2003

	9/30/2003 BALANCE	EXPENDITURES	RECEIPTS	12/31/2003 BALANCE
General	\$306,028.84	\$326,982.14	\$769,114.98	\$748,161.68
Road & Bridge	\$207,238.23	\$210,461.93	\$372,387.07	\$369,163.37
Bridge Building	\$68,512.89	\$7,752.51	\$3,520.33	\$64,280.71
Noxious Weed	\$41,721.06	\$4,378.55	\$8,441.59	\$45,784.10
Noxious Weed Special	\$13,841.70	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$13,841.70
Solid Waste	\$1,788.17	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,788.17
Rural Fire	\$24,990.34	\$16,680.39	\$26,805.49	\$35,115.44
Hospital	\$17,913.14	\$27,565.72	\$226,116.92	\$216,464.34
Special Fire Equipment	\$47,350.78	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$47,350.78
Treasurer's Special	\$15,183.95	\$19,774.45	\$4,590.50	\$0.00
Attorney Fund	\$3,426.33	\$261.70	\$54.00	\$3,218.63
TOTAL ALL FUNDS	\$747,995.43	\$613,857.39	\$1,411,030.88	\$1,545,168.92

A detailed statement of expenditures is available for public inspection at the county clerk's office. Copies of such statement shall be available upon request. K.S.A. 19-228

Terry Miller
 Cheyenne County Clerk

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