



Margaret Russell, manager of the county landfill and transfer station, talked to Curt Way, public works director, about the material being pulled out of the city trash. Steve Roy, a sales representative for Excel Manufacturing, said most of the material would work fine in baler being suggested for Sherman County. Photo by Tom Betz / The Goodland Daily News

Benefits of baler shown to county commission

TRASH, from Page 1

they had looked at several balers in Nebraska, and were impressed. One had been handling trash and cardboard for over 20 years.

Lane said other benefits would include control of material which the wind could blow away and fewer problems with birds. He said the lower cost of operation would probably make the system pay for itself within five years.

The Sherman County commissioners recessed their meeting to go to the transfer station with Lane and Roy to look at how a baler could be used in the present building.

The sales representatives suggested that a pit in the south side of the building and that an addition on the south where the baler would be housed. The pit would allow a loader to shove the trash onto the steel conveyor belt which then carries it up to the hopper.

School board backs decision

KANSAS CITY, Kan. (AP) — Although admitting they made mistakes, Piper school board members refused to change their decision to force a teacher to change grades of students she had failed for plagiarizing.

The board also voted Tuesday to pay fines for violating the state's open meetings law when it met in closed session in December to discuss the plagiarism case.

At that closed meeting on Dec. 11, the board reversed Piper High School teacher Christine Pelton's decision to flunk 28 students for plagiarizing a biology project. She said she suspected the students had plagiarized after discovering nearly identical material in their papers.

Pelton resigned, rather than change the students' grades.

On Tuesday, in front of more than 100 people including Pelton, the board voted 6-0, with one abstention, not to change that decision.

After the meeting, Pelton said she thought the board had undermined her as a teacher, and should have been more heavily sanctioned for violating the open meetings law.

But she said it was too late to change the students' grades.

"I think at this point it's better for the students to keep the decision the same," Pelton said. "It's not going to benefit the kids to go back and change

The commissioners seemed to be impressed with the presentation, and talked about how this could assist in the landfill and recycling programs.

Commissioner Mitch Tiede suggested that with a baler, the county could eliminate a compactorene at the landfill.

The commissioners plan to ask for some additional figures to see what the building addition and pit would cost.

"This is not always an easy change," Roy said, "but people have to understand that it has to happen. If you have source separated materials, this system can provide some return on the costs."

Lane said it would take three to four months from a signed order to have the baler built and installed.

The next commissioner meeting will be 8 a.m. Tuesday, April 9, in the commission room on the main floor of the Sherman County courthouse, 813 Broadway Ave.

their grades."

Many board members expressed regret that the issue had divided Piper patrons and brought unwelcome national attention and ridicule to the district.

"I wish this issue had never come to the attention of the Board of Education," said board member Greg Netzer. "I wished I had asked more questions and listened more carefully."

"Anything which I did intentionally, unintentionally, known or unknown, which led to this very difficult situation, I sincerely do have regrets and do apologize," Netzer said.

Leigh Vader abstained, saying she believed in standing behind the district's teachers. She stressed that she didn't think the students who were accused of plagiarism were bad children.

"They made a mistake ... but I did feel in my heart that they deserved to suffer the consequences for their mistakes," Vader said.

Wyandotte County District Attorney Nick Tomasic had brought a civil complaint against the board for violating the open meetings act. The board voted 7-0 to settle that action. Each board member will pay a \$250 fine, and the school district will pay \$1,238 in court costs. The board said its closed meeting was a "technical and unintentional violation of the Kansas Open Meetings Act."

Tuition hike could cut enrollment

UNIVERSITY, from Page 1

reduction could be.

"Fort Hays State University would see a budget cut so severe," Hammond said, "that our ability to provide access and a quality education for the people of Kansas would be drastically affected for decades to come."

Other colleges in Kansas would have their budgets cut, too, Hammond said, but it would be worse for Fort Hays because most of its students come from rural counties.

He said Fort Hays students have trouble qualifying for financial aid because many come off the farm, where families are worth a lot on pa-

per because of expensive farm equipment, but don't have much cash. Hammond said a 60 percent tuition increase could mean they can no longer afford to go to college.

"We have the poorest student body in the state," he said. "Eighty-one percent receive financial aid."

If students are forced to borrow the money, Hammond said, that would mean they will be entering the working world already buried in a pile of debt. The university is willing to increase tuition by 5 percent, he said, but no more.

"We think that's a reasonable increase," he said.

If the university doesn't raise tuition, Hammond said, it will have to make

major cuts. He said that will reduce the quality of education and most likely the student population.

Most Fort Hays students want to work in Western Kansas after college, Hammond said, noting that if they move east, they probably won't return. He said the budget cuts could mean more population decline — something most Kansas counties are struggling with.

"You will lose a source of professionals you need to serve Western Kansas," he said, adding that he doesn't think the public realizes the cuts will affect everyone.

The House budget plan is not acceptable, Hammond said, saying that legislators have no choice but to raise

taxes. Most lawmakers want to avoid tax increases in an election year, but Gov. Graves, who is finishing his final term, wants to raise them.

"We know our elected leaders want to do what's best for the people of Kansas," he said, "and we know the problem they are struggling with is real. Painful though it may be to consider some increases in taxes, budget cuts that undermine the future of our citizens and our state will be far more painful in the long run."

Hammond said he wants people to understand what's happening and that's why he's touring newspapers.

"I want to put a face on what the problem is," he said. "We need to help citizens understand the issues."

Commissioners buy containers

CITY, from Page 1

will pay for themselves."

The commissioners voted 4-1 to buy the containers, with Rohr dissenting on the ground that the county should help pay. The new bins will be placed with existing bins at the city shop and Rasure's Lumber Do-It Center.

A third paper bid at The Goodland Daily News is privately owned. President Steve Haynes said it is primarily for waste newsprint and not a public drop point.

In other business, the commission:

- Voted to have the mayor sign an agreement between the city and the Kansas Department of Transportation

covering construction on Cattletrail. The city will put \$175,000 into the project, and the rest will be covered by the state.

The city is trying to get permission from the owners of the Gibson's building to put a temporary detour through the parking lot. Goodland residents are already using it, Pickman said, but out-of-town drivers may not know it is there.

The city cannot make it an official detour without permission, Pickman said, and it might be hard to get because the property is tied up in bankruptcy.

- Accepted a bid to remove buildings, trees, and debris at 721 Cherry from Mike Yarger for \$5,735. Town-

send Construction had the only other bid at \$8,890. The commission had offered six business the chance to bid.

The property had gone through bankruptcy and foreclosure, Pickman said, and the city got a court order to clean up the property. The city will have a lien on the property for the cost when its owner is determined, Pickman said.

- Appointed Robert Boyle and reappointed Joann Wahrman to four-year terms on the library board. Mike Foust had served two terms and was not eligible for reappointment.
- Got \$3,000 from a representative of Aquila Inc., formerly UtiliCorp United, for the cardboard recycling

program.

- Approved a joint grant writing program between the city, county and school district.

- Proclaimed April as Fair Housing Month, and the week of April 14 to 20 National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.

The Kansas Department of Commerce and Housing asked the city to declare the special month, and the Sherman County Communications Center sponsored the week.

- Approved the minutes of the meeting of March 18, and the two special meetings on March 26 when the city discussed its trash problems.

Governor backs off veto for redistricting plan

REDISTRICTING, from Page 1

Brown said.

Senate President Dave Kerr and several other senators met with the governor after the Senate vote.

"I think he was fully prepared to veto it, if necessary," said Kerr, R-Hutchinson.

Kerr said the new map has enough changes that he and other senators advised Graves against vetoing the measure. Kerr said the governor's first veto led to alterations that made the second redistricting proposal more acceptable.

Lawmakers are redrawing Kansas House, Kansas Senate, U.S. House and State Board of Education to account for shifts in population over the past decade.

Redistricting became especially contentious after the coalition stunned moderate Republicans in mid-February by presenting its favored map during Senate debate and pushing it to passage. Both the conservatives and Democrats said they were tired of being shut out of the process.

"This has been a long process, and I hope it's over," said Minority Leader Anthony Hensley, D-Topeka. "There has been a good faith effort to address the concerns the governor stated in his veto message and individual concerns about the map."

Graves had criticized the earlier version because it was neither considered by a committee nor presented for public comment.

Moderate Republicans were unhappy with elements of the new plan, including its insertion of a new, seventh Senate district in Johnson County in a way that many believe would favor a GOP conservative.

Also unappealing to moderates were the new boundaries of two southeast Kansas districts currently represented by Sens. Jim Barone, D-Frontenac, and Dwayne Umbarger, R-Thayer, and the extension of the 15th district, currently represented by Sen. Derek Schmidt, R-Independence, north into Franklin

County.

"I'm glad it's behind us, but I'm disappointed we didn't address some critical issues," said Reapportionment Committee chairman David Adkins, R-Leawood, who voted against the bill Tuesday.

The debate between Barone and Umbarger became especially intense last week, with Umbarger accusing Barone of wanting to keep a potential challenger, Rep. Doug Gatewood, D-Columbus, out of his district.

Barone says that's not the case, and Gatewood hasn't said whether he is interested in running for the Senate in 2004, the next time seats in that cham-

ber are on the ballot.

Many senators said too much time was spent on redistricting and it was time to move on to other pressing issues, like the budget.

"We've had this long involved process that I always felt like we could conclude and obviously this ends on a very positive note," said Hensley. "Now we can move onto the budget and other important issues."

In other action:

- Budget planners learned that the state's March revenue collections were \$27 million less than expected.
- A bill making it easier to declare people dead if their bodies aren't found

after a disaster went to Graves.

On the Net: Senate redistricting plan is Sub for SB 256.

Kansas Legislature: <http://www.kslegislature.org>

Legislature's redistricting site: <http://skyways.lib.ks.us/ksleg/KLRD/Redistrict/>

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