

# City seeking proposals for trash collection

**By Tom Betz**  
*The Goodland Star-News*  
City commissioners agreed during a work session Monday that they still want out of the trash business, and decided to seek new proposals to buy and run the city's trash service.

There was no discussion about further negotiations with Sherman County, but the four commissioners present said they were interested in new proposals to have a private firm collect the city's trash.

The county commissioners had been negotiating with the city about taking over the trash collection for five months, but a recent exchange of letters seemed to end the discussions.

Members of the Sherman County Economic Development Council tried to get both sides to agree on having the county collect and

handle all the trash. The dispute with city broke to the surface when the county refused to accept a truckload of city trash contaminated with construction and demolition debris.

This sent the city looking for a contractor to buy it's equipment. Then the city and county developed a 17-point plan for a county take-over, but neither side made a decision. At a public forum in January, city Commissioner Curtis Hurd suggested that the county pay for the sorting and the city would keep the trash collection. The county commissioners agreed in a letter, but city commissioners were not pleased with the strings attached.

Monday, City Manager Ron Pickman gave the commissioners drafts of a contract and city ordinance which would be part of the proposal process. He said he hoped to have the request for proposal

draft completed by the commission meeting on Monday.

Pickman said he had talked to the city attorney about the sale of the city trash collection equipment, and he recommended that the city get the money for the equipment up front rather than agreeing to finance it over a period of years.

He said that would protect the city in case the contractor should fail. Otherwise, he said, the city would have to repossess the equipment

City Commissioner Curtis Hurd asked if the city could finance the equipment. Pickman said the commission could make that decision, but he was reporting the lawyer's advice.

Hurd said having to finance the equipment cost up front might make it more difficult for some of those interested in handling the city col-

lection to bid.

Pickman said another part of the proposal would be a question of whether to include a franchise fee to be paid to the city. He said it would be something to consider, but he felt it was not necessary in the beginning.

The proposals will be for a 10-year contract, he said, and that the fees would be set for the first five. There would be conditions in the contract that would protect the contractor if the fuel costs, tipping fees or other costs increased dramatically.

Commissioner Dean Blume asked if the proposal allows the contractor to haul anywhere they want, and Pickman said it is entirely up to the bidder. They would not have to use the county's landfill.

"The companies will present

you with proposals about how they will collect the trash," Pickman said, "and it will be up to the commission to select the best one based on the details included in the proposals."

Commissioner Rick Billinger said he felt it might be good to set a base price for the city equipment, but Pickman said he felt it should be up to the person making the proposal. He suggested this might be one of the negotiating points in determining which proposal to accept.

"I think we need to get all the way out," said Mayor Tom Rohr. "I think we need to get out of all the special pickups and everything."

"We don't want to do what we did last time," Pickman added, referring to a previous round of proposals which have fallen by the wayside in nearly two years of wrangling with the county over the trash

issue. "We want to get all the information up front."

Pickman said he thought there were several groups or individuals interested in presenting proposals. He said U.S. Waste Industries of Colorado Springs continues to be interested, along with area residents Kevin Butts, Chuck Redlin, Randy Topliff and possibly one other.

If the commission approves the draft request for a proposal on Monday, he said, they will set a date for having them returned to the city. The suggestion was to give the companies two to three weeks to have them completed, but no specific date was set.

Billinger said he wanted to be sure everybody was on the same page.

"I don't think we should sell it at all," Billinger said, "but I want it to be as fair and simple as possible."

# Three-tier water rates will boost conservation

The drought forced the city to impose tight lawn-watering restrictions last year, and at a work session Monday night, city commissioners looked for ways to handle the problem in a more planned manner.

City Manger Ron Pickman said using a tier rate, with users paying higher rates the more they use, could encourage water conservation.

"The intent is to save water, not to make a pile of money," Pickman said. "The best suggestion to encourage conservation in difficult times is to get into people's pockets."

The tier rate would have three phases, with the restriction and costs going up with the severity of the emergency.

Currently, the water rate is 95 cents per 100 gallons up to 5,000 gallons, with the first 300 gallons free per month.

The first phase of a water emergency, with tier rates, the price would be \$1.50 for anything over 5,000 gallons; \$2.50 for over 10,000 gallons and \$3.50 for over 15,000 gallons.

In a second-phase emergency, the 95 cents would be up to 2,500 gallons, rise to \$1.50 for up to 5,000, \$2.50 up to 7,500, and be \$3.50 for everything over 7,500 gallons. A phase 3 emergency would include mandatory controls on water use.

Pickman said these rates would be something the commission could impose as a part of what they already have in the water ordinance or as an addition to the other restrictions. Those restrictions could include the watering hours and even and odd days as were imposed last summer.

"When you have an emergency, it would kick in," he said, "not only in the summer, but if you had a well failure or any time you have an emergency in the water system."

Commissioner Dean Blume said he felt most of those who already conserve water would not be hurt by the rates.

"In an emergency, those who conserve would not be hurt," Pickman said, "but those who abuse would pay more."

Pickman suggested the city could provide the customers with hints about saving water. Conservation efforts do work, he said, as evidenced by the emergency last summer. The measures imposed by the city did drop the pumping rate.

Mayor Tom Rohr said it would be expensive if the city were to be fined by the state for over pumping its well permits. Pickman said the penalty could be \$10,000 per day for such a violation.

Another water related issue was that currently the city charges the same base monthly rate for all the

meters, no matter what size the customer's line.

Ed Wolak, public works director, said a one-inch meter costs \$975 installed, and that the city charges \$5.60 per month as the base rate for the water meter.

Commissioner Rick Billinger said he didn't feel they needed to do much to the water rates because the system is making money.

Pickman said the base rate on the meter does not give the city much income to replace the equipment, and suggested the commission look at raising the rates for the larger meters.

With most of the residential meters being one-inch, it was suggested this rate might be increased to \$6 per month, and the rate for a two-inch meter would be \$15, for a three-inch \$30 and for a four-inch meter \$45.

Wolak said the one-inch meter is supposed to be the smallest in the system, and that if they find anything smaller it is replaced.

The commissioners asked Wolak if he had an inventory of the water meters, and he said they did not have one at this time.

The commission is expected to review an ordinance setting out the water rate changes in the near future. They want to have the emergency water rates in place before the summer, just in case.

# Time zone change backed

**By Tom Betz**  
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Members of the Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau voted Monday to support a proposed change from Mountain Time to Central Time.

J.B. McClure and Larry Keirns, who had previously approached the Sherman County Economic Development Council about the idea, talked to the visitor's board about the idea, saying it would be good for business.

Chairman Dale Neil aid he has heard people at his KOA campground decide to drive farther when they learned that Goodland is not in the Central Time Zone.

"We're going to give this thing a boost to see if we can make it happen," McClure, a plumbing and heating contractor, said. "We believe the school district is in favor,

the city is in favor and Sherman County is in favor. We will be talking to them and others to get support for the change."

Visitors board member Ryan Hageman said one drawback he could see would be that in the summer the sun wouldn't go down until later, and that might mean his business would have to stay open later.

"People don't eat until the sun goes down," said Hageman, who manages Wendy's.

Keirns said the longer afternoon light would give golfers an extra hour to play, and more time for the summer ball programs as well.

"This seems so logical," Keirns said, "it is just strange out here for us not to be part of Kansas. We would like to have support from this group on this matter."

Judy Siruta, manager of the Com-

fort Inn, made the motion to support the time zone change. Elaine Morrow, manager of Super 8 Motel, seconded the motion.

The board members present, Neil, Hangmen, Morrow, Norma Notz, owner of Motel 7, and Marilyn Collett of Butterfly Aviation (by proxy) voted in favor of the time change. They instructed Executive Director Donna Price to write a letter to indicate the board's support.

Keirns said he would have an address to send the letter to in the near future.

## matters of record

**District Traffic**  
The following traffic cases were handled in the Sherman County district court:

**Feb. 12** — Al H. Kleinsorge, 82, of Kanorado was fined \$10 for no seat belt.

Sheryl A. Millam, 43, of Goodland was fined \$79 for no child restraint and \$10 for no seat belt.

**Feb. 13** — Chad Jason Lyons, 25, of Cherokee, Okla., was fined \$149 for speeding, 75/55, and \$300 for no liability insurance.

## student of the week



**Name:** Brandon Van Vleet  
**Parents:** George and Mary Ann Van Vleet  
**Grade:** 12  
**Age:** 18  
**We've nominated this student because:** Because Brandon has shown outstanding leadership and has taken on many rolls this year. Brandon has a lot of pride in what he does and always puts out 100% effort.

**Student Comment:** I will remember the friends I've made and the teachers that helped me succeed. The art class has been rewarding to me.

**Activities involved in at school:** FCCLA, Band, Tennis

**My choice of movies, books, and games :** My favorite movies are The Fast and The Furious and Dumb and Dumber. Music is rock and country

**After I leave Goodland High School I intend to ...:** Attend Northwest Kansas Technical College in Auto Technology

**And 10 years from now, I think I'll be:** Hopefully running and managing my own business

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Board field narrows

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filed for Kanorado City Council, although two positions are open.

County Clerk Janet Rumpel said the registration books are now open for the general election and people can register at her office until Monday, March 17.

With the election scheduled for April 1, she said the advance voting is expected to begin by March 12 if the ballots are printed.

The primary was the second time the voting has been held at the Veterans of Foreign Wars building, and Rumpel said it seemed to go well.

All general election voting will be held at the same location.

Looking at the advance voting in the primary, Philbrick and Russell

each received 77 votes. Melia had 75, Duke 68, Whalen 66, Gray 64, Duell 59, Smith 55, Pianalto 38, and Galindo 23.

The Kanorado election, oddly enough, was held in Goodland because with its new voting system, Sherman County has gone to a single poling place. There was no place to vote in the smaller town, and most people apparently chose to use advance voting rather than make the drive.

In the mayor's race, Estes received 18 advance votes, Webber had 10, and all 3 of Handle's votes were advance.

Tuesday, 14 people made the 16-mile trek from Kanorado to Goodland to vote, with 10 voting for Estes and 4 for Webber.