

# Board tells principal to wait on schedule change

**By Pat Schiefen**  
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Goodland High's incoming principal surprised the school board with a plan to change the oft-controversial block schedule last Monday, but the board turned her down, suggesting she aim for next year.

The board listened to Sharon Gregory's suggestions, but in the end decided to leave the schedule the same, saying it wanted to look at alternatives for the following year. One member pointed out that students has already enrolled in classes for the fall.

Principal Sharon Gregory suggested going to what she called a flexible block schedule, where freshman would start with a traditional seven-class-a-day schedule. Sophomores would have block scheduling in biology, chemistry and production classes, she said, while juniors and seniors would have more and more block scheduling.

Under the current plan, students have four classes of 90 minutes each day four

days a week. Most meet on alternating days. Monday classes run on a more traditional schedule.

Block scheduling was brought in 10 years ago by outgoing Principal Harvey Swager. The scheduling was supposed to increase hands-on time for instructors and get students used to a more college-like schedule.

It was modified later to allow math and music classes to meet every day, Gregory said. Teachers found it did not work well for those subjects. Another concern was for students with short attention spans who are not mature enough for 90-minute classes. Block scheduling was supposed increase hands on activity, said Gregory, but it hasn't always worked that way.

Gregory said block scheduling works well for industrial-arts classes and science labs. Classes such as band, vocal music and math need to meet every day, she said, presenting statistical data to support her proposal.

After talking to the staff, she said, only four teachers were adamantly opposed to her proposal.

The new principal said the schedule would also allow freshman to take classes at the junior high if they need to and make it easier for juniors and seniors to take courses at the Northwest Kansas Technical College. "Instructional time" in classroom seats would jump from 42.5 to 55 minutes per class on average, she said.

She said the dropout rate has increased as much as 30 percent in some classes. Gregory was worried about a decrease in teacher-student time, an increase in work sheets and a decline in one-on-one and small group learning.

Gregory said she was not opposed to holding some classes before or after school starts. Students will have more options with virtual classes and independent studies.

The activity period could be set up so that the sponsor of a group such as DECA could have those students in his or her room, she

said. The principal said she would like to have career planning conversations with students and also tap into the resources of the community.

The board felt the change was too sudden.

"Will freshman and sophomore be able to do extracurricular activities?" asked board member LeAnn Friedrichs.

"This overwhelms me," said board member Marty Melia.

"The schedule would be a work in progress," Gregory replied.

"I think you need a year to get used to the staff," said board President Jane Philbrick.

"I would love to see you take a year," agreed Friedrichs. "Take it a little slower."

"This came up really fast," said Philbrick. "People will want buy in."

"I am not against changing the schedule," said Friedrichs.

"I like the ideas," said Jeff Mason, a parent and president of the high school site council. "There is no way to fit eight classes

into seven hours."

He added that the school might need to make some adjustments in the number of credits needed to graduate.

"Mrs. Gregory has presented good academics and a workable schedule," said Superintendent Shelly Angelos. "There has not been enough time for community, school board and staff buy in."

"Do we want to wait for the next meeting for a decision?" asked board member Andrew House.

Friedrichs made a motions that at the schedule stay the same and asking Gregory to bring proposed changes in for next year.

"I was disappointed," said Gregory. "It will be extra challenging to facilitate classes with the junior high and the technical college and give me an opportunity to work on the schedule for next year."

The motion passed 4-3, with Philbrick, Melia, Fritz Doka and Friedrichs voting yes, and Andy House, Sederston and Dick Short voting no.

## Audit report delayed

The Goodland Regional Medical Center board met at noon Wednesday in the hospital's large board room.

Chief Financial Officer Jim Precht said he had hoped to have the annual audit report from Roger Johnson, a certified public accountant of Wendling, Noe, Nelson and Johnson, but Johnson was not able to meet with the board this week.

Precht told board members the audit draft he gave them should 99.9 percent final.

"I don't anticipate any changes," he said.

Johnson is expected to give the formal audit report at the board's meeting at 6:30 p.m. Monday, June 25.

The board approved medical staff privileges for visiting specialists in the areas of cardiology, dermatology, rheumatology and obstetrics.

They finished with a closed session for 40 minutes.

## Going, going, gone



Gone! Workers were digging out the foundations on Monday, the last step in demolition of the deserted K-Inn motel on Business U.S. 24 near Cherry Ave. The city hired

Goody's, owned by Mike Yarger, to remove the old motel after more than a two-year court fight.

Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

# Water meeting in Colby highlights challenges for irrigation users

**By Tisha Cox**  
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When the water goes away, so will western Kansas, said farmers, experts and political leaders at a televised "town hall meeting" Wednesday at Colby High School.

The forum, "Water in Kansas," sponsored by Smoky Hills Public Television, was taped to be broadcast at 7 p.m. today on PBS.

Panelists were Lon Frahm, a Thomas County farmer; State Sen. Ralph Ostmeier of Grinnell; Hays City Manager Randy Gustafson; Tracy Streeter, director of the Kansas Water Office; and Don Paxson of Penokee.

"It's an issue we can't walk away from," Ostmeier said. "I will not give in to a Buffalo Commons."

Panelists answered questions from the audience on water rights and permits, the future of irrigation, the future of water in western Kansas and the effects of use on the Ogallala Aquifer. The aquifer, an underground water supply spread across eight states, is the largest source of water for western Kansas.

"Today, water in Kansas belongs to its people, but its use is granted through water rights," Frahm said. "That is controlled by the Kansas Water Office."

Water users have different priorities. Domestic use, or water for towns and cities, comes ahead of agricultural use, Streeter said.

The first question was whether the water office has granted too many water permits, and what can

be done to encourage conservation.

Streeter said the state is not granting new permits for anything — for irrigation or livestock use.

Frahm said farmers have been pumping water "exponentially," but economic factors drive everything, including how much water is pumped. He said high energy prices will stop wasteful water use.

"As a producer, I'm only going to do what's in my best interest," Frahm said.

Paxson said he believes in conservation, but noted agriculture uses more water than anything else. Cooperation between agriculture and municipalities could make a difference, he said.

"We have a duty to conserve and extend the life of the aquifer," Paxson said.

Streeter said the state has spent a lot of time on the issue, but he feels we need to cut water use without upsetting the economic engine that drives western Kansas.

He said new state and federal programs that voluntarily retire water

rights will help.

Ostmeier said he was glad to be on the panel because the Legislature cannot take care of everything.

He said "knifing" irrigation, completely stopping it, would be hard on most of western Kansas.

Today, panel members said, there's growing competition between renewable energy production, including ethanol plants, and agriculture for water. Streeter said corn needs more water than other crops, and more corn has been planted to meet the growing demands for corn in livestock and ethanol production, but that could change.

The use of "cellulosic" material, mostly plant waste, to make ethanol takes different technology, but uses less water.

Ethanol plants using corn are not able to get new water rights, Streeter said. Instead, they have to buy existing rights and file with the state to change the use from agricultural to industrial.

Water rights are simply the right to use the water — how, how much, and when, he said.

Streeter drove home the point that Kansas is using all the water it has and then some. Consumptive use cannot increase, he said, it needs to go down, but some of the water used in ethanol production can be reused.

Frahm said if the use of the water stated in the rights change, the state can take away part of the right, sometimes up to half. That lessens the impact on the Ogallala. He said it means getting more use out of the existing water right.

Gustafson said the state should do a comprehensive study done on the aquifer to figure out how much water is left, and then make some decisions.

Some areas of the aquifer already have been pumped dry, he said, while other places still have a long usable life ahead. Paxson said that could be as long as 100 years.

"When you talk about the Ogallala, you need to treat it with

the diversity it is," he said.

Frahm said some wells are down to 30 percent production, but technology is helping change how farmers use water. He asked how the state can deal with the differences in the aquifer.

"How do you manage it when it's different in so many places?" he said.

Some irrigation changes that have helped are the switch from sprinklers to low pressure nozzles used on center-pivot systems, Frahm said. A farmer can use 40

percent less water but still get the same crop with new equipment, he said.

"Economics have driven a lot of that," he added.

Someone asked about a subsurface drip irrigation, where pipes or drip tape are buried next to plant roots.

"I think it's quite efficient, but the price is the problem right now," Ostmeier said.

Streeter said the subsurface system is efficient, but the systems degrade over time.

## corrections

The Goodland Star-News will correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at (785) 899-2338 to report errors. We believe that news should be fair and factual. We want to keep an accurate record and appreciate you calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.



## IRS Public Auction



Pursuant to an Order of Sale entered in *United States vs. Donald W. Dawes; Phyllis C. Dawes; and David Larry Smith and Derek Dane Dawes as Trustees of the Plainsman Property Trust also known as Plainsman Property Company* defendants, Civil Action No. 03-1132-JTM, United States District Court for the District of Kansas, the United States will offer to sell at public auction, to advertise and sell, without appraisal and subject to any unpaid real property taxes or special assessments, to the highest bidder, according to law and pursuant to the terms and conditions set in herein, the real properties in which Donald W. and Phyllis C Dawes have an interest.

Included in the sale is a house with 2,689 sq ft of total living area on the south edge of Goodland KS, grain bins and a machine shed in Brewster KS, and approximately 1,600 acres of agricultural lands located in Sherman, Thomas and Wallace Counties.

Sales will be held at the respective county Court Houses on June 20, 2007

Thomas County 9:00 A.M. Central Time  
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