

City purchaes sign-making machine

By Tom Betz
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Replacing bent, damaged or worn out street signs should be easier for Goodland's city crew with the purchase of a \$14,000 sign-making machine and a computer to run the software.

Justin Lohr, who works in the street department under Phil Erickson, told the City Commission last Monday that the city's old sign-making machine could not be repaired and that if the city could buy a new machine, it would save the city money by making the signs rather than having to buy them.

Lohr said he had contacted a couple of companies in Denver and Denco Sales has a Graphtec machine and software that would meet the department's needs.

"With the plotter and laminator, we could make almost any kind of sign," Lohr said. "We could make street signs, signs for the parks and even make decals for the vehicles."

Lohr said the Graphtec machine would handle signs up to 42 inches.

Erickson said the largest city signs are 30 inches, but most are six inches long by about two or three inches tall.

Lohr said the signs cost about \$30 each, but with the machine the city could make them for about \$6 each.

"We could save money by having the machine," he said.

Lohr said the city would buy aluminum sign blanks in the sizes needed and the machine would cut the signs out of reflective material to be put on the blanks. He said a protective layer can be

laminated over a sign to protect it from weather and graffiti.

Mayor Rick Billinger asked how much the city pays for a stop sign now.

Lohr said it is about \$37 each. He said regular signs could be made cheaper than the larger ones.

Erickson said the city has about 720 street signs at street corners alone.

"We could make the park signs," he said, "rather than painting them."

"Can you recycle the signs?" asked Commissioner Josh Dechant.

"If it has not been badly damaged," Lohr replied.

Lohr said the signs were baked on with the old machine, but there is no way to get parts for it and it was limited in what could be produced.

Dechant asked what the longevity of the plotter should be.

Lohr said it would depend on future upgrades of the software. He said the Graphtec machine is \$13,935 and the computer would be separate. He said he had a bid of \$999 from S&T Communication. He said money was set aside in the budget for the sign machine and computer.

Erickson said the Denco people told him they would have somebody deliver and up the machine and train the city's people.

Commissioner John Garcia said it sounded like it would save the city money, and made a motion to buy the sign-making machine from Denco and the computer from S&T.

The motion passed 4-0 with Daniels, Dechant, Garcia and Billinger voting in favor. Commissioner Annette Fairbanks was absent.

In other business, the commission

- Agreed to change the date of the next meeting to 5 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 25. City Manager Wayne Hill said the regular meeting date on Monday is President's Day, and the city offices will be closed.
- Heard from Hill that city water well No. 12 had locked up for the second time in a year. He said after the pump was pulled, it became apparent the hole is crooked and the casing is not straight. He said the best solution would be to put in a submersible pump.

Billinger asked who drilled the well, and if the city could go back and ask the driller to fix it. Daniels asked if there was any way to straighten it out. Hill said the only way is to re-drill it. Garcia said he felt the first thing to do was to ask the man who drilled it.

Hill said if it cannot be fixed, the city could put in a 60-horse submersible pump. He said there may be another problem with the electronic soft start.

Billinger suggested talking to the city attorney about going back to the person who drilled the well. Hill said he would.

- Held two closed session to discuss personnel. The first was for 25 minutes with the four commissioners at 7:05 p.m. Billinger made the motion for a closed session. When the commissioners returned, a motion was made for a second closed session at 7:30 p.m. with Hill asked to participate.

The commissioners returned at 7:50 p.m. and adjourned without taking any further action.

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County to pay \$190,000 for weed mowing

By Tom Betz
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Mowing weeds along the roads and ditches in Sherman County will cost about 4.5 percent more this year, county commissioners heard Tuesday when they agreed to a contract for \$190,000 the summer season.

Contractor Darrel Schrader said he would rather mow for flat fee rather than the bid and fuel adjustment the contract called for last year. He asked for \$195,000.

Commissioner Mitch Tiede said the contract last year was for \$175,000 and that with the fuel adjustment, it was \$182,000.

Tiede asked Schrader if he could do the mowing for \$190,000.

"I will work on it at that price," Schrader said. "I know it is getting expensive. I'll get ready to go."

Tiede said he knows with all the snow going into the ditches, the weeds will grow fast this year.

Commissioner Chuck Thomas asked Schrader if he could work closer with Daryl West of the county noxious weed department to coordinate spraying and mowing.

Schrader said the north part of the county is the worst for amaranth,

which is becoming a real problem. He said in some places, it was hard to see if the spraying did much good.

He said some of the amaranth last year had three or four inch stalks, which slowed down the mowers. He said one 11-mile stretch with a large amount of amaranth took more than three days to mow.

Tiede said he noticed that the spraying dries

Schrader said when it is sprayed, it makes it woody. It becomes like an old fence post, he said.

Thomas said it needs to get mowed before it gets too tall, noting that the amaranth comes in about June or July, right about wheat harvest time.

Tiede asked how much was in the road and bridge budget for weed spraying.

Public Works Manager Curt Way said there is \$40,000 for labor and chemicals.

"Maybe we need to concentrate the spraying on the north half," Way said, "and not try to do the whole county."

Thomas said it might be good to rotate and try to get each section about every three years.

Tiede asked Schrader when and where he wants to start Schrader said he has been trying to do the areas with the most population first.

Way said he would drive the roads to see where the worst is and suggest that Schrader start there.

"We have money in the budget," Commissioner Kevin Rasure said. "We need to have Darrel, Curt and Daryl get together to make a plan and decide what we are going to do. Have you map it out and bring it back so we know what the plan is."

Tiede said Schrader thought the worst weeds were in the northeast. West asked if that is where he should start.

"Once the weeds start growing, the spraying does not seem to work," Tiede said.

Thomas said the first round of chemicals last year did not do that well. West said after the first round, he changed the chemicals and it seemed to do better.

Rasure asked the men to get the figures for manpower and chemicals and get a plan back to us to know what we are doing.

"I just want to do the job and do a good job," Schrader said. "I

know I just have to deal with what is there."

Steve Duell, farmer who lives north of Ruleton, said he thought the spraying should be done at a maximum level because some of the weeds are developing a resistance to the chemicals.

Tommy Tompkins, farmer from south of the city, said he thought it would be good to encourage farmers to mow some of their own ditches without spraying them. He said that would help the whole county.

Schrader said one idea might be to burn out some of the ditches Tiede asked Way if he thought burning might help. Way said they could try that.

"It is up to you," Way said. "It was done years ago. It probably did work. It has done good in the past, but it does not get rid of all of the amaranth."

Tiede said they might try some burning as a test.

Chamber honors retired water man

CITIZEN, from Page 1a

Clara Huber June 2, 1937. They had nine children.

Nelson introduced the Chamber board and turned the program over to incoming President James Miller of Eagle Communications.

Other members are Jeris McCombs,

vice-president, from United Agra Products; Karen Duell, secretary, from S & T Communications; Doug Claussen, treasurer, from Kennedy and Coe; Darren Kannady of First National Bank; Randy Topliff of Overhead Door and American Communications; Laura Pope of Wal-Mart; and Joni Guyer of Prairie Rose Floral.

Miller presented outgoing President Brian Linin of Frontier Ag with a set of Sherman County history books.

Miller said the Chamber continues to face challenges, but with the help of the members, will work to improve its operations and services to members and the public.



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Goodwin Law, LLC

The classy brick building that sits at 118 E 10th Street and announces to the city of Goodland that there's a new law office available continues to remain under construction. Goodwin Law, LLC offers legal services from Schyler Goodwin. Goodwin graduated Washburn University School of Law in 2006 and is currently operating out of his home located at 317 E. 9th Street. "We hope to be in the new building within the year," said Goodwin. The professional office will also offer space for lease for smaller businesses that would benefit from sharing staff, utilities, and space.

When asked about his preferred area of the law to practice within, Goodwin commented that he likes it all, but he will not do family law (divorce, child custody, and child support), bankruptcy, or criminal defense cases involving drugs or alcohol. Goodwin received a specialization certificate from Washburn Law, which included additional coursework in real estate, negotiations, corporate law, business formations, and contracts.

Goodwin has also been involved in a variety of mediation cases. He prefers mediation over going to court, as it gives the parties involved an opportunity to work out their problems themselves. He hopes to be able to begin a juvenile criminal mediation program in Goodland.

Schyler Goodwin is available by calling (785) 821-4653 or emailing him at goodwinlaw@yahoo.com. His mailing address is PO Box 992, Goodland, KS 67735.