

City budget approved without comment

By Tom Betz

nt.betz@nwkansas.com

The public hearing was held Monday on the city budget for next year, and without any objects or comments from the public the commissioners unanimously approved the budget as presented.

Mayor John Garcia said he was pleased the commissioners and city staff were able to hold the line on the property tax.

City Manager Doug Gerber said after the commission work session the staff made some adjustments in the budget to get it as close to flat on the property tax as possible.

"The budget was reasonably a success in holding the line and keeping the key core services," Gerber said and recommended adoption.

Commissioner Josh Dechant said he commended the staff for keeping things down and made the motion to approve as presented.

Commissioner Annette Fairbanks seconded, and the budget was approved unanimously.

Garcia said the budget includes transfers of money to pay off the water project, and Gerber said that was correct. He said the transfers do not include money to pay off the

existing water bonds.

Gerber said this pays off the water treatment plant and water lines, and the city will hold an open house at the water treatment plant from 6 to 9 p.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 17.

He said the commission will have some tough choices with the water fund coming in the near future.

In other business the commission

- Approved the application from Cowboy Corner Xpress for a cereal malt beverage license to sell for non-consumption on the premises. The business located at 1631 Main Ave., is owned by Jayson and Tara Woofter of Colby.

Rich Hillmer will be the Cowboy Corner Xpress manager.

- Approved the final payment for the curb and gutter and valley gutter reconstruction to APAC of Hays for \$11,848. The final payment brings the total paid to APAC for the project to \$592,407.

- Approved an ordinance clearing up some language and inconsistency in the code about collecting solid waste in the city. Gerber said the change clears up that the city cannot disconnect water or electric utilities because of non-payment of

a solid waste fee.

- Approved low bid from APAC for \$325,335 to remove sludge from the city sewer pond. The bid is for \$143,000 for pond drainage and sludge removal, \$86,000 for removal and replacement of concrete sloping material and \$31,000 for a temporary settling pond.

Jeff Mills of Evans, Bierly, Hutchison and Associates, said they got three bids, and APAC was the lowest. The other two were from DTR BioSolids of Wisconsin for \$409,205 and Sporer Land Development of Oakley for \$701,910.

Gerber asked why the wide difference.

Mills said he thought Sporer was thinking about taking out a portion of the dike rather than just taking out the sludge. He said that would be more expensive. We want to get in and really remove sludge with a track vehicle. He said there are a couple of farmers who have said they would take the sludge.

Dechant asked if they are getting this set up, and asked about the water on top.

Mills said they will start draining off the top soon and let it evaporate while they get the temporary pond

built.

Gerber said removing the sludge fully means they will get within two inches of the bottom. He said the decision was to drain the pond so a majority of the sludge gets removed, and there is some concrete work that needs to be done.

Fairbanks asked how much sludge is in the pond.

Mills said it varies with the west end being the deepest about 52 inches and down to about six inches on the east. He said he feels there is an average of 30 to 36 inches across the whole pond.

Commissioner Bill Finley asked if the State Department of Health and Environment had given approval.

Mills said yes, they have given approval and the sludge has to be tested before it is dispersed.

Gerber said when the state guys were out to look at the water treatment plant they looked at the sewer pond and gave verbal approval for this project.

- Approved a demolition bid from B&K Pump for \$4,450 for removing the foundation at 419 Harrison Ave. A hearing on the foundation was held a year ago, Gerber said, and

the homeowner was given several extensions and the time ran out. He said the staff took bids on the demolition as the foundation has been in the existing shape for 23 years, and he felt the city had made a good faith effort to resolve the situation.

Dechant said he agreed it needed to be done and made the motion to demolish the foundation. Commissioner Chris Zimmerman seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

- The Pooch Plunge is coming up from 1 to 4 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 21, and the money will be donated to the Northwest Kansas Animal Shelter, Gerber said. He said they tried this last year on the last day of the pool season and it seemed to go over well.

- Complaints about recent graffiti around town have been addressed, Gerber said. He said Chief Joni Showalter had been talking to people, and the graffiti seems to have stopped.

- Street sealing process has been completed, and the fog seal will be sprayed on in the next couple of weeks, Gerber said.

- Flowers were planted at Pioneer Park on Monday by city employees

Crystal VanVleet, Amy Thorson, Joyce Sanderson and Danny Krayca, Gerber said to have something there for the fair and upcoming all school reunion.

- Report on handing out free ice cream cone cards to people visiting at the Van Gogh painting was given by Dechant. He said he talked to a family from Mississippi who had stopped and the woman said she researched the Van Gogh on the Internet. He gave them ice cream cone cards.

Gerber said he would say it was working, and has another company who have provided cards to be given out.

- Commissioners held a 20 minute closed door session and extended it for 15 minutes to discuss client and attorney matters with the commissioners, City Attorney Jerry Fairbanks and Gerber.

The meeting reopened at 7:05 p.m. and no action was taken. The meeting was adjourned. The next city commission meeting is scheduled for 5 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 15, in the commission room on the second floor of the City Administration Building, 204 W. 11th.

Tech college hosts school alliance meeting

Northwest Tech hosted a unique meeting for western Kansas small school superintendents on Thursday, July 28.

The purpose of the meeting was to join an informal discussion about current research with nationally prominent rural educator, Dr. Paul Theobald, from Buffalo State College, and to discuss the creation of a superintendent's organization aimed at representing and promoting the interests of small western Kansas schools and their communities.

In attendance were superintendents Bill Steiner, Oakley; Janci Mills, Brewster; Rob Schiltz, St. Francis; Mary Ellen Welshon, Golden Plains; Dave Hale, Wallace County; Dave Porter, Sharon Springs.

Joining the superintendents were Dr. Paul Theobald, Woods-Beals Endowed Chair, Buffalo State University; Dr. Ed Mills, Northwest Tech President; Tim Cress, Weskan

Board of Education President; Bruce Buck, Northwest Tech Tech Board member; Diane Stiles, Northwest Tech Assistant VP Academic Affairs and Goodland School Board Member; Ian Tompkins, Northwest Tech Media Specialist; and Tiffini Unger, Northwest Tech Student Services Coordinator.

Theobald visited with the group and talked about recent research showing graduates from small schools tended to be quite successful in college and beyond when compared to their large school contemporaries. His point was "bigger isn't always better when it comes to schools."

He discussed the many contributions small schools and communities have historically made, and continue to make, in the quality of American life.

"They represent a system of ethics and values that are dear to the foundation of the nation," he said.

Theobald was concerned in times

of economic recession, politics often turn against small schools as dollars become scarce.

"When small schools are closed, the students just don't go away," Theobald said. "In fact, there is some thinking it actually may cost more to educate students in the resulting consolidated schools, particularly when travel is involved."

During the meeting, Dr. Mills, college president, said Northwest Tech would assist in any way possible to support the group.

"This is exactly what we have been needing," said Welshon, from Golden Plains.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the group decided to begin meeting monthly on the campus at Northwest Tech to discuss matters of mutual concern.

For more information on upcoming events at Northwest Tech, visit www.nwktc.edu

Budget cut reduce hours at Hays social security office

Budget cuts have reached down to the Hays Social Security office, and beginning on Monday, Aug. 15, the office will close a half hour earlier Monday through Friday.

The office will close at 3:30 p.m. each weekday.

Agency employees will continue to work their regular hours, and the shorter public window will allow them to complete face-to-face service with the visiting public without

incurring the cost of overtime. Congress provided Social Security with nearly \$1 billion less than the President requested for the budget this fiscal year, which makes it impossible for the agency to provide the amount of overtime needed to handle service to the public as we have in the past.

Most Social Security services do not require a visit to an office. For example, anyone wishing to ap-

ply for benefits, sign up for direct deposit, replace a Medicare card, obtain a proof of income letter or inform us of a change of address or telephone number may do so at www.socialsecurity.gov or by dialing our toll-free number, 1-800-772-1213. People who are deaf or hard of hearing may call our TTY number, 1-800-325-0778.

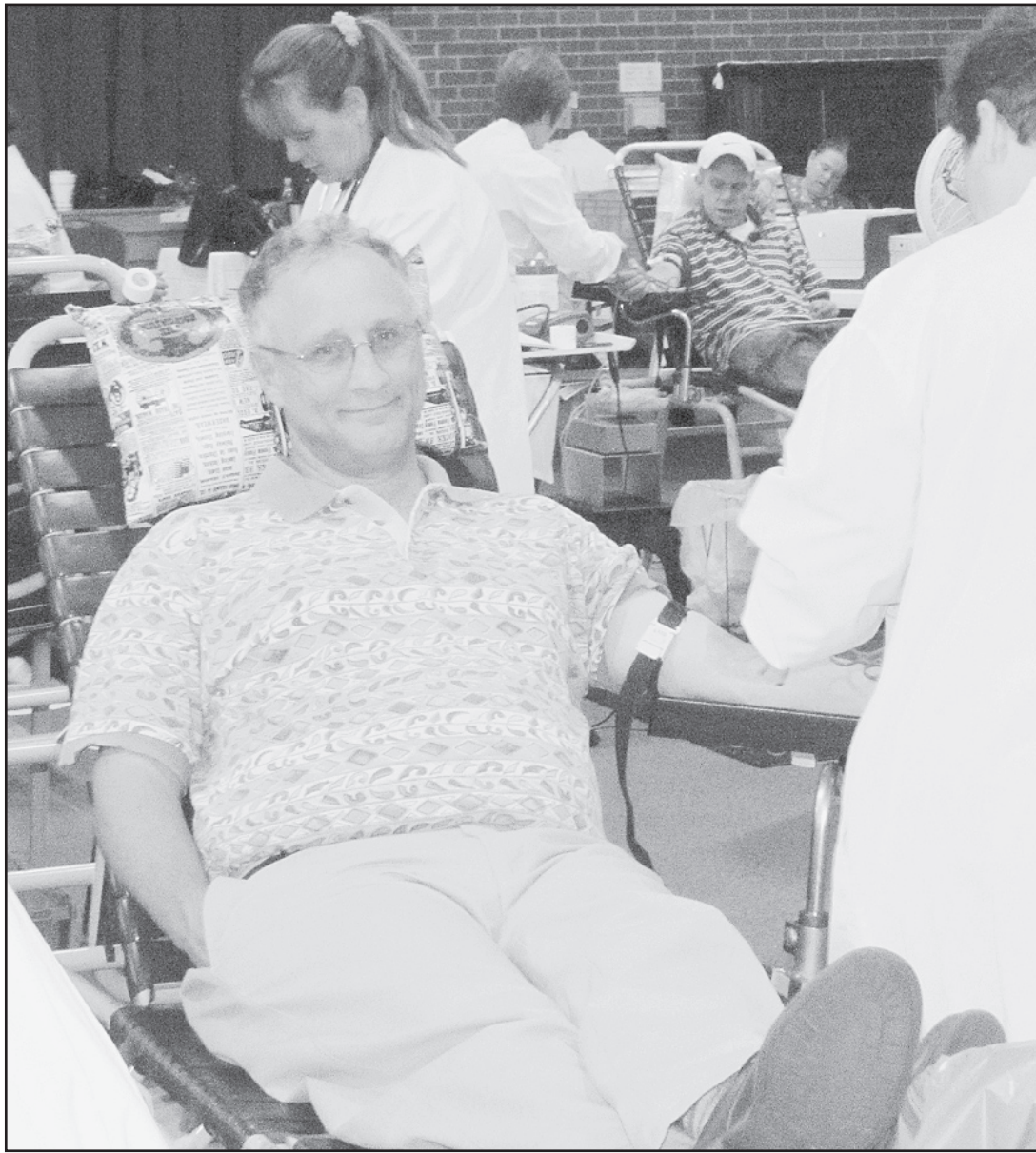
Photography contest to be held at Flatlander Fall Festival

Anyone who wants to enter photos in the Annual Flatlander Photography Contest by the Goodland Arts Council are asked to bring in the entries by Thursday, Sept. 1. The winners are selected by people's choice. Prizes will be awarded to the winners in each division - nature, people, still life, landscape

and other.

The photos must be at least 5 by 7 inches and either be framed or matted. A person may enter as many photographs as they want. Entries will be judged during the month and winners will be announced following the Flatlander Talent show on Saturday, Sept. 24, at the Carnegie

Battle of the badges



District Judge Scott Showalter was one of the volunteers donating blood at the United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall Tuesday afternoon. He was one of 69 who gave blood, and the Red Cross said it was a good day. The Battle of the Badges went to the Emergency Medical Technicians who had 25 votes when the tally was checked about 5 p.m. The firemen

had 19 votes and the police and sheriff had 16 votes. The EMS will get a trophy for winning. The organizers said not everyone voted, but felt it was a good turnout. The next blood drive will be on Tuesday, Sept. 27 from 1 to 6 p.m. at the same location.

Photo by Tom Betz
The Goodland Star-News

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.

STATE-OF-THE-ART AND GREEN TECHNOLOGY	
AUGUST 5-11	Nightly 7 PM
ZOOKEEPER	Sunday Matinee 1:30 PM
(PG): Some rude and suggestive humor and language.	<i>Movie bucks make great gifts!</i>
www.goodlandnet.com/movies	Sherman
	1203 Main - Phone 899-6103

LAND FOR SALE	
Kit Carson County-1520± acres dry land. Seibert area. 1,900,000	
North of Seibert. 480± acres dry land. \$600,000	
South of Ruleton-40 acres. home, shop & other buildings. Reduced \$99,000	
Lincoln County, CO - 3729± acres gross. 25 miles south of Punkin Center.	
Improvements: home & small shop. Good water, good fencing. \$1,062,765	
Burlington, CO-6 Lots 17th & Rose \$145,000 4 Lots 17th & Rose \$60,000	
Dale Stull, Broker Cell 719-349-5710 Toll Free 866-346-5710	The Land Office LLC www.thelandofficellc.com

Grower's Outlet Store	
No Hormones No Antibiotics	
Stop in and start eating better today!	
114 W 12th Goodland, KS	
785-899-9274 ♦ 855-330-1493	

* SOFFIT * DOOR AND WINDOW REPLACEMENTS *	
	NEW CONSTRUCTION
From concrete to roofing and everything in between.	
Ron Lucke	
CUSTOM BUILDING	
Burlington, Co. (719) 346-8840 CELL PHONE (719) 349-8840	
SIDING * SEAMLESS RAIN GUTTERS * FASCIA *	

HOST AN EXCHANGE STUDENT TODAY!	
(for 3, 5 or 10 months)	
Patrick from France, 17 yrs. Loves the outdoors and playing soccer. Patrick's dream has been to spend time in America learning about our customs and attending American high school.	Elisa from Italy, 16 yrs. Likes to play tennis, swim, loves to dance. Elisa hopes to play American softball and learn American 'slang' while in the USA.
Make this year the most exciting, enriching year ever for you and your family. Share your world with a young foreign visitor from abroad. Welcome a high school student, 15-18 years old, from Italy, France, Norway, Denmark, Spain, Germany, Brazil, Thailand or China as part of your family for a school year (or less) and make an overseas friend for life.	
For more information or to select your own exchange student please call:	
Ginny at (785) 332-3414	
or	
Marcy at 1-800-888-9040 (Toll Free)	
or e-mail us at info@world-heritage.org	
www.whhosts.com	
World Heritage is a public benefit, non-profit organization based in Laguna Beach, CA.	