

Water-rate hike staves off budget problems for a year

By Tom Betz
The Goodland Star-News
City commissioners agreed at a budget workshop Tuesday to hike water rates \$2 a month after hearing that the water fund is basically broke.

City Manager Ron Pickman said he and City Clerk Mary Volk had tired to find a way to balance the fund, which was facing a \$164,978 deficit. Pickman said all the utilities continue to face shortfalls in revenues.

“The budget shows the water utility in the red,” the manager said, “and the commission will have to decide what to do to put it in the black.

“For the past several years the city has chosen to use carryover funds, reserves, or has cut budgets to deter increases in rates. In the case of the water utility, the carryover funds and reserves have been depleted.

“The commission needs to study rate increases to address the decrease in revenue and balance the budget. A small increase in rates on a regular basis is easier to swallow than a large increase in rates every

few years.”

Mayor Rick Billinger suggested moving the pool payment of \$95,000 and the bulk purchase of gasoline to the general fund, but Pickman and Volk said property taxes would have to be raised to cover the payments.

The pool payment is split between the electric, water and general fund, and this arrangement was approved by the commission in 1999.

The bulk purchase of gasoline is reimbursed to the water fund by the other departments based on usage. “This has been done this way before I came here,” Pickman said. “The water fund purchases the bulk gasoline and the general fund buys the bulk diesel and the department reimburse them on the basis of usage.

“It seems like a strange situation to me, but as long as it is reimbursed from the departments it doesn’t seem to matter. It does make it easier to cut one check for the fuels. It is an easier way to pay the supplier rather than having a check from each department.”

Department head Rich Simon

said they need to spend \$70,000 for a telemetry system to manage the water pressure in the system.

“We are going to try to get through until next spring,” he told the commissioners.

Pickman said the last base water rate increase was in 1999, before the city borrowed money to start updating the system and got a grant for the new water tower. The \$184,000 annual payments on that work began in 2000 and run for 15 more years.

To break even with all the things in the budget, Pickman said it would take a rate increase of 150 percent or 2.5 times what they are now.

Commissioner Dean Blume said the problem has been building over the years, and the commissioners had been unwilling to raise the rates a small amount each year.

“A little each year is better than having to raise a large amount just to get even,” Blume said. “This does not even address the real problem, and we will have to do this again next year.”

Commissioner Dave Daniels said he agreed it was hard to do large rate increases, and said that maybe the

commission should look at raising the sales tax.

In the end, Pickman and Volk suggested balancing the water fund by raising the base monthly minimum by \$1.50, from \$3.60 to \$5.10, and shifting some of the payments to the next year, plus making some cuts in the budget. With this, they said, the water fund would break even, but there would not be anything left for the next year.

Commissioner John Garcia and Billinger suggested making it a raise of \$2 in the monthly minimum

rate to give the fund a little cushion. With those changes, they said, the water fund should be in the black by \$16,247. This will raise the minimum from \$3.60 to \$5.60 for the first 300 cubic feet of water.

Pickman said this will buy the city some more time, but does not address the fact that the water fund continues to run in the red.

Simon said there are several wells that need attention, and that some of the tests of the well are showing increases in nitrates which could mean trouble in the future.

Pickman said if the nitrates continue to rise, the city might be forced to build a water treatment plant which would probably cost two to three times the \$2.5 million estimated for the sewer treatment plant.

The water fund will be in the black for the next year, but when the budget comes back around in the summer, they will need to make the payments that were shuffled this year. Pickman and Volk estimated that another rate increase of at least \$3 or \$4 per month will be needed then to come close to breaking even.

SHERMAN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS EXPENDITURES

FOR THE MONTHS OF APRIL, MAY & JUNE, SECOND QUARTER AS AUTHORIZED BY HOUSE BILL 3211-1980.

SALARIES:

APPRAISER \$25,766.75; HEALTH \$33,230.79; ELECTION \$2,082.10; GENERAL \$199,332.24; NOXIOUS WEED \$6,259.72; ROAD & BRIDGE \$97,695.74; RURAL FIRE DISTRICT #1 \$3,825.00; SOLDIERS MEMORIAL PARK \$1,399.97; SOLID WASTE \$26,571.49; PRAIRIE DOG \$202.52; ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT \$13,372.25 TOTAL SALARIES: \$409,738.57

EXPENDITURES:

Advance Ins Co \$1,240.40; Cody Alexander \$67.45; Dick Allaman \$10.80; Allied Oil & Supply Inc \$4,309.85; Alltel \$1,050.49; Amera-Chem Inc \$39.95; American Crane Inc \$677.61; American Environmental Consulting LLC \$11,420.34; American Fidelity Assurance Co \$4,550.42; Americo LLC \$25.00; Ansell Healthcare Products \$130.00; Carolyn Applegate \$727.74; Aquila \$3,458.59; AR Supplies \$993.45; Arkansas Democrat-Gazette Inc \$185.00; Raenita Artzer \$97.50; AT&T \$429.51; ATCO Int'l \$1,040.00; Aventis Pasteur \$1,130.75; B&B Electric Inc \$259.73; B&K Pumping Inc \$455.00; DJ Baehler \$75.00; Barton Co Community College \$144.00; Bateman Funeral Home Co \$423.00; Bay Tech Label Inc \$50.27; Irma Benavides \$110.00; Berry Tractor & Equip Co \$384.88; Best Western \$528.01; Blossom Shoppe \$64.58; Blue Cross/Blue Shield \$59,675.77; Bud's Repair Shop \$407.00; Burlington Radiator \$315.00; Business Office Systems \$127.95; Butler Co Community College \$36.00; Kevin Butts \$91.71; CT Jewell Co Inc \$48.85; Candlewood Suites \$170.50; Central Detroit Inc \$561.78; Central Plains Labs \$439.35; City of Goodland \$11,354.66; City-Co Recreation \$9,108.55; Clawson Auto Supply \$69.10; Clock Medical Supply Inc \$56.70; Cloud Co Community College \$12.00; CMI Inc \$27.32; Cobblestone Floral \$16.00; Colby Bearing Inc \$110.95; Colby Community College \$2,508.00; Colby Free Press \$20.25; Colby Wrecking Yard \$603.78; Colonial Life & Accident Ins \$108.00; Commercial Sign Co \$514.00; Conoco/Philips \$327.69; Consortium Inc \$589.00; Conway Data \$1,041.25; Kendall Cooper \$1,200.00; Co Weed Directors Assoc of Ks \$65.00; Cowboy Loop \$156.10; D&D Filter \$452.63; Rhea Daise \$30.00; Dan Brenner Ford \$18,533.42; David Daniels \$113.85; Data Imaging Supplies \$261.47; Dependable Glass Inc \$78.20; Des Moines Stamp Mfg Co \$54.75; Development Systems Inc \$85.00; Developmental Service of NW Ks Inc \$1,286.15; Dictaphone Corp \$42.32; Dinkel Law Office LLC \$1,925.00; Barb Disney \$75.00; Dr Michael Dobersen \$1,100.00; Dollar General \$450.00; Marvin Duell \$20.16; Shirley Dupsky \$32.70; Eagle Communications \$313.53; Economic Development Petty Cash \$435.73; Ellis Co Environmental Office \$2,424.18; Ellis Co Sheriff's Dept \$251.09; Evercom Systems Inc \$647.50; Extension Office \$31,799.64; F&S Supply Inc \$58.00; Carole Farris \$6.46; Fastpro Int'l \$211.80; Finley Motors Inc \$291.43; First BankCard \$1,546.96; First Nat'l Bank \$775,977.16; Fixsen Electronics \$604.80; Free Fair \$7,423.09; Frontier Equity Inc \$39,431.55; Gall's Inc \$674.86; Gambino's Pizza \$70.06; Gar's Upholstery \$350.00; Garden City Community College \$78.00; Garden City Telegram \$74.37; Gary Farris Enterprises \$387.00; Scott Gilmer \$275.21; Gilmore & Bell PC \$11,101.82; GlaxoSmithKline Financial Inc \$1,107.30; Goodland Cemetery Assoc \$12,754.49; Goodland Family Health Center \$106.00; Goodland Greenline Inc \$125.15; Goodland Medical Arts Pharmacy \$1,732.59; Goodland Nutrition Project \$732.26; Goodland Public Library \$4,335.22; Goodland Regional Medical Center \$362437.22; Goodland Senior Citizens Center \$9,657.26; Goodland Star-News \$3,154.83; Goodland Yost Farm Supply \$403.31; Goodell/Stratton/Edmonds/Palmer \$722.00; Lance Goodman \$63.15; Goody's \$229.00; Gordon N Stowe & Associates \$95.00; Kyle Gordon \$901.39; Grass Roots Lawn Service LLC \$219.73; Kenny Griffith \$35.86; Guyer Farms GP \$1,737.00; Carol Guyer \$3.20; Dorendo Harrel \$196.67; Hays Daily News \$67.14; Hays Fire Equipment \$35,641.33; Heft & Sons LLC \$144,628.17; Hemocue Inc \$87.50; Herl Chevrolet-Buick Inc \$37,416.61; High Plains Mental Health \$964.61; High Plains Office Supply LLC \$6,489.43; Highland Ranch Law Enforcement Training \$50.00; Hillcrest Motel \$49.44; Historical Society \$3,623.72; Hitchcock Inc \$1,019.30; Hoidale Co Inc \$270.26; Holiday Inn \$250.16; Homestead Nutrition Project \$1,695.07; Hoover Co \$112.62; Hopkins Medical Products \$381.75; Hospice Services Inc \$321.54; Hunting Shack Inc \$190.89; IBI Synergy Inc \$75.94; Ideal Linen Supply \$434.41; IKON Office Solutions Inc \$260.00; In the Can LLC \$457.80; Infinitec Inc \$9,530.63; IRS \$281.40; Interstate Turbo \$133.20; J.O.M. Pharmaceutical Services \$599.76; J&J Drainage Products Co \$1,694.96; J&K Radiator Repair \$165.00; J-D Stonecutters \$100.00; Jury Duty \$272.60; K&K Tree & Lawn LLP \$200.00; K-State Research & Extension \$3,000.00; Kanorado Cemetery Assoc \$1,417.16; Kanorado Coop Assoc \$51.91; Kanorado Senior Citizens Center \$4,324.15; Ks Co Clerks/Election Officials Assoc \$292.00; Ks Co Treasurers Assoc \$115.00; Ks Dept of Administration DISC \$600.00; Ks Dept of Ag \$25.00; Ks Judicial Council \$290.00; Ks Kustomz \$70.18; Ks Payment Center \$816.90; Ks Silver Haired Legislature \$72.08; Ks State Attorney General \$324.00; Ks State Treasurer \$31.50; Ks Withholding Tax \$12,213.41; Kansas! \$25.00; Kansasland Tire \$5,155.11; Paula Keller \$433.75; Sherryl Ketter \$78.52; KIPHS Inc \$100.00; Bill Knitig \$75.00; Knox Consultant Service \$2,740.50; Lampton Welding Supply Co Inc \$566.87; Larry's Professional 2-way \$1,460.51; Lenan Corp \$304.22; Lockwood Co Inc \$1,319.04; Marriott \$562.83; Martin Tractor Co Inc \$3,559.32; McClure Plumbing & Heating Inc \$485.50; Bob McClure \$109.44; Dr McCullough \$250.00; McKesson General Medical \$469.86; Meadow Creek Truck Supply \$276.68; Med-Enterprises \$947.00; Medical Arts Clinic \$30.00; Merck Human Health \$1,940.98; Mary Messamore \$345.29; MHC Kenworth \$1,665.07; Mid-Kan BlueLine Inc \$72.81; Midwest Energy Inc \$467.55; Mike Miller \$6,755.00; Shelby Miller \$241.93; Miller's Electronics \$198.49; Carroll Mogge \$450.00; Moore Medical \$102.97; Motion Industries Inc \$940.50; Mr Jims \$24.00; Municipal Emergency Services Inc \$269.75; NDF Co \$116.39; Penny Nemechek \$2,250.00; Nex-Tech Rural Telephone \$2,286.00; Nicom Technologies Inc \$30.00; Dr Lyle Noordhoek PA \$1,385.95; Norwest Rec Inc \$192.91; NW Ks Ambulance Service \$1,842.06; NW Ks Area Agency on Aging Inc \$368.74; NW Ks Area Health Education Center \$130.00; NW Ks Area Medical Foundation \$120,254.75; NW Ks Silvered Haired Legislature \$72.08; NW Ks Substance Abuse Unit \$958.31; Office Works Inc \$506.93; OMB Police Supply Inc \$361.93; Orscheins \$3,077.91; Overhead Door of NW Ks \$2,655.38; Parts House \$1,359.82; Paving Maintenance Supply Inc \$459.00; Pawnee Co District Court \$501.00; PDQ Emergency Products \$553.08; Penco Engineering PA \$50.00; Stan Pettibone \$62.64; Pfizer Pharmaceuticals \$1,004.13; Phillips 66 \$20.99; Physicians Reference Lab LLC \$372.00; Burton Pianalto \$106.47; Pioneer Country Development Inc \$200.00; Plak Smacker Inc \$148.66; Pleasant Valley Fish Farm \$300.00; Price Truck Line Inc \$79.50; Prints & the Paper \$1,241.05; Priority Dispatch Corp \$39.00; Professional Radiology Service PA \$38.00; Resature Lumber Co \$1,802.30; Tim Renner \$33.09; Resource Management Co Inc \$110.65; Retailers' Sales Tax \$143.41; Janet Rumpel \$469.33; S&T \$6,582.87; Safety-Kleen Corp \$152.90; Iris Scheopner \$52.11; Scheopner's Water Conditioning Inc \$44.00; Schlosser Concrete \$775.80; Darrell Schrader \$20,571.43; Serendipity Flower Shop \$57.50; Shad's Electric \$373.00; Sherman Co Convention/Visitors Bureau \$13,035.77; Sherman Co Economic Development \$12,500.00; Sherman Co Health Dept \$1,638.69; Sherman Co Rural Fire \$200.00; Sherman Co Soil Conservation \$5,521.76; Sherman Co Treasurer \$4,941.71; Shores Inc \$2,423.36; Jason Showalter \$18.90; Scott Showalter \$2,482.50; Melvin Sieck \$34.56; Siemens Medic Solution USA Inc \$250,000.00; Simpson Farm Enterprises Inc \$157.80; Marshall Siruta \$44.00; Terry Smith \$75.86; SWB \$7,358.28; Roger Studer \$97.44; Superior Signals Inc \$551.55; SW Mgmt Fund-KDHE \$975.31; TJ's Tires \$259.91; Thomas Co Alcohol & Drug \$958.30; Thomas Co Health Dept \$24.00; Thomas Co Treasurer \$1,081.94; Lucy Thomas \$50.00; ThyssenKrupp Elevator \$1,148.97; Topside Inc \$505.47; Alan Townsend \$1,000.00; Tri-State Exterminating Co \$73.00; Tri-State Initiative \$236.62; Truck & Tractor Repair LLC \$196.11; UAP Timberland LLC \$13,123.63; Unice! \$42.03; United Computer \$985.00; United Methodist Church \$75.00; United Refrigeration Inc \$792.72; United States Postal Service \$5,632.81; Vegetation Management Supply Inc \$11,852.64; Vignery & Mason LLC \$4,238.84; Viking Office Products \$600.11; VonFeldt, Bauer, VonFeldt Charterred \$7,701.67; Wagner Equipment Co \$18.47; Walmart Community \$8,008.45; Perry Warren \$2,850.00; Waste Connections Inc \$1,610.56; Waytek Inc \$1,047.82; Gerald Webber \$9.86; Weis Fire Safety Equipment Co Inc \$4,290.85; Weis Oil Co \$1,267.56; Wells Fargo Financial Leasing \$1,104.30; Daryl West \$251.49; Western State Bank \$27,484.11; Western Uniform Inc \$860.09; WH Scale Co Inc \$322.00; Doug Whitson \$258.83; Wilkens Industries \$435.57; Witness Fees \$20.00; Witzel & Rhea Co \$289.09; World Chamber of Commerce \$40.00; Crystal Wright \$9.63; Wyeth Pharmaceuticals \$2,417.28; Wyrick Law Firm PA \$105.00; Xerox Corp \$162.00 TOTAL EXPENDITURES \$2,306,790.41

Budget would raise property tax

BUDGET, from Page 1

cellent job in keeping costs down. They have worked extremely hard the fast few years on special project, and I believe they will continue to provide the extra effort to make the budget work. They exhibit pride in their work and this is a small way of rewarding them for their efforts.”

Among items Pickman highlighted was the need to do something about the entry road and parking area at the airport.

“One of the most critical issues

facing the airport is the deterioration of the entry road and parking area,” he said. “This is a considerable expense (\$328,032) to reconstruct. The city has applied for federal grant money to assist in this project, but we have no idea when or if this project will be approved.”

Pickman said the list of streets that need repair or reconstruction is lengthy and costly.

“The only way to accomplish this type of improvement is by doing a bond issue,” he said. “The structure of a bond is a decision the commis-

sion will face in regards to length of term and payment options of either a sales tax or mill levy.”

The city has been frugal, Pickman said.

“There is no ‘fluff’ or ‘hidden funds’ in the budget,” he said. “Departments were asked to prepare their budgets at a below ‘bare-bones’ level, and this is reflected in the budget figures.”

He said the city has held spending down over the past few years, with \$11,134,000 in 2001 and an estimated \$11,000,561 for this year.

City of Goodland Treasurer’s Financial Statement

“For the period from April1, 2004 to June 30, 2004

FUNDS	PREVIOUS BALANCE	RECEIPT	DISBURSEMENT	CURRENT BALANCE
Special Highway	“114,765.87”	“30,590.33”	0.00	“145,356.20”
Self Insurance	“899,423.15”	“78,908.19”	“89,763.46”	“888,567.88”
Airport Fund	“302,013.68”	“3,114.63”	“2,500.00”	“302,628.31”
General Operating	“1,883,067.00”	“429,148.98”	“487,757.60”	“1,824,458.38”
Bond & Interest	“259,803.11”	“65,144.08”	0.00	“324,947.19”
Library	0.00	“34,207.16”	“34,207.16”	0.00
Sales Tax	“7,331.39”	“29,067.38”	“28,834.14”	“7,564.63”
Electric Utility	“2,087,241.08”	“1,193,512.20”	“1,312,141.75”	“1,968,611.53”
Municipal Court Diversion	“9,683.91”	461.21	367.97	“9,777.15”
Law Enforcement	“21,601.64”	815.69	0.00	“22,417.33”
Electric Meter Deposit	“111,054.00”	“6,800.00”	“7,919.00”	“109,935.00”
Water Utility	“313,594.77”	“142,229.97”	“216,972.43”	“238,852.31”
Water Service Deposit	“51,003.00”	“4,900.00”	“5,325.00”	“50,578.00”
Sewer Utility	“32,752.30”	“97,950.10”	“120,847.51”	“9,854.89”
Special Park & Rec.	“45,863.35”	“3,004.67”	“14,542.94”	“34,325.08”
Vehicle Inspections(VIN)	“8,234.08”	“1,956.91”	214.00	“9,976.99”
Grant Imp Reserve Fund	“185,367.55”	“95,886.61”	“29,517.87”	“251,736.29”
Steever Park Project	“5,975.93”	“1,847.67”	“7,713.61”	109.99
Solid Waste	“199,485.18”	“84,783.25”	“114,064.84”	“170,203.59”
Fire Equipment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Airport Improvement	“-6,630.21”	0.00	“9,877.10”	“-16,507.31”
Water Imp. (CDBG)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Capital Imp. Reserve	“2,548,281.29”	“166,934.97”	“287,257.11”	“2,427,959.15”
Insurance Proceeds	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Employee Benefit	“361,285.84”	“151,565.41”	“107,268.02”	“405,583.23”
Library Emp. Benefit	0.00	“3,006.55”	“3,006.55”	0.00
State Water Fund	“4,191.67”	“2,300.91”	“1,333.04”	“5,159.54”
Cemetery-Perp. Care	“82,500.00”	0.00	0.00	“82,500.00”
Cemetery Endowment	“56,150.79”	“1,600.00”	0.00	“57,750.79”
Cemetery Improvement	“88,915.24”	“1,185.86”	0.00	“90,101.10”
Replacement Tree	“1,923.81”	4.95	0.00	“1,928.76”
Electric Reserve	“1,329,498.34”	“48,044.91”	“78,858.28”	“1,298,684.97”
Water Reserve	“769,158.04”	“1,885.59”	55.50	“770,988.13”
Water System Improve Proj.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
CDBG Housing Grant	“3,986.64”	0.00	0.00	“3,986.64”
Sewer Reserve	“431,352.94”	“25,961.79”	0.00	“457,314.73”
M.E.R.F.	“1,924,257.84”	“97,906.11”	“4,198.96”	“2,017,964.99”
Total	“14,133,133.22”	“2,804,726.08”	“2,964,543.84”	“13,973,315.46”
AVAILABLE CASH	PREVIOUS BALANCE	CURRENT BALANCE		
Cashier's Change	“2,000.00”	“2,000.00”		
Checking Accounts:				
BANKWEST	“660,651.32”	“242,633.56”		
Investments	“13,470,481.90”	“13,728,681.90”		
Total Available Cash	“14,133,133.22”	“13,973,315.46”		
LIABILITIES AND OBLIGATIONS				
ST OF KS PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY LOAN			“2,092,381.43”	
STEEVER PARK PROJECT LEASE PURCHASE			“1,445,840.17”	
“GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS, SERIES 1996-1”			“395,000.00”	
“GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS, SERIES 1996-2”			“325,000.00”	
TOTAL	“4,258,221.60”			
“I, Janeil Dilling, do hereby certify that the above statement is correct.”				
Janeil Dilling	Treasurer			
Signature	Title			
Published in The Goodland Star-News on Tuesday, July 13, 2004				