City fire chief says he's in no hurry for retirement

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News Goodland Fire Chief Dean Jensen told city commissioners last Wednesday that his budget request includes a \$6,000 increase over last year.

City Manager Ron Pickman said part of that is needed to cover a severance package in case the chief would decide to retire.

Jensen said he does not want to retire because he enjoys his job. He said part of the improvement this next year would be to take some of the weight off a rescue truck, which blew a tire on the way to an accident on I-70 in May.

"We have 10-ply tires on it," he said, "but it is carrying more weight than it should. We would get a topper for the rescue truck so we can and move it to the other rescue truck

Pickman said Police Chief Ray Smee had hoped to be at the work could use a little help.' session, but he was recovering from neck surgery and would not make it. He said the department has nine his department. Pickman said there officers, the chief, one clerk and three part-time positions.

in the budget to cover raises, and that a number of these that need to be under capital expenditures there would be one vehicle replacement.

Under animal control, Pickman said the city contributes \$2,100 to the this budget was down a bit, but that Northwest Kansas Animal Shelter to they had kept the same amount in take care of the dogs and cats that are for snow removal despite the fact picked up, and that they pay \$400 a they have not had that much in the month to Prairieland Animal Clinic to house the dogs for three days.

transfersome of the weight off of one mal shelter. As Commissioner storm this winter." Chuck Lutters put it, "They do us a

which can handle the weight better." world of good by helping to take plans to do more repair work on 17th which can be spent for anything ing a slight decrease, but Pickman care of the dogs, and I am sure they

Steve Criswell, city building inspector, was present to talk about was a slight decrease in this budget. Criswell said the city needs to look He said there was a slight increase at the dead tree problem. There are removed he said

Rich Simons talked about the public works budget. Pickman said past few years.

"We are going to get snowed in The commissioners discussed this year," Mayor Rick Billinger raising this a bit to help out the ani- said. "I am predicting a big snow

Pickman said the street crew

Street between Main and Broadway. We need to coordinate with the

business owners," Pickman said. On Steever Water Park, Pickman said the budget has an increase built in for utilities, and that recreation director Jason Hickson is looking for information on a pool cover that might help hold in heat to reduce costs. Pickman said the estimated for the cover is \$11,000, but that he has not seen the information on how it would be handled and how long it would be expected to last.

He said the state has said they will continue to fund the special highway maintenance distribution which the city uses to do the annual street chip sealing and resurfacing. He said this is about \$140,000 a year.

Under general government, the manager said there is \$40,000

with a majority vote of the commission. Economic development remains at \$50,000.

Commissioner Dean Blume said he felt the economic development requested by the Arts Council for program was doing a good job and should be continued. However, he suggested it should be funded through a county property tax levy rather than splitting the cost between the city and county.

The rest of the commission indicated support for the economic development program as it is now set up.

On employee benefits, Pickman said there was a slight drop in this budget because the increase in insurance rates was lower than had been anticipated. He said the budget has an increase of 15 percent built in, and he hopes this is too high.

The self-insurance fund is show- on Monday, Aug. 2.

said part of that is because the city is getting about half of what they were getting for interest.

The budget included the \$3,000 the Carnegie Arts Center. Commissioner Lutters said he felt the amount should be cut to the same level as last year.

"This is the only group asking for an increase," he said, "and with the tight conditions, I feel they all should be the same as last year."

Blume, Billinger and Daniels agreed and the amount was cut back to the \$2,000 level, which was what the art center got this year.

When all the changes were added, the property tax levy increase to

fund the general fund was 3.87 mills. The budget hearing will be held

Clerk enjoys the daily challenges, changes of

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county; checks and balances with the treasurer on county money; handling county and township budgets; double checking the city, school board and fire district budgets; and submitting budgets to the state and setting levies.

Rumpel said she enjoys the bud-

geting and accounting parts of the ees and accounts payable for the timate the revenues for the next year, she said, without knowing much." what the state's going to do. Rumpel said she enjoys challenges.

"I enjoy the challenge of finding a mistake," she said, "figuring out how it can happen."

She said her job is a challenge and there's never a dull moment.

"That's one of the reasons I've

One thing Rumpel doesn't like about the job is dealing with personnel issues. This is kind of like a human resource department, she said.

"I don't always know what to do (with personnel issues)," she said. "I don't like politics in jobs."

But Rumpel livens things up for job the most. It's a challenge to es- stayed as long as I have," she said. those she works with by joking "The slower times I didn't like it as around and playing pranks on others in the courthouse. She said she is glad to able to joke around with all three commissioners and says she has had fun playing pranks.

> One year when the extension office closed during the fair and set up an office at the fairgrounds, she and others marked the extension office

as quarantined "on account of cooties" and even had an order from the before the election, she said. There judge attached to the door.

the courth

She said the janitor gathered some dead bugs which they lined up in the office with tombstones saving things like, "Here lies Cootie George...." She said when the extension crew returned to the office. they all had a good laugh.

But the job has had serious moments.

"When I first started," Rumpel said, "we had bomb threats."

One was sent on a postcard the day was a grand jury setting at the time, she said, and the courthouse had to be cleared out. Election officials had to wait until someone could get in to get their supplies, she said.

Rumpel said one employee said to her, "I thought I was going to work in a quiet little office."

Rumpel said she told the employee, "You know in the interview when I asked if you had any questions? That was your chance to ask."

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month, and has some questions about some travel expenses.

diem for all departments," Tiede said.

lines," Thomas agreed. The commissioners agreed to more utility and phone bills by approve the vouchers with the one exception, and agreed to have Tiede "We need to have a set of daily per review other bills expected before a.m. The next meeting will be 8 a.m. commission room on the main floor

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Thursday.

The meeting adjourned at 10:35 Friday. There was not a total for the on Tuesday, and the commissioners of the Sherman County courthouse, "We need to set some guide- bills because Deputy Clerk Mary will be discussing preliminary bud- 813 Broadway.

Ann Snethen said she is expecting get figures. They will have a budget request from Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas.

The commissioners meet in the

Property owners it is anticipated that the street in front of your property will be sealed the week of July 19th through July 23, barring mechanical difficulties or unforeseen weather. **<u>Please move your vehicles</u>** away from the street and **please do not water** your yard that morning so that crews can seal streets effectively. Any vehicles not moved from the street will be towed.

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