



Heather Blake and Nick Slusher gave statements to Greg Kroskey of the Goodland Police Department Thursday afternoon after they found their best friend, Raquel Perez, dead in her home. Kroske went back into Perez's home with Dr. Travis Daise, deputy coroner for the county, when he arrived. Photos by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News



Student found dead after friends check on her

A 22-year-old student was found dead Thursday afternoon after friends, concerned about her well-being, broke into her home in a Goodland trailer park.

Police said Raquel Perez, 22, apparently died of natural causes Wednesday. She was found Thursday when her friends, who hadn't seen her since Tuesday, went to look for her.

Nick Slusher and Heather Blake said they went to her trailer at 919 E. Business U.S. 24, Lot 8, Thurs-

day afternoon and found her not moving and not breathing.

They called Nick's father, Harold Slusher, who came to the house and told them to get out, called 911 and checked on Perez. Harold said he was sure she was dead.

Nick said he and Heather took Perez home Tuesday, Nov. 9. She didn't answer the door when they went to pick her up for school Wednesday morning,

he said, so they thought she was out.

When they still hadn't heard from her by Thursday, Nick said, they were worried and went to the house. When she didn't answer the door, he said, they broke out a window and went in.

Harold said he knew Perez from her coming to his home with Nick and Heather, who were best friends with her.

She was a nice girl, Harold said, and she could re-

ally cook. He said Perez had diabetes and other health problems.

Perez was working toward her GED.

Responding to the emergency call Thursday were Greg Kroskey of the Goodland Police Department and Burton Pianalto of the Sherman County Sheriff's Department.

An ambulance came to the scene and left, and then Dr. Travis Daise, deputy coroner, arrived a little later.

Interest rate settles decision on bank for lease financing

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News Sherman County commissioners reviewed bids last Tuesday from four banks to help lease-purchase a new road grader for \$143,663, with the winning bank helping to finance \$125,000.

Curt Way, public works manager, brought the four bids for the commissioners to review. The details offers were similar, Way said, but the interest rate differed.

Western State Bank bid 4.95 percent; First National Bank, 4.71 percent; Bankwest, 3.5 percent; and People's State Bank, 4.35 percent.

Way said the first payment would be made in January and then there would be four annual payments of \$25,000 plus interest for the remainder of the lease.

Commissioner Chuck Thomas made a motion to approve the bid from Bankwest. It passed unanimously.

Way said the grader had arrived, but that the blade will be coming in about a week. He said the \$18,663 difference between the total price and the financed amount would come from county funds.

The total price of \$143,663 will be paid to Martin Tractor of Colby, and County Treasurer Shelby Miller was present to make sure the money was available and the timing of the payments.

Mary Messamore, head of county dispatch and emergency management, was at the meeting to get permission to move ahead with a 911 upgrade.

She said the new telephone contract and system will be top of the line, but does not include Geographic Information System mapping. The new system will speed up the response, and make it easier for the dispatcher to locate the callers through the existing mapping system.

"It is more than we have now," she said. "It will make the system work much more efficiently and give our dispatchers more useful information on a quicker basis."

The total cost for the upgrade is \$108,220, with an up-front grant of \$68,600 from the Public Safety Foundation of America. The difference of \$39,620 will be the cost to the county.

"The total we estimated was \$121,000," Messamore said, "but it looks like it will be less than what we proposed. We have \$88,345 in the 911 fund."

She said she was going to have County Attorney Bonnie Selby look over the contract.

The commissioners asked when the present system was installed, and Messamore said 1991. She said the SBC tariff has changed, and they are now charging by population, which means the county's bill has dropped.

When asked about how long it would take to do the upgrade, Messamore said it has to be done by Aug. 20, because of the grant. She said with the ordering of equipment and conversion of the county mapping, it should take four to five months.

The commissioners approved the project contingent on the review by the county attorney.

Messamore said there was some training coming up in Wichita, but she felt she could not go and had asked Police Chief Ray Smee to attend. She asked the commissioners for permission to pay his motel and travel expenses for this trip.

Messamore said she had completed an independent study on the Internet for the same type of emergency training, and did not feel she could take off to attend the classes, and that it would be better if Smee attended.

The commissioners agreed with her recommendation.

She asked about abandoning the rural fire phone, which has been used as a backup to pagers.

The problem, she said, was that many of the firemen are no longer with SBC, and the line will not work with cell phones.

She said she had talked to Rural Fire Chief Kenny Griffith, who says it is not working.

The commissioners said it would be good to have the rural fire board review this, and they need to decide if it should be abandoned.

Messamore asked for a closed session to discuss a personnel matter.

Following the closed session, the commissioners made a motion to

approve raising the wages of dispatcher Diane Burns from \$9 to \$9.45 per hour.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Accepted resignations of Dan Hayden from the grant writer board and Jason Archer from the Smoky Gardens Board.

- Answered a question from Mary Snethen about a bill from In the Can for the yard waste subsidy. The commissioners had agreed to split the extra cost of the roll-out yard waste containers with owner Chuck Redlin, and to pay \$3 per month to help defray the costs of these. The bill from In the Can was for \$2,526 that covers 133 customers for approximately six months.

- Discussed computer policy with County Assessor Terry Ballard, and decided that for the future, computer decisions will go through Commissioner Rasure. Ballard was saying he had permission to purchase a new computer, but the commissioners were talking about other computer parts such as memory cards, which were not included in the computer approval.

Ballard said those came out of his office's budget, and he did not see where that mattered with the county computer system. The policy has been that such purchases were to go through the county computer manager. Ballard said he felt it was a petty issue, and he was being ques-

tioned for taking the initiative to get things done. The commissioners held a 10-minute closed session with Ballard to discuss personnel matters, and when they came out no action was taken.

- Held a 15-minute closed door session with County Attorney Bonnie Selby and County Clerk Janet Rumpel on a personnel matter. The commissioners extended the session for another 15 minutes. No action was taken when they returned to open session.

- A special session was held at 4

p.m. on Thursday afternoon with the commissioners going into a 20-minute closed session with Selby for a personnel matter. The session was extended and Rumpel was called in. The commissioners returned to open session at 4:25 p.m. and said they were waiting on Selby to return.

When she returned, the commissioners went back into closed session with the attorney and clerk for 5 minutes. When they returned, the meeting was adjourned without any action.

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.

China Gardens will be closed for a family vacation Wednesday, Nov. 10 - Nov. 21. We will reopen Monday, Nov. 22

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