

# Extension district moves forward

DISTRICT, from Page 1a

tion dealing with budgets and tax levy, the law says, “...the extension district may make an annual tax levy upon all the taxable tangible property of the district to be used to plan and conduct the educational programs of the district...”

“...the rate fixed is not to exceed the greater of the rate of 2.5 mills or the rate determined to yield an amount equal to the product of \$75,000 multiplied by the number of counties within the extension district.”

Rumpel said currently the county levies 1.71 mills for the Sherman County Extension Council, and for next year this will raise \$112,518. She said Kansas State University contributes \$17,000 to the extension program in the county.

With a maximum of 2.5 mills, the new extension district could receive up to \$140,000 annually from the Sherman County taxpayers.

The commissioners were asked Tuesday if they had understood this

part of the extension district resolution, and said they thought O’Brien had mentioned this during his presentation.

“I think he mentioned it,” Commissioner Mitch Tiede said, “but there wasn’t any questions or discussion about that issue.”

Belshe, asked later on Tuesday about the taxing question, agreed he thought O’Brien had mentioned the taxing provisions, but there had not been any questions from the commissioners.

A fact sheet developed by O’Brien and handed out to the commissioners and council members talked about the process of creating a district and the advantages of the district, but did not mention anything about the district having taxing authority.

Kansas State University Extension Service has been encouraging formation of the district, and three have been formed so far. The Post Rock District covers Lincoln and Mitchell counties, Walnut Creek District covers Lane, Ness and

Rush counties, and Central Kansas District covers Saline and Ottawa counties.

O’Brien said Wednesday these three districts have been running less than the maximum tax levy, and are averaging about 1.75 mills now. He said tax levels vary depending on the needs of the district and taking in to account the economic condition of the taxpayers.

O’Brien said the main advantage of the district would be to provide better services and educational programs. He said the offices in the two counties would remain open. Assistant county agents would handle the 4-H program in each county and the county fair programs would remain the same.

The fact sheet said Sherman and Wallace counties should consider forming a district because they have a common regional trade area and similar employment patterns, reasonable travel distances and compatible extension programs. Cheyenne County has decided not to join

the district.

He pointed to similar agriculture practices in the two counties, including irrigation, dryland cropping systems and pasture management issues, complimentary family and consumer science programs for adults, and compatible 4-H youth programs in the areas of livestock, families, camping and judging activities.

The commissioners asked Schilling if the county extension council had any concerns about the proposal.

Schilling said not many concerns had been expressed, but they did not want to get the district too big. She said three counties is about right, and that Cheyenne could come in after they are satisfied that it is working.

She said the plan will be presented to the Wallace County commissioners on Monday, Nov. 29.

Approval of the resolution in Sherman County would not create the district until the Wallace County commissioners pass a similar resolution and the protest period there lapses.

# Commission fails to reach agreement on manager’s raise

RAISE, from Page 1a

When the doors were opened a few minutes later and the meeting called back to order, there was a motion to adjourn.

“I feel like I am in limbo,” Pickman said after the meeting. “I don’t know what to do, and they didn’t ask me anything or give me a chance to defend my side.”

# City reviews holiday banquet invitation policy

CITY, from Page 1a

- Commissioners approved a motion to reimburse the Easton family for a drainage remediation on their property for no more than \$2,000.

The Eastons will hire a contractor and the city will reimburse them. “It will be a separate contract between the city and the Eastons,” Pickman said.

The drainage will run from 1st Street to Armory Road, running parallel with Eustis Ave.

- Pickman told commissioners the city was planning to replace the fence surrounding Renner Field. The new 7-foot fence will run along the main road.

“It’s part of the improvement process,” he said.

The fence will cost the city \$3,960 for materials and city crews will set it later this year.

- Commissioners heard a report from Pickman about the need for a new hot water steamer.

“It is an item,” he said, “that is definitely needed. It is one that we use frequently.”

He said the old washer, a 1994 model that ran on kerosene, is costing the city more to repair than it was worth.

The new one will cost \$3,300 for a kerosene or diesel burning washer, Pickman said. Although the item has not been budgeted, he said, they will take money from line

items to cover the cost.

- Pickman reported the city will be developing informational brochures for customers. He said they have printed one for code enforcements, but they plan to make more available. The brochures will have important telephone numbers and information.

said, “The commission members appreciate what you (Pickman) are doing. It is a top-notch job.

“We want to give you a little raise for next year, and know you understand we are limited by the budget.

“We are going to give you a \$1,000 a year raise.”

The meeting adjourned without the commission making a motion or voting to approve the raise.

There were two 10-minute closed sessions last Monday to discuss Pickman’s contract, but again no action.

Blume said it was after the closed sessions on Monday he felt it would be a good idea to hold the special meeting and have the attorney explain the contract details to the rest of the commission.

“I think it is very unfair to Pickman to keep him dangling,” he added.

Blume said he thought hearing from the city attorney would break the apparent log jam of the commission, which has two votes to approve the raise as set forth in the contract, and two who feel the announced \$1,000 is fine. That would leave Billinger in the middle to break the tie, but Blume said Billinger said he would not bring it up for a vote until the next meeting at 5 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 6.

# County approves money for fireworks

FIREWORKS, from Page 1a

firm would provide technical backup to county building supervisor William McKnight. He said the plan would include twice-a-year inspections, but the maintenance would be done by local people with his company providing technical backup.

Thomas asked about the cost of the options, and Krause said he would have to come up with a bid after inspecting the courthouse.

Daryl West, head of the noxious weed department, talked to the commissioners about replacing his all-terrain vehicles.

West said the department has three, but he only uses one of them for the prairie dog program. He said one of those not being used has an older spray system attached, but that it does not work right. He said two are 1991 models, and the other is a 1987.

He asked for permission to sell all three and get a new one for both prairie dogs and some spraying.

West suggested buying a new one from Goodland Greenline for \$5,307 because it had a water-cooled engine and automatic transmission.

Other bids were presented from Northwest Cycle for \$5,700 and from Oakley Motors for

\$5,199, but West said both of these were for Kawasaki models that were air cooled.

“I am OK with that plan,” Rasure said.

The commissioners approved the sale of the three older models and purchase of the new one from Goodland Greenline.

The question about prairie dog bait and what the county will do in cooperation with the landowners will be put on the agenda for the next meeting, which will be Tuesday, Nov. 30.

In other business the commissioners:

- Approved an engineering contract with Penco Inc. for the Kansas Department of Transportation five-year plan, which includes the section of north Caldwell from the airport to the junction with K-27.

- Approved appointments to the Sherman County Economic Development Council for next year. The council had recommended Gary Slough of S&T Communications, Rick Breininger of Sunflower Computers and Harlan D. House, a farmer and rancher, to three-year terms beginning in January. The fourth appointment was Shelley Thompson, who was recommended by Bankwest for a three-year term.

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