

City brick intersection project may start in spring

The Goodland City Commission authorized the mayor Monday to sign a contract with the Kansas Department of Transportation on the project to replace the brick intersections on Main at 11th and 12th.

The total project is estimated at \$411,000, with the state paying 70 percent. City Manager Ron Pickman said the city would pay the preliminary engineering costs.

If things work right, he said, the project could begin in the spring.

The commission also approved changes to the city personnel manual to implement rule changes from the Internal Revenue Service on personal use of city vehicles and cell phones.

Pickman said the IRS has changed the policy about public vehicles being driven home by the employees. He said the rule used to be that the employee could drive a vehicle home and back to work and the city would charge the employee tax on 37 cent per mile for one round-trip per day.

Now, he said, the city has to charge under the commuting rule, which means the employee is taxed on \$1.50 per one-way trip or about \$6 per day, if they go home for lunch. The city has to charge the employee for the taxes on this as part of their income.

This is more than the mileage for most employees, Pickman said, and some employees have stopped driv-

ing vehicles home because of the change.

Pickman said it is too early to tell how this will affect the city performance. He said one of the rules says the city policemen cannot wear their uniform boots home without them being considered taxable income. The reason for this is that the boots can be used for general use beyond the work shift.

City Clerk Mary Volk said she does not know what the police chief has decided to do about the uniform rules, but that under the rules they will be considered taxable income until an alternative is proposed.

"I know Police Chief Ray Smee was talking to Pickman about this," Volk said, "but I do not know what they have decided."

Under the cell phone rule, Pickman said, city supervisors can have a phone to use in doing their jobs. Personal use of a city cell phone is not allowed, and any emergency calls made on a cell phone by an employee have to be reimbursed to the city at the current rate per minute. Pickman said most of the city cell phone have been turned in because of the new rule because the employees did not want to keep track of each call. He said there were not that many cell phones being used, and that many of the employees are using their own cell phones rather than have to follow the new IRS rule.

Aircraft Seal and Gasket gets \$63,844 payment from loan

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

The Goodland City Commission unanimously approved a \$63,844 loan advance for Aircraft Seal and Gasket Corp. at Monday's meeting.

Roy Dixon, project manager for the company, told the commission the work was progressing at the firm's plant here and that more equipment was being prepared for shipment here.

City Manager Ron Pickman said the firm's request was for \$60,093, and \$3,750 was for the Northwest Kansas Planning and Development Commission for contract administration.

He said all the payments made by the company had been reviewed by Randy Hrabe of the development office, and he had recommended the approval of the payment.

Commissioner John Garcia asked Dixon if the company was getting caught up with its bills and back payroll payments. Dixon said the company had

cleared up many of the accounts and was making payments on some others.

Hrabe, who arrived after the commission had approved the payment, said he had checked the inventory as much as possible and reviewed all the receipts to be paid to see which ones were acceptable under the state's economic development loan program.

This is the second payment request Aircraft Seal and Gasket has made out of the \$200,000 loan fund, making the total paid so far \$98,844 and leaving a balance of \$101,156.

In addition to the \$200,000 in loan funds, the company had to put up \$100,000. The company reports it has spent \$55,994 of its own money over the past year.

At the previous city meeting on Dec. 6, Dixon told the commission the firm plans to hire three more people after the first of the year, when some additional equipment is ready for operation, and hopes to hire three more in the spring.

In other business, the commission:

- Approved an amended resolution adopting the pay plan for full-time city employees and making it effective on the first of January.

- Approved a bid of \$8,349 from Mike Yarger of Goody's Construction for demolition of the old offices

on the east side of the barrel hanger at the city airport. There were two other bids, from Townsend Construction for \$13,875, and Tiede Construction, \$10,608. Yarger's bid said he would begin within a week of approval, and the structure would be removed within 30 days.

- Approved beer licenses for

package sales for Wal-Mart, Conoco Travel Shoppe, Presto Convenience Store, Total Convenience and Kabredlo's. Licenses for on premise consumption were approved for the China Garden, Pizza Hut, Gambino's, the Buffalo Inn Restaurant, Greg Shores and Bowladium Lanes.

- Approved reappointment of Trent Blythe and Marty Johnson to three-year terms on the Electric Board and J.B. McClure to a three-year term on the city Plumbing Board. The term of Clark Jordan on the plumbing board expires at the end of the month, and Pickman said he did not want to be reappointed. Randy Zimmerman was appointed to a new three-year term to replace Jordan.

- Reappointed Tom Stewart to a three-year term on the city Planning Commission. Pickman said there is a vacancy on this board and they are looking for someone.

- Approved a re-plat of Townsend Estates as recommended by the planning commission to make Pheasant Run Drive end in a cul-de-sac north of Toelkes between Broadway and Clark avenues. Pickman said the planning commission had held a public hearing and there was no objection.

The original plat had Pleasant Run Drive going north through the east set of lots. The re-plat evened up the lots and made Pheasant Run end in a cul-de-sac similar to Circle Drive to the west. There are four lots in the Circle Drive section and five lots in the Pheasant Run section.

- Heard that city offices will be closed today and on Monday for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. The offices will be closed next Friday for New Years Eve, and will reopen on Monday, Jan. 3.

Council begins looking for new economic development director

By Tom Betz

The Goodland Star-News

The Sherman County Economic Development Council is beginning to advertise in Kansas and Colorado to find a new executive director to replace Caroyln Applegate, who resigned earlier this month.

At the council's regular meeting Tuesday, which had to be moved from S&T Communication to Western State Bank, Chairman John Garcia said he had been pursuing leads on a possible replacement.

"I talked to several people about the position," Garcia said. "I have followed leads in Norton, Belleville, Russell and other places, but they have all been dead ends."

Garcia asked the council members about a format for finding a new director and said if anyone has a lead, they should contact him. He said Jerry Leatherman had suggested using the Kansas Economic Develop-

ment Alliance to advertise for a new director. He said the opening could be put on their web site for \$75.

The council approved placing the job opening on the website, and authorized spending up to \$250 to place a similar announcement with Colorado Counties Inc. or a similar economic development group in that state.

The council is looking for an office person, as Rhonda Sieck said she was leaving to take a job at Wilkens Truck and Trailer. Garcia said Sieck told the council about her decision during a closed session, and that the council would try to hire a temporary secretary until the new director can be hired.

At the meeting, Sieck said she had been doing some follow-up paperwork on the audit of the micro loan program. With the seven loans out, she said, there has been over \$7,000 paid back to the county

which could be loaned out again.

Dave Daniels, council vice chairman and a member of the micro loan review committee, and that they felt the county could start loaning money back out when about \$10,000-\$15,000 had been paid back.

"It looks like it will be quicker than we expected," Daniels said. "That is good for the county."

Garcia said the dues for the Kansas Rural Economic Development Association were up in February, and said he had talked to the outgoing president about the group. He said the man encouraged Sherman County to continue as a member.

The council approved paying the \$100 dues for the next year.

Garcia welcomed visiting members of the Convention and Visitors Bureau board, Arlo Hansen of Goodland Sinclair and Drew Rohlman of Howard Johnson's; Courtney Warden of the Goodland

Chamber of Commerce; and Rick Breininger of Sunflower Computer, who will be one of the new council members in January.

A question about renewing the membership in the Northwest Kansas Travel Council was raised because it might be a duplication of effort with the visitors bureau.

"I feel there is a common goal for economic development, the visitors bureau and the Chamber," said Steve West of Western State Bank. "I believe we have three groups trying to move forward."

"Maybe all three should get together to talk about goals," Rohlman said.

The council members agreed a joint meeting might take place after the first of the year.

Daniels reminded the council since it was his last meeting, they needed to appoint someone to be a representative with the Board of Realtors.

"This ought to be part of the goals when we have the new members," West said.

"I have enjoyed working with each and everyone of you," Daniels said. "It has been a good three years, and I enjoyed it."

"It has been fun to be part of the ground," said Patty Eckhardt, who is another of those who are leaving the council. "I think we accomplished a lot, and wish good luck to you. It was a great three years."

Under committee reports, Duane Timm handed out a draft of an incentive package for new businesses that had been worked out with Kevin Rasure as the representative from the county commission. Timm said he has been trying to work out a time to meet with City Manager Ron Pickman to discuss the city incentives.

Timm said he will be attending a wind energy seminar in January in Fort Morgan, Colo.

West said the industrial park committee is waiting on a financial plan.

Don Newell said the council's website should be ready by the January meeting.

The next council meeting will be at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 18, at the Western State Bank.

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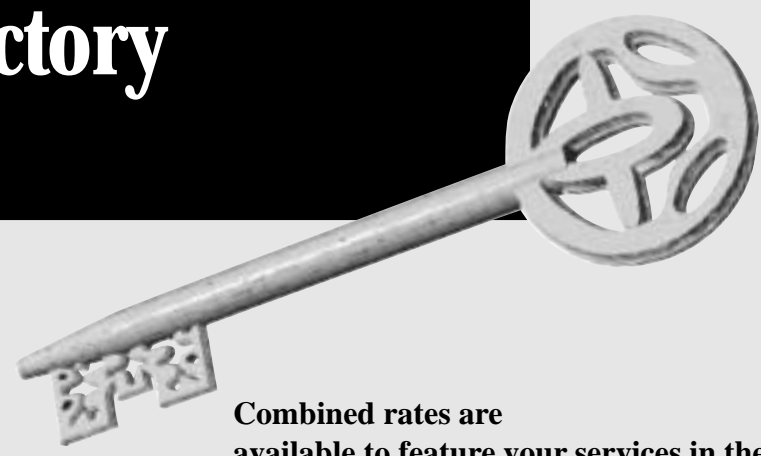
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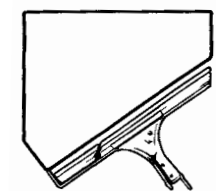
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