

City agrees to help extend water line for college

By Tom Betz
The Goodland Star-News
The Goodland City Commission agreed last Monday to pay part of the cost of a larger water line for a 11,000-square-foot addition to the diesel building at the Northwest Kansas Technical College.

President Ken Clouse said the addition will allow students to work on larger trucks and provide more classroom space, but it brings the building up to a size that requires a fire sprinkler system.

The college will pay about \$11,000 to extend the water line and the city agreed to pay the cost of the water tap and labor estimated at \$2,900.

Clouse said he had talked to City Manager Wayne Hill and Public Works Manager Rich Simon about the water line.

He said there is a 10-inch main on the west side of Eustes, but it drops down to a four-inch line.

“We are getting 480 gallons per minute out of the four-inch,” Clouse said. “We need 600 gallons to supply the sprinkler system....”

“I thought you might help put in a bigger line. I think putting in a six-inch line is a college expense of about \$11,000.

“My request is to assist the college with this endeavor, if not the whole project, at least the tap fee.

“You are wanting to put in a six-inch line from the other side of Eustes to the building?” asked Commissioner Dave Daniels.

Clouse said the college would own the line, which would tap into the 10-inch line.

Hill said the \$2,900 was Simon’s estimate of the labor and materials, with the labor \$900 of that.

Clouse said the six-inch line would give the college enough water volume for the sprinklers. Hill said he thinks the four-inch line meets the fire protection needs of the

city.

“But the four-inch does not meet the requirement of the sprinkler system?” Commissioner John Garcia asked.

“With the addition, we are now going to have to sprinkle the whole building,” Clouse said. “It has not had one in the past.”

Clouse said the new line would be 308 feet long, and it may cost a bit more than his estimate because the line has to be bored under the street.

“I am appealing to you and asking for any assistance,” Clouse said.

Garcia asked when the project would be done.

“Mike Miller is doing the work, and he has actually started,” Clouse said. “He is getting the ground ready to order the building.”

“I want to support them,” Mayor Rick Billinger said.

“I want to support them,” Daniels said,

“but we have turned down some others in the past.”

“No one has been here in front of the commission,” Billinger said.

“They talked to Wayne and Rastus (Simon),” Daniels said. “It was for a line west of the county shop.”

Billinger said such requests should be brought to the commission.

“I think this is an education program and a tax-supported program,” Billinger said. “I think it is a good investment.”

“I am thinking about the others who would want us to help,” Daniels replied.

“You wanted us to help with the whole thing?” Garcia asked.

“I was thinking of a bigger project,” Clouse said, “but I learned it is not something you are requiring and it would not be appropriate. I felt it would better to ask about the tap fee.”

“I agree with Rick that the college is a

revenue-producing institution that we all benefit from,” Garcia said. “The college brings students to town, and they pay rents, utilities and buy food. I would like to see us support the college and get the tap fee done.”

“I agree,” Commissioner Annette Fairbanks said. “I think we should help out. I am not aware of any others asking for help. I think they need to feel like they can come before us.”

“The city has an ordinance that spells out what the cost is,” Hill said, “and with the Holiday Inn Express, they had to pay it up front. Again, the hotel is not a taxing entity.”

Garcia made a motion to have the city forego the tap fee and pay for the labor and materials up to \$2,900. The motion passed 4-0 with Commissioner Josh Dechant absent.

Owner complains about city mowing costs

By Tom Betz
The Goodland Star-News
A rental property owner came to a City Commission meeting last week to complain that he’d been overcharged for mowing weeds on his land.

David Walker, who owns a house at 240 Walnut, told the commission at a meeting last Monday he thought the bill he got for mowing was too high. He said he had been in to talk to city officials about the charge, and was asking the commission to consider lowering the charge.

Walker passed out photos of the front and back yards of the house, saying they showed that the weeds were “not as bad as somebody reported.”

The weeds were mowed back in July, Walker said, adding that he cut part of the back yard before he had to leave town. The city contractor, Justin Bentzinger, must have mowed it shortly after he left, Walker said.

“I understand somebody called and said it was bad,” he told the commission.

He pointed to several of the photos of the alley behind the house,

where he claimed the weeds were worse than in his back yard.

Walker said the bill from the city showed it took five hours to mow the weeds.

“That is impossible,” Walker said. “I have been doing landscaping for years, and I know there is no way that yard should take five hours.”

Walker said he had a bill from the city for the previous year and the weed mowing took three hours.

“I wanted to know who I could go to about this,” he said. “I have been everywhere and no one could help. I am not making this stuff up.”

Mayor Rick Billinger asked when the photos were taken. Walker said early July.

“I think this is an issue of fraud and the city needs to look at it,” Walker said. “If Bentzinger did this to me, he could have done it to others.”

Commissioner Annette Fairbanks asked Walker if he had received a letter from the city telling him to mow the weeds.

“Yes,” Walker said. “I started, but I did not get it done before we had to leave town.”

“We would not be here if the weeds were cut,” Fairbanks pointed out.

“I know that is true,” Walker said, “but my problem is that I do not agree it is right to bill me for five hours when half of it was cut.”

Commissioner Dave Daniels asked Walker if he remembered when he got the letter from the city.

“I do not have that letter,” he said, “but I did start mowing the weeds before we left town. Two previous times when the property was mowed by the city, it was billed for three hours.

“I understand that after I left town, Bentzinger was called and went over to mow the weeds.”

“I can drive by and look at the size of the yard,” Billinger offered.

“I know what I am talking about,” Walker said. “I did this for 15 years.”

“We will look into it and see what do,” Billinger said.

“We will look at that,” Daniels said. “It is a year’s contract for the weed mowing and we will talk to Steve Criswell (city building inspector) to see if there is a problem.”

Revenue bonds approved for new motel south of town

The Goodland City Commission approved an ordinance last Monday to issue \$5 million in industrial revenue bonds for the new Holiday Inn Express motel south of I-70, selling the bonds to a Goodland bank.

City Manager Wayne Hill told the city commission last Monday that the ordinance was the final step needed to issue the bonds to First National Bank.

Steve Riebel, a commercial loan officer, said the bank is buying all the bonds at an interest rate of 7.25 percent.

Hill said the city is a conduit for the bonds, allowing them to get favorable tax treatment, but has no responsibility for paying the loan.

Mayor Rick Billinger, noting that a lot of industrial revenue bonds are being issued across the state, asked what the advantage is.

Riebel said the bonds carry a lower interest rate because of the tax breaks.

Commissioner Annette Fairbanks made a motion to approve the ordinance, and Commissioner John Garcia seconded. It passed 4-0 with Commissioner Josh Dechant absent.

During the city manager’s report, Hill said he was about to get the final draft of a utility rate study.

He said he would be getting the information to the commission soon. He said commissioners will have to make some decisions about utility rates based on the preliminary figures in the study.

Hill said he had met with John Topliff, who has asked to lease the old barrel hangar at the airport. Hill said engineer Darin Neufeld was doing a quick study of what it will take to make the hangar sound. The city had planned to demolish the historic structure, built by the Works Progress Administration during the Depression.

The manager said after he gets the

report, he will make an offer to John Collette, airport manager, who has a lease with the city. Hill said he will get back to Topliff after he has an answer from Collette.

Hill said it is going to take some time to get everything settled, and he will keep the commission updated.

On another note, Hill said the Goodland Rotary Club has donated 17 chaise lounge chairs for Steever Water Park.

Hill said power has been ran to a tree in the north part of Pioneer Park so it can be decorated for Christmas. He said the city crew had to do a lot of work, but there is power for the tree. He said the electricity will come on at night like the other park lights.

Fairbanks thanked Hill and the city crew for acting on the request so quickly.

“This will allow us to light it and enjoy it this year,” she said.

Goodland High graduate Kelly Fogo took home an Emmy from the 2006 Heartland Regional Emmy competition in Denver last month.

He won the award for as a creative services writer/producer with John Blessing for the best sports promotions, called “Sports Replay.”

Fogo works for KWGN-TV, CW2, in Greenwood Village, a Denver suburb.

The station took home Emmys in five categories, including best performer for a news special and best program writer.

“This is the third regional Emmy I’ve won,” Fogo said. “I’ve worked at CW2 for 12 years.”

His station is on both of cable systems in Goodland. Fogo’s mother, Linda, and his sisters, Sheryl Linden, Debbie Martin and Jacque Cooper, all live in Goodland. He has

three children, Kylie, Kamdyn and Kaelor.

KWGN is owned by Tribune Broadcasting, one of the country’s top media companies, with businesses in publishing, interactive and broadcasting.

The company operates 11 daily newspaper, including the *Chicago Tribune* and *Los Angeles Times*, and 25 television stations.

The National Television Academy, through the Emmy Awards, recognizes achievement, higher standards and quality in television.

The Heartland chapter, formed in 1986, covers markets in Denver, Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Wichita/Hutchinson, Omaha, Colorado Springs/Pueblo, Lincoln/Hastings-

corrections

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We want to keep an accurate record and appreciate you calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.

Yum, that’s good



A squirrel helped himself to pumpkins put out for Halloween at 418 E. 12th, first a little hole, then more, then the seeds inside.

Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

Goodland graduate wins Emmy

Come to the Nu Phi Mu’s 29th Annual Arts, Crafts & Home Based Business Fair

Saturday, November 18, 2006
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Max Jones Field House
13th & Arcade
Goodland, Kan.

FREE ADMISSION
Pictures with Santa 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Lunch Counter - All Day
Babysitting Available

The fair offers a large variety of gift and food items – something for everyone on your list, including yourself. Come check out the many new exhibitors, local crafters and businesses.

Nu Phi Mu donates the proceeds from the fair to local families and organizations. When you shop at the fair, you help support those in the area.

Bright & BOLD

Prairie Rose Floral Co.

Holiday Open House

November 18, 2006 9 s.m. to 5 p.m.

1012 Main Street ~ Goodland ~ 890-7673

Beautiful Christmas and many “unique” gift items to complete your holiday shopping also featuring handcrafted items by many local artist.