

Board to look at options

The community facilities advisory committee hopes to have a tentative plan to the Oberlin School Board for updates and renovations at the grade and high schools by the end of April.

Mark Olson, a member of the group, said that may be cutting things a little close, but the committee hopes to meet the deadline.

At a meeting Monday, Jan. 13, he told the school board there wasn't a lot of new information, but reviewed what had already been done.

He said the committee has looked at all the needs in both of the schools that people who attended community meetings said were important.

The group has come up with four options of what to do with the buildings. Dr. Olson said the group then challenged the numbers on the options, which were provided by the architects.

The group had talked to various contractors and come up with different numbers. Dr. Olson said they should have new numbers back by the end of the month.

The plan is to have a survey with the four options and numbers ready for the next board meeting, said Dr. Olson. After that, it will be taken to the people so they can decide what they think needs to be done and what they would pay for.

The committee knows that the area is in an extreme drought, said Dr. Olson, the worst it has been probably in the last 100 years. This year isn't the right time to put a school plan to a vote, he said, but the committee wants to come up with the best plan and what the people want. When it is time to vote, the board will have the option to go with what the committee has done.

"We are excited about education," said Dr. Olson. "Our whole committee stands 100 percent behind fixing our facilities the best we can and doing what we can afford."



WITH ROLLER IN HAND, an employee from Schultz's of St. Francis, was busy wallpapering the vault at First National Bank as part of the renovation project.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Brandt

Bank updates vault, spruces up

First National Bank is undergoing a facelift, which will include an updated vault, an additional office, extra set of doors, and new carpet and wall coverings.

They have been talking about the changes since First National bought the building from Commercial Federal in June 2001, said Branch Manager Marilyn Noone.

The vault work is being redone, she said, because it is a rated vault and has to be updated for fire and security ratings.

The preliminary work at the bank started on Jan. 14 with the actual remodeling started on Jan. 17.

Mrs. Noone said the whole project should be done by the first of March.

First National has safety de-

posit boxes which are stored in a stand alone vault. Once the vault is brought up to ratings, the boxes will be moved. Mrs. Noone said the vault, which is the main project of the renovation, will also be more secure.

The bank staff has also done some rearranging, including redoing the teller lines to give customers better access to the boxes.

The south side of the lobby will be enclosed to make a third office. Mrs. Noone said they are waiting on materials for those walls.

The new carpet and wallpaper will match those in other First National branches.

Mrs. Noone said the center counter in the lobby will be taken out and replaced with comfortable seating for customers who need to wait.

There will also be a set of air lock doors added on the front of the building, so basically customers will have two sets of doors to come through.

All this work is being done by area people, said Mrs. Noone. The electrical work was done by Amstar Electric of Oberlin. Others included in the project are Colby Glass, Scott Schultz of St. Francis, and Dennis Saint Construction of Goodland. The vault work was done by Bill Watkins from Missouri.

Mrs. Noone said that during the project, customer service will not be affected.

The renovation won't change any services; it is being done just to update appearances and freshen up the place.

Council discusses waste treatment options

Oberlin has a few options at the sewer treatment plant to meet new requirements set by the state by December 2005, the city's engineers say.

Thaniel Monaco, with Miller and Associates, told the City Council on Tuesday, Jan. 14, that the requirements were set by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the city has two years to meet them.

The McCook firm has already started the groundwork for the project, he said.

One of the biggest things the city has to do is deal with waste sludge at the plant.

There are three options, he said:

- Wet haul, which means pumping it out as a liquid and hauling to a field and dumping it.

- An injector, which injects the sludge into the ground.

- A sludge drying bed. Dry sludge could be hauled off later and spread on fields.

Mr. Monaco said they need to look at wet-weather flows before they can get a plan together, but they haven't had the needed wet weather.

By August, he said, he would like to have a finished plan so he can submit it to the state.

What the city can't do is use the sludge lagoons or holding ponds as they are now without having them lined.

Mr. Monaco said they are already working on the first phase of the project. He presented the council with the second phase of the project, which was broken into four tasks.

During the second phase, the company will look at the existing facilities, study a treatment process, look at a disinfecting system and then recommend improvements.

The cost for the second phase is \$14,740.

Mr. Monaco said the city will receive bills as each task is completed. All of the options will include what type of equipment the city would need, he said.

Councilman Jay Anderson asked if the company had given any

thought to completely recycling the water from the plant. Mr. Monaco said there is a process for that and California has done pilot projects on it, but he doesn't know if it will fly.

Councilman Ken Shobe asked if the council needed to make a motion to approve the pay schedule that night. Mr. Monaco said they could look at it first.

Mr. Shobe asked how this would affect the city budget. Councilman Stan McEvoy said he didn't remember budgeting for it.

The council decided to look at the plan at their meeting Thursday, Feb. 6. They asked City Administrator Gary Shike to talk with Treasurer Deanna Castle about the money.

Commissioners hold ceremony to change positions

By **KIMBERLY BRANDT**

The Decatur County commissioners held their annual "changing of the drawers" ceremony last Tuesday morning, gently sliding two drawers out of their table and moving them to their new places.

With Commissioner Pat Glenn being elected chairwoman for this year, she moved her drawer from the end of the table to the middle and outgoing Chairman Doyle Brown moved his from the middle to the end.

The practice was adopted because it was easier than cleaning the drawers out and moving the contents to another.

The commissioners took a short break about an hour into the meeting to honor Commissioners Ralph Unger and Brown with certificates for service. Mr. Unger has been a commissioner for the last 30 years and Mr. Brown for the last 10.

Commissioners talked with Noxious Weed Director Gaylen Huntley, who is looking for a roadside sprayer truck. Originally he and Road and Bridge Supervisor Tim Stallman were going to pay for the truck out of both budgets and get a newer truck. With the recent cuts to the road and bridge budget because of state cutbacks, Mr. Huntley presented bids for a few used trucks he had found.

Mr. Huntley said he found a 1991 truck that could be purchased for around \$40,000 and then they would have to add the spray equipment for around \$22,000.

There was no decision made. The commissioners suggested he look at diesel trucks too.

Mr. Huntley said they are rebuilding their chemical room, including working on the floor and putting in a new entrance. He said he found some pallets to go under the chemi-

cal barrels in case they leak.

He has also been checking into a mosquito control unit for the department. It would be used to spray puddles and water where mosquitoes are found. Mr. Huntley gave some pamphlets to the commissioners.

In other business, commissioners:

- Held a five-minute closed session with Mr. Huntley for non-elected personnel. There was no action taken.

- Talked with Emergency Preparedness Director Bert Cool about money from the Kansas Department of Transportation and what it can be spent on. The County has \$5,331 and would like to use it for the ambulance department, but Mr. Cool said he will need to check.

- Approved a contract to allow the Vance Co. to stockpile road materials in Jennings.

- Named *The Oberlin Herald* as the county newspaper.

- Approved a waiver of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles for the audit.

- Transferred \$10,000 into the landfill fund from the general fund.

- Approved around \$3,000 transfer to the county extension fund from employee benefits.

- Signed a resolution saying there would be no pay raises until the commissioners decide the money was available.

- Decided that reimbursement will be 36 cents a mile for county employees.

- Approved seven change orders for the tax rolls; abatement of two mineral interests for Betty Huff, an oil abatement for Damar Resources, an abatement for Brett Robuck, a mineral abatement for Don Lawson, an abatement for Elmer Kathka and an addition for George Addleman.

Fifth Wednesday event planned

The Oberlin Business Alliance will hold its Fifth Wednesday celebration today with snacks downtown.

Each alliance business will have

snacks from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. today. Businesses that are participating will have a sign in the window.

Everyone is invited to come downtown to shop and have a snack.

HOUSE AUCTION

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2003 10:30 A.M.

SALE LOCATION: 451 OTWAY ST., HERNDON, KS

(In case of bad weather, sale will be held at the Senior Center, Herndon, KS)

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