

Ranch contract reviewed

Council wants revisions before it signs papers

The Oberlin City Council discussed a proposed new agreement for management of Sappa Valley Youth Ranch at a meeting Thursday night and asked the city attorney to negotiate with the company.

Clarence M. Kelley Detention and Youth Services runs the ranch for the city. The new agreement would start June 1 and run for three years.

City Attorney Steve Hirsch said he had looked at the proposal and there were a few items that needed to be cleaned up. The biggest change is that the firm will pay \$3,600 a month instead of a fee per student per day.

City Administrator Gary Shike said when the agreement started, the city was getting paid \$10 for each child each day. When state payments to the ranch were cut, that changed to \$8.50 a day.

The \$3,600 will cover the city's debt at the ranch, said Mr. Shike.

Mr. Hirsch said to terminate the old agreement, either party had to give reasonable notice. The new one says they have to give 30 days, and he recommended that be changed to 90 days.

It seems from both sides that 30 days is a little problematic, said Mr. Hirsch. The city would probably find it difficult to find someone to take over in 30 days and the company would probably find it difficult to shut down in 30 days.

Termination for cause, if the agreement is breached, would take effect in 30 days, which Mr. Hirsch didn't have a problem with.

A flat rate of pay is probably better for the city in the long run, said Mr. Hirsch, because it allows the city to make bond payment each month. After all, the head count could be zero.

Mayor Ken Shobe said \$3,600 is about half of what the city was getting last year. It covers the debt, he said, but nothing else.

Councilman Stan McEvoy said he would rather see the 90-day cancellation clause, and agreed it would be better for both parties.

Mr. McEvoy said if Mr. Hirsch thinks the attorney clause should come out, then it should come out. He said he was a little disappointed with the changes to the contract, but the company kind of had the city over a barrel. Mr. McEvoy said he wasn't happy about that.

Council Round-up

At its meeting Thursday, the Oberlin City Council:

- Discussed a proposed agreement for management of Sappa Valley Youth Ranch and asked the city attorney to negotiate with the company. Story above.

- Heard that a bid from Fortis Insurance for employee health coverage is in, but they are still waiting on other figures on employee health coverage and decided to wait until after the insurance committee meets Thursday night to make any decisions. Story above left.

- Heard that a bid from Fortis Insurance for employee health coverage is in, but they are still waiting on other figures on employee health coverage and decided to wait until after the insurance committee meets Thursday night to make any decisions. Story above left.

In her Easter bonnet, with all the frills upon it



MODELING AN EASTER BONNET she helped create, Carol Morford (above) worked with Cedar Living Center residents Wednesday. Teresa Shaughnessy (right) helped Gertrude Fleckenstein. — Herald staff photos by Kimberly Brandt



City Council waiting on health insurance figures

The Oberlin City Council heard that a bid from Fortis Insurance is in, but are still waiting on other figures on employee health coverage and decided to wait until after the insurance committee meets Thursday night to make any decisions.

Councilman Stan McEvoy said Fortis had a 66 percent increase from their estimated bid, but it is still cheaper than Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

He said he doesn't know about the

deductibles.

The clinic had an increase of 67 percent in its insurance and is also looking at Fortis. Mr. McEvoy said it worried him a little if the clinic doesn't come on board.

The city also received another proposal from Blue Cross/Blue Shield. City Administrator Gary Shike said it is about 11 percent cheaper than the first figures the city received, but it is still 30 percent higher than last year.

The council talked about having a special meeting after the committee meeting tomorrow night, but didn't set anything up.

Before the meeting started, Mayor Ken Shobe and Councilman Ray Ward were given the oath of office. Councilman Patrick Pomeroy came late to the meeting and was given the oath when he arrived.

As his first act as mayor, Mr. Shobe appointed business owner Joe Stanley to fill his seat on the

council for the next two years.

In other business, the council:

- Said thanks to Clerk Martha Nemeth, who is retiring after 12 years. They presented her with a red strobe light because she accidentally turned on the police light in one of the city cars a month or so ago.

- Appointed Sharleen Wurm to the Convention and Visitors Bureau to fill Kathy Almquist's seat. The term expires in January.

- Approved the low bid for a new

Marty J mower from Salem Motors for \$6,000. The city received a bid from Southwest Implement for a John Deere for \$6,500.

- Heard the city will be getting bids to repair some roof leaks at The Gateway.

- Held a 30-minute closed session for attorney-client privilege. There was no action taken.

- Agreed to make Mr. McEvoy council president. He will preside when the mayor cannot.

People can buy trees for \$100

The Oberlin Tree Committee received 50 trees last Wednesday which they plan to sell to people at cost.

The trees are being stored in the city shop. So far, the city hasn't had any takers.

The committee ordered 20 greenspire linden, 15 burr oak and 15 prairiefire crab apple from Common Scents in McCook. The cost is \$100 each.

The city is soon to lose several of

its older trees along Cass Avenue because of the water project. The trees which will be taken out have been marked on the trunks with large pink X's.

Mayor Gary Walter said at a recent council meeting that it would be nice for some of those trees to be replaced with some of these younger ones.

The committee has applications for the trees in the county extension office. The location a person wants

to plant the tree has to be approved by Rocky Diederich of the city crew. The trees will need adequate room to grow and the committee wants to make sure that there are no problems in the future, said Mayor Walter.

Only one tree will be allowed per person or business.

The city will provide wood chips for mulch. To get an application, call 475-8121 or stop by the extension office at the courthouse.

Police work wrecks, burglary

Two fender benders and a theft or burglary were reported to the Oberlin police last week.

At 1:45 p.m. last Monday, Ron Fowler, driving his 2000 Chevy Silverado, hit the rear of his 1995 Ford service vehicle while parking on North Griffith. The Silverado received extensive damage but the Ford had minimum damage.

At 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Chance Beinke, 18, backed from his parents' garage at 302 N. Penn into a

vehicle owned by David Juene-mann. Beinke was driving a 1995 Honda Accord and Juene-mann, a 1991 Ford Ranger pickup.

No tickets were issued in either accident.

Janice Walters, 102 S. Elk, reported that between April 12 and Monday, April 14, two wedding rings were removed from her residence. The rings, one a diamond and one a gold band, are valued at \$850.

Commissioners discuss new federal health privacy law

By KIMBERLY BRANDT
Decatur County commissioners have been reading papers about new regulations under the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

They decided not to sign a proposed agreement for the health department and then changed their minds. However, they wouldn't sign off on the part about confidentiality.

Health Administrator Marilyn Gamblin brought the papers in to sign Tuesday, April 8, then realized that she hadn't brought in an agreement to include dispatch under the county for privacy issues. When she left to fix the agreement, County Attorney Steve Hirsch had a chance

to check the document.

He said the agreement would make confidential information, including but not limited to compensation, or basically, how much a county employee makes.

County Clerk Marilyn Horn said that is public information. So is the budget, said Mrs. Horn, and that is included in this.

The group agreed that those things can't be closed to the public.

As an elected official, said Mr. Hirsch, he would have a problem signing the agreement, because it is broader than just health issues.

The act works well for private clinics and other operations, he said, but secrecy doesn't work well in government.

Mr. Hirsch said if he signed the agreement, it would be like leaving his oath of office at the door.

Ambulance Director Patrick Pomeroy said he thought the compensation part was supposed to cover what a patient pays. Mr. Hirsch said it was up to each of the commissioners if they wanted to sign it.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said he would like to see Mr. Hirsch write to the appropriate agencies before signing the agreement. Taxpayers have a right to know where their money is going, and by signing this, that wouldn't happen anymore, said Commissioner Doyle Brown.

Commissioners didn't sign the document, but didn't hold Ms.

Gamblin at fault. They agreed that it was probably a document that was printed from information she received about the act with information inserted. That is why all legal documents need to go through the county attorney, said Mrs. Horn.

At the end of the meeting, Ms. Gamblin brought in new documents to be signed without the confidentiality section.

The commissioners agreed to sign the confidentiality agreement only if it is in accordance with the Kansas Open Meetings and Open Records laws.

Ms. Gamblin said she still has an agreement for the county's accountants, Mapes and Miller, to sign. The company does the county audit.

Mr. Unger said he received a phone call from a member of the ministerial association who wanted to know if a person going to the hospital could still have their pastor contacted with this act.

Mr. Pomeroy said anyone can waive their privacy rights. Ms. Gamblin said ministers should still be able to call the hospital to talk with patients. The act won't allow people's names to be listed in the lobby of the hospital or given out on the phone without their permission.

The hardest part for the ambulance is still to come, said Mr. Pomeroy. The department may have to use scrambled radio because dispatchers can't say things like there is a heart attack at a certain address.



1 OUNCE FINE SILVER GRADUATION COINS
Reverse of coin is ready for engraving.

Other Silver Coins in stock
• Twin Towers * Spirit of America
• Tribute in Light (very limited quantity)
and many others to choose from

Trader Horn
1004 W. Frontier Parkway
Oberlin, KS 67749
785-475-2626



NEW EXCLUSIVE LISTINGS

- 3 Quarters dry cropland
- 157 acres of cropland and pasture land with 5 bedroom home and other improvements
- Approximately 9 acres with small home and outbuildings within 12 miles of Oberlin
- Selden acreage with 4 bedroom home and city utilities

LAND SALES • REAL ESTATE • AUCTIONS

Our staff can handle all your needs! Visit us at our convenient DOWNTOWN location!

	Office	785-475-2111	
Gary Richards	475-8324	Jeanette Krizek	678-2670
Duane McEwen	877-3032	Duane Steele	475-2791
Gene Leitner	475-2733		

RJ METCALF REAL ESTATE

181 S. Penn • Oberlin, KS • 785-475-2111
www.metcalfrealestate.com

RJ Metcalf, Broker 475-2198 Carolyn Burtis, Associate Broker 475-3859



R.J. Metcalf Real Estate is very pleased to present Gary A. Richards as a recent addition to our sales staff. He will be involved in all areas of real estate sales but is most interested in all types of Ag Land!

Gary is a third generation resident of Decatur County. He has a B.A. degree in Secondary Education from Kansas State University and has farmed and ranched in Kansas for 30 years.

Gary and his wife Marsha reside at 112 East Maple in Oberlin.

We welcome Gary and hope that the community and local areas do as well!

RJ METCALF REAL ESTATE

181 S. Penn • Oberlin, KS • 785-475-2111
www.metcalfrealestate.com

RJ Metcalf, Broker 475-2198 Carolyn Burtis, Associate Broker 475-3859