

School district ends year in the black

The Oberlin School District made it to the end of the fiscal year at a special meeting last Wednesday with some carryover money left to transfer into five funds.

Superintendent Kelly Glodt had feared the district would spend all its cash before year-end. The district made it to the end of the year, he said, because of savings the staff has made during the year.

Teachers agreed to a higher insurance deductible, saved money on hiring substitutes since teachers who were in the buildings covered the classes, and spent less on

supplies this year.

Lots of the cuts the board approved this year, he said, they didn't know the exact dollar amount, so it was hard to project the year-end balance.

The district is not out of the woods yet, he said. The issue now isn't how much money the district has but how much budget authority it has. The district will continue to have less and less to spend as enrollment goes down. The district can only spend so much money depending on how many kids are enrolled.

The district could get a \$20 million gift tomorrow, Mr. Glodt said, but if the budget authority isn't there, they wouldn't be able to spend it.

In all, the district was able to transfer \$321,236 split among food service, special education, driver education, in-service education and the contingency reserve.

The district transferred \$200,000 into the special education fund. Mr. Glodt said this was a mandatory transfer because the district's contract with the service center is different and the bill will be bigger. The

majority of the money for the special education department will go to the Northwest Kansas Educational Service Center of Oakley.

The transfer into the food service was \$7,000. Even with the transfer, he said, the district will have to supplement the fund.

Last year, he said, the district used every penny in the contingency reserve, which was \$103,000.

Mr. Glodt said they transferred \$37,236 into the fund this year. It isn't much of a cushion, but it is a positive move.

Driver's education costs up to \$10,000 a year, he said. The board transferred \$6,000 into the fund this year. He said they need to start out with some money in there so they aren't taking all the money out of the general fund.

The other transfer was to in-service education for \$8,000.

Mr. Glodt said the board didn't transfer any money into capital outlay. The interest raised on idle money this year will be transferred into the special education fund rather than capital outlay, he said.

Council looks at budget

Workshop held to start process

By KIMBERLY BRANDT

The Oberlin City Council talked about equipment needs, staff and costs to run the city next year during its first budget workshop after the regular meeting Thursday night.

The council went through the budget piece by piece, adding a little here and a little there. None of the numbers are final, though; the work has just begun.

Normally, the council meets anywhere from two to three times before the final decisions on the budget.

Under general and administration, the council talked about needing a computer in the city office which would cost around \$1,000. They also discussed their Internet service and whether they should go with cable or the phone company. City Administrator Gary Shike said they would like to network all six of the office computers together.

The police department will add a fourth officer. Chief Wade Lockhart said they are paying officers as much in overtime now.

What would the pay be for another officer? asked Councilman Patrick Pomeroy. Chief Lockhart said it should be higher than starting pay at Sappa Valley Youth Ranch, which is around \$8.68 an hour. It should be at least \$9 an hour starting for someone who goes to the academy. Someone with experience could cost more, the chief said.

City Clerk Deanna Castle said they have had several calls about the proposed position.

Councilman Ray Ward said in the past they have a training center for officers who left for larger departments. Chief Lockhart said it hasn't been that way since he was hired. If Oberlin has someone trained and they leave to go to another place, he said, then that department has to reimburse Oberlin for training. By state law, he said, the other agency would have to reimburse Oberlin within a year, said City Attorney Steve Hirsch.

A retired police officer from Denver called and wanted to commute, said Chief Lockhart. He said no. He said even with a fourth officer, they will still need only three cars.

The council noted that the contractual fund under the police budget will go up because the dispatch bill from the county will probably go up, as it does nearly every year.

They discussed the possibility of having to change to narrow-band radios. Mr. Hirsch said the county is looking at a grant for new radios and maybe the city could get involved in it. The Federal Communications Commissions has ordered public service broadcasts switched to narrow bands to create more frequencies, since the radio spectrum is overcrowded today.

There was a question about whether the police department benefits from the state's "911" tax on telephone service. Chief Lockhart said he has never seen anything. Mr. Shike said he will write the county a letter and ask how the money is spent.

Chief Lockhart said he would like to see money put in the budget for a new car so that they can get rid of the 1998 Ford. He said they also may need a computer since the one in his office is five years old. Councilman Stan McEvoy said \$24,000 should (See CITY on Page 12)



IN THE MEDIUM-SIZE POOL at the Oberlin city pool, Landen Macfee floated in an innertube (above) on a warm, sunny afternoon. Tawni Dolan (below) sat in the lifeguard chair and watched kids swim. The pool is open weekdays from 1 to 5 p.m.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Brandt

City asks county for help with pool

Members of the Oberlin City Council met with Decatur County commissioners last Tuesday morning to ask them to help pay for running the city's swimming pool.

City Administrator Gary Shike said the council asked the county to consider a long-term commitment to pay about a third of the pool's operating costs.

The commissioners were very nice about it, he said, even though they didn't give a definite answer.

Mr. Shike said the county's share would run around \$18,000. He said they also talked about building a new pool.

Mr. Shike said people who live in the city and those who live in the county but outside of Oberlin all use the swimming pool and all pay the same fees.

The council brought a chart along to show the expenses for the swimming pool. Last year, it cost \$54,046, in 2002 it was \$53,150 and 2001 \$43,083. The income on the pool last year was \$13,548, in 2002 it was \$12,734 and in 2001 it was \$10,499.

The quick fix this year to get the pool up and running cost \$3,117, he said, although the council wasn't asking the county to help pay that bill.

The commissioners have looked into a property tax levy for the swimming pool, said Mr. Unger, but the only way to do that is with a special levy through city/school funding.

Councilman Patrick Pomeroy asked if there was another fund the money for the pool could come out of. County Attorney Steve Hirsch said the general fund is spent on a variety of things. By law, said Commissioner Doyle Brown, the county cannot have a levy for the pool.

Councilman Stan McEvoy said the pool is getting older and each year something has to be fixed to get it running. He said they don't know what it will be next year or what it will cost.

The council, said Mr. Hirsch, will need to know a dollar figure commitment from the county for their budget process.

The group noted that the pool was built in 1957 and then enlarged in 1964.

Commissioner Patricia Glenn asked how warm the city keeps the water, since the gas prices are so high. Mr. Shike said they try to keep it at 65 degrees.

There is a pool committee looking into what it would take for a



new pool to be built. A bare minimum a pool would cost \$600,000 to \$700,000, said Mr. Shike. Mr. Hirsch said a good one could cost

\$1 million to \$1.5 million. The idea came up of building a pool inside for year-around healthy exercise. No decisions were made.

First Kansas case of West Nile virus found

The first confirmed case of West Nile virus in Kansas this year was found in a bird in Sedgwick County last week, meaning that the virus is with us once again this summer.

Decatur County Health Administrator Marilyn Gamblin said there haven't been any human cases reported in the state yet.

Ms. Gamblin said the virus is passed by mosquitoes from birds to humans and horses.

There are some precautions people can take when they are outside. She said they should use insect repellent with the chemical DEET in

it. Adults and children can use the repellent with DEET, but it shouldn't have more than 33 percent of the chemical. If it does, it may be too strong and be harmful to kids, especially under 10 years old.

She said people should avoid standing water and not leave standing water outside. Children's swimming pools should be dumped and changed, and so should water dishes for pets.

Ms. Gamblin said everyone should wear long sleeves and pants, and limit their outdoor activities at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are

out. Make sure you have good screens on windows and on doors so that the mosquitoes can't get in.

Last year, she said, there were two confirmed human cases in Decatur County.

A lot of people have West Nile and never have the symptoms. Only 23 percent of those infected will ever show signs of having it, officials estimate. Some of those symptoms are fever, headache, tiredness, body aches and occasionally a skin rash on the trunk of the body or swollen lymph nodes.

Even though there hasn't been a

case in the county this year, Ms. Gamblin said, there is a good possibility that there could be one or more.

Anyone who finds dead birds, said Ms. Gamblin, can call (877) 228-2287. Only certain birds are likely to be infected, including blue jays, magpies, hawks, owls and eagles.

When a person calls in, the person answering will give the finder directions on how to preserve it.

Ms. Gamblin said the bird needs to be dead less than 24 hours and in pretty good shape.

Rains provide moisture

It seems that when it rains it pours.

At least, that's what it did last week in Decatur County. The rain started on Thursday, with .81 of an inch falling. The following day, another 1.53 inches fell. That was almost more than fell in the entire month of June.

On the Fourth, the area received another .71 of an inch, and then Monday .90 on an inch more. That means Oberlin got 3.95 inches in just the first five days of the month. In June, the county received 2.65 inches.

From the beginning of the year, the area has received 11.65 inches of precipitation, over half of which has fallen in the June and July.

The normal amount of rainfall for the year to date is 11 inches, said David Floyd, meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Goodland.

It isn't unusual to get this kind of rain this time of year, he said. Northwest Kansas is supposed to get three to four inches of rain during the months of May, June and July.

Everyone has gotten so used to having dry weather that it seems weird to be getting this much rain.

Mr. Floyd said he wouldn't say that the drought is over, but the area is receiving good rain to keep the top soil wet and the crops are using that. A lot more moisture is needed in the area in order to even make a dent in the drought, Mr. Floyd said, like anywhere from 10 to 12 inches.

In order to get out of the drought, he said, the area would need to not only get normal rain, but above-normal rain. The subsoil is still pretty dry.

Mr. Floyd said there will be a break in the weather pattern for a few days and then by Friday night and over the weekend, the area should see some more rain.

Overall, he said, the area is in a favorable weather pattern. The high temperatures aren't extreme and the rain has been coming.

There is decent moisture in the lower atmosphere and there have been a series of disturbances in the upper atmosphere that have moved through.

The movement has been every 24 to 48 hours which has brought the timely thunderstorms.

When the ground is wet, he said, a little more water can evaporate back into the air, and that brings more rain. Dry weather begets dry weather, he said, and rainy weather brings rain.

City uses less water

Oberlin City water use climbed over 800,000 gallons last week, then steadily dropped with the rains.

Despite the wet weather, watering restrictions remain in force. Those with odd addresses can water on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday and those with even addresses can water on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. No watering is allowed on Mondays.

The city pumped:

- 433,000 gallons on Monday, June 28.
- 814,000 gallons on Tuesday, June 29.
- 685,000 gallons last Wednesday.
- 335,000 gallons on Thursday.
- 273,000 gallons on Friday.
- 240,000 gallons on Saturday.
- 424,000 gallons on Sunday.
- 383,000 gallons on Monday.

County talks money

The Decatur County commissioners heard budget requests last Tuesday from representatives from the Thomas County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council and the Northwest Kansas Family Shelter.

Nina Carpenter from the drug abuse council said most of their work is outpatient counseling. She said most of it is done in Colby, with people coming to them, but they will travel to Oberlin if the person wants them to.

She said the agency does get state money, and they use a sliding scale to charge patients and are eligible for third-party payments, such as insurance. They work with people who have tickets for driving under the influence and minors in possession.

Commissioner Doyle Brown asked when they started serving the area, and she said in 1973.

When people are charged with a drug or alcohol violation, such as driving under the influence or minor in possession, she said, they get a list of places they can get evaluations done. Her agency does a number of them, she said, but there are private individuals who can do the evaluations.

Quite a few of the referrals from Decatur County, said Ms. Carpenter, are from friends, family or the Valley Hope Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center. She said they try to offer the whole family help with their service.

When an evaluation is done, she said, the patient might be referred for treatment, maybe just an eight-hour class or an outpatient schedule.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said they would hold onto the information and look at it again when they are working on the budget.

No certain figure was brought up. The county hasn't given in the past to this group.

Charlotte Linsner with the family shelter said she wanted to thank the county for its support. They gave \$500 in the past. She said they would appreciate that support again. She said Oberlin City pledged \$600 and she would like the county to do the same.



Fountain stays busy

IN THE AFTERNOON on Tuesday, Leah Marietta (above) made soft drinks at the soda fountain in Addleman Drug Store. Tricia Dorshorst (left) paid for her drinks. The fountain, open throughout the summer, offers everything from limeades to malts.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Brandt

* City begins to count money for 2005 budget

(Continued from Page 1) cover a car and a computer. He agreed that they need to get back into upgrading cars.

Mr. Shike said he needs to talk with Fire Chief Bill Cathcart about the fire department budget.

Mr. McEvoy said City Foreman Dan Castle wanted to replace a couple of pickups. Mr. McEvoy said he isn't sure what departments to put those in. He said he thinks some of those upgrades can be smaller trucks, S10s or Ford Rangers.

Mr. Shike said he wouldn't want all of the pickups to be small, but some could be. Councilman Ward said he can see where 99 percent of the time a small pick-up would work.

They would run around \$10,000 apiece, said Mr. McEvoy. The suggestion was to put one in cemetery and one in parks.

For the swimming pool, Mr. Pomeroy said he would like to put some money aside every year and

save up for a new pool. Mr. Hirsch said they could set up a multi-year improvement plan, but there has to be a plan.

A new pool, said Mr. McEvoy, is a good idea but the city needs to concentrate on keeping the one it has open. They talked about trying to get grants.

The council added money for a new lawnmower for parks, moving the old one to the youth ranch; money for a back hoe and a sand spreader; and talked about a digger truck for the electric department, which would cost anywhere from \$40,000 to \$60,000 and up.

The council also talked about factoring in a 12 to 14 percent increase in health insurance costs for city employees.

Mr. McEvoy said none of the numbers is set in stone.

The next budget workshop meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, July 15, in the meeting room downstairs at The Gateway.

Replacement part could cost thousands

The county road supervisor told Decatur County commissioners at their meeting on Tuesday, June 29 that a breakdown in the 1988 Dresser dozer could cost the county anywhere from \$750 to \$5,500 for a new or used transmission case.

Road and Bridge Supervisor Tim Stallman said the transmission case is broken. They tried to seal it, but it was leaking oil. Then, he said, they asked Kieth Alstrom to weld it, but it didn't work. Mr. Stallman said they took the case in to get fixed and that didn't work either.

He said a new one costs around \$5,500. He said he started to look for a used case at salvage yards and found one in Colorado for \$750.

The salvage yard will ship it to Berry Tractor in Garden City, he said. They will look the piece over,

and if it is in good enough shape to be used, then Mr. Stallman said he would like to purchase it.

The supervisor said he thought this would be a good deal since used ones are normally half of what new ones cost.

In another day or so, said Mr. Stallman, the road crew will be getting into townships to start blading and cutting weeds. He said he would like to see the county get some rain after they blade.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Were reminded there would be another health meeting at 10 a.m. the following Tuesday.

- Held a five-minute closed session for attorney client privilege with County Attorney Steve Hirsch. There was no action taken.

Accident claims three lives

A traffic accident on U.S. 50 east of Peabody in Marion County last Tuesday, June 29, killed three members of an Oberlin man's family.

Dead are Victoria Bogner, 43, daughter of Harold Nichols of Oberlin; her son, Gerald Bogner, 21; and his wife, Charlie Michelle Bogner, 17, all of Wright, in Ford County.

Also killed were John Cafferty, 56, and his wife, Shirley, 51, of Wichita. The deaths made a total of at least nine people killed while waiting for construction on the stretch of U.S. 50 east of Peabody this year.

The Kansas Highway Patrol reported that a semi-trailer rig slammed into the back of a vehicle waiting for a pilot car in a construction area, causing a six-vehicle chain reaction that left five people dead.

Trooper Mike Ottensmeier said the area is well marked. Six-foot orange signs warn drivers of the construction more than a mile ahead of the area, about three miles east of Peabody.

According to the patrol report, Richard Duncan, 33, Granite City, Ill., driver of the tractor-trailer, told

troopers that he was dozing off just before the crash about 6 p.m. Tuesday. He was taken to a hospital with an injured hip.

Two Mexican nationals were killed the day before when their pickup, also waiting for a pilot car at the same location, was struck from behind.

On May 10, two Marion County residents, Lori Leeders, 42, and Brandi Billbe, 40, were killed when a van they were riding in was struck from behind by a tractor-trailer as they awaited a pilot car about eight miles to the east.

Victoria Bogner was born Feb. 14, 1961, at Oberlin, the daughter of Harold and Kathleen (Canaga) Nichols.

She attended Oberlin schools and graduated from Decatur Community High School in 1979.

She married Bryan P. Bogner on July 14, 1990. She was a payroll clerk for the Dodge City School District.

Survivors include a son, Brandon Bogner, and a daughter, Emily Bogner, both of the home; and two brothers, Harold Nichols III, Texas, and Richard Wesley Nichols, Dan-

bury, Neb.

Gerald Christopher Bogner, 21, was born Oct. 9, 1982, at McCook, Neb. On March 15, 2003, he married Charlie Michelle Fry at Hartford, Kan. He was a sanitation worker for the city of Dodge City.

Charlie Michelle Bogner, 17, was born June 30, 1986, at Emporia, the daughter of Mike and Linda (Meyers) Fry. On March 15, 2003, she married Gerald Christopher Bogner at Hartford.

Survivors also include: her mother, Linda Fry, Madison; her father, Mike Fry, Bloom; and two sisters, Maggie Kane, Amarillo, Texas, and Stephanie Fry, Emporia.

Vigil service was held Sunday, July 4, at St. Andrew Catholic Church in Wright for all three victims. A funeral Mass was held Monday at the church with Father Robert A. Schremmer officiating. Burials were in St. Andrew Cemetery at Wright.

The family suggests memorials to the Court Appointed Special Advocate program in care of the Burkhart-Ziegler Funeral Chapel, 1901 N. 14th Ave., Dodge City, Kan., 67801.

Insurance to pay for part of roof

Decatur County commissioners heard from their insurance pool last Tuesday morning that the county will receive around \$85,000 towards the replacement of the roof at the Good Samaritan Center.

The commissioners, Good Samaritan Center Administrator Janice Shobe and Environmental Maintenance Supervisor LaVern Burtis talked with Harry Bowen from the Kansas Counties Multi-line Pool in a conference call.

Commissioner Ralph Unger said they wanted to know what the insurance company had decided after being faxed all the roof proposals. Mr. Bowen said the agency would suggest the bid from Roofmasters out of Colby, which included tearing off the old roofing, for \$105,000.

He said they are thinking in the range of paying \$84,000 to \$100,000. That would not include the deductible, since that has already

been met. Basically, said Mr. Unger, the insurance company will pay \$85,000 and then the rest is the county's responsibility.

Yes, said Mr. Bowen, but the agency would like to see a complete tear off.

Any experience with these roofs? asked Mr. Unger.

Mr. Bowen said he liked the rubberized roofs with the hard boards under the rubber better than the others.

Mr. Unger said the commissioners wanted to do some more talking and thinking on the matter, and then would call the insurance company back.

Mr. Burtis said he had contacted both companies that sent in bids about the sprinkler system the center needs. He wanted to talk with the companies to see if the bids were comparable.

One of the companies only has two people who are bonded. Mrs. Shobe said the center has a policy that they can only hire people who are bonded.

Mr. Burtis said Jayhawk Sprinkler saw the blueprints and came here and then made a bid. McDaniel Company worked only off the blueprints.

Maybe the county should ask for references, said Mr. Burtis.

Mrs. Shobe said other Good Samaritan centers in Kansas are mainly working with Jayhawk. She said she would contact the agency's building consultant and see why.

The center is also looking into figures for the replacement of several windows at the center. Mr. Burtis said someone from Marvin Windows, which Good Samaritan has a contract with, was out to work on a bid.

There were no decisions made.

