

# Council to lower its taxes

By CYNTHIA HAYNES

With an addition here and a subtraction there, the Oberlin City Council came up with a 2005 budget that will lower the property tax levy a little and still provide what the town needs.

At a special meeting last Tuesday night, the council went over a budget that had been hammered out earlier in the month. Most items stayed the same, but between the two meetings, said City Clerk Deanna Castle, she realized that there was \$25,000 that should be in the cash reserve of the bond and interest fund.

Council members decided to leave the money there and take it out of some other part of the budget to keep the tax levy at 67.138 mills, which is what they had decided on at a budget meeting this month.

This year, the levy was 67.896 and in 2003 it was 69.150. Each mill will raise about \$7,000 in taxes.

While the levy won't be finalized until after a public hearing on Thursday, Aug. 19, the council wanted to have the budget ready for publication in today's paper. (The budget is at the bottom of Page 5A.)

After they decided to keep the \$25,000 in the bond fund, the council went over the budget and decided what to cut to make up that amount.

Looking at the capital expenses, Stan McEvoy suggested that, since the city is planning to purchase three new pickup trucks next year, for the cemetery, parks and sewer departments, one might be cut. He asked Supervisor Dan Castle to prioritize.

Mr. Castle said it is difficult to rank the need. Mr. McEvoy was not budging, however, so the foreman said to eliminate the truck for the parks department. Mrs. Castle estimated savings at \$17,000.

After looking over the figures again, Mr. McEvoy suggested cutting the expected health insurance increase from 14 percent to 12 percent — an \$8,000 savings.

Mayor Ken Shobe asked Mr. McEvoy, who sells insurance for a living, if he was comfortable cutting the expected increase. Mr. McEvoy shrugged and said he had no idea what health insurance would cost next year, since the increases fluctuate so wildly.

Expected capital expenses next year will include a new car, lights and computer for the police department; a sand spreader for the street department; a pickup and backhoe lease payment for the cemetery department; a mower for the park department; \$15,000 for a sign for The Gateway; a pickup for the sewer department; a digger truck for the electric department; a backhoe lease payment for the sewer department; and a new boiler for the swimming pool.



## Store gets face lift

**LAYING NEW BLUE** indoor-outdoor carpeting in front of Raye's Grocery on Sunday night, Bill Goscha and John Barrett rolled out the material and carefully cut the seams around the canopy poles. The work started after the store closed at 6 p.m. and went on until after midnight, taking advantage of cooler night air.

— Herald staff photos by Cynthia Haynes



# Gas tank stops man in chase

A Colorado man on a 2004 Yamaha motorcycle led a chase that started in Norton, dodged a roadblock near Sappa Creek, roared through Oberlin and ended just short of Rawlins County — when the biker ran out of gas.

Oberlin Police Chief Wade Lockhart said officers were notified around 11:10 p.m. Saturday that a state trooper had tried to stop a man on a motorcycle near Norton, but the man outran them and headed west.

Troopers told the Oberlin Police Department about the man and said he might be heading their way.

Chief Lockhart said Officer Troy Haas and sheriff's reserve Deputy Barry Richards set up a road block about one to two miles east of town on U.S. 36.

The driver, Joel Griffin, 20, of Thornton, Colo., didn't stop, the chief said, but blew right through the roadblock. When he got to town, he turned south and flew down Wilson. Chief Lockhart said he intercepted the bike on Victoria. For a while, he said, it seemed like every street he entered ended with a dead end, but he managed to get away.

Chief Lockhart said Mr. Griffin shot up Penn Avenue and headed west on U.S. 36 with Deputy Richards and Officer Haas on his tail.

The motorcycle ran out of gas just before the Rawlins County line at 11:56 p.m. Officers arrested him for attempting to elude a police officer, reckless driving and driving with a revoked license. Chief Lockhart said he wasn't sure how fast Mr. Griffin was traveling in town, but when he was outrunning the troopers, he was exceeding 120 mph.

Mr. Griffin was being held in Norton County, but will be sent to Decatur County when they are finished with him.

# Council will meet Thursday

The Oberlin City Council plans a short meeting at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at The Gateway since it is fair week.

City Administrator Gary Shike said the council needs to talk about sewer plant design. He said they need to tell the engineering firm, Miller and Associates out of McCook, what kind of plant they want and what size so work can begin on it.

Mr. Shike said the council will discuss a request from Ampride for the city to waive the sewer fees if they put in a recreation vehicle dump. He said the question has never come up before.

There will also be appointments to the swimming pool commission.

The meeting is open to the public and will be held upstairs at The Gateway. Mr. Shike said he isn't sure if it will be aired on cable local access channel 7 because it is supposed to be a short meeting.

# Commissioners agree to buy sheriff new truck

By STEVE HAYNES

Decatur County commissioners bought the sheriff's department a new truck last Tuesday, approving a \$25,102 bid from Taylor Motors of Colby for a 2004 Dodge Durango.

The search for a new patrol car had stretched out over a month, and the county wound up buying the same truck the sheriff started out with for more money.

The sheriff had wanted to buy a Durango equipped with a police package from an Illinois dealer he found on the Internet for \$22,900 plus \$350 for delivery. Commissioners wanted to know if he'd asked for any local bids, and when they found the answer was no, they sent him back to the drawing boards.

Then the sheriff came in with more bids, but the lowest was from Nebraska, and he said he'd heard that the county wasn't allowed to buy from an out-of-state dealer.

He went looking for more bids. He wound up with two, one from Taylor and one from Tubbs and Sons Ford of Colby for \$26,660 on a 2005 Ford Expedition. Both are four-wheel-drive, four-door sport-utility vehicles.

Tubbs offered a \$4,000 trade allowance on a 1997 Expedition the department wants to get rid of. Commissioners found they had one sealed bid for that truck, for \$5,055.55 from Rusty Addleman. They decided to sell to him and to take the low bid from Taylor on the Durango.

The sheriff said it's the same vehicle he wanted to buy earlier. Taylor will get it from Illinois and bring it back, adding about \$1,700 to the cost. On the new truck, \$6,000 will come from the ambulance fund to repay the sheriff for an Expedition

## Bids were a letdown

County commissioners thought they had four bids for a new sheriff's vehicle last Tuesday, but a couple of the envelopes were sort of disappointing.

Commissioner Pat Glenn opened the four envelopes the clerk's office had collected, and Chairman Ralph Under started to read them.

The first, from Shawnee-Mission Ford, turned out to be an advertising flier, apparently a mass mailing, for a Ford Taurus.

donated to the ambulance department after it was seized in a drug case.

The sheriff said he had not received a formal opinion from the attorney general's office, but had talked to the deputy who was doing the opinion.

He told him, the sheriff said, that there was no law against the county buying a vehicle out of state, but if the Illinois dealer isn't licensed in Kansas, it would be illegal for him to sell one here.

And, the sheriff said, the county really can't be helping the dealer to break Kansas law.

Mr. Badsky and Undersheriff Michael French said they have removed the police equipment from the old truck, but it will cost about \$1,400 to get it installed in the new one.

Earlier, the commissioners approved purchase of four laptop computers for the sheriff's department, taking a low price for Dell equipment at \$5,522. The sheriff said these come with printers.

It wasn't quite what the county was looking for.

The second, from someplace called Larry's RV Sales, contained paperwork on a loan to be filed by the county.

The other two were legitimate bids from two Colby dealers, and the county did buy the sheriff a truck.

"I've never seen that happen before," Mr. Unger said, with a shake of his head.

They've installed stands for them in the cars, and officers will be able to write reports and print them in their cars. The money will come from a federal Byrne grant, with the county paying 25 percent.

In other business, commissioners:

- Named Ron Jansonius, a self-employed communications consultant, to the county hospital board, replacing lawyer Chuck Frickey, who is retiring. He will fill an unexpired term until November.

Someone asked if this appoint-

ment was good for a full four-year term, but Commissioner Ralph Unger said he didn't think they'd advertised the post that way. Mr. Jansonius was the only applicant. The board controls Decatur Health Systems, which manages the county hospital.

- Agreed that raises for county employees would be \$60 per month across the board, with part-time employees getting 25 cents per hour. Only those who have been with the county more than six months will get a raise.

- Heard that Commissioner Doyle Brown and the others have had several positive calls on a proposed recycling system.

- Heard from Emergency Preparedness Director Bert Cool that new radios he ordered under a federal Homeland Security grant had started to come in. These will accommodate planned switch narrowband channels in a few years, he said, but don't necessarily allow all emergency units to talk to one another.

He said a request for pagers had been turned down, but could be made for next year. The county also should be able to get new repeaters next year, he said.

The order includes about 60 mobile radios for county departments, plus new base stations.

Mr. Cool said it was about time, noting that the sheriff's office base radio has been down for more than a month.

## STOCK REDUCTION AND CONSIGNMENT AUCTION

Tuesday, August 31, 2004

McCook Farm Equipment Co., McCook, Nebraska, will be having an absolute auction! Consignments are being accepted for this auction. This is not like most consignment sales that are just doing inventory. Everything will absolutely sell!

If interested in selling equipment contact McCook Farm Equipment at 308-345-4480 or Lynn A. Johnson, Johnson Realty, Inc., 785-475-2785 or cell phone, 785-475-8514.

Auction to be held at 708 E. B St., McCook, NE

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**Johnson Realty, Inc.**  
109 N. Wolf, Oberlin, KS 67749  
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