

Taxpayers get county to cut levy

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

After taxpayers protested at a budget hearing, Decatur County commissioners agreed last Tuesday to cut \$40,000 out of an already approved \$100,000 spending increase. The commissioners had voted in September to increase the county budget by \$100,000, which would have meant a larger increase in taxes. The increase allowed for more money to be put into the road and bridge fund for fuel and \$60,000 in employee benefits.

After the budget hearing, though, commissioners decided to cut \$10,000 out of the fire department and \$30,000 from expected increases in employee benefits.

At the hearing, commissioners heard from three businessmen, Frank Black from Jr's Used Cars; Ron Fowler, owner of Crossroads Express and Ron's Tire Service; and Rich Grafel of D&S Grain. Several department heads also attended.

Mr. Grafel asked the commissioners to explain "in plain English" what the county wanted to do with the money. The state, said Commissioner Doyle Brown, doesn't send as much money to the county as they used to. That has to be made up from property taxes, he said, and then there is an increase in fuel.

The county doesn't want to raise taxes, Mr. Brown added, but if people want services, it has to happen. The county has no idea how high natural gas or fuel prices will go, he said.

Mr. Grafel said he appreciated the

Taxes still will increase

Property owners in Decatur County will pay a little more tax next year with a 2.072 mill property tax increase in the overall budget.

Last year, the property tax levy was 52.976 and next year it will be 55.039, said County Clerk Marilyn Horn. That means on a \$50,000 house, a taxpayer would see an increase of \$11.91 for the year.

Those who pay taxes for the rural fire department, which includes townships and cities that don't have fire departments of their own, will see a decrease of \$2.17 on a \$50,000 house. Taxpayers who live in Oberlin, Norcatur and Jennings, where there are city fire departments, won't see the decrease on that line.

commissioners efforts, but wonders where he is supposed to get the money to pay for the increase.

Mr. Brown said he understood where he was coming from, because (See TAXES on Page 5A)

Oberlin will get added water from new well

By STEVE HAYNES

Oberlin should soon have as much as 60 percent more water as a new well goes on line east of town, but the city still may face the expense of building a treatment plant to remove contaminants as federal regulations get tighter and tighter.

Engineer Thaniel Monaco, with Miller and Associates of McCook, told the Oberlin City Council on Thursday that the well, just south of U.S. 36, has been drilled and developed, with casing in place. The contractor, Woofter Pump and Well from Hoxie, was working on pipe connections and dirt work, he said.

"They're progressing pretty well on track to date," he told the council. "They were pumping the well at about 300 gallons per minute and the water dropped one foot.

"We have 50 foot of water. We're planning on pumping it more than

Council Roundup

At a meeting last Thursday, the Oberlin City Council:

- Heard that Oberlin should soon have as much as 60 percent more water as a new well goes on line east of town. Story at left.

- Learned that kids who walk south from Oberlin Elementary School will be getting a marked crosswalk at Cass Avenue and Commercial Street. Story below right.

that. It was good gravel. We're very satisfied with what is there.

"The original spec was set for 400 gallons per minute, the largest well (See CITY on Page 5A)

Dresser gets page in Profile this week

This week's edition of *American Profile*, included in *The Oberlin Herald*, includes a feature about the Dresser, a cooperative women's clothing store in Oberlin. Karen Metcalf, manager of the store, said that on Friday she received a telephone call from Jean Clingersmith of New York. She had read the story and told Mrs. Metcalf that she wished they would start a similar store there, as she had trouble finding clothes that fit.

Since then, Mrs. Metcalf has received calls from Kentucky,



Missouri, Oklahoma, Indiana, Virginia, several more from New York, Georgia, and Great Bend. Jody Betts got an e-mail from former Oberlin residents Dr. Bob and Nadine Simpson, now of Pleasant Hill, Tenn.

The story, on Page 4 of the magazine, tells how area women decided to open the store in 1993.



Devils see red at school

AT THE GAME on Friday, Jordan Dreher, (above) Brandi Diederich, Jori Diederich, Stephanie Bruggeman and Rachelle Scott showed their school spirit with red-and-white paint on their faces. That day at the pep assembly, Dani Rouse and Kole Breth (right) walked into the auditorium carrying the flowers and crown for the queen.

— Photos by Patti Richards and Jonna Inman



School district's enrollment up a little

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

The Oberlin School District will have to republish its budget after gaining two students at the high school and eight at the grade school on the first count day.

Superintendent Kelly Glodt said the district published the budget with an enrollment of 248 students at the high school and ended up with 250 on Sept. 20. At the grade school, he said, they budgeted for 206 and counted 214.

With republishing, the budget the district will get \$9,365 more in state

aid. For each student, the district receives \$4,257.

The reason for republishing the budget, said Mr. Glodt, is so the district can get state money for the extra students.

On the count day, said Mr. Glodt, the high school actually lost one student and then gained three.

In the seventh grade, he said, there are 33 students, the eighth grade has 37, ninth grade 38, tenth grade has 48, eleventh grade has 48 and twelfth grade has 46.

At the grade school, the pre-

school/early childhood class has 23 students, kindergarten has 20, first grade 25, second grade has 27, third grade has 35, fourth grade has 30, fifth grade has 31 and sixth grade 23.

There is only one section of sixth grade this year, said Mr. Glodt, since it is a smaller class. All of the other classes have two sections.

At the end of last year, the grade school had 224 students and so did the high school. With a small senior class last year, said Mr. Glodt, the numbers are up some. Last fall there were 228 students at the high school

and 215 at the grade school.

The high school is up 22 students at the school and up one at the grade school.

The district gained two freshmen, four sophomore and two juniors from Jennings. Although they are counted in the 250 number, the district doesn't get state aide for those students.

With the decline in enrollment expected, he said, the district will need to use the three-year average for budgeting. The slight increase this year will help that, too.

Kids to get crosswalk at busy intersection

By STEVE HAYNES

Kids who walk south from Oberlin Elementary School will be getting a marked crosswalk at Cass Avenue and Commercial Street, Police Chief Wade Lockhart told the Oberlin City Council on Thursday.

A request for the crosswalk had come in to the council, but City Attorney Steve Hirsch said the police chief has authority to decide where school crossings go. While drivers are required to stop for pedestrians at any intersection, whether the crosswalk is marked or unmarked, the chief said making this a school crossing should give it a little better visibility. Tickets might be more costly, too.

He and Mr. Hirsch said the mark-

ing would include school crossing ahead and school crossing signs like those on U.S. 83.

"There are a lot of children crossing that intersection in the afternoon," the chief said, "not so much in the morning."

Earlier, the council bought a police car with little discussion and no public comment. Chief Lockhart recommended buying the 2006 Ford patrol car from Tubbs and Sons Ford of Colby, which bid \$21,585.

While Shawnee-Mission Ford bid \$21,023, or \$562 less, the chief said the city would spend more than that just to send two officers to Kansas City to pick up a car. The trip would involve paying two men for two days, he noted, a hotel, fuel and

food, and overtime back in Oberlin. Wagner Ford of McCook bid \$22,590.

"This would be a way to get one that would be more local," the chief said, adding that they'd probably get the new car serviced in Colby while it's under warranty.

Answering a question from the council, Chief Lockhart said fitting the car for police work should cost only about \$100 for decals.

"I do the rest of it," he said, "the light bars, cages, etc." The chief said he was starting to interview applicants for the fourth patrolman's job again, but didn't have too many. None of the current applicants is a certified officer, he said, meaning that the city would

have to pay to train whoever they hire.

On a complaint about weeds and junk at 117 South Beaver, Councilman Rob McFee said he had checked the area.

"I didn't think it was that bad," he said, "but she (the woman who called) does."

In other business, the council: • Agreed to let students develop a Frisbee golf course as part of development at Sappa Park. Rusty Adleman represented the group wanting to lay out the course.

• Heard that there had been more thefts from garages.

"If people see people around where they don't belong, they need to call us," Chief Lockhart said.

* Taxes will go up

(Continued from Page 1A)
 the farms and pays taxes too.
 Has each department been looked at to see if there is anything that can be cut? asked Mr. Grafel. Not with a fine tooth comb, said Mr. Brown. The county is trying to be proactive instead of reactive. In 10 years, they don't want to look back and wonder what they did.
 How much goes from the county to the city? asked Mr. Black. The county just gave \$2,000 to the city for the swimming pool project, and the emergency medical services is run by the county and covers the city, said County Clerk Marilyn Horn, but the county doesn't actually pay anything to other government units.

On the city side, said Ambulance Director Patrick Pomeroy, who serves on the City Council, over half the tax increase was for bond and interest payments. The county though, he said, doesn't have much debt.

If a person has to work 24 hours a day to make a living, Mr. Fowler asked, then how are people going to be able to live here?

If the taxes aren't paid, the money isn't actually in those department's funds, Mr. Brown admitted.

After lunch, the commissioners returned to make a decision about the budget.

Commissioner Ralph Unger suggested cutting \$10,000 from the fire department, since there is \$230,000 in cash there. He knows, he said, that they are planning to buy a truck. The commissioners agreed to the cut.

The other cut came in employee benefits. Instead of increasing \$60,000, the fund will only increase \$30,000 next year.

The board approved the budget with a \$60,000 increase, \$40,000 going to road and bridge for fuel and \$30,000 to employee benefits.

Parade planned

The annual Spook Parade will be held at 4 p.m. on Halloween, Monday, Oct. 31, down Main Street.

The parade, sponsored by the Oberlin Business Alliance, will start at the Decatur County Good Samaritan Center. Kids will then walk from the north end of Main Street south to the intersection of Penn Avenue and Hall Street.

Marchers can then trick or treat at the downtown businesses.

The alliance will also hold a costume contest for businesses. Employees of any business who want to dress up will be judged at 2 p.m. Scrip money will be given to the top three winners.



Practice makes perfect

JUST FOR PRACTICE, teacher Christie Morris marched the band on Grand Avenue north of the high school last Wednesday. On the drums were Rory Wendelin (above) and Dakota Soderlund. Jasmine Pearson (right) played her clarinet as the she marched in place. The band marched and played at the homecoming parade and football game on Friday.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis



* City well to add water into system

(Continued from Page 1A)
 on the (city) system.”

Until testing is done, he added, engineers won't know if the water will have to be blended with the output from other wells or treated to meet federal standards.

Later, he said the new well, No. 12, will replace No. 9, just to the south. The city also pumps from No. 10, closer to the railroad tracks east of town, and from No. 11 south of town. Both produce about 300 gpm, he said, while the new well should get 400.

While the potential is there to pump a lot more water, he added, it remains to be seen if No. 12 and No. 10 can be pumped for long stretches together. They are only about a block apart. Still, No. 9 was producing only 150 gallons per minute lately and its flow had dropped off.

At the meeting Thursday, the council authorized Mayor Ken Shobe to sign agreements with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development agency to accept a \$414,000 emergency water grant to pay for the well and related work.

Dave Barber from the Hays office said the money could be advanced when the city authorizes payments. Mr. Monaco asked for a first payment to contractors of \$66,045.

The grant also covers a new radio system to control all three city wells, he said. Electronic gear will monitor wells and lines and report system status to a new computer at the city power plant. Eventually, he added, the computer may be able to control and track the city's power system as well.

The council approved the pay-

ment request and hiring Robert Grimm as construction observer for the project, a requirement of the federal grant.

From the \$414,000 grant, he said, roughly \$310,000 will go for construction, \$55,000 for the control system, \$30,000 to \$50,000 for engineering and the rest for contingency. Mr. Barber said the government would like to see the whole amount spent on the project.

On another project, Mr. Monaco told the council that the state Department of Health and Environment was insisting on more soil borings around the new waste water treatment plant south of town than he had hoped. The borings are to determine how deep the ground water is in the area, an issue in plant design.

Mayor Shobe asked if the project was about ready to go to bid, and Mr. Monaco said it was. Plans need to be reviewed by the state first, he said.

There may be some delays, he added, and contractors may be unsure how much to bid because supplies are in heavy demand after the hurricanes down south.

“Right now, you cannot get PVC pipe in the nation,” he said. “Nobody will quote it. We can get ductile iron pipe, but that is 25 percent more.”

“Why?” someone asked.

“There are a whole bunch of scared people out there,” Mr. Monaco said, adding that manufacturers say they cannot get plastic resin, a petroleum product, to make the pipe.

The bottom line, he said, is delay.

“I assume the state realizes we're not going to make a Dec. 25 completion date?” the mayor asked.

Dentist recovering after car accident

Oberlin dentist Gary Fredrickson, 50, is recuperating at home from a broken right elbow suffered last Wednesday in a two-vehicle accident at Grainfield.

Dr. Fredrickson said he was on the way to Salina when a pickup ran a stop sign. He was taken by ambulance to the hospital at Quinter, then transferred to Salina Regional Medical Center, where the elbow was placed in a sling. He said the other driver was not injured.

The Kansas Highway Patrol reported that the accident happened about 1.2 miles north of I-70 on K-23.

Dr. Fredrickson was southbound in a 1990 Acura about 6:35 p.m.. The pickup, driven by Alexander J. Zerr, 67, Grainfield, was westbound on County Road DD.

The patrol said the truck pulled in

front of Dr. Fredrickson, and his car smashed into the right cab door of the pickup. The Acura spun 180 degrees and came to rest on the highway facing northwest. The pickup was shoved into the southwest ditch.

Both drivers were wearing seatbelts.

After being released from the hospital, he accompanied his brother sister-in-law, Dr. Kurt and Jean Fredrickson of Salina, to Wichita, where they and their father, Doyle Fredrickson of Wichita, attended funeral services on Thursday for their cousin and nephew, John Fredrickson, 57, son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Fredrickson.

Dr. Fredrickson said that a dentist will be coming to Oberlin to see patients at Fredrickson Family Dentistry on Monday through Thursday until he is able to return to work.

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