

City could take state tax refunds for old utility bills

The Oberlin City Council approved adding an administrative fee to debts owed for utilities and file them with the state so the city can get its money from income tax refunds.

City Administrator Gary Shike said at a meeting Monday that the recommendation came from City Clerk Deanna Castle, who learned about the option at a meeting. When someone moves without paying a utility bill, he said, it can be sent to a state offset program. That debt will then be "offset" from the person's state income tax refund, if any.

The state takes 20 percent of that debt as a collection fee, he said. The city can add an administrative fee of 20 percent and then get the full amount of the debt repaid.

The council decided to add that fee.

The council also approved a building permit for Dale's Fish 'N' Fun without a survey for storage units to be added at the store on U.S. 36 now.

Mr. Shike said owner Dale Young applied for the permit. The city's permits require a survey for anything that costs \$2,500 or more.

Mr. Young and co-owner Joe Dejmal talked to City Attorney Steve Hirsch about the permit, and said he told them the code allows the survey requirement to be deferred to the council.

Both Mr. Dejmal and co-owner

Council Roundup

At a meeting last Monday, the Oberlin City Council:

- Talked about charging liquidated damages to the contractors on the sewer plant because the facility wasn't done by the completion date. Story below.

- Approved adding an administrative fee on debts to the city for utilities. Story at left.

Bob Woolsey came to the meeting. The council decided to approve the permit without a survey.

In other business, the council:

- Started the process of applying to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Administration for a loan to build a water treatment facility. Mr. Shike said the city doesn't know the cost yet.

- Looked at a sample maintenance agreement between the city and Pheasants Forever for Sappa Park. There was no action taken.

- Directed Mr. Shike to negotiate with Johnson Realty for land on West Hall Street between Rodehaver and Cass avenues belonging to McCorkle Motors.

Council may make contractor pay up for unfinished work

Although the city's new waste water treatment plant is in operation, it isn't done, and the Oberlin City Council talked Monday about charging liquidated damages to the contractors because they missed the completion date.

Contractor Midlands Contracting, said City Administrator Gary Shike, was supposed to have the facility done by the end of November, but got an extension for six months to May. The new lagoons south of Sappa Creek aren't completed, he said, and the sludge hasn't been removed from the old ponds.

At a meeting last Monday, said Mr. Shike, the council asked about charging damages for the contractors being late.

Both Chris Miller, owner of Miller and Associates, the engineering firm which designed the plant, and City Attorney Steve Hirsch said the project needs to be finished before they assess any liquidated damages. A letter has been written, said Mr. Shike, and sent to Midlands.

The problem, he said, is that items from the original contract aren't done. The items like a taller fence that was just added aren't done either, but that is understandable.

Mr. Shike said the council members were upset to varying degrees that the plant isn't done.

The council agreed to request a six-month extension on a Community Development Block Grant for \$400,000 for the plant which has to be used by Sunday. The last payment won't be done by then, said Mr. Shike. He said this extension is the only time the city can request.

Workshop set on city budget

The Oberlin City Council plans to start working on the budget for the next year this month, with workshops planned on Thursday and July 19.

City Administrator Gary Shike said the workshop next week will follow a regular council meeting.

All workshops are open to the public. The meetings start at 6:30 p.m. at The Gateway.

Northwest Kansas Virtual Program Non-Traditional Learning Opportunity

(A K-12 Virtual Learning Opportunity) □ □ □ □ □ Information Meetings Scheduled in Northwest Kansas. Join us for more information. □ □ □ □ □

- July 11 at 6 p.m. MT Goodland City Library
- July 12 at 10 a.m. CT Oakley City Library
- July 23 at 6 p.m. CT Oberlin TBA
- July 31 at 6 p.m. CT WaKeeney TBA
- August 1 at 6 p.m. CT Hoxie City Library
- August 2 at 6 p.m. CT Colby Pioneer Memorial Library

For more information contact: Dan Thornton 785-672-3125 dthornton@nwesc.org www.nkesc.org

UPCOMING EVENTS in Kansas

Brought to you in part by Kansas Travel & Tourism Division

KKOA Leadsled Spectacular
July 27-29. Kustom Kemps of America Car Show! Over 500 Kustoms and hot rods, awards and 2 live stages of entertainment!
Thomas Park, Salina, KS, (417) 847-2940 or www.KustomKempsOfAmerica.com

Antique Show & Sale
July 29-30. Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 11am-4 pm. \$5 at door. 33 Dealers Americana & European. WU Lee Arena, 19th & Washburn, Topeka, KS. Call Bill at (785) 271-8151 for information.

National Baseball Congress World Series
July 29-August 12. Round-the-clock baseball with teams from 35 states competing for a National Semi-Pro Championship. Lawrence-Dumont Stadium, Wichita, KS (316) 267-3372, www.nbcbaseball.com

Kansas' Biggest Rodeo
August 2-4. Wild West action with cowboys, bucking broncs, and bull riding!
Rodeo Grounds, Phillipsburg, KS (785) 543-2448, kansasbiggestrodeo.com

When Pigs Fly In & BBQ
August 24-25. Activities for the entire family. McPherson Airport, McPherson, KS (620) 241-3303, www.mcphersonks.org

Hot Air Balloon Classic
August 24-26. 4th Annual Hot Air Balloon Classic & 16th Annual Tumbleweed Festival. Fairgrounds & Zoo, Garden City, KS www.gardencity.net/chamber/ctb

Wild Bill Hickok Rodeo
August 1-4. Fun, action-packed rodeo with Old West flair! Fairgrounds, Abilene, KS (785) 263-4570, www.wildbillhickokrodeo.com

KANSAS
as big as you think™
www.TravelKS.com



Food, fun fuel party at city pool

AT THE OBERLIN POOL last Wednesday, Keith and Roma Grafel (above) cooked hamburgers and sold them during the Fourth of July games to raise money for the pool. Their son Rusty is pool manager. Zach May and Channing Farr (right) helped Kelly Brown take off a wet sweatshirt during a relay.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

Field fires keep firemen on the move

Decatur County firemen had at least three calls to field fires over the week.

A fire burned up 30 to 35 acres of standing wheat Thursday evening just over the Nebraska border and west of U.S. 83.

Decatur County Fire Chief Bill Catchart said firemen went out to help the Beaver Valley Fire Department out of Danbury. Chief Cathcart said he wasn't sure who owned the land, but the field had not been cut

He said he thought the fire started in the road ditch along U.S. 83.

Just before midnight Sunday, said Chief Cathcart, they got a call about a fire 11 miles south of Oberlin and two miles west. He said the firefighters couldn't find the fire, supposedly started by lightning, though they spent some time looking.

The field actually was 17 miles south and two west, he said, and they found a couple of guys who had put what was left out after the rain took

care of the flames.

Another fire was reported about 3 p.m. Sunday, in a field along the state line south of Lebanon, Neb., and north of the Lyle community. Carl Lyon, Norcatrur fire chief, said the fire burned about two acres of wheat and 30 acres of stubble on land farmed by Dennis Walters. He said the fire was caused by the combine. The Beaver Valley department at Danbury also responded to that fire, as well as some farmers with tractors and disks.

New postmaster to take over Thursday

Oberlin's new postmaster starts work this week, with installation ceremonies scheduled for 11 a.m. Thursday at the post office.

Stephen E. Schultz will take Linda Smith's place. Mrs. Smith transferred in January to a job in Arizona. Mr. Schultz has served as postmaster in St. Francis, Winona and Goodland and as officer-in-charge in Lyons.

According to a release by the U.S. Postal Service, Mr. Schultz started

his career in March 1984 as a part-time clerk/carrier in Goodland and later went to full time. In August 1995, he was promoted to postmaster in Winona. He then served as the postmaster in St. Francis and later in Goodland.

Mark Kerschen, manager of post office operations from Hutchinson, will administer the oath of office Thursday. The event is open to the public.

FOUNTAIN SPECIAL FOR THIS WEEK Sundaes



REG. \$1.60 SPECIAL \$1.35

SMALL REG. \$1.35 SPECIAL \$1.10

Family-owned / operated since 1906

Addleman DRUG STORE

Phone 475-2661 — Oberlin — Toll Free 1-800-794-3784 Service and value are the cornerstones of our business.

Discover THE POSSIBILITIES

MORTON BUILDINGS INC.
8 offices serving Kansas • mortonbuildings.com
Commercial • Agricultural • Suburban • Equestrian • Residential
When quality matters **800-447-7436**