

# \* Group talks to consultant about ranch

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There are students who need help, said Mrs. Barth. There is a need for foster-type homes too.

Why, said Mrs. DuQuesne, do you want to even mess with the facility?

"We can't just throw away a resource that could benefit all of us," replied Dr. Cullen.

This is unique that the city and schools are working together, said Mrs. DuQuesne. She said she doesn't see that very often.

What about road blocks? she asked.

The group came up with several potential problems, including lack of personnel, the qualifications of those people, the facility needing some updating, licensing, marketing, the location and community support.

Profit or nonprofit? someone asked.

There are fewer restrictions on private nonprofit schools than on public, said Mrs. DuQuesne, but having a for-profit facility would eliminate all possibilities of grants and besides, a boarding school here probably won't make money.

Being a nonprofit school doesn't mean that you can't make money, though, she added.

What kind of ideas would be good for the school and city to focus on? she asked. The group suggested the facility could be used as a boarding school, conference center, outdoor educational place, camp, alternative education site, controlled hunting and fishing area, lodge, adult drug and alcohol rehabilitation clinic or a National Guard regional training site.

With a boarding school, said Mrs. DuQuesne, there has to be a catch or a hook to sell the program; then the kids would have to be matched to the program.

Lots of times with a boarding school, she said, the teachers are

house staff during the week and then the administrators relieve on the weekends.

Running a boarding school is expensive, she said, and only part of the cost would be covered by tuition from the kids. The rest might come from grants and other sources.

The group talked about each of the ideas and what kind of problems there might be in creating each at the facility. Some things that came up was that a camp or an outdoor educational center would be seasonal and take a lot of money to start up. Someone noted that the town already has a conference center with The Gateway.

The boarding school, said Mr. Haynes, is the only idea that would benefit everyone concerned.

One way to sell a boarding school, said Mrs. DuQuesne, is for it to be a magnet school or one that focuses on one subject area, like arts, math or science. Or the school could target students with learning disabilities.

Parents who send their kids to boarding schools want at least 99 percent of them to go to college, she said, and not just any college but a prestigious one of their choice.

This school district has a good educational product, said Dr. Cullen.

The parents will want to look at ACT and SAT scores of students, too, said Mrs. DuQuesne.

The good thing about this school, said Ms. Moxter, is that kids would be able to be involved in every activity they want. They wouldn't have to pick just one activity, but can be well-rounded. Small class size, said Mrs. DuQuesne, is something the district could brag about.

Although no plans were set, Dr. Cullen did say he would talk with the school board about the process. He also talked with the City Council about the meeting and what needs to be done next at their meeting on Thursday night.

# \* Council wants to be involved

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Council members last Monday about the idea, and they agreed it would help the schools, the city and the entire community.

Dr. Cullen said it would be nice to bring something like a boarding school here. It would be something positive for the schools and whole community, he said, bringing students, money and jobs to town.

This project could probably make eight to 10 jobs, Dr. Cullen said, adding that they would most likely focus on a nonprofit school because they can get more grants and financing. The ranch is an awesome facility, said Dr. Cullen, although it will probably need some repairs.

It will take some time to get the license for a boarding school, he said, so if they want to do something for next fall, they need to get started.

Dr. Cullen said he would like to see five or six people on a committee to come up with a vision and get things going.

Maybe, he said, they should hire

Mrs. DuQuesne for the next three months to seek her advice over the Internet. To start this project up, they will need to find some money.

Mayor Joe Stanley said he talked to the consultant, who told him the facility was impressive.

Councilman Jay Anderson said since the city owns the property and buildings, someone from the council should be on the committee.

This will probably take a lot of work, said Dr. Cullen. It has to be a quality operation, with everyone working together. He said he thinks they can sell the educational process. They will have to sell the facility, too.

Dr. Cullen said he knows the city doesn't have the budget to make this happen and neither does the school.

The plan will probably be a major topic at the school board meeting at 7 p.m. Monday, Oct. 8, at the school district office. Dr. Cullen said, and the council members and city officials are all invited to be there.

# \* Alcohol/drug policy enforced at school

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expelled.

Some people think it should mean to immediate expel from school, he said, that doesn't follow the guidelines set out.

Mr. Haag said all of the suspensions or expel decisions come through his office and he makes the decision.

With the contract, it is signed between the kids, parents and the coach or sponsor. He said that doesn't mean that he doesn't get involved with those disciplinary efforts or finding confirmation.

Parents have come in and turned in kids, said Activities Director Joe Dreher. The school can't take action on something that is just word of mouth though.

Confirmation can include that the kids admits it, the parent comes in and tells about their kid or the police/sheriff give a ticket or give a breath test. Mr. Haag said they only need

one of the confirmation factors.

The school is not the long-arm of the law, he said.

If something happens at a non-school activity or off-hours of school and the school gets confirmation they can act on it. If there isn't any confirmation, said Mr. Haag, the school can't do anything.

If an officer comes in and says a kid was at a party, but there isn't any ticket, it isn't enough, he said, there needs to be proof.

With activities, said Mr. Haag, some of this is up to the judgment of the coach or sponsor.

They can say that a student is going to miss a game or do something extra at practice.

Mr. Haag said they are concerned about kids doing these kinds of things and want to talk with the sheriff's office and police department so they can all be on the same page. It all comes down to the fact that the school needs proof.



BRAD BURMASTER is the new police officer hired to work in the City of Oberlin.  
— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

# Department has new officer

The Oberlin City Police Department has a new face on the force, although he isn't new to Oberlin.

Brad Burmaster graduated from Decatur Community High School in 1987, left to join the Navy and returned home 11 years ago. For the last 10 1/2 years, he has been a corrections officer at the Norton state prison.

Mr. Burmaster, who started with the department on Aug. 21, said he

has always wanted to be a police officer. His father was an officer and so was one of his cousins. It's just something, said Mr. Burmaster, that he has always been interested in.

So far, he said, he is really enjoying his new job. His fellow co-workers have been a tremendous help in teaching and mentoring him.

Although working full time on the force, Mr. Burmaster still needs to go to the state police academy in

Hutchinson for training. He said he might go in November, with the training to last 3 1/2 months.

Mr. Burmaster has a son Aubrey, 9, who lives in Iowa and a step-son Jordan, who attends Decatur Community High School. His wife Yvonne works in McCook.

In his spare time, Mr. Burmaster, said he likes to hunt, ride his motorcycle, play paint ball and attend church activities.

# \* Questions answered by power people

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he said, the city has a lot of due diligence to do.

The contract needs to be written to mutually protect each of you, he said.

"It isn't obvious to me how this can be made to work at this point," said Mr. Herz.

He is talking about the first contract, said Brice Barton, with Sunflower Wind, which has been withdrawn. The agreement on the table is the Right of First Refusal. That states that if Sunflower Wind isn't up and running by a certain date, he said, then everyone is out. The other contracts don't have to be terminated for this to happen.

Wapa power, said Mr. Herz, is an asset. It shouldn't be put to risk. It is a renewable that represents 60 to 70 percent of the power the city uses.

If this agreement puts to risk or causes problems for any power the city might be negotiating with in the next few years it isn't worth it, said Mr. Herz.

Does Sunflower Electric have to buy power from Sunflower Wind? asked Councilwoman Marcia Lohoefer. No, said Mr. Herz.

Bob Johnson, with Sunflower Electric, said the company is at a point that they think they have as much power as needed, but they are always looking toward the future. With wind farms, he said, they look at hourly production and see if it is a good deal. They don't want more than 10 percent wind in the system at a time.

Why only 10 percent? asked Greg Lohoefer. Wind energy, said Mr. Johnson, carries a negative load. Although wind is a good resource, it can't replace regular generation.

Mr. Johnson said the company is a co-op that tries to provide members with long-term, low cost power. He said they would never sign a Right of First Refusal.

If the city does that, why would Sunflower Electric want to waste time to make an offer if they aren't going to get it. Mr. Johnson said he didn't think the agreement was in the best interest of the city or his company.

Sunflower Wind says they can provide hydrogen back up, said Councilman Jay Anderson. Would you bet on it? asked Mr. Johnson.

The group talked about why the power is so affordable. Mr. Johnson said all wind energy requires a subsidy to make it economical. The production tax credit makes it affordable.

Mayor Stanley said he still wants to know why the little amount 5 megawatts at peak, makes a difference to Sunflower Wind? Sunflower Wind, said Mr. Barton, came to support northwest Kansas. If the money is going to be put here, then the company wants the city to support them too.

What happens to the other 95 percent of the power that the company

doesn't sell to the city. That will be sold on the grid, said Mr. Barton.

Jim Widener, general manager of Kansas Municipal Energy Association, said normally when someone receives a power proposal it is confidential while negotiating. It will be difficult to receive other proposals from operators if they know that confidential documents will be given to another company.

So if there is a Right of First Refusal, said Councilwoman Rhonda May, you won't bid. There isn't any competition that way, said Mr. Johnson, because the other company can beat any bid.

There isn't any competition now, said Ms. May. Mr. Johnson said they are working on getting more power opportunities in this area.

Has Sunflower Wind started mar-

keting to sell power on the grid? asked Dr. Anderson. No, not yet, said Mr. Barton. They are waiting for a firm agreement.

The company also offered agreements to Sharon Springs and St. Francis. J.R. Landenberger, the city manager in St. Francis, said the council decided to pass on the proposal. At that point Sunflower Wind pulled all of the proposal back.

# \* City to talk wind

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that they are looking for the best option and agree to that.

There was no motion made.

It sounds like the city can't get past the Right of First Refusal, so why negotiate, said Mayor Stanley. If it dies tonight, said Mr. Barton, he said doesn't know where they go from here.

Mrs. Lohoefer said she would still like to see if the city could negotiate something before totally writing the idea off.

Something between Right of First Refusal and a letter of intent, said Councilwoman Rhonda May.

The letter, said Mr. Ward, is the strongest the city can do.

Does anyone really know the economic development impact for the county when it is tax exempt? asked Commissioner Stan McEvoy. Only some of it is tax exempt, said Mr. Barton. There will be workers here staying, eating at restaurants, and more. But there isn't any property tax, said Mr. McEvoy.

No, not on the turbines, he said.

This has been beat for two hours, said Mayor Stanley, is there a motion? The room was silent, with the whole thing almost dying. Instead Mrs. Lohoefer asked that the city pursue negotiations with Sunflower Wind and see if Mr. Herz is available to help.

The vote passed unanimously.

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