

Council looks at wind negotiations

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
kldavis@nwkans.com

The Oberlin City Council agreed Thursday to pay a consultant to help with negotiations with Sunflower Wind, but only if the city has an actual proposal on the table.

Councilman Jay Anderson said he doesn't want the city paying the expert, Joe Herz who works for Sawvel and Associates in Burr Oak, to help educate the people from Sunflower Wind about the city's system. Mr. Herz has been hired to advise the city if there is an actual proposal

on the table, he said, not to help Sunflower Wind write a proposal.

Dr. Anderson said he hasn't seen a financial statement from Sunflower Wind or information about the hydrogen or methane backup energy sources the firm proposes to build. He added that he hasn't seen anything saying that Sunflower Wind can put the extra energy generated on to the regional power grid.

Dr. Anderson said he talked to other cities in the state that aren't very happy with wind power.

Every time he asked for a plan, he said, it seemed like the company came back with a scheme. Dr. Anderson said he thought the city should stop negotiations until Sunflower Wind could come back "like adults with a plan."

The question is, said Councilwoman Rhonda May, if the city is willing to sign a deal without knowing the ins and outs of the business. She said her feeling is that Sunflower Wind won't ever tell the city everything. If the city isn't willing to sign a contract knowing that, there isn't any

reason to continue negotiating.

Ms. May said she talked with Brice Barton with Sunflower Wind, who said he wasn't able to make it to the meeting. He said he had talked with Mr. Herz, who said the negotiations would probably take 40 hours at a cost of \$6,000.

Mr. Herz wants Sunflower Wind to tell him everything about its finances, process and plans, she said, but Mr. Barton said he didn't want to do that and suggested a contract with performance agreements. If those aren't met, then the contract would

be over.

Maybe the city could pay half for Mr. Herz and Sunflower Wind the other half, Ms. May suggested.

Dr. Anderson said he doesn't want to even pay half.

City Administrator Gary Shike said he talked with Mr. Herz at length, and thinks he is trying to limit how much the city will have to pay. He is asking Mr. Barton questions so he can understand things about the city's power system, like the load on (See WIND on Page 5A)



Kids decorate veggies

WITH A MARKER in his hand, Konnor Witt (top) drew a face on his small orange pumpkin during school Friday. Andrew Wade (right) taped a piece of yarn around his pumpkin while his classmate Ara Marine (above) drew a nose under the sunglasses she put on her large pumpkin.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

City tables application for water loan

A decision to apply to borrow \$4,218,000 from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment revolving loan fund was tabled Thursday night after it failed to get the votes of a majority of the City Council's elected members.

The plan — which includes a water treatment facility, more distribution lines in town, new valves on some lines and drilling a new well at the irrigation well site — has been talked about for over a year now. At the meeting Thursday night, David Blau and Chris Miller with the city's engineering firm, Miller and Associates of McCook, talked with the council about the facility and the loan application.

The city has to build a water treatment plant because of new federal regulations in the Safe Drinking Water Act. The state is responsible for enforcing the federal regulations and the city's water doesn't meet the regulations because it's high in uranium and arsenic.

The council had published a notice of a public hearing at the meeting, but no one except the engineers showed up for the session.

The vote to pass the resolution received two votes in favor from Councilmen Jay Anderson and Ray Ward. Councilwoman Rhonda May voted no.

"I don't believe in the water treatment plant," she said. "I think it's bull shit."

Council members Rob McFee and Marcia Lohofener were absent.

Saying that two members are less than a majority of the five-member council, Mayor Joe Stanley asked City Attorney Steve Hirsch to look up the rules.

After looking it up, Mr. Hirsch said the council probably could go either way. It's up to the mayor, he said.

This loan will last at least 20

Council Roundup

At a meeting Thursday night, the Oberlin City Council:

- Agreed to pay a consultant for negotiations with Sunflower Wind only if the city has an actual proposal on the table. Story above.
- Approved a beer license for the Re-Load at its new location on Main Street. Story to come.
- Tabled a decision to apply to borrow \$4,218,000 from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's revolving load fund to build a water treatment plant after a majority of the members present didn't vote in favor of the decision. Story at left.
- Decided to change some street addresses that are out of order or were mistakes for the new county wide 911 addressing system. Story on Page 3A.

years, he said. It probably isn't worth someone being able to challenge the decision 15 years from now. Someone could ask if the 2-1 vote was enough for it to pass.

Mr. Hirsch said that since two members isn't a majority of the elected members, he suggested the council table the item and bring it back up at a future meeting.

He said the mayor in a third-class city in Kansas doesn't vote except to break a tie.

A motion was made to table it until the first meeting in November. The vote passed two to one, with Dr. Anderson voting no.

Director gets OK to purchase emergency items

Decatur County commissioners gave the emergency management director permission to spend the last \$13,000 in Homeland Security money from 2005 by picking things the county might need from a government catalog.

Director Patti Skubal said they have until Friday to spend the money left from 2005. The county receives the federal grant money from the state to spend on certain equipment.

The money comes with a book of items, from flashlights to generators, that the county can purchase, she said. If the county wants to use the money to buy from another bidder, she said, that has to be into the

state by Wednesday. One item commissioners talked about buying was a portable generator for Norcat, which could be used for their shelter. At the beginning of January, the county helped the City of Jennings purchase a generator for its storm shelter.

Mrs. Skubal said the generator would cost around \$5,000. She suggested building a trailer for the generator so it could be moved if necessary.

Commissioner Ralph Unger suggested finding out how much it would cost to build the trailer and see if the grant money would help pay for it. Mrs. Skubal said the grant (See COUNTY on Page 5A)

Store's paint quilt featured in magazine

Stanley Hardware's unique display of paint formed into a quilt was recently featured in "Paint and Decorating Retailer," a trade magazine.

Joe Stanley, owner of the hardware store on Main Street, said he and Lakin Lahe, who worked at the store over the summer, submitted the article to the magazine.

Mr. Stanley said Miss Lahe wanted to see if the magazine would run something about the store so they found a contact email address and wrote to them. Mr. Stanley said the

magazine sent back some questions for them to answer and they wrote the story together.

In September the story about the quilt made of paint showed up in the magazine.

Mr. Stanley said the quilt was started six months ago. There was a big bare wall behind the paint computer, he said, and they thought they would start putting up samples of paint colors.

At first, he said, they kept track of the names of the colors and whose they were, but after a short amount

of time the list was lost and the quilt began to grow quickly.

He said they plan on expanding the quilt to be taller and wider on the wall. When they sell paint, he said, they ask the customer if they want to see a sample on the wall and most are excited and say yes.

In the magazine article, Mr. Stanley said "The quilt gives customers a chance to see their color on the wall. When customers get two or three colors, they always want to see them side by side. Not only is the color on display but the sheen of

the paint is more visible as well."

Each of the patches in the quilt are made up of three colors and measure about one inch by three.

"It is very important for retailers to continue to try new ideas, and we have tried a lot of different things in the store," said Mr. Stanley in the article. "I did a paint commercial in which my kids poured paint on my head as I explained the advantages of our paint. Right now, we are having a 'tent sale' under a pop-up canopy with some close-out merchandise."

*Wind plan questioned by council

(Continued from Page 1A) an hourly basis. Basically, said Mr. Shike, Mr. Herz said he is teaching him about some things he doesn't know.

"I am not comfortable dealing with them," said Dr. Anderson. "I don't think we can sell the future of Oberlin. Yes, wind is part of the package, but I think we have spent more time working on this than they have."

What if the city signs the contract, the company receives a government subsidy and then puts the wind farm up for sale? he asked. There is no guarantee they will have two employees here.

Councilman Ray Ward said he didn't think Sunflower Wind has given the city enough information to justify the time the council has spent on the proposal.

The city could ask for Sunflower Wind to pay for half of Mr. Herz's

services, said Ms. May.

"Why should we pay for something that already should have been presented?" Dr. Anderson asked.

If Sunflower Wind brings in a genuine proposal, he said, he isn't opposed to paying Mr. Herz to help, but he doesn't want the city paying to educate Sunflower Wind.

If the city receives a good proposal and accepts buying power for loads above what it gets in federal hydropower, that leaves less than a percent of the load the city would purchase from Sunflower Wind, said Mayor Stanley. Why is that less than 1 percent so important? he asked. Is it that the company needs the city to sign on to receive a government subsidy?

The council agreed to pay Mr. Herz for negotiations of an actual contract, but not to pay him to work on a proposal or to educate members of Sunflower Wind.



FIREMEN from Sheridan County (above) worked in the middle of the U.S. 83 K383 junction last week cleaning up from an accident that left a pick up truck (below) just beyond the south ditch. — Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

*County says yes to spending grant money

(Continued from Page 1A) money will pay for the generator but not for the installation.

Can the money be used on a vehicle? asked Mr. Unger. It can, she said, but the vehicle has to be new, said Mrs. Skubal, and the total bill has to be paid out of the grant money, not just part of the price. If they used the money for a vehicle, she said, then they wouldn't have money for the generator in Norcat.

Mrs. Skubal said she talked with the sheriff about using the Dodge Durango when it is available. He told her that was fine, she said, but he will need it in the winter to get around.

That is most likely the same time, said Commissioner Stan McEvoy, that she will need to use it.

Maybe, said Mrs. Skubal, they can make an agreement with the

appraiser's office to use their four-wheel drive vehicle in the winter.

That is something, said Mr. McEvoy, that they would need to talk with the appraiser's office about.

Are there any other items the county needs? asked Mr. Unger.

Mrs. Skubal said she was looking for a power cord for the ambulance defibrillator machine and a wind meter for her vehicle.

If the county doesn't use the money, he said, it will be lost.

Don't just buy items to buy them, said Mr. McEvoy, or things that the emergency staff isn't trained to use.

The commissioners gave Mrs. Skubal permission to look through the book and make decisions about purchases to use the rest of the money. She said she will make a list of what she decides on and bring it in for them to look at.

Register of deeds to get new program

The Decatur County commissioners OK'd the purchase of a new program for vouchers and receipts for the register of deeds' office at their meeting last Tuesday.

Register Judy Gaumer said she thinks the program, which is used by both the road and bridge and the noxious weed departments, will be a real time saver for her. It should really help the next person who serves in the position, she said.

The program, called Voucher and Receipt Add on Module from Star Programming will cost \$2,250 for the register's office and have an annual fee of \$350.

Commissioner Ralph Unger suggested buying the same program for the rest of the county offices and maybe they could receive a package deal and lower annual fee.

Maybe, he said, they should talk with County Clerk Marilyn Horn and see if she is interested in the program.

Deputy Clerk Collenn Geishler said the clerk's office doesn't have

the program because they do vouchers before the month is closed out in the treasurer's office. With this program, she said, if they do the vouchers early, then they will show up on the accounts even though the month isn't closed out.

That means, she said, she would have to wait until the end of the month to make the vouchers and then work day and night to get them done in a short time to have the bills paid by the beginning of the next month.

It basically won't work for them, said Ms. Geishler.

Commissioner Doyle Brown said he had no problem with Mrs. Gaumer buying the program, and the group agreed.

Mrs. Gaumer told commissioners that she won't be running for office again. She said she had made the announce

ment several weeks ago, but never saw anything in the newspaper and wanted to mention it again.

Jennings man injured in farm accident Friday

A Jennings farmer, Galen Tacha, 53, suffered pelvic injuries in a farm accident on Friday afternoon.

According to his aunt, Nadine Tacha, he and her husband, Galen, were parking machinery in the pasture. He was standing on the side of the tractor and a back dual tractor tire ran over him, causing

him to fall.

He was brought by ambulance to Decatur County Hospital, then flown by helicopter to Via Christi Hospital in Wichita, where he underwent surgery. He remains in the intensive care unit and his sister, Jeri Brungardt, of Wichita is with him.

Truck totaled in wreck

An accident last Wednesday ended with a Colorado man taken to the hospital in Colby.

The accident at the intersection of U.S. 83, K 383 and K 23 took place just before 10 a.m., said Trooper Phil Hendrickson.

It happened when Wanda Dickinson, 54, of Oberlin was driving her 1995 Cadillac south on U.S. 83 and ran into a 2005 Ford truck driven by Milfred Harr, 69, of Colorado.

Trooper Hendrickson said Ms. Dickinson probably did stop at the sign, but then didn't see the truck



and crossed the highway to go south onto K 23 when she hit the truck just behind the driver's side door.

Mr. Harr was east bound on U.S. 83 when she ran into his truck. The truck went east after being hit, when the driver lost control. The truck went into the south ditch, rolled one

time and stopped in the right way up facing southwest.

The truck driver was taken to the hospital in Colby by ambulance.

Both vehicles were towed by Butch's out of Colby, said Trooper Hendrickson. Ms. Dickinson, he said, will receive a ticket for failure

to yield right of way.

Trooper Hendrickson said the intersection is part of the area that he works, but he made it to the scene first because he was in Dresden.

Board approves objectives for super

The Oberlin School board discussed some guidelines and goals for the board as well as the superintendent at the meeting this month, approving the guidelines for the board.

Superintendent Dr. Pat Cullen said the guidelines for the board are something they came up with during a work session at the beginning of the year with a representative from McPherson and Jacobson, the company hired to help with the superintendent hiring process. The board did some editing to the guidelines and decided to accept them.

The board approved six guidelines for themselves including:

- educational advocacy which includes making "the education of our children the highest and absolute priority in a manner that is financially responsible to the community as a whole."
- leadership team development focusing and decision making and positive relationships.
- keeping open communications.
- how to handle concerns including listening to individual concerns, value confidentiality, not considering anonymous letters as legitimate complaints and "expressing appreciation to the individual for presenting the concern."
- accepting a meeting format.
- planning, goal setting and accountability including "commit to a comprehensive planning process leading to mutually accepted goals and their accountability to all district stakeholders."

Dr. Cullen said during the same work session the board brainstormed goals for him or board performance objectives. These are still a work in progress, he said, as he thinks the board wants to add something about budgeting, finances and long-term planning.

The board will discuss the goals at the meeting on Monday, Nov. 12

The current goals or board performance objectives for the superintendent include:

- Provide the board with data and information that is necessary for them to develop an honest and com-

plete understanding for the success of all students.

- Provide to the board a complete explanation of the staff evaluation procedures and process.

• Improve public relations and communication with the board, administration, staff and community.

- With the assistance of McPherson and Jacobson, the board will develop "Board Operating Principles" to define the board and how they will operate as an organization and board.

Janssen Kool Honda's Grand Opening Celebration

October 24th - 27th

Wednesday	Cash drawings at 10-2-4.
Thursday	3 drawings every hour for \$20 gift certificates
Friday	Every hour have a chance to step in the money machine and grab as much money as you can. (10-4)
Saturday	Free barbecue from 11:30 - 1:30 p.m. Hayrack rides

Huge discounts on New and Pre-owned vehicles. Prices will never be this low!

Over 100 vehicles to choose from.

Pre owned units - Choose from Honda, Chevrolet, Ford, Nissan, Mercury, Lincoln, Chrysler, Dodge, Hyundai, Buick, Pontiac

The Kool family and the Janssen family have teamed up to offer you one of the best selections of vehicles in Southwest Nebraska and Northwest Kansas.

www.janssenautogroup.com

308-345-3600 - 1-877-584-6632

JANSSEN HONDA KOOL HONDA

West 8th & C Street • McCook

Austin Hawkins
Ben Garcia
Mark Kool

Theme needed for holiday parade

The Oberlin Business Alliance is gearing up for the annual light parade the Friday after Thanksgiving.

With only 30 days left until the big parade the alliance needs help picking a theme.

- Options include:
- When Christmas Lights Shimmer, Christmas Spirits Glimmer.
 - Light up on Santa's Good List.

• Rockin' and Dancin' round the Christmas Tree cause Oberlin, Kansas is the place to be!

- Look! He'll be comin' down your chimney.
- Santa Blows Into Oberlin Kansas.
- Have a Holly Jolly Christmas.

Anyone who wants to make a suggestion which theme the alliance should go with can call Gary Walter at The Bank at 475-2216.