

Having fun while learning



AT THE GRADE SCHOOL last week, Leta Meitl showed students including Konnor Fortin, left, Nick Ashley and Chris Anderson what a cow's eye looks like while she dissected it. — Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

County raises hourly pay for volunteers

The Decatur County commissioners approved increasing rates to \$20 a call for fire department volunteers and for local calls for the ambulance service at the meeting last Tuesday.

At a previous meeting, Ambulance Director Linda Manning asked about increasing the pay rates for volunteers on the service, but the commissioners wanted to check into the reimbursement rate for the fire department volunteers first.

Fire Chief Bill Cathcart said he can put the fire calls on the pay sheets, but was told in the past that he didn't need to. Chief Cathcart said he has all of the runs and meetings that the volunteers get paid for in his records.

Currently, he said, the firefighters receive \$15 a call and for each meeting. The meetings, he said, may last a couple hours when they do training and go over the fires.

The commissioners asked about advertising for more volunteers for the fire department. Chief Cathcart said word of mouth seems to be working pretty well. When the department gets new volunteers, he said, it does cost to get them outfitted with gear. Chief Cathcart said he tries to keep as many volunteers for the gear he has.

The commissioners approved the increase to \$20 per person for

each fire call, fire meeting and local ambulance calls.

The commissioners also changed the rate for a local emergency call from \$290 to \$300 per call. This is the rate the user would pay.

The group did talk about the National Incident Management Training for Chief Cathcart with Emergency Management Director Patti Skubal.

Mrs. Skubal said there are new objectives which will affect the fire department. In order to stay in compliance, she said, Chief Cathcart has to get the training.

Chief Cathcart said he hasn't been able to attend because it cuts into his trash hauling schedule. He said he thinks he needs to have some compensation or help to cover his regular job while he attends the training.

The two discussed fire calls and who is in charge. Commissioner Doyle Brown said Chief Cathcart should remember he is in command during a fire call. Chief Cathcart said Mrs. Skubal is the emergency management director and should report back to the commissioners on situations.

She said she is working on scheduling a local emergency preparedness committee meeting and hopes Chief Cathcart will be there as well as the other department heads.

Council OKs lease on farm ground

The Oberlin City Council approved a three year lease with an Oberlin man for the farm ground around the Oberlin airport north of town at a meeting Thursday, Jan. 17.

City Administrator Gary Shike said most of the ground is on the south side of the airport and east of the runway.

Mayor Joe Stanley said the city sent Greg Lohofener the lease and he signed it and sent it back.

The lease is done every three years, said Mr. Shike. The only thing that changed from previous years is that the city added a clause to let either party out of the lease before the three years are up just in case.

The council approved the lease, with Mr. Lohofener paying \$100 a year and also agreeing to continue mowing around the hangars and runway.

Councilman Ray Ward asked Mr. Shike if he had checked into the

property on north U.S. 83 just north of C&H Powerline and across from Sappa Valley Construction, because someone is parking vehicles for sale there.

Mayor Joe Stanley said they would check to see if the city owns it. If it is city land, he said, the people will be asked to move the vehicles.

In other business, the city: • Heard that someone asked Mayor Stanley why events at The Gateway aren't publicized more. Mayor

Stanley said if a group is putting on an event, normally the group will advertise. If a private party is putting on an event, he said, they can choose to advertise it or not. The event can also be put on the sign out in front if people want.

• Talked about the cemetery plan and the idea of putting together a list of approved trees and other plants that people can put in at the cemetery

Grant applications signed by county

The Decatur County commissioners signed two grant applications for the Decatur County Health Department to ask for just over \$10,000 in money passed from the federal to the state government for bioterrorism and influenza pandemic planning.

Health Administrator Marilyn Gamblin said both grants are to help the department prepare in case either of the events happen here.

The bioterrorism grant is for \$5,384. The department will receive \$9,138 this year, although the department had received \$3,754 of the money.

Ms. Gamblin said the other one is for \$5,083 for the pandemic flu.

The commissioners approved

the two and signed the applications.

Ms. Gamblin said she would like to start looking for a new laptop computer with some of the grant money. She asked if she could start getting bids.

Commissioner Stan McEvoy said she should probably wait until the department actually has the money.

Ms. Gamblin said she is starting to think about and work on the annual health fair, which is normally in April. She said she is trying to work with the hospital.

She said she also talked to Barb Whitney, the new manager, at the Oberlin Clinic, and the health department will start doing all immunizations, instead of both giving some.

Recycling program receives new baler

The Decatur County commissioners talked with the noxious weed director about the recycling program and improvements he would like to do to the building being used for the baler.

Noxious Weed Director Gaylen Huntley said the baler is ready to be wired, but he would like to order some more wiring to handle the extra lifting in the building and receptacles.

Mr. Huntley said the building could actually use some better lighting so he would like to check into that.

Commissioner Stan McEvoy said Mr. Huntley should talk with Kevin Brown, with Sappa Valley Construction, about the lights, since he put in some good ones in the new Livestock Building at the fairgrounds. The lights were inexpensive and economical to run, said Mr. McEvoy.

Mr. Huntley said he would like to purchase a fork lift for the recycling program and is checking into one. The commissioners suggested some places for him to look including the

state and federal surplus.

Sarah Fredrickson, with the noxious weed department, said Mr. Huntley has picked up a lot of cardboard from businesses in Oberlin. They plan to set up barrels behind the Re-Load and American Legion for glass only.

The commissioners suggested Mrs. Fredrickson check at businesses about a pickup fee.

Mr. Huntley said he isn't sure how they will keep up with the recycling program and still use Mrs. Fredrickson for chemical spraying.

In other business, the commissioners:

• Heard Mr. Huntley and Mrs. Fredrickson have taken the first level of the National Incident Management Systems training. Curtis Richards, with the department, still needs to take it.

• Heard Mr. Huntley will have a large chemical purchase in February.

Clinic plans open house

Anyone wanting a chance to sneak a peek at the new speciality clinic at the Decatur County Hospital will get a chance to do so on Sunday, Feb. 10 during the open house sponsored by the hospital.

Administrator Lynn Doeden said the open house starts at 1:30 p.m. with everyone invited to come walk around the speciality clinic and see the hospital's newest addition. They will serve cookies, coffee and tea.

The clinic includes a check-in-desk, stress test room, procedure room, restrooms, storage areas, two exam rooms and offices. It was built this past year to provide a place for traveling doctors, or speciality clinics to have a place to see patients. Currently the hospital has speciality clinics in four areas including cardiology, urology, oncology and ophthalmology, which helps patients so they do not have to travel.

The new clinic cost \$800,000 to build with \$150,000 coming from the hospital board and \$650,000 from the United States Department of Agriculture as a loan. Although

the paperwork has been received on the loan, the hospital hasn't actually received the money.

Liquidation Sale Continues on the following items:

- Carlton Cards & Party Goods
- Gift Wrap • Leaning Tree Cards • Gifts • Selected Jewelry • Office Supplies

* Sale of items effective Jan. 29 to Feb. 4

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