

Motion to apply for loan fails again

By **KIMBERLY DAVIS**
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The Oberlin City Council defeated a motion to apply for \$4 million to build a water treatment plant from the state Revolving Loan Fund on a 3-2 vote Thursday, putting the unpopular project back on hold.

After over an hour and a half of discussion about the plant and possible fines the city might have to pay if it isn't built, Councilman Ray Ward made a motion to borrow the money from the state.

Council countdown

At a meeting last Thursday, the Oberlin City Council:

- Defeated a resolution to apply for a \$4 million loan for a water treatment plant on a 3-2 vote. Story at left.
- Talked briefly about a recent

meeting of groups with an interest in Sappa Park. Story to come.

- Agreed to declare three vehicles as surplus property and advertise for sealed bids. Story to come.

After more discussion and questions about how long it took the Nebraska state government and the U.S. Environmental Protection

Agency to fine McCook over the same issue, council members Rhonda May, Rob McFee and Marcia Lohoefer voted not to borrow the money. Councilmen Jay Anderson and Ward voted for it.

The plant supposedly is needed to meet new federal requirements that uranium, a radioactive metal, in drinking water can't be over 30 parts per billion and arsenic, a heavy-metal poison, can't be over 10 parts per billion.

The city has uranium in the water wells at 40, 60 and 100 parts per billion, said Chris Miller, owner of Miller and Associates, the McCook engineering firm which does the city's work.

If the city blends wells 10 and 12, said Mr. Miller, the arsenic level gets below the limit, but blending can't get the uranium levels where they need to be.

The \$4 million, he said, includes other improvements to the water

system, so only \$3 million is really for the plant? Ms. May asked. Mr. Miller said that is right. About \$1 million of the money would go to replace water mains and valves, mostly in the southern part of the city.

The coagulation filtration plant is designed to take uranium and arsenic out of the system, said City Administrator Gary Shike, but won't do anything about nitrate

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Board to vote again after a tie last week

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After six interviews and two votes ended in a 3-3 tie last Tuesday, the Oberlin School Board decided to table a decision on a new board member until officials could check with lawyers on what to do.

What they found out is the board will just have to keep voting until the tie is broken, said Superintendent Pat Cullen. Board members had wondered if they could just flip a coin. The position will be on the agenda for the next board meeting at 7 p.m. Monday at the district office.

With a little over 30 people in the audience last week in a special meeting at the high school cafeteria, the board voted on large pieces of paper marked with the member's name.

The first vote picked out Doug Brown and Jerry Chambers as front runners, eliminating four other candidates. The second ended in 3-3 tie. The board decided to table the decision, not knowing whether they should flip a coin or what.

After calling the legal department at the Kansas Association of School Boards last Wednesday, Dr. Cullen said the board will need to keep voting until one of the candidates wins a majority.

The appointment for the board is needed because of the resignation of Delayne May, who quit in January after moving to Lawrence. Her term runs to June 30, 2009.

Six candidates were interviewed, including Mr. Brown, who works at Frenchman Valley Co-op in McCook; Mr. Chambers, with the U.S. Army; Dr. Gary Fredrickson, an Oberlin dentist; Abby Hissong, insurance agent; Jess Randel, technology manager at Colby Community College; and Colleen Rittmann, who works at the Decatur County Feed Lot.

Before starting the process, board President Dewayne Jackson explained that although the meeting was open to the public, the board was asking the candidates to leave during the interviews. He said the board couldn't make any of them

leave, but would appreciate it if

they did. Mrs. Rittmann and Mr. Randel chose to wait in the hall for their turn in the hot seat, while the others stayed in the room.

Although the meeting began at the district office, Mr. Jackson looked at the crowd and made the call to move it to the cafeteria.

The audience included more than 30 people, mostly district staff and teachers. There were also a few Oberlin business owners and a handful of retired educators.

Each of the candidates was asked the same 12 questions.

Mr. Brown said that with his business experience and education, he thought he could be a real asset to the board. He said he has experience with budgets, cash flow and working with financial statements.

He said if the district had the money, he would like to see seat belts put in all of the school buses, especially for country kids. It would be a big plus, he said, adding that declining enrollment is the district's greatest challenge.

In dealing with a hostile patron or staff member or even with a reporter, Mr. Brown said, the board needs to act together. One member can't go out on a limb, he said.

He said he has served on the Oberlin-Decatur County Economic Development Corp. board for seven months, on the Chamber of Commerce board for nine years, on the Liberty Township Board and the stewardship board at St. John's Lutheran Church.

Mr. Chambers said with two children in the school district, he has a vested interest in the schools. He said he not only wants to help with the board, but wants to be part of the team, continuing with the success of the district.

If the schools had the money, he said, and after some research and horror stories of the No Child Left Behind Law, he would bring back everything every child wants to learn about. Then he would work on the buildings and pay the teachers and administrators better.

In dealing with upset patrons, staff or the media, Mr. Chambers

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Disease results negative for deer killed in area

Test results from the 36 deer taken in Decatur County by the Kansas Wildlife and Parks Department all came back negative, meaning there might not be a major problem with chronic wasting disease in the county after all.

Two weeks ago, department biologists came to the county to take 25 to 50 more deer, ending up with 36 to test for the fatal disease.

At the beginning of the month, the department reported that three deer shot during the fall hunting season had tested positive for the disease. For several years now, the department has asked hunters to send in samples to test their deer for the disease. The illness hasn't been proven to be transmittable to humans or cattle, but is fatal in deer, elk and moose.

With only 11 total tests last fall and three of them positive, the department wanted a bigger sample.

Monday afternoon, Lloyd Fox, big game/furbearer program coordinator for the department, said all

of the deer tested negative, which has the biologists scratching their heads. The previously small sample size was giving the experts nightmares, he said. Now they're asking if it was a fluke.

Male deer move around a lot, said Mr. Fox, so although all three were taken in the same area, along the Sappa Creek, that doesn't mean that is where the deer would be roaming today if alive.

The question now, he said, is did the hunt just not hit the hot spot for the disease, or is there a hot spot here? It's possible the spread of the disease in Decatur County might just not be as bad as originally thought with the small sample size.

These results show that the disease isn't as prevalent in Decatur County as originally feared.

Mr. Fox said he was busy Monday calling everyone who accepted deer meat after the harvest two weeks ago, to let them know that the meat is OK. The department gave away over 700 pounds of meat.



DAVE AND SHERRY BERGLING embraced at their home (above), where Mr. Bergling fell down a flight of stairs at the end of December, bruising his brain. Ward Votapka (below left), Kirk Brown and Robert Groneweg helped set up for a benefit dinner for Mr. Bergling on Saturday at the American Legion. — Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

Man makes recovery

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Dave Bergling says he could have died after a fall late in December at his house. In fact, maybe he did, once or twice.

Relatives said he wasn't breathing when they found him at the bottom of the basement steps. They revived him and called an ambulance. Emergency medical technicians feared he could have broken his spine. They treated him gingerly.

Doctors found a couple of bruises on his brain, but had trouble getting a clear scan because Dave, a former Army sergeant who doesn't sit still much, kept trying to get up.

At first, his wife Sherry said, it seemed like he wasn't healing very fast.

But with determination, help from a lot of friends, hundreds of prayers — and maybe a little luck — he's pulled through, passed all of his tests, and although he says he's just lost three weeks of his life, he's back at work and pushing forward.

Mr. Bergling, advertising manager for *The Oberlin Herald*, fell down the basement steps at his home after midnight on Saturday, Dec. 29. His wife said she had fallen asleep on the couch in front of the wood burning stove, where her husband had started a fire.

Mrs. Bergling's children and grandkids were visiting. They had planned to leave that day, but Mr. Bergling had suggested they stay the night and he would make chili for lunch.

Dave was still up, Sherry said, talking with the kids. He went to grab his jacket and go outside, and they heard him fall down the back basement stairs, which



are near the coat rack and the back door.

Mr. Bergling said the stairs were narrow, padded with carpet and slanted down a little.

Her kids, said Mrs. Bergling, heard Dave fall. Her daughter Eva and her granddaughter's boyfriend, Creighton, found Mr. Bergling at the bottom of the stairs. He wasn't breathing, they said, and they started doing cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

The kids resuscitated him, said Mrs. Bergling, and woke her up. He was lying at the bottom of the stairs, she said, and he talked to her, saying "I died" three times. In the meantime, said Mrs. Bergling, her granddaughter, Audrea, called 911 and dispatch wanted to know where they lived. (The house is at the east end of Victoria Street, in a rural part of south Oberlin.)

"My granddaughter didn't know the address," she said, "but found a

piece of mail on the counter in the kitchen. That's why the (enhanced) 911 update is such a good idea."

When the ambulance crew arrived just after 1 a.m., they didn't know if Dave had broken his back or neck in the fall, she said. They strapped him to a back board and loaded him in the ambulance.

Mrs. Bergling said when she turned around from attending to Dave, her daughter Stephanie handed her her coat, shoes and purse, and she was ready to go.

At the Decatur County Hospital, said Mrs. Bergling, they scanned Dave's brain and tried to do a body scan, but he wouldn't hold still. Dr. Stellan Andrea said there were two bruises on the brain and advised that he needed to be flown to a larger hospital in either Kearney, Neb., or Denver.

Mrs. Bergling said she had heard good things about the Good Samaritan Hospital in Kearney and

the weather was bad in Denver, so they headed to Nebraska.

Workers in the emergency room had to hold Dave down, she said, because he was agitated. The couple had to wait for the fixed-wing plane to arrive. She said she was told a helicopter wouldn't be able to land in Oberlin because of the snow.

While they waited, said Mrs. Bergling, someone at the hospital asked her if she wanted to go home and pack a bag. She looked at them and said she had her purse and didn't need anything else. Really, she said, she just didn't want to leave her husband.

Mrs. Bergling was able to ride in the air ambulance with her husband to Kearney. At the larger hospital, she said, the doctors did a complete body scan. They found the two bruises in the brain, one above each ear. The brain surgeon wanted to

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