

City tables decision on airport

By KIMBERLY DAVIS

k.davis@nwkansas.com

The Oberlin City Council agreed Thursday to put off a decision about a petition to bar spending on a new runway at the city airport until the first meeting in October, allowing time for another informational meeting on the project.

At the council's meeting last Thursday, Sid Metcalf, a member of the Oberlin-Decatur Area Economic Development Corp. board, asked the council to table the decision so people can get straight information on the proposed runway project for a "town hall" meeting.

Many years ago, he said, Oberlin turned down a rail line, then other things that should have been here. Let's not rush into anything here, said Mr. Metcalf, and stub our toe like the city's forefathers have done.

Decatur Tomorrow has offered to bring someone in to mediate the meeting, he added.

Councilwoman Rhonda May said she would like to plead for everyone to be civil in their disagreements.

"We can disagree without being disagreeable," she said. "If we are lucky, all of us in the room will still be neighbors 20 years from now. I plan on being friendly neighbors with everyone in this room, even if we disagree on this issue."

"We need to stumble forward as amicably as possible."

Although there were more than 40 people at the meeting, only a handful got up to talk about the airport project and the petition opponents filed with the council.

Meeting next week

Decatur Tomorrow will host an airport informational conversation at 7 p.m. next Wednesday in the high school cafeteria.

Gary Anderson, with the steering committee, said the group will ask for a short point of view presentation from the petitioners and the airport committee before opening up the floor for questions.

Terry Woodbury, with Public Square Communities, will moderate the questions and get them to the right people to be answered.

This is not a debate, said Mr. Anderson, but a positive conversation on the airport, regardless of a person's point of view. He added that the steering committee wants people to feel welcome to come express their opinions.

The group hosted a similar style conversation about Sappa Park in 2008, bringing all interested parties to the table.

Mr. Anderson said the conversation is scheduled to be done at 8:30 p.m.

The airport petition, said City Administrator Austin Gilley, was (See AIRPORT on Page 8A)

Few citizens speak on airport issue

With a packed house at the Oberlin City Council meeting last Thursday, only a few signed their name on a sheet at the entrance so that they could speak.

Those in the audience were asked to sign at the door if they wanted to speak during the public comment period, so that they would have the names for the minutes.

Mayor Joe Stanley said he would like to keep each person's comments to three to five minutes.

Former Mayor Chuck Frickey, who commented that he used to sit

on the other side of the table, asked to talk about a petition to bar spending on a new runway at the airport. As a citizen, said Mr. Frickey, he, like many others, has unresolved questions in his mind. He added that he didn't think the council meeting was the proper time to get those answers. The information needs to be presented to everyone, with time for a conversation back and forth.

If the ordinance is adopted, he said, it means for 10 years the city is prohibited from spending money, (See PEOPLE on Page 8A)



AT THE FAIRGROUND on Sunday morning, Gary Orr used a tractor to pull an old baler during the 29th Annual

Mini Sappa Antique Engine and Thresher Show.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

Spectators learn about antique machinery

Spectators milled around the Decatur County Fairground, looking at antique working engines, quilts, items to buy, cars, machinery and other displays all weekend as the annual Mini Sappa Antique Engine and Thresher Show brought out people of all ages.

The show Saturday and Sunday brought in people from two states and 18 towns, said Liane Martin, secretary of the group. Entries included 36 tractors, six engine exhibitors with several engines, 10 mowers, 19 vehicles and others.

For each day, the top five tractors and cars are chosen.

On Saturday, the top five tractors were:

- a 1950 Lanz Bulldog owned by Bill Anderson of Superior, Neb.
- a 1947 John Deere D owned by George and LaDonna Brown of Jetmore.
- a 1953 IH Super M owned by

Eugene Anderson of McCook.

- a 1951 IHC H owned by Tom Solko of Herndon.

- a 1937 Farmall F20 owned by Bernard Hinrichs of Bruning, Neb.

On Sunday, the top five tractors were:

- a 1938 John Deere B owned by Ray and Ruth Griffith of Phillipsburg.

- a 1942 Farmall H owned by Toby Griffith of Glade.

- a 1951 Minneapolis Moline BF owned by Vickie Lippelmann of Oberlin.

- a 1950 Allis Chalmers owned by Norman Wendel of Almena.

On Saturday, the top five vehicles were:

- a 1949 Chevy two-door Fleetline owned by Alvin Koenig of Colby.

- a 1928 Whippet 95 Coach owned by Jim Marshall of Ober-

lin.

- a 1954 GMC pickup owned by Gus Wolters of Oberlin.

- a 1965 Chevy Corvette owned by Gary Orr of Oberlin.

- a Willys M-38 Army Jeep owned by Gary Allen of Oberlin.

On Sunday, the top five vehicles were:

- a 1927 Chevy Landau Coupe AA owned by Jim Marshall of Oberlin.

- a 1973 Chevy C10 pickup owned by Everett Shuler of Oberlin.

- a 1950 Ford F5 truck owned by Tom Solko of Herndon.

- a 1955 Willys U.S. Marine Corp Jeep M38A1 owned by Col. Allen of Oberlin.

- a 1991 Cushman Truckster Police Car owned by Tom Solko of Herndon.

On Saturday afternoon, James West, Bob Steele, Buche Martin,

Al Berndt, Lis Boucher, Gary Sanger and Gary Hammersmith tried their hand at the stock garden tractor pull.

Winners of the kids' pedal tractor pull that day:

- Brynna Adleman, first, and Tara Larson, second in the 3-6 year-olds.

- Blake Cole, first in the 7-10 year-olds.

- Nick Cole, first, and Lane Cole, second in the 10-13 year-olds.

Both days, the group had a concession stand with breakfast and lunch. The Decatur Community High School Kayettes did a great job working in the concession stand, said Mrs. Martin.

Saturday evening the group held a dinner and Sunday morning a nondenominational church service, which was well attended.

Sappa Park to get working bathrooms

The Oberlin City Council agreed Thursday to spend just under \$17,000 to help put bathrooms inside the existing shelter house at Sappa Park.

Kimberly Davis, co-convenor of the Sappa Park Committee, said the committee's been working on a grant from the Kansas Department of Commerce's Tourism and Attraction program.

She said the committee wants to put in an "eloo" outhouse at the

first campground, two handicap restrooms and showers in the shelter house, a bulk underground storage tank, four picnic tables and four benches, paint the shelter house, erect an entry sign to the park, place four heavy-duty trash cans and playground equipment.

On his arrival, Gary Anderson, another committee member, took over the presentation.

The grant is a 60/40 match, he said, with the state paying 40 per-

cent. He said the cost is estimated at \$54,791 for everything, 60 percent of that is \$32,874 with \$3,000 from the Oberlin Convention and Visitors Bureau, \$3,000 in in-kind work, \$10,000 from the Sappa Park Fund and \$16,874 from the city.

The idea is to use the existing spaces in the shelter house, said Mr. Anderson, where the rest rooms originally were on the north side of the breezeway. The park committee, he said, decided to keep the

project with as low maintenance as possible with stainless steel fixtures and walls and floors that can just be sprayed down.

The idea is that whoever is maintaining it can take a hose in and just wash it down.

The underground holding tank, said Mr. Anderson, would have to be pumped out when it's full. Councilman Bill Riedel had suggested hooking a dump station for motor (See COUNCIL on Page 8A)

Woman to compete in Europe

By STEVE HAYNES

s.haynes@nwkansas.com

Oberlin's Jo Ann Lerew leaves Friday for the Czech Republic. It's her first trip to Europe, and she admits she's pretty excited, but this is not exactly a vacation.

After landing in Prague, she and her handler will take a train across the eastern European nation to Ostrava for the 18th Women's and 27th Men's World Masters Powerlifting Championship competitions.

Her red, white and blue uniform is packed, her ticket is ready and, though it's all a little unreal, she's primed to compete in the women's 40-to-50 category.

So how does a girl from Kansas wind up at an international weight-lifting competition?

"I started when I was 40," she said. "I signed up with a personal trainer to get into shape and lose some weight."

He said I was very strong for a girl."

At the time, she said, she was living in Spearfish, S.D., where she lived for 15 years. The gym



AT HER DESK, JoAnn Lerew worked on a project in *The Oberlin Herald*. Ms. Lerew leaves this week for Europe, where she will compete in an international weight-lifting championship.

— Herald staff photo by Steve Haynes

formed a powerlifting team, and they started going to meets.

"We had a lot of fun," Ms. Lerew said. "There was a lot of camaraderie."

We took our medals back and (See WOMAN on Page 8A)

Scores low in reading

The Oberlin School District didn't make the "adequate yearly progress" in reading at the high school last year, as required by the No Child Left Behind Act, a problem which eventually could threaten the district's federal money.

Superintendent Duane Dorshorst and Principal Charlie Haag gave the board members the numbers during their meeting last Monday.

At the high school, they said, 57 percent of the 31 students in the free and reduced lunch program made the number. The standard required is 76.7 percent.

Mr. Dorshorst said they've put a challenge out to the teachers to find ways to help these kids score higher on these tests, including different ways to teach reading.

He said the district would have to fail to meet those standards for two years before it would put on "school improvement" status.

This is the first time in a long time, said Mr. Dorshorst, that the district hasn't met all of the required numbers during state assessment tests.

The adequate yearly progress provision requires schools to make improvements in their scores. Besides math and reading, he said, the government looks at attendance and graduation rate.

Statewide, said Mr. Dorshorst, 172 schools didn't meet adequate yearly progress goals. Of those,

School Roundup

At the monthly meeting last Monday, the Oberlin School Board:

- Talked about the upcoming swine flu vaccine sessions and sending information home to parents so the shots can be given at school. Story to come.

- Accepted the resignation of an assistant coach. Story to come.

- Heard the district didn't meet the adequate yearly progress standards in reading at the high school last year. Story at left.

- Approved goals for the district for the new year and members to sit on committees to work toward those goals. Story to come.

110 missed the mark in reading and 122 in math. Last year, he added, 138 schools missed the goals in 34 districts. Every year, he said, that number will go up. That's because the standards keep going up, said Member Dan Nedland.

Statewide, the lowest scores are in the text-type questions on the reading portion of the test, said Mr. Dorshorst. Some of those are going to be taken out, but they will be replaced with other questions.

Up in Smoke



AT LUNCH TIME on Saturday, Roger and Judy Cochran checked the goodies on their grill during the Up in Smoke Barbecue Cookoff at Sappa Park. The all-day grilling competition ended with music and dinner that evening.

— Herald staff photo by Cynthia Haynes

*Airport ordinance tabled

(Continued from Page 1A) received by the city on Tuesday. The ordinance proposed by the petition, if passed, would ban any spending on a new runway for 10 years. The council has four choices, he said: it can choose to table the decision until the first meeting in October, can take no action for 20 days and then the ordinance will go to an election, disapprove the ordinance or send it to an election.

All of the elections would be conducted by the county election officer, the clerk, he said, adding that he doesn't know of any elections coming up so it would have to be a special election.

If the council decides to just adopt the ordinance, he added, the members could set an election to rescind it at any time.

Mr. Gilley said he's talked with the project engineers, and if the ordinance does pass, alternative No. 4 in the 2007 airport study might work to extend the life of the old north-south runway. It would close 615 feet on the south end of the runway for a "protection zone" and then extend the existing runway to the north for a total of 4,000 feet. With that length, he said, 10-passenger planes under 12,500 pounds could land, and that would include most air ambulances.

The plan will fix problems with the line of sight, widen the runway and improve the lights, he said. With that runway, he said, the EagleMed Kingair, or air ambulance, could land.

Circumstances like weather, weight of the plane and other things determine whether or not a plane can land, he added.

A 4,000-foot runway, said Mr. Gilley, is not long enough for business planes like the one Bus and Coach International uses. The city

did contact the bus company to see if the company could commit anything further, and the firm said it still supports the project.

The No. 4 alternative, said Mr. Gilley, wasn't considered in the past. The cost then was estimated at \$1.83 million, but that's increased to \$3 million. The Federal Aviation Administration's 90 percent match would work for the project, leaving the city and state to pay around \$300,000.

If the fairground ever stop using the north parking lot, he said, the city could extend the runway 600 more feet, just 200 feet shorter than what the administration said it would pay for on a new runway.

The Kansas Department of Transportation said if the ordinance is adopted or passed by election, the \$1 million the state has offered for a new runway would be gone. The city could then reapply for \$500,000, he said.

The question posed to him, said Mr. Gilley, was if the ordinance was approved, whether the city could continue to spend money on the existing runway. He said he's not a lawyer, but the way he interprets the ordinance, if it passes, the city could continue improvements and expansion of the existing runway. If challenged, he said, the city would need a legal opinion.

Air ambulances are typically Kingairs? asked Councilman Bill Riedel. That's what came off the EagleMed website, said Mr. Gilley. He said he thought the minimum runway length was a little over 3,700 feet.

The council has 20 days to act on the petition, asked Mayor Joe Stanley, but how long does it have to hold the election. Mr. Gilley said he believed it is 90 days.

Although the City of Norcatur

might have an election before the end of the year, said City Attorney Steve Hirsch, there aren't any others scheduled.

If the petition were to pass, asked Mr. Riedel, would that open the door for the county to take over the project? This has no binding effect on the county, replied Mr. Gilley.

If the council adopted the ordinance, he added, he doesn't think it would prevent the county or the economic development group from pursuing federal stimulus money for the project.

"But the city owns the airport?" said Councilwoman Rhonda May. "Why would the county be interested?"

Mr. Gilley said he's not sure that the county would be.

In addition, said Ms. May, two-thirds of the people live in the city, so why should they expect the county to take it over?

Bus and Coach International (based in Jennings) was the main driver for the project, said Mr. Riedel, and most of the planes are owned by people who don't live in the city. Why should the City of Oberlin pay for an airport for all of the county?

On the same note, asked Ms. May, why should those in the city be allowed to use the county hospital? People in the city still pay county taxes, Mayor Stanley pointed out.

When she first came on the council, said Ms. May, she had the same questions about why the city owns the library and other operations and the county, the hospital and so on.

Several of the council's comments were met with laughter and applause, including the decision to table a decision until after another public meeting.

Although the City of Norcatur

*People question 10-year law

(Continued from Page 1A) whether federal, state, private or city, on airport expansion. The 10-year life is required by state law, he said.

Mr. Frickey said he doesn't know of anyone who, in their personal life or business, would be willing to say they are going to bind themselves to that kind of decision for 10 years.

"This will cut off our nose to spite our own face by saying that we aren't going to do anything for 10 years," said Mr. Frickey.

One concern raised by Linda Manning, county ambulance director, in a letter to *The Oberlin Herald*, he said, was having a runway to serve air ambulances. That needs to be addressed in public forum, he said. Some say there are only two flights a year that need a longer runway, said Mr. Frickey, but if he's on one of those two flights, he wants to make sure the airplane can get out.

There are some legitimate concerns that people have with the airport project, Mr. Frickey added.

There needs to be some discussion, he said, adding that he's not sure if an outside mediator needs to be brought in for a community meeting.

Former Councilwoman Judy Scott, who also said she has been on the other side of the table, said she could almost ditto everything Mr. Frickey said. She said she went to the informational meeting Thursday, Sept. 10. He gave a good presentation, she said, but she was disappointed that the city administrator left before others could speak. (Ground rules for the session allowed citizens to ask questions, but not to make statements. That included supporters of the runway plan.) Ms. Scott said she would have liked to see Mr. Gilley stay and listen to the other issues, but that was his decision.

The 10-year law, said Ms. Scott, really peaked her interest. Taxes are going to go up regardless, she said.

Rusty Addleman said he agreed with what's been said. Information

was presented in a good manner at the meeting the week before, but it didn't represent all the information that should have been heard. Most of the information was for a 7,000-foot runway, but that's way down the road.

The people who filed the petition, said Mr. Addleman, a former drug store owner, said that's their right, but a lot of people have spent lots of hours, time and money to work on this project.

There needs to be a public forum, because those with the petition haven't had a chance to say why they are concerned, and the people need to know what the true cost of the runway will be, said Mr. Addleman.

He added that he wished those who left after Mr. Gilley would have stayed to listen to the other side.

Herschel Betts, a retired farmer and high school principal here, said he would second everything that had been said.

*Woman to lift in Europe

(Continued from Page 1A) everyone at the gym said, "Wow, that's cool."

When she moved to Grand Junction, Colo., a few years ago, she said, she got away from lifting. Later, she began working with Robb Grisham, a Denver-area lifter and trainer. He offered to work with her every couple of weeks, and she started doing the 240-mile trip, including two mountain passes, once or twice a month.

"It seemed like I was getting better and better," she said.

She went to national competition in Killeen, Texas, in 2008, and took fourth in her age/weight group. Earlier this year, both she and her daughter Jessica, 23, took firsts in Miami.

"The next thing you know," she said, "I had an invitation to the world championships in the Czech Republic."

While most of the U.S. team is traveling together from the East Coast, she and Robb will fly from Denver to Detroit to Prague, and meet the team in Ostrava. She said she's glad Robb has been in Europe before.

Masters competition, she said, is divided into women ages 40-49, 50-59, and 60-69 with weight classes in each group. She leaves from Denver on Friday and the competition begins Monday, with lifting through next Saturday, Oct. 3.

Events include the bench press, done lying down; squat, where the lifter takes the weight and presses

up, and the deadlift, off the floor. Her personal bests are 198 pounds in the bench press, 347 in the squat and 314 off the floor.

To get ready, she's been making the 248-mile trip — no mountain passes or heavy traffic — to Denver every weekend. She'd leave Friday night and come home Sunday. She also has a set of weights at home to work on, and says she lifts four days a week.

"I fell into it by accident," she said of her lifting career. "It's just been so much fun, and I've met so many neat people."

"As it gets closer, I'm getting a little apprehensive."

But the bag is packed, and Friday she's off.

Native returns home to work

Jo Ann Lerew says she's amazed how many people she meets in her new job as advertising representative for *The Oberlin Herald* know her, know who she is or know someone in her family.

Ms. Lerew, a native of Oberlin, was born in McCook and attended schools in Marion and Lebanon, just over the state line. Her maiden name is Hackney, and she's related to many of the Hackneys in this area.

She started her job Aug. 10 after moving to Oberlin from Grand Junction, Colo., where she lived and worked the last four years. She said she moved here to be closer to her family and get away from city life.

"It was time to move," she said. "We were kinda tired of the city."

"Everything is good here. My mother meets me for lunch once a week in McCook."

Her mother, Hope Kathka, and grandmother, Vena Walters, live in the same apartment building in Indianola, she said, and a sister, Susan Schick, lives in Curtis, north of McCook.

Ms. Lerew said she graduated from Beaver Valley High School in 1981. She married and moved around a lot, ending up in Spearfish, S.D., where she worked in insurance and for car dealers, doing both paperwork and sales at different times.

She moved to Colorado four years ago. Ms. Lerew has two daughters, Andrea, 25, a student at Mesa State

College in Grand Junction, and Jessica, 23, who is moving here this month with her 3-year-old son Alex. Her son, Daniel, 11, is a sixth-grader at Oberlin Elementary School.

And don't forget the family's two cats and one dog, she added. They're waiting to move into a house in southwest Oberlin, near the hospital.

"I've met a lot of people," she said. "It's funny how many people know someone who is related to me."

On the job, she splits her time between customers in Oberlin and the McCook area, dealing with all kinds of advertising needs. To get in touch, call 475-2206.

*Council OKs money for park

(Continued from Page 1A) homes and campers to that tank.

The committee would like to clear out the old shower area and make it into a picnic patio area with benches and tables, Mr. Anderson said.

The project includes painting all of the wood on the shelter house back to the original color, he added.

This grant, said Mr. Anderson, doesn't include the cost of any campground hook-ups because it can't. The tourism and attraction grant won't pay for any kind of lodging. The price doesn't include trenching needed, he said, since the plumbers told the group the price would be less if the city could do the trenching.

The idea is to put the camper hook-ups to the north of the shelter house in the grass in a circle people can drive around. That would keep the campers out of the Frisbee golf course and allow people to pull in from either side, Mr. Anderson said.

The idea is to generate some revenue off the campground, which the committee believes the city can do with a pay box. There's no telling how many people are camping there now, he added.

One campground he's stopped at, said Mr. Anderson, had a payment box, then had a sign on it that if that spot hadn't been paid for by midnight, the city police would come to ask for the money.

Earlier in the year, the city looked at putting up prefabricated out-houses, said Mr. Anderson, with the cost around \$14,000. For not that much more, this project includes showers, he said.

The space for the restrooms is

already there, he said. There doesn't need to be any construction, because this is where the bath rooms were years ago. He added that the doors to those areas have been locked for maybe 40 years.

Each side would have two toilets, a sink and a shower. The sink and the shower would have automatic shut offs for the water, which can be set for 30 to 60 seconds.

On the men's side, said Mr. Anderson, instead of a second toilet, it might be a urinal, which would also save a little money.

While Mr. Anderson handed out all of the bids the committee has received so far, he said the grant application is due by the end of the month. In it will include letters from people supporting the project. One of those is from the International Crane Foundation, which says that the Sand Hill cranes should be seen at the wetlands to be built at the park.

There's lots going on at Sappa Park, he said. The students who first put in the frisbee golf course plan to return on Saturday, Oct. 3, to hold the park's first tournament.

Councilwoman Rhonda May asked where the money in the Sappa Park Fund comes from. Decatur Tomorrow raised money during a Cinco de Mayo meal and other fund raisers, said Mr. Anderson. Then there was around \$6,000 left from the re-shingling project.

The committee is about 90 percent done with the grant, said Mr. Anderson. Part of getting that application finished is getting a letter that the city will commit its share.

Committee members, he said, have talked at length about what

happens if the project isn't chosen for a grant. They decided that the restrooms and showers are the first priority. Opening the courtyard so it's usable won't cost a lot of money, he said.

That would open parts of the shelter house that have been shut up for years, said Ms. May.

The restrooms would be left unlocked for people to use, said Mr. Anderson. After the grant is finished, the committee plans to work on some other plans and policies to bring to the city, including rental policies and who will maintain everything.

The group still needs to map out where the camping hook-ups will go, he said.

Councilman Ray Ward said he thought this was something the city needs to do that could come out of the Community Growth Fund.

The council had agreed to budget all of the growth fund for the airport project, said City Administrator Austin Gilley, but that is a revolving fund, and the city has the budget authority to spend the money.

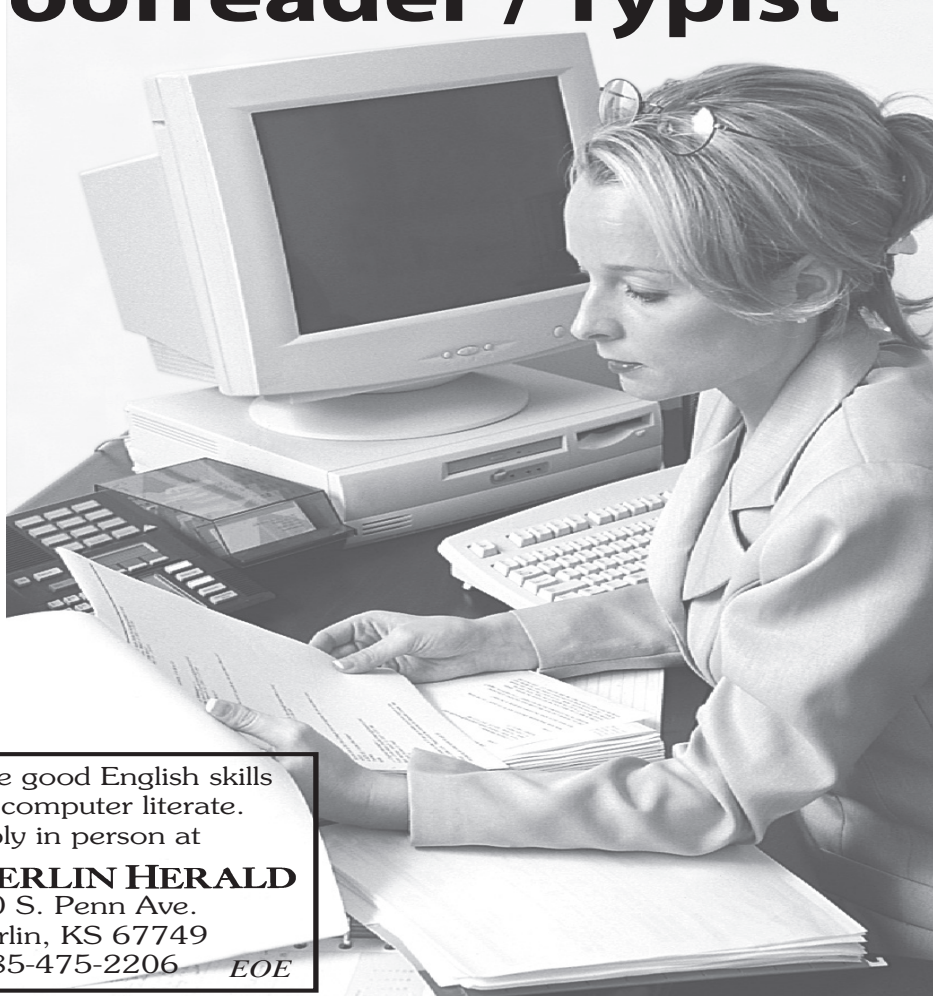
The city should go ahead and do this, said Ms. May, who made the motion. Mr. Ward seconded it.

Mayor Joe Stanley asked if the money would be contingent on getting the grant. Ms. May said she wouldn't make that a requirement. There's a fair amount of value in getting the shelter house available and useable again, she said.

The council approved the request with Councilman Bill Riedel abstaining, since his wife Connie is a co-convenor on the committee.

HELP WANTED

Proofreader / Typist



Must have good English skills and be computer literate.
Apply in person at
THE OBERLIN HERALD
170 S. Penn Ave.
Oberlin, KS 67749
785-475-2206 EOE