

Officers looks at several houses

Oberlin's city code enforcement officer talked with the council about several properties around town Thursday, two of which she suggested the City Council move ahead with the enforcement process because of safety issues.

The first home, said Jan Ackerman, at 302 W. Hall, is owned by Nolan and Bobbi Johnson. She said she sent them a health nuisance letter, but it came back unopened. Mrs. Ackerman talked about starting the condemnation process, but said she wants to wait 30 days so that she can try to contact the couple again.

She said she's also concerned about a house behind the Hall Street address because someone is living in it even though the utilities aren't hooked up.

She also pointed out a house at 805 S. Chandler, which is owned by Terry Lippelmann. That house had a fire in it a while ago. Mr. Lippelmann has tried to work on it, she said, but nothing has been done in the past year.

City Attorney Steve Hirsch outlined the enforcement process: after a complaint comes and the code enforcement officer determines the property unsafe or dangerous, then the council sets a hearing. At the hearing, the council determines whether the property is unsafe or dangerous. The notice for the hearing has to be published for two weeks prior to the date, so the earliest it could be set would be the

beginning of July.

Other properties mentioned in Mrs. Ackerman's report included:

- 110 S. York, owned by Michael Oglesby, which is to be donated to a new owner. The deed has been sent for a signature so it can be turned over to a new owner, who wants to rehabilitate the house.

- 608 N. Neill has already been deeded to David and Timmarie Sporn. Mrs. Ackerman said the couple plans to rehabilitate the house so it can be used for storage for now and then turned back into a residence.

- 203 E. Hall is to be donated to a new owner. Mrs. Ackerman said there are two people interested in the property.

- 113 W. Hall, owned by Kenneth Morgan, the building was repaired and the case has been closed.

- 128 N. Griffith, owned by William Matchett Sr., case has been closed.

- 209 W. Maple, owned by Duranda Dehoff, case remains open.

- 602 W. Hall, owned by Aaron Ploussard, case remains open.

- 109 N. Grand, owned by Jake E. Fahrenburch of Pratt, has been closed.

- 503 N. Wilson, owned by Richard Valentine, case remains open.

- 120 S. Cass, owned by Polish Traders LLC, case remains open.

- 201 N. East, owned by Marina N. Fisher, case remains open.

Playing in the mud



ALYSSA VanVLEET, 9, played in a large mud puddle she and her sister Ravyn made in their backyard on Friday. The girls took turns jumping in the mud puddle.

— Herald staff photo by Kimberly Davis

Council approves hiring a sexton for Oberlin cemetery

After a 20-minute closed session for personnel Thursday, the Oberlin City Council approved hiring a new cemetery sexton at \$11.50 an hour.

The council approved hiring Jeremy Tally in a unanimous vote. He will start with the city on Monday.

Mr. Tally, son of Eugene and Tonya Tally of Oberlin is a 2007 graduate of Decatur Community High School. He plans to graduate from Kansas State University this weekend with a degree in Landscape Management. His wife Jennifer has been hired to teach music part-time at Oberlin Elementary School. She is the daughter of

City Attorney Steve and Anita Hirsch.

City Foreman Dan Castle said the crew will have the cemetery ready for Memorial Day.

The city crew, said Administrator Karen Larson, has been painting the pool and working on getting it ready to open Memorial Day weekend.

Mrs. Larson asked if the council wants to change the pool fees this year. A season pass now costs \$60 for a family or \$30 for a single, she said. The daily rate is \$1 for kids and \$2 for adults.

It costs more every year to heat the pool, noted Councilman Rob McFee.

It's important to keep the rates affordable, said Mrs. Larson, but maybe something should change.

While the council talked about increasing the daily rates, in the end they agreed to leave the rates the same.

The pool's never going to pay for itself, said Mr. McFee.

Mrs. Larson said she had hired Andrew Dempewolf again this year to manage the pool.

The administrator asked about the old two-room trailer schoolhouse at the former youth ranch and whether the city wants to sell it. It's just deteriorating sitting out there,

she said, but there's no plumbing to the building. Mrs. Larson said she talked with someone from the Oberlin School District to see if they would be interested in it, but with declining enrollment they aren't.

The council approved declaring the school house surplus property so it can be sold.

In other business, the council:

- Heard that the airport engineer will be in town at 2 p.m. Thursday, May 19, for those who have questions about the project.

- Heard that Mrs. Larson and Mr. Castle have a meeting coming up about the electric contracts.

- Heard the Modern Woodmen will be planting two trees at 3:30 p.m. Friday. They will start at Centennial Park downtown and go to City Park.

- Heard that the city ran the power plant for a few hours on Monday. Mr. Castle said he took Mrs. Larson on a ride around town to show her everything the city owns.

- Heard that the city's newest police officer, Brett Marietta, is doing his required training.

- Held a 15-minute closed session for attorney/client privilege with the council, city attorney, administrator and mayor. There was no action taken afterward.

Teacher resigns; hired part-time

The Oberlin School Board accepted the resignation of its long-time vocal music teacher as a full-time teacher at the meeting Monday night, then hired her back to teach part-time at the high school and hired an Oberlin grad to take her place at the grade school.

Susan Nelson has taught vocal music in the district for the 32 years.

Last year, she started teaching at

the grade school as well as the high school and junior high. Her resignation is effective June 30.

Mary Jo Lohoefer, who has been an accompanist for the district for the past 34 years, also resigned. At first she was there as needed, but in the last 20 years Mrs. Lohoefer has worked at the school every day.

The resignation of Mrs. Nelson opened up a vocal position at the

grade school. The board hired Jennifer Tally, a 2007 graduate of Decatur Community High, as a part-time music teacher for the elementary.

Mrs. Tally will graduate from Kansas State University with a degree in vocal and instrumental music education this month. She is the daughter of Steve and Anita Hirsch of Oberlin.

Doctor interested but not yet hired

The Decatur County Hospital hasn't hired a new doctor for the family practice clinic yet, but does have one who is interested.

Hospital Administrator Lynn Doeden said the doctor, who lives in Arkansas, had been here to look

at the facilities and the town.

He is licensed in New York, Delaware and Wyoming, she said, but needs to go before the Kansas Board of Healing Arts in June to get an endorsement for Kansas. Mrs. Doeden said when she talked to the

doctor after his visit here, he said he is working on the paperwork.

The doctor needs to get the endorsement from the state, she said, before the hospital can offer a contract.

Group gives \$400 for cup project

The Oberlin Business Alliance approved giving \$400 for the project to put square, colored, plastic cups in a design in the fence across the street from the Last Indian Raid Museum.

The money will be given out of the proceeds from the burger and fish fry on Good Friday. The event brought in \$500, said Carolyn Hackney, chamber manager, but she hadn't yet received any bills and didn't know what they would be.

At the group's monthly meeting last Wednesday, the members discussed an upcoming fund raiser on Friday, May 27, over lunch time at the museum. The group will grill and serve burgers and brats for Alumni Weekend. Money raised will go to help fix the canopies downtown and for new banners.

In other business, the members:

- Heard that Ron Jansonius plans to use the speaker system downtown to announce prom names during the

promenade.

- Talked about the community breakfast that morning. Museum director Sharleen Wurm said about 10 people showed up. It went well, she said, and proved to be a good way to just socialize with people. Karen Thompson, with the Dresser, agreed, saying it would be good to have a community breakfast a few times each year.

Commissioners look at cell phone option

The Decatur County commissioners decided to give a few cell phones from Verizon Wireless a test run recently.

The commissioners talked with Jeremy Coulter, a Verizon salesperson, at the meeting on Tuesday, April 26, about plans the company can offer.

County Attorney Steve Hirsch asked how many towers Verizon has in the county. Mr. Coulter said he wasn't sure.

Mr. Coulter went over the plan he could offer the county, which included a push-to-talk feature, which he said basically makes the phone like a two-way radio.

He said the company is getting ready to switch from a 3G network to a 4G network, which will really only make a difference for data connections.

With 12 regular phones and three smart phones, said Mr. Coulter, it

would cost the county on average \$509 a month for cellular service through Verizon.

Commissioner Stan McEvoy asked if the county switches from another service, if the company pays to get out of the old contracts.

Currently with government contracts, said Mr. Coulter, they don't do that. If five county phones are switched to Verizon though, he said,

the employees can get 18 percent off a bill of \$34.99 or higher. The would also get 25 percent off accessories.

Mr. Hirsch said it would be nice to know where the towers are. Mr. Coulter said he would find out. He also said he would loan the county a few phones to test.

The county is also going to check out plans with Nex-Tech Wireless and Viera.

College offers hybrid repair training

The Northwest Kansas Technical College in Goodland will be offering a national certification in hybrid collision repair training.

An alliance agreement signed by Northwest Tech and the Auto Career Development Center will allow the college to deliver classes and offer the nationally recognized certification in hybrid automotive repair.

"To the best of my knowledge, we are the only institution in the nation that offers a third-party certification in hybrid collision repair specifically," said

Larry McLemore, collision repair instructor.

He said he and automotive instructor Curt Goodwin are two out of a handful of instructors in the nation to be master certified to teach a detailed hybrid training curriculum.

This addition to the automotive and collision repair program will open up different avenues for business and industry training, he said. A first responder training course will be available this summer.

For details, call Oura Garrett at (785) 890-1547.

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