

*Group wants pool

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obligation or revenue bonds to borrow money. Oberlin's new water system is being paid for out of revenue bonds, which are to be repaid by an increase in water rates.

The city can only issue bonds for up to 30 percent of its assessed valuation, she said. And with Oberlin's new water and sewer systems, it could get to that and still have other needs.

If the city is interested in a new pool, she said, it could set up a public building commission, which would issue the bonds to build the pool. The city would then lease the pool from the commission and commit to pay for it by whatever means.

Any sales tax or bond issue, she noted, must go to a vote of the people.

Councilman Rob McFee asked if the public building commission isn't just putting a middleman into the equation.

"It's a workaround so that we can steal more money without the government telling us we can't," he said. "I don't feel like this is a good idea at all."

Shayla Williby, an organizer for the pool group, asked that the council set up an official committee to start the process.

Mayor Bill Riedel asked her group and the council members to come up with a list of names of people who would serve on that committee.

"I see a lot of value in a new pool," Mr. Riedel said. "How we're going to pay for it is another thing."

He also noted that he has seen the bills for upkeep and repairs on the old pool and it is expensive to maintain and a problem for the city.

"I think it's a great idea," he said. "Form a committee and get some hard numbers."



EMERGENCY PERSONNEL loaded an Atwood teenager into an ambulance Wednesday night after a wreck about five miles west of Oberlin on U.S. 36

— Herald staff photo by Cynthia Haynes

Wreck sends teen to the hospital

A 17-year-old Atwood girl was taken by ambulance to the Decatur County Hospital after narrowly avoiding a head-on collision with a semitrailer truck.

Kathryn Terry was driving a 2001 Chevrolet westbound on U.S. 36 about 7:15 p.m. last Wednesday when she attempted to pass a westbound semitrailer rig a little over 5 1/2 miles west of town. She apparently didn't have enough room to pass, said sheriff's Deputy Jay Tate, and struck another semi coming east.

Deputy Tate said Miss Terry's car hit the side of the eastbound truck and trailer and came to rest on the south side of U.S. 36.

Manuel Bustillos, 29, of Yuma, Colo. was driving the eastbound 1995 Freightliner. Deputy Tate said Mr. Bustillos attempted to avoid the Chevrolet and pulled off as far as he could to the side of the road.

The Chevrolet was destroyed, said Deputy Tate, and the Freightliner was disabled.

He said no tickets have been issued so far.

*Voters to decide on airport project again

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included Phase II in them.

The next step is to acquire land for the runway, and Mr. Riedel said he doesn't want to start negotiations on that and then discover the city can't finish the project. That likely would doom any future help for the federal government, he said.

Councilman Josh Williby finally suggested that the city move forward.

"We gotta see this through," he said. "It will further our city. Let's

get a (U.S. Department of Agriculture) loan request sent in."

Councilman Rob McFee said he thought the city would need a public vote any way it decides to pay for the airport. Mayor Riedel suggested that the issue be put on either the August primary or November general election ballot, whichever would work best.

City Administrator Karen Larson said she will check with Colleen Geihlsler, the county clerk and election officer, to see what can be done.

The question of how to sell the project to the public was raised.

"We need to be up front and show the value of it," the mayor replied. "The city pays \$50,000 a year to maintain the airport and very little of that is wages."

One of the big needs is air ambulance service, said Lee Franklin of rural Jennings.

"Everyone from other towns and counties tell me if you can't medivac, you lose your hospital," he said. "People don't like helicopter rides."

*Woman asks for exception

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Ms. Johnson said that one of her dogs, a Yorkshire terrier which she brought with her, is a service dog and should be exempt from the rule. The other dogs, she said, are therapy dogs.

Ms. Johnson said that the Yorkie is a service dog for post traumatic syndrome disorder.

Council members said they would take her request under advisement and get back with her.

In other business, the council:

- OK'd an extension of the city's trash contract with Bill Cathcart but included an increase in rates to \$16.20 per month for homes and businesses and \$8.20 for single-person residences. Mr. Cathcart submitted a new contract several months ago with the requested increase in rates, but it has been held up by a legal question on whether the service is a franchise or not.
- Was told of a work day planned from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, March 24, at Sappa Park and a meeting to help come up a plan for the park at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 3.
- Heard from Lee Franklin that he believes that wind power is getting closer to Decatur County. He said Sunflower Electric will build connecting lines and that the U.S. government and Tri-State Generation and Transmission, a Colorado power cooperative, will buy all the wind power the area can supply. He said he expects it to take about three years for wind energy to get here.
- Authorized the expenditure of \$65,000 from the water fund to replace the main under Columbia Street, which has broken in several places, before the street is repaved this summer.
- Heard from Police Chief Wade Lockhart that patrolman Scott Ziegler has returned to full-time duty and the city's new patrolman Beau Downing will be able to get into the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center earlier than expected. He can start at the academy on March 12 and be done by June 15, the chief said. He had been scheduled to go in May before a slot opened up.
- Heard from City Foreman Dan

Castle that the repairs on the electrical substation could cost as much as \$650,000, but that the rebuilt transformer should be as good as new. He said he expects to get it back during the summer but will probably wait until September to swap it with the city's loaner because it will cause an outage while both are offline. It would be better to wait until after the peak-demand season, he said.

- Learned that the city's insurance company has written that it will not pay more than \$500,000 on the damages to the substation and transformer and that it could be less. However, no firm amount has been set.
- Was told by City Administrator Karen Larson that the city is sending out letters to those with sprinkler systems reminding them that they must have a pressure vacuum breaker to keep water from their systems from flowing back into the city's system and contaminating the drinking water. Water service to anyone not complying with the regulation will be turned off, Mrs. Larson said.
- Heard that three land owners are interested in having city wells on their land. A fourth owner uses his water for irrigation and has declined, she said.
- Heard a brief review of property that is still in unsafe or unsanitary condition from Code Enforcement Officer Jan Ackerman. Out of five cases, she said, one has complied, one is making good progress, one is being sold and two will get one more chance before she turns them over for legal action.
- Received a copy of a 2009 city survey from Mayor Bill Riedel. Mr. Riedel said that he found a copy, thought the comments and plans were interesting and thought the council would like to read it. He also suggested the city might want to do another survey.
- Held a 15-minute closed session with the county attorney and Mrs. Larson to discuss nonelected personnel. After the session, the council changed the hours the police department is paid for monthly from 171 to 173.



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