

Chamber looks to change outdated bylaws

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
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Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce members will get a chance to decide if they want to change the group's bylaws at a special meeting next Wednesday.

A committee of Chamber board members met over the bylaws, which were last updated in 1975, and updated the language, changed some of the provisions to match what is actually happening and added a few items.

Chamber Manager Carolyn Hackney said that she provides a packet for each new board member so that they can get up to speed on the organization. This year, she said, the board has several new members, and as everyone was looking at the information, they decided the bylaws were getting out of date.

A committee got together, she said, and rewrote the bylaws. They had County Attorney Steve Hirsch check the new version for problems. Then a copy of both old and new bylaws were sent out to each member.

A meeting at 5 p.m. next Wednesday at the Business Enhancement Entrepreneurial Center will give Chamber members a say on the changes and allow them to vote on the new bylaws.

It will take a two-thirds majority of those at the meeting to pass the new version, Ms. Hackney said, and at least 10 members have to be present.

Some of the changes are to shorten and simplify the language.

The word "area" would be dropped from the name and mem-

bership would no longer only be open to any "reputable" person, association, corporation, partnership or estate.

Where the term "he" was used, it was changed to be non gender specific.

Some deletions were made. There would no longer be associate members, and people and organizations can no longer hold multiple memberships.

Complicated board nominations and election procedures would be dropped.

A requirement for written notice of membership meetings was dropped, as was the requirements that the Chamber manager should submit a financial statement and written report at the end of each year, that the books be audited every year and that the treasurer and manager need to be bonded.

Some changes to reflect actual happenings include movement of the annual meeting from February to January and creating four categories of membership - business, individual sponsored by business, individual and service organization.

Additions include the office of secretary, a method to call emergency meetings and a statement of nondiscrimination.

The term for elected directors was changed from one three-year term with a one-year break between terms to two three-year terms and a three-year break.

Full copies of both the old and new bylaws are available at the Chamber office, Ms. Hackney said.

Credit union wants to use schools' logo

The Oberlin School Board tabled a request from the United Northwest Kansas Federal Credit Union to use the school's logo on a check card with the district getting a return whenever a cardholder uses the special cards.

Superintendent Duane Dorshorst said at the board meeting March 12 that he got a letter from the credit union asking for permission. The district would receive 2 cents per transaction, paid quarterly, he said.

The contract, he said, would end when either party terminates the agreement with a 90 day written notice.

Board member Dan Wasson asked if Mr. Dorshorst had talked to a lawyer with the Kansas Association of School Boards to see if this kind of arrangement was OK. Mr. Dorshorst said he hadn't.

He added that he doesn't know how many check cards the credit union has issued. No one said whether they wanted to put the school's mascot on a card.

Mr. Wasson asked if the credit union was offering the same thing in Norton? Mr. Dorshorst said he didn't know.

Is this just the credit union's way to contribute to the district? asked board member Abby Hissong. It could be, said Mr. Dorshorst.

"Wouldn't this show we endorse

the credit union?" asked Board member Doug Brown. "I don't for obvious reasons." (Mr. Brown works at The Bank.)

The board decided to table a decision so Mr. Dorshorst could get more information.

In other business, the board:

- Heard that Mr. Dorshorst had received several e-mails from staff members thanking the board for allowing them to take Friday, March 9, off from school.

- Heard that teacher Penny Arnold is retiring from Head Start. Deb Helm, said Mr. Dorshorst, will be taking over the class.

- Accepted \$4,000 from the Oberlin Kids Wrestling Club to help pay for a new wrestling mat, which costs \$6,710. The new mat, said Mr. Dorshorst, was used at the state wrestling tournament.

- Decided to not approve a request from the senior class to take a trip on Wednesday, May 23. Mr. Dorshorst said while he isn't opposed to a senior trip, he doesn't like the idea of putting coaches and kids at odds. Some of the students who would be included in that trip will have practice before state track at the same time.

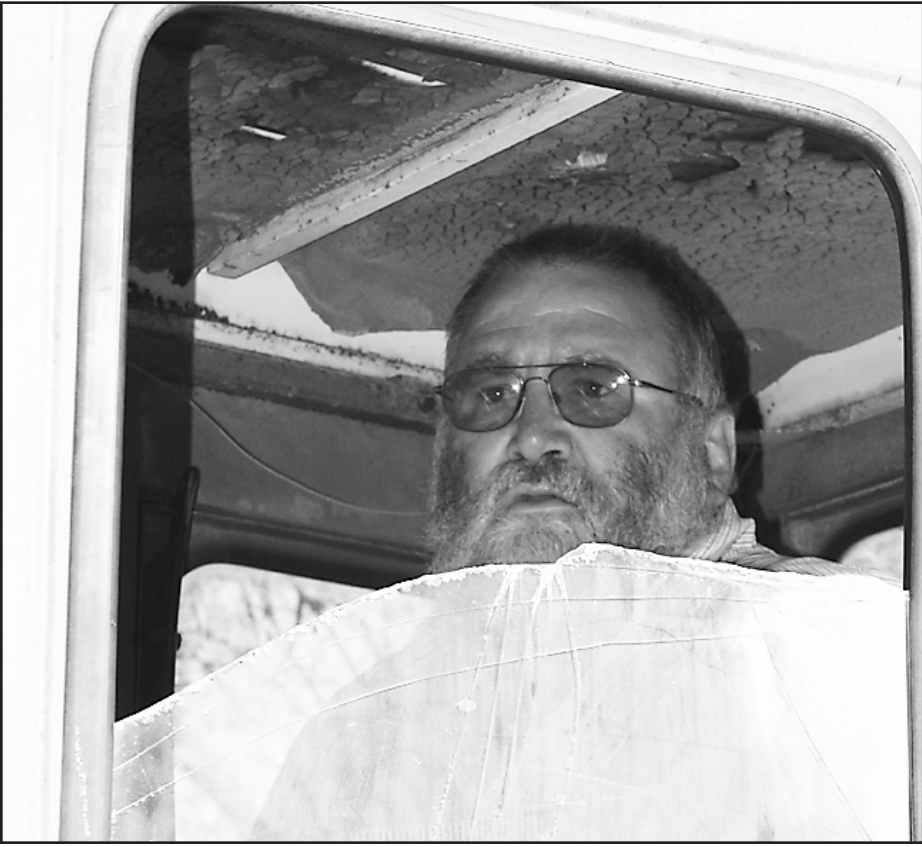
The board praised Serena Stacy, class president, for her hard work in getting all the needed information for the trip, but decided that on the day requested, it wouldn't work.



Volunteers clean up park

VOLUNTEERS AND MEMBERS of the Sappa Park Committee worked for several hours Saturday morning cleaning up downed branches on the road and near the new playground equipment. Connie Riedel, (above) a committee member, spent time near the playground equipment helping clean up large trees knocked down in a storm last year. City Councilman Rob McFee (right) drove his tractor to the park. He used the machine to haul branches of the downed tree closer to the water's edge.

— Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis



Mental health organization doing well

By CYNTHIA HAYNES
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Despite cuts in state and federal money, High Plains Mental Health out of Hays is still doing fine, Sheriff's Deputy Jay Tate told the Decatur County commissioners last Tuesday.

"They're still financially sound and still making payroll," he said, adding that the mental health agency realized back in 2006 that changes would have to be made and started slimming down its operations.

"They do a lot less extras," he noted, explaining that the agency has been seeing fewer patients because with less state money, people

tend to drop out and stop using the services.

"I don't know how to reverse this process," he said. "We just have to figure out how to keep the doors open."

One of the big recent cuts, he said, is that the state is no longer paying for someone to go out and do mental health screenings in the county jails and hospitals. The hospital here has put in a teleconference center and the sheriff's office is getting one, he said, so mental health screenings need to be done over the Internet.

He said he doesn't really like the teleconferencing but it sure beats the hours required to drive a person

to Norton or Hays, wait for the screening and then driving them back to Oberlin.

Deputy Tate is Decatur County's representative to the agency's board and serves on the executive board.

About 25 percent of the money for High Plains comes from the state, he said, from money to help the severely and persistent mentally ill and emotionally disturbed children - those people who used to be put in the state hospital.

Another 8 percent comes from counties, he said, and the rest, about 67 percent, from services. Of that, about 19 percent is from Medicaid, the state-federal program offering

medical care for the needy, and the rest out of the patients' pockets, he said.

Mr. Tate said a lot of services are never paid for, but that the agency is willing to work with clients and has a sliding fee schedule. Even if someone can only pay \$1 a week, he says, they are making an investment in their health care.

Compared to other states, Kansas has a good mental health system, he added.

"People are literally moving to Kansas for mental health services," Deputy Tate said.

Management group looks at hospital operations

Members of the Decatur County Hospital Board talked about the possibility of getting a regional firm to take over management of the hospital and its related operations.

Administrator Lynn Doeden said representatives of the Great Plains Health Alliance were here to take a look at the operation and wanted to get some more information. The firm is looking at what they can do for the hospital, she said.

Mrs. Doeden said Hays Medical Center representatives were to come here on Monday to take a look, too, but they had a special board meeting

and couldn't make it.

Board member Pam Wilson said she talked to a former board member, who said that before the board does anything with Great Plains, to talk with the Phillipsburg Hospital Board.

Mrs. Doeden said they are also looking at Good Samaritan out of Kearney, Neb.

In other business, the board:

- Heard that Mrs. Wilson had stopped by Mrs. Doeden's office to sign the paperwork needed for the Docs Who Care, a firm which provides doctors to cover when Dr.

Steve Albert has a weekend off.

- Heard that Mrs. Doeden would be going to the Decatur County commissioners meeting the next morning to let them know that they are going to be making some changes to the building for the new CT Scanner.

- Heard that the hospital's golf tournament and fund raiser will be held Saturday, Aug. 18.

- Talked briefly about the hospital's strategic plan.

- Talked about the chief executive officer's evaluation. Mrs. Doeden said she would e-mail the form to

the board members. Mrs. Wilson said they decided last year to wait to do the evaluation until after the auditor comes in April. Board member Ruth Wolfram asked about the evaluation.

New machine draws lots of business

In February, the staff at the Decatur County Hospital did 29 mammograms using a new digital machine.

Leslie Jones, radiology manager, said in the last six months of 2011, the hospital had nine patients a month for mammograms. She said they sent out a letter to area hospitals to let them know that the hospital here has a digital machine.

Technician Jessica Fisher, she said, is working on doing her 25 supervised mammograms. The maintenance department is starting demolition on the rooms for the CT Scanner this week. Lead-lined drywall has been ordered, and the equipment is supposed to be in-

stalled this spring.

The CT operation will be down for about a month, said Ms. Jones, but the new machine should be usable by the beginning of May. She said she's called other hospitals in the area to let them know about the machine.

Does it have to be down for an entire month? asked Board mem-

ber Kathy Nauer. If extra help was brought in, would the work go faster?

Hospital Administrator Lynn Doeden said she wasn't sure that the labor was what would take the longest. The new machine has to be installed and calibrated, she said, and the company doing the work wants it to be perfect.

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Oberlin Arts and Humanities presents:
Turpin Tyme Ragsters
Saturday March 31, 7:30 p.m.



The Turpin Tyme Ragsters is a seven-piece Ragtime music ensemble from Kansas City. The group will perform at The Gateway Civic Center in Oberlin. This is a season ticket event or \$12 for adults, \$7 students grades 1 through 12. For information, call Ella Betts (785) 475-3557, or Mary Henzel (785) 470-0218.