

A springy soup and salad supper



IT WAS THE PERFECT day for a cold sandwich and hot cup of soup, as Myrna Jones (left) and Dolores Depperschmidt put together their plates at Faith Lutheran Church on Sunday. The church has a free supper once a month, but Sunday's was the last one until the fall.
— Herald staff photo by Stephanie DeCamp

*Rebate would benefit motel

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ton's is 10 years), the business or homeowner would again pay 100 percent of their property taxes. The rebate would apply only to the increased value a project creates, not to any existing tax value.

The details of the program, things like who would be included and how long the rebate would last, have yet to be ironed out, Commissioner Metcalf said.

"I think all three of us are for this thing," he said, "but we haven't decided how we want to structure it." Both the commissioners and Ms.

Grafel said they were not concerned about the appearance of running the little guy out of town when it comes to building the new motel across the street from the Oberlin Inn and Frontier Motel.

"When there's something in town like a wedding or funeral," Ms. Grafel said, "we get so many people complaining that have stayed at either place ... I don't understand why people think we're going to take anything away from them. They're losing business because they're not keeping their business up. Maybe this will make them

spend some money and invest in the place to make it better. I mean, the construction crews aren't going to go to the new motel because it's too expensive."

"That's what I was saying," said Mr. McEvoy. "There's a market for everybody."

"Truck drivers and construction crews will always stay at the Oberlin Inn or Frontier," agreed Mr. Metcalf. "This won't be a fix-all for everything, but for the ones who can afford to and want to, this will be a good incentive for them to do so."

*Hospital to open chemotherapy unit as part of cancer alliance

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that the center is dedicated to serving the whole region, not just Johnson County and Kansas City.

"We want to make sure that our patients can get treated locally as much as possible," he said, "because travel makes it even more difficult than it already is."

*Author has two books

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ladies, Mary Lincoln and Varina Davis.

"I'll probably cover a combination of things in those books," she said in an interview Friday. "My specialty is 1844 through the Indian Wars, Bleeding Kansas, and a mix of things like that."

Mrs. Bisel said that she won't be bringing any props and doesn't do re-enactments, but does like to tell stories.

"I grew up in Virginia," she said, "and that state is knee-deep in the Civil War. My great-grandpa was Patrick Gettysburg, and so I grew up with stories of my relatives fighting in the war."

"People, especially here in Kansas, tend to have no idea how rich the history is, and how interconnected it is with the rest of the country — especially if you grew up here. It's so isolated, which is a shame because Kansas is so pivotal on so many things."

"These people in the past were just as real as you and me, and that's really misunderstood. We look back at the past, and everything is a given, everything just worked out that way. But these people were uncertain and anxious, alarmed by political movements, and the economy affected everything, just like it does now."

"Nothing has changed; our technology has changed, but not our people — We're a constant."

"Deb is an excellent speaker," said Mrs. Wurm. "She's just so bubbly and energetic. She knows her stuff, too, and can present it in a fun and contagious way. Hopefully, we can have even more guests like her this summer. It's going to be a wonderful time."

"It'll be fun," Mrs. Bisel agreed. "There are just so many awesome people in Kansas history. It's not a dull history at all. People should just be jumping up and down about how great it is. That's my mission, to make people aware of that."

*Commission to set up bylaws, meetings

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who wishes to protest the move can do so before the money is issued. If 5 percent of the voting populace of the city petitions against the project, then it will stop."

If that happens, he said, the council will have three options: go ahead and issue general obligation bonds for the project itself (which would max out the city's debt limit), abandon the project altogether or put it to a vote again.

The public building commission system was created by the Legislature to finance a prison in Ellsworth, he

said, and it's been used for various things since then. A number of those have been for pools, since they're expensive.

"This is not a pool building commission," Mr. Haas emphasized. "It's a public building commission — it's for all sorts of stuff. The commission can only do things if a taxing entity (like the city, county or school district) is willing to enter into a lease with them and make payments on it, and it's all subject to protest."

"The main thing I want to reinforce is that the commission will own the pool, but it's your project, your problem, your baby, your pool."

Public funding process for pool centers on bonds

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP
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How the new Public Building Commission will get money for Oberlin's pool project is part of a complicated system of money changing hands and selling bonds, but it's not so complicated that the average person can't understand it.

John Haas, the city's financial consultant, went through the ins and outs of the process at a City Council meeting April 18.

"Based on today's interest-rate market," he said, "if you borrow (\$2.1 million) over 20 years, there will be a \$148,292 yearly payment, totaling over \$2.9 million when all is said and done."

Selling a bond issue is how cities borrow money, he said. Investors buy bonds from — a city (or county or school district), knowing that they will make money on the interest (that \$8 million difference up above). It's considered a trust-worthy investment, because a city is more likely to pay back a bond than others a person might invest with, like a start-up business or your next-door neighbor.

Mr. Haas went on to say that the length of time over which the bonds are paid back can be shortened, but that might raise the interest rate. It would be considered a bigger risk, he said, because if the money the

city collects from a new 1.5-cent sales tax isn't enough to pay back the bonds, then it would have to get money from another source.

"If the city went over cost," he said, "then it would have to ask the commission again for more bonds, but it probably won't happen that way. The city would probably issue its own bonds, because it wouldn't be that much of a difference, or they would tell the construction crew that something needs to be cut out due to lack of funds."

"If we go the other way and end up spending less, then that money can be used for another addition to the pool or to pay the debt service down."

"The debt to build the pool could be paid back in as little as nine years," he said, "if the city collects as much money from the sales tax as it's hoping to."

There are two methods by which the city can sell its bonds to get the money for the pool, Mr. Haas said: either by taking bids from prospective buyers for the bonds, or by taking proposals from investment firms that would be willing to cover the cost.

Mr. Haas said that personally, he thought that bidding is the way to go, because it's competitive and the city could pick the bid that gives it the biggest bang for its buck. But there are exceptions. If the market for city bonds looks good, he said,

and the city wants to have the loans paid off within 20 years, then it would most likely be best to take bids on the bonds. If the market for bonds is looking sour, or if the city wants to pay back the loans over a longer period, then it may be best to consider proposals, he said. If the city decides to go the proposal route, then proposal packages would go out to every financial institution in Oberlin, and to investment banking and commercial firms who do this kind of financing in Topeka, Wichita and Kansas City.

"If and when the commission decides to accept a bid, it still won't have money at that point," he said, "but at the same time, the commission could accept the bond agreement, and then the city would enter into (a lease) with the commission that would be equal to the debt payments on the borrowed money."

If there is no petition against the public building commission's borrowing money, he said, then on June 20 there could be a joint meeting between the commission and City Council. The resolutions from the city to ask for the money, and from the commission to issue the bonds, would be passed at that meeting.

Then a third motion would be put forth to seek proposals from investors to purchase the bonds or institutions to bid on them, he said.

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