

# City decides pool will cost \$2.1 million

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP  
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The City Council took another baby step toward building a new swimming pool Thursday when it declared a dollar amount to ask the new Public Building Commission for – and if you guessed that amount at \$2.1 million, you’re exactly right.

There was a little debate, since that’s what the pool committee suggested and Mayor Rob McFee has never been comfortable with borrowing that much. Newly elected council member Marilyn Horn had voiced objections as well. Mayor McFee said the council needed to decide on a dollar amount before it could give the commission further directions on how much money to borrow for the project. The only thing that worried him, he said, was that the council didn’t have a very recent estimate on which to base its decision.

“This is bothersome to me,” he said. “We got a bid eight years ago, and we don’t have a current one. The city didn’t advertise for a new one, and we just have the one figure (provided by the pool committee) to go on.”

“The \$2.1 million has always seemed high to me. I don’t know if we want to go with that or put together a proposal with bids from firms so maybe it doesn’t cost so much.... We need to decide what we need to do, whether we want to spend \$2.1 million and have that as the limit to what we’ll spend, leave it open-ended or set it at a lesser amount.”

Council member Jim Miesner asked if the amount would be permanent once it was declared, to which Mr. McFee said that it would.

“They can only issue what we tell them to,” he said.

Mr. Miesner then made a motion to ask for the estimated amount of the project the pool committee suggested, \$2.1 million. Newly elected council member Rachel Johnson,

who is herself a member of the pool committee, seconded the motion and it passed without objection.

The next step for the commission is to set up bylaws and elect officers, Mr. McFee said. Gaylord Shields, a member of the commission who was at the meeting, said that the members hadn’t decided when to meet yet, but that meetings would be open to the public and *The Oberlin Herald* would be notified.

In other business, the council:

- Approved a motion to accept the lowest bid of \$24,225 to build new bathrooms at Sappa Park from Boon Concrete Co. of South Dakota.

The Sappa Park Committee, City Administrator Karen Larson said, has raised about \$11,000 for the bathrooms, which will be made of cement and stainless steel. Another \$5,000, she said, will be taken out of the city’s community development fund. The rest will come from the special reserve fund, she said.

- Heard from Water Department Director Willard Perrin that city well No. 12 has been pulling sand into it, and he believes there may be a hole in the casing.

- Approved a motion to pay wildlife biologist Alex Heeger of the national Pheasants Forever organization, \$3,000 a year promised from the city’s economic development fund instead of providing free rent at Sappa Park. Mr. Miesner said the organization needs the cash to invest, and it will pay Mr. Heeger’s salary.

- Decided to allow the Oberlin American Legion to get an M60 tank from the National Guard in Topeka to serve as a permanent display at the Oberlin Municipal Airport. The city won’t be responsible for any of the cost, Mr. Miesner said. The council decided to approve the request pending clearance from the Federal Aviation Administration.

- Decided that the next meeting will begin at 7 p.m., instead of 6 p.m., and the council would decide which time it likes.

## Concealed-carry class offered for women only

Another concealed-carry gun license class will be offered from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday, June 2, at the Decatur County ambulance barn, but don’t be so quick to bust out your toys, boys – this one is for ladies only.

“The classes teach you the law on what the permit allows you to do and what you can’t,” said Ambulance Director Linda Manning, adding that the classes are sponsored by the county Emergency Medical Services Department, the Oberlin-Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce and the Sheriff’s Department. They are required to apply for a concealed-carry permit, she said, and make it a lot easier to buy a gun, since those who take them will already have gone through background checks.

“A lot of the women are intimi-

dated by going out and shooting,” she said of the women-only affair. “We had 19 in the last class, five of which were women. A lot of them have asked for a women-only class because they don’t feel as comfortable shooting with all the guys.”

Sheriff Ken Badsky said that more than anything, the classes are about safety.

“It teaches you proper gun safety,” he said, “and everyone should have the right to carry. It could help us (law enforcement) out down the road, but is more apt to help you. Like most people say, something can happen in seconds, but cops are minutes away – which is true. And out here, we could be up to 30 minutes away.”

The class will be taught by Kansas Highway Patrol Trooper Minh Huynh of Goodland, she said.



## Hoedown provides supper, auction, dance

PEOPLE ATTENDING THE HOEDOWN on Saturday night were welcomed to the Good Samaritan Center’s annual fund raiser by Administrator Janice Shobe (left). After dinner, a live auction was held. Sid Metcalf (above) held up one of the items while spotting bids. Jaime Metcalf and Whitney True (holding basket, below right) helped auctioneer Lynn Johnson, who checked out the merchandise before beginning the bidding. Dancing followed the auction.



## Clay needed to fix up baseball fields

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP  
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Decatur County’s Summer Recreation Board needs some dirt – specifically, \$1,000 worth of clay – to cover the two ball fields for this summer.

Kris Randel, a member of the board, said that it doesn’t have the money in its budget. She came to last Tuesday’s commissioners’ meeting to see if they could help out. The commissioners told Mrs. Randel they would prefer to have her seek donations first, and report back to them if the board couldn’t come up with the cash.

The dirt was found in Viola, a town near Wichita, and the group will need to find a truck to haul it to Oberlin, Mrs. Randel said. Board member J.D. Johnson, a teacher at Decatur Community High School, said the board wants to bring in the

clay to help keep the dust down during games.

“The clay dries quicker and doesn’t blow around,” he said. “I think we have someone that might go pick it up for us, but we’re going to be responsible for the cost of the material and the fuel for the driver.”

“I’m not sure how we’re going to get the money. As for raising money, I really don’t know, we’re not for sure exactly how we’re going to try and work it out.”

Mr. Johnson said that if people would like to help out with the cost, they should make donations to the county’s recreation account, which they can send to the county clerk’s office on the second floor of the Decatur County Courthouse.

“People should know that we’re also going to have a work day starting at 9 a.m. on Saturday, May 11 at the field,” he said. “Anyone willing

and wanting to help is welcome to come down. We’ll be fixing fence and stuff.”

“We should have coaches and teams setting up next week, too, so people should be receiving calls from their coaches in the next week or so since they’ll be doing their draft on Saturday the 11th.”

In other business, the commissioners:

- Approved a highway permit for Marexco Inc., which is putting in an oil well, to run an electrical line across the road to a meter 18 miles east and 10 north of Oberlin near the Lyle United Methodist Church.

Road Supervisor Tim Stallman said that right now, his department is working on the roads and streets in Norcatur and Dresden, as well as doing shouldering work in Sappa Township to get it ready for some fresh gravel. The department has

finished grooming the county roads, he said, and repairing “soft spots,” where the dirt has become loose on the road, around the northeast side of the county.

- Approved the purchase of a document scanner for County Attorney Steve Hirsch for \$800.

- Heard from Noxious Weed Control Department Director Gaylen Huntley that his department is set for a busy summer. The ball fields and parking lots have been sprayed, he said, and the fairground is next. Mr. Huntley said he is still waiting on five townships to call in their spraying needs, and already has 45 treatments set up for the other 20.

- Approved appointment of Jake Weyeneth to the Beaver Township board.

- Purchased a 2007 Chevy Impala from federal surplus in Wichita for county officials to use for trips.

## County bridge replacement gets more expensive

By STEPHANIE DeCAMP  
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A bridge that the county has been working to replace has become \$23,000 more expensive, dealing another blow to the Road and Bridge Department budget.

The bridge is over Sappa Creek, about eight miles east and 5 1/2 miles north of Oberlin in Roosevelt Township, Road Supervisor Tim Stallman told county commissioners’ last Tuesday. The commissioners approved the increase after hearing what Mr. Stallman had to say.

“We tried to fit a 30-foot bridge in there, but can’t stretch it, so we have to make it a 40,” he said. “You can imagine what that does to a budget for something like this. The creek banks won’t hold it, and we have running water.

“Unfortunately, that adds \$23,000 to the cost of the bridge. Our minimum length of bridge is 30 feet, and we build it up to 60 feet. We’ve been trying to keep it to the 30s to keep costs down, but we just can’t do it with this one. We went all 30s last year, and it worked because we were working out west where the channels are more shallow. But that isn’t the case here.”

The reason the budget is getting tight on bridges, Mr. Stallman said at a previous meeting, is because the federal government has cut its budget for local bridges, with the intention of eliminating the money altogether. When that happens, he said, it will mean \$90,000 a year less for his department to work with.

Bridge building and maintenance is paid for in two ways, he said: First,

through county property taxes, which provides the department with about \$65,000 a year. The second source is the federal government, which divvies out money to the states, which then send it to the counties. Mr. Stallman said the county was getting around \$160,000 a year from the feds, but that’s set to decrease to about \$75,000 over the next year and half. That leaves about \$140,000 a year for about 233 bridges.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Decided to keep a resolution from 2012 on the books which provides money for developmental disability services and allows people to choose their own provider.

- Approved a motion to upgrade the classification of county roads

316 and 507 to “minor collector” status from local road status so that they will receive more maintenance.

- Approved purchase of a small refrigerator for the landfill from Kirk Ulery for \$50 by Mr. Stallman.

- Had two 10-minute, closed-door sessions for non-elected personnel. No action was taken.

- Heard that Commissioners Brad Marcuson and Stan McEvoy are going to the Kansas County Commissioners’ Association meeting in Wichita this week. Commissioner Sid Metcalf said he would let the others know if he could attend by Tuesday.

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