

Efforts to transfer Heritage ownership gain support

Written by Wauneta Breeze

Friday, 07 October 2011 18:48 - Last Updated Friday, 07 October 2011 18:58

By Tina Kitt

The Wauneta Breeze

Feedback from consultants indicate community volunteers and the Wauneta Village Board are on the right track with their efforts to seek ownership of Heritage of Wauneta.

These efforts were launched earlier this year when Vetter Health Services, owner of Wauneta's nursing home and one of the largest private employers in town, announced plans to cease operation in Wauneta by June 30, 2012.

An early draft of a feasibility study being conducted by Rural Health Development, a health care consultant and management firm based in Cambridge, notes that while there will be risks involved, they would recommend that the community continue to pursue acquisition of the facility.

An overview of the draft report was presented by Terry Engell and Page Johnston during a special Village Board meeting held Monday night.

While a final assessment will not be available until all financial and facility data is collected, research into available funding is well underway, said Johnston.

BWTELcom has been assisting efforts to research USDA loan funds, available at zero percent interest. Members of the Village Board said they would be willing to pay the cost of hiring someone with expertise in this area to help file the necessary paperwork and applications.

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Engell and Johnston said VHS is working cooperatively with community leaders to make the transition possible and hope to be able to make a formal announcement regarding the status of these efforts in the near future.

Storage units greenlighted

Robert Hohl was given approval for the conditional permitted use of constructing self-storage units on property he owns at the corner of Arapahoe and Kiowa Streets where the former B&D Station previously stood.

Hohl said he plans to build a five-bay self storage unit where B&D stood. The units will face north so the flow of street traffic will not be hindered.

The units will be constructed of steel and feature a gabled roof.

Board members noted that no one protested the construction of the units as they voted to accept the recommendation of the Wauneta Planning Commission to allow the conditional permitted use.

Rider Trust investments

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Acting on the recommendation of Sharleen Riemenschneider with Edward Jones Investments of McCook, the board voted to move funds in the Rider Family/Chateau Theatre Trust into an Advisory Solutions managed account which is structured to rebalance according to market conditions to garner better returns than less fluid accounts.

Johnston noted that Valley Bank and Trust has an investment advisory arm as well and has been asked for the board to consider letting them make an investment proposal.

Sinner and fellow board member Tony Cribelli noted that the Rider Trust was established with Edward Jones and in keeping with the family's wishes thought it best to keep those funds there at present.

"Edward Jones specializes in investing and I would like to give this Advisory Solutions a chance for a year or so to see if we're happy with it," said Cribelli.

Johnston noted that it would be best to have legal counsel review the trust agreement to ascertain whether the Village Board is even at liberty to move the investment funds.

The board also voted to formally designate the Village Clerk and Village Board Chairman as the contact persons for the Rider Family Trust. Evelyn Skelton is the current Village Clerk and Sinner the current board chair.