By Sheri Hink

The Wauneta Breeze

Wauneta's Village Board members continue to spend much of their time hashing out details concerning the recent purchase of Sunrise Heights of Wauneta nursing home.

Village leaders report that the transition from Vetter Health Services to Village of Wauneta ownership is going well. Ownership transition occurred on July 1, 2012.

Village Board members held their July meeting one week later than usual, on July 17.

The agenda items concerning the nursing home included many administrative items.

Authorized signers

First up on the nursing home agenda was designation of signers for the nursing home checking accounts. It was determined that checks under $1,500 could be signed by nursing home staff and those for over $1,500 must also be signed by one of the three nursing home committee members (Page Johnston, Tony Cribelli and Lloyd Sinner).

In addition, the first two pay periods under village ownership will be completed using paper checks, which will be signed by a board member. The third pay period on will be completed via direct deposit. Payroll will be reviewed by a village board member and the check to transfer payroll funds will be signed by a board member.

Budget

The board, with Sunrise Heights administator Lisa Kisenger and Rural Health Development representative Jo Fuller had a lengthy discussion of the facility's budget.

During the budget discussion Kisenger reported the current census of Sunrise Heights is 33 as of July 17. Of the current residents 17 are private paid, 11 are paid by medicaid and five are paid by medicare. She also reported the facility has had three inquiries from potential residents.

Kisinger explained the budget was completed with the assumption of a census of 29 residents–13 paying $174/day privately, 13 paying $155/day from medicaid and 13 paying $350/day with medicare.

Her proposed budget included three percent increases in employee salaries and supply costs. The budget resulted in a projected bottom net income of $104,708.64.

Room rate increase

Kisinger and Fuller discussed a raise in room rates with the board. Kisinger reported the facility

averaged a $7/day increase per year in the past.

Kisinger recommended a $2/day increase for private pay residents effective Sept. 1, 2012. The board approved the increase. Residents will be given a 30-day notice before the rate goes into effect.

Software

The village board approved payment of $8,344.42 to American Healthtech for purchase of bookkeeping software for the nursing home. The payment includes $1,295.42 to transfer software licenses to the village, $5,480.00 for payroll software and $1,569.00 for general ledger software. The nursing home will also be billed $375.42/month for maintenance of the software.

Employee benefits

Kisinger asked the board for their permission to offer dental insurance to employees, with employees carrying 100 percent of the cost. Board members approved the benefit.

Kisinger also reported that all employees who desired to roll their existing IRAs into new accounts had been able to do so.

The board also approved a team handbook of policies and procedures for Sunrise Heights.

Sprinkler system

The final nursing home agenda item included a motion to accept the proposal from Nebraska Fire Sprinkler to install the new sprinkler system for $138,900 with the requirement that the nursing home committee establish that their proposal provides for a minimum of ceiling texture disturbance.

This mode of installation will reduce the occurrences of asbestos abatement required, thus lessoning the cost of sprinkler installation.

Other nursing home items

A regular time was determined for the nursing home committee to meet. It was determined the committee would be the fourth Tuesday of each month at the nursing home.

These meetings are attended by a maximum of two village board members and therefore do not constitute a meeting of the village board.

The board also approved raising the reimbursement rate for employee-owned vehicles for business use to the IRS standard of $0.555 per mile from the current rate of $0.40 per mile. Board members also approved the purchase of a printer for the therapy department and moved to hire Doug Kucera to perform the annual nursing home audit, cost report and quarterly analysis.

Sheriff's vehicle

Mike Dukes with the Chase County Sheriff's department attended the village board meeting. In addition to his regular report he also reported on the progress of purchasing a new vehicle.

The new vehicle was first brought up at last month's village board meeting. It will be used by the officer assigned to the Wauneta area.

Per Wauneta's contact with the County, the Village of Wauneta is responsible for half the cost to purchase the new vehicle.

Bids were taken to secure a new vehicle. The only bid received was one by Country Ford out of Imperial. The bid is for just under $28,000 to purchase a crew cab Ford F150, of which the Village will pay for half.

The new pickup will be ordered and then necessary equipment will be installed in the vehicle, with the Village also responsible for half the cost of the equipment and installation as well.

Equipment in the new pickup will include a quarter cage for transferring prisoners.

Deputy Dukes also reported that Sheriff Kevin Mueller is researching the possible purchase of new radar equipment for the pickup. It is possible that STOP funds may be used for the purchase.

When the current vehicle is retired from service it will be transferred to Village of Wauneta ownership.

Clerk's report

Skelton brought a letter she had received to the attention of the board. A Wauneta resident stated by letter that a flea infestation at his/her property was suspected to be caused by the goats grazing the river property.

Village Superintendent Bill Bischoff reported to the board that he had discussed the issue with Bruce and Larry Peterson, the owners of the goats. The Petersons informed Bischoff the goats are regularly treated both internally and externally for fleas.

It was determined the flea infestation must have come from another source. Bischoff stated he would follow up with the resident who sent the letter.

Skelton reminded village board members it is time to begin working on the Village's new budget for the upcoming year. Board members instructed Skelton and Bischoff to begin work on the budget, get tentative numbers to the board and then schedule a budget workshop.

Skelton asked the board to consider development of a Village mission statement and log. Board members felt both were important to have and asked Skelton to research them further.

Superintendent's report

Village Superintendent Bischoff started his report by informing board members village summer workers have been busy repainting parking lines on Tecumseh. He asked board members if they would also like the employees to repaint the center lines on the street.

It has been observed by several of the board members as well as the superintendent that vehicles regularly make u-turns in the middle of main street.

Board members instructed Bischoff to have the employees repaint the lines in hopes it would help eliminate the problem of illegal u-turns.

Bischoff also reported that the village may soon have the opportunity to purchase a new bucket truck from Southwest Public Power at a reduced price. The opportunity has been discussed at previous village board meetings.

Upcoming projects for village workers include flushing the sewers, a project that will begin soon. Bischoff also has plans to armor coat five to six blocks of Wauneta's streets yet this summer.

Bischoff also reported to the board that the village has experienced issues with the SCADA monitoring system. The SCADA system for the lift station went out for three days with no inconvenience to the public.

Village employees monitored the system manually 24-hours per day. At one point the village was using 400,000 gallons of water per day due to residents watering their yards.Bischoff stated the SCADA system failed due to the heat. He reported that the system was fixed and operational as of Tuesday.

CDBG funds

Village clerk Evelyn Skelton reported to the board that she had notified the Department of Economic Development that the village intended to return the remaining Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. She was told the DED had extended its deadline to return funds.

The Village received a letter from DED in June indicating that the money must be returned or the village's usage of the funds would be audited.

During the June meeting the board moved to return the funds with the understanding that the Department of Economic Development will acknowledge receiving the funds back, assume liability of current CDBG loans and release the village from liability in the program.

Based on DED's most recent statement, the village is holding on new information from DED before moving forward with any actions with the funds.

Other items

The board approved payment of $35,374.97 to Pivot Electric for variable frequency drive and SCADA installation, part of the ongoing water project. The board also approved an outlay request to request $35,374 in state revolving funds loan/grant funds from the Department of Environmental Quality.

Board members approved a payment of $750 to cover the annual fee for the Village of Wauneta's allocation of the Code Red Emergency Notification System. The total cost of the system to the county is approximately $5,270.

Board members took a moment at the meeting to review the investment account for the Chateau Theatre. Reports show that funds have grown to $100,105.41 as of June 21. This represents a 7.39 percent increase since Oct. 5, 2011.

The amount shown on the statement takes into account the roughly $4,500 withdrawn from the account to perform heating/air conditioning repairs at the theatre.

Village board member Tony Cribelli brought the Wauneta website to the agenda. He has been working with Village of Wauneta staff members to arrange for weekly updates to the website.

He felt these updates would, “Help get the word out about what’s going on in Wauneta.” It is hoped the regular updates to the site will aid in getting more families/businesses to move to the community.

The Village Board acknowledged receipt of a $1,365 donation to the Village Library from the Willa McBride Memorial. Board members expressed their appreciation for the donation.

The Wauneta Village board’s regular meeting time is the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. MT. The public is welcome to attend Village board meetings.