

## **Village board discusses one and six year road plan, electric increase expected in March**

Written by Wauneta Breeze  
Friday, 22 February 2013 18:21 -

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**By Sheri Hink-Wagner**

### **The Wauneta Breeze**

The Wauneta Village Board met for their regular meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 12 at the city building.

Village board members Lloyd Sinner, Tony Cribelli, Page Johnston, Beau Kramer and Rick Einspahr were present for the meeting.

Sheriff's Deputy Mike Dukes and Village Attorney Arlan Wine were also in attendance at the meeting.

Key topics of discussion at the February meeting were a public hearing on the village's one and six year road plan, possible electric rate increases at the March meeting, possible restrictions to water usage if the drought continues and animal complaints.

### **One and six year road plan**

The board had a public hearing on the one and six year road plan last Tuesday.

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Greg Wolford with W Design Associates out of McCook, who is also appointed as the Wauneta Street Superintendent, was present to explain the one and six year road plan. No members of the public attended the public hearing.

Wolford indicated that all plans on the 2013 one and six year road plan were included in last year's plan as well.

Improvements to Falls Drive and west Cheyenne Street are planned during the first year of the plan. Plans include plotting the streets which will most likely require the streets to be widened. Plans to improve the streets are also cited in the plan.

The one and six year road plan includes a budget of \$41,000 which would allow for curb and gutter work as well as application of millings to create a hard surface on the streets.

Village Superintendent Bill Bischoff proposed an alternative to curb and gutter work which could be completed at a lesser cost. Bischoff's alternative plan consisted of forming a ditch with millings to control water runoff without the need to build curbs and gutters.

Village board members discussed both options and seemed to favor Bischoff's alternative suggestion due to the low traffic flow on the effected streets.

The board and superintendent agreed the plan for this year will be to survey and plot Falls Drive and west Cheyenne Street so the village will know where the street is supposed to be. The village wants to address the erosion problem on the city equipment yard. After the survey and plot are completed on the streets the village will look into laying millings and concrete drainage control according to the one and six year road plan.

If extra millings are available, the village will consider putting millings on East Park Road and Bodeman Drive by the city park. The refurbishment of park roads is not included in the one and six year road plan and would be a separate village endeavor.

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The six year plan includes work to Sioux Street, Legion Street, Shawnee Street, North Railway Street, Arikaree Street, Pontiac Street, east Wichita Street, and Valley Street. The public can view a map depicting the streets effected by the plan at the Village office.

Bischoff noted the village's one and six year road plan allows the village to access highway allocation funds from the State of Nebraska and that the village received nearly \$60,000 in highway allocation funding last year.

### **Electric rate increase on March meeting agenda**

Village Clerk Evelyn Skelton was not in attendance during the February meeting. Village board members viewed a written report Skelton prepared before the meeting.

Skelton's report indicated that the village has been absorbing increased electric rates from the village's electric providers since Jan. 1.

Village board members determined electric rate increases should be put on the agenda for the March 12 village board meeting.

Board members hope to adjust the village's electric costs at the March meeting in order to pass the increases along to consumers.

During his superintendent's report Bischoff reported several complaints the village had received regarding electric bills.

He told the board the increased electric bills were due to increased usage due to the fact that

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the temperature was never above 30 degrees during the day and fell dramatically during the nights in January.

Bischoff informed the board that as a village electric usage was up 200,000 kilowatts in January 2013 versus December 2012.

### **Water usage may be restricted if drought continues**

Bischoff presented information to the board concerning Wauneta's Drought/Emergency Ordinance.

He explained the community established the ordinance a few years ago when required to do so by the state.

Bischoff went on to say that another drought is predicted this year and that it may be necessary to enact portions of the ordinance which could restrict water usage if the drought continues.

He also brought to the board's attention that the current ordinance does not offer provisions for restricting bulk water usage.

Bischoff explained that he and Skelton have discussed the need for the board to review and possibly modify the ordinance to provide restrictions to bulk water usage in years of drought.

Last year the village reported 357,000 gallons of water were used by bulk water consumers. Those purchasing bulk water pay a flat fee of \$10 plus \$1 per gallon.

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Bischoff and Skelton would like to review the cost of bulk water to assure that the costs are in line with rates regular water customers pay.

### Dog and cat complaints

Complaints regarding animal issues continue to be a point of discussion at village board meetings.

During the superintendent's report Bischoff reported the village had received numerous dog calls.

He said the calls consisted of a couple missing dogs, reports of a dog at the school gym during a basketball game and a call complaining of five dogs in a resident's yard. He indicated two dogs were kept by the village for a week.

Bischoff also reported the village employees need to begin trapping cats in a couple areas of town. He said there have been complaints of cat issues in a couple of areas. Furthermore, he stated that if a cat has a collar the village has to house them and that the village is not currently set up to house cats.

He reiterated to the board the village's ordinance cites allowance for two adult dogs and two adult cats. The village's animal ordinance is being published in the public notices section of this week's edition of the Breeze.

Village attorney Arlan Wine stated the village has the power in place to enforce the ordinance.

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During the sheriff's report Deputy Mike Dukes informed the board he and Skelton have been researching ordinance examples from other communities. As one example, Dukes mentioned that Elwood requires owners of dogs deemed potentially dangerous to carry liability insurance for their dogs.

Dukes emphasized the importance of having animal ordinances that reflect the needs of the community by saying, "It's a public safety issue."

Village board members made no decisions regarding the animal ordinances at the February meeting, but made plans to discuss the issues again at the March meeting.

### **Nursing home report**

Page Johnston provided a brief report on happenings at the nursing home.

During the January Village Board meeting the board asked the nursing home committee to determine if the nursing home's operations budget could handle payment of health insurance claims of \$14,000 to \$25,000.

The committee was directed to pay the claims from operations if possible, otherwise the committee was to advise the board so a special meeting could be called to allocate the funds from the village.

Johnston reported that the committee deemed the nursing home operations were capable of paying the insurance claims and therefore no further action of the board was needed.

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The nursing home's census continues to stay above the budgeted number. Current census was reported at 33 residents.

Bryan Einspahr has finished work on the kitchen wall which had been damaged from water.

Nebraska Fire and Sprinkler is continuing the work on the nursing home's new fire sprinkler system.

One item on the nursing home and committee's agenda in the near future is the need to upgrade reporting software at the facility.

Johnston reported that regulations require all reporting to be done electronically by 2014. He reported that Lisa Kisinger, Sunrise Heights of Wauneta administrator, is currently researching costs to upgrade the software.

The Clerk's Report discussed at the meeting included a report that \$150,000 from the village's reserves has been moved to nursing home accounts.

The Village of Wauneta had pledged this amount to the fundraising efforts initiated prior to the purchase of the facility but had not yet made the transfer. Skelton's report indicated the funds have been transferred.

### **Superintendent's report**

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Village Superintendent Bill Bischoff provided the board with an update on the ongoing water project. He reported that the project is nearly complete. The only portion still needed is an electric flow meter. He stated that everything else is ready to go. Once the electric flow meter is installed the village will be able to switch water usage control over to the variable frequency drives.

Bischoff provided an account of what he learned at a recent water conference. At the conference he learned of a pilot project the state is aware of in a few communities in Nebraska.

It has been found that when pumping rates increase so does the arsenic levels in water. The communities in the pilot project are replacing the gravel packed in wells with benzonite. This process is expected to lower arsenic levels in the water supply.

The superintendent emphasized the village has good wells, but that the arsenic level continues to be higher than allowed. It was 11.4 at the last check.

Bischoff reported that some grant money may be available if the village was able to participate in the project.

The board encouraged Bischoff to look into possibly participating in the pilot project.

Also in the superintendent's report, Bischoff reported he has been attending National Incident Management classes in Imperial. The classes will allow the village to maintain its eligibility for disaster funding.

He also reminded village board members of an online emergency class they each need to take.

Bischoff asked the board if it would be possible to paint the village's Case loader. He said it is mechanically solid but is also the most unsightly piece of equipment the village owns.



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After discussion the village agreed to allow Bischoff to seek estimates to paint the loader from Sinners Paint and Body Shop.

Bischoff also reported a happening with a property owner and the sewer line to their home. The village owns sewer lines as far as the sewer mains, but property owners may not always be aware that they own, and are responsible to repair sewer lines to the point where their sewer lines meet the village's main—usually in the middle of the street.

### **Other business**

Village board members appointed Joey Large to join the village's economic development committee. Other members of the economic development committee include Tony Cribelli, Rick Einspahr and Bill Bischoff.

The Wauneta Village Board's regular meeting time is 7:00 p.m. MT the second Tuesday of each month at the village office. The public is welcome to attend Village board meetings.