

NEWS

BOCC . . .

(Continued from page 1)

ing in Jefferson West USD 340 and that both Valley Falls USD 338 and Oskaloosa USD 341 are interested in likewise partnering with it to ensure that their students have access to behavioral health services. He went on to report that the agency has seen some “positive benefits” as a result of this arrangement.

The school-based therapists have been in place for about a year, according to him.

Durkin also informed the commissioners that TGC recently landed a small suicide prevention grant the agency can tap into in attempting to meet the mental health needs of any number of people.

The executive director eventually made the board aware of TGC’s need to have more space at its clinic in Oskaloosa so that it can better serve Jefferson County residents, and he indicated that the agency would be exploring this subject further in the days ahead.

“We haven’t even started on the budget yet,” Malm told Durkin after he had wrapped up his remarks to the board.

Also on hand for Durkin’s presentation of the budget request for next year were Paul Slobodnik, the chief financial officer for TGC, Chloe Grabanski, the director of Crisis Services, and Lance Lewis, who has served as the administrator of the clinic in Oskaloosa for the past 18 years.

Later in the meeting, wearing “another hat,” so to speak, Lutes, who also is the mayor of Ozawkie, asked the commissioners if county labor and equipment could perhaps be used to overlay Sioux Street with asphalt.

Lutes described Sioux Street as a “main street” in Ozawkie and said the proposed project would involve five blocks of pavement. He estimated that the area where asphalt would be put down amounted to 2,500 square yards.

The commissioners collectively told Lutes that they would get back with him with an answer later. Meanwhile, County Counselor-designate Jonathan Ehrlich was going to be studying the current statutes, laws and regulations in an effort to determine whether or not county labor and equipment can be used in connection with a city project.

In other business during the board’s weekly meeting the afternoon of May 12 at the courthouse in Oskaloosa, County Treasurer Douglas Bond informed Christy, Malm, and Walbridge that the four Lexmark printers the county purchased recently were scheduled to be delivered the next day.

In response to a question from one of the commissioners, Bond said the next sale of tax-delinquent properties was still on for Thursday, May 29.

The sale is set to start at 10 a.m. Registration will get underway at 9.

The county treasurer told the commissioners that plenty of people have pre-registered for the event as prospective bidders.

Community Development Director Stephan Metzger reported that because of a change in Kansas law, Jefferson County is no longer eligible to participate in the Department of Commerce’s Rural Opportunity Zone program.

Metzger told the commissioners that if a new full-time county resident has already been accepted into the program, which makes possible student loan repayment assistance, he or she would be permitted to finish the five-year program. But if that new resident who wants to take part in the program hasn’t found a sponsor yet, he or she

has until June 1 to do so, he related.

“It (the county’s participation in the program) was a brief, whirlwind adventure,” Metzger remarked in reflecting on the experience from the county’s perspective.

According to the Community Development director, state statutes now specify that only counties with a population of less than 15,000 can participate in the program. The program had been limited to counties with a population of less than 40,000.

The 2020 U.S. Census put Jefferson County’s head count at 18,368.

The county was added to the state’s list of ROZ counties last May.

After recessing the meeting to allow the commissioners to meet as the directors of the Jefferson County Land Bank, Christy, Malm, and Walbridge accepted a bid on Lot 47 in Block M of Lake Ridge Estates.

The bid was supplied by Steven Maltby, 6680 Crescent Rim Drive, Ozawkie, and was in the amount of \$525.

Before the vote was taken Malm told Metzger that he would like to have seen a higher offer for the lot, which prompted the Community Development director to suggest that perhaps the county needs to raise its minimum acceptable bid.

The minimum acceptable bid currently is \$500. It had been \$300.

According to information Metzger made available to the commissioners and the paper, Maltby wanted the lot so that he and his wife, Rebecca, could enlarge the size of their yard. That same information also indicated that the couple might put up a utility shed at some point.

Metzger went on to mention the bid on Lot 451 in Lakeside Village the board tabled a week earlier, saying the bidder, Daniel Logan, thought he was making an offer on two lots and not just one. The Community Development director then explained that the cause of the confusion could be traced to the fact that Lot 451 and Lot 452 comprise the same parcel of land.

The meeting was recessed for roughly 10 minutes to accommodate the business of the Land Bank.

Voting 3-0, the board OK’d a motion that by way of a Quit Claim deed, an unplatted piece of property located north of the entrance to Lakeside Village be transferred from the county to the Land Bank and that Christy be authorized to sign the necessary paperwork on behalf of the governing body.

The property in question covers approximately half an acre.

The board passed Resolution

2025-018 on a 3-0 vote following the required public hearing on a petition to vacate the platted setbacks for Lot 2 in Roe Addition. That petition was filed by Daniel and Linda Foltz, 11091 46th Street, Perry.

During the hearing Metzger told the commissioners that his office hadn’t received any objections to the proposed vacation of the existing setbacks, which reportedly are greater than what the county’s zoning regulations call for.

No one at the hearing expressed any objections to the proposed vacation of the setbacks.

Executive Sessions

At the request of Christy, the commissioners met privately with Bond and Ehrlich for 10 minutes so that the client group could be given legal advice under the attorney-client privilege exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act. An “interagency issue” was identified as being the subject that was to be discussed.

At the request of Emergency Manager Keith Jeffers, the commissioners met privately with him and Ehrlich for five minutes so that the client group could be given legal advice under the attorney-client privilege exception to KOMA. “Land acquisition” was identified as being the subject that was to be discussed. Metzger was invited to join the closed-door conversation about a minute after it had begun and did.

At the request of Public Works Director Ben Domann, the commissioners met privately with him for 10 minutes for the stated purpose of discussing personnel matters relating to non-elected personnel. “Recruitment and retention” was identified as being the subject that was to be discussed.

At the request of Metzger, the commissioners met privately with him and Ehrlich for five minutes so that the client group could be given legal advice under the attorney-client privilege exception to KOMA. “Potential litigation” was identified as being the subject that was to be discussed.

At the request of Walbridge, the commissioners ultimately met privately for 10 minutes for the stated purpose of discussing personnel matters relating to non-elected personnel. “Recruitment and retention” was identified as being the subject that was to be discussed. Ehrlich was invited to remain in the room for the closed-door conversation and did.

When the meeting reopened to the public, Christy announced that no binding action had been taken behind closed doors.

The meeting adjourned at 2:33.

3 school boards have Pos. 2 vacancies; race created for Nortonville council

by Clarke Davis

Candidates filing for public office in Jefferson County picked up somewhat this past week and the deadline — June 2 — is now just a little over a week away.

Jeanette Shipley, 57, filed for re-election as mayor of Valley Falls. She joins two other mayoral incumbents who filed earlier, Nortonville Mayor Ray Brown and Ozawkie Mayor Loren Lutes.

In last week’s complete listing of all offices up for election, the paper failed to include Position No. 2 on the McLouth school board. This is an unexpired term, according to the Jefferson County Election Office. A vacancy was created with the resignation of Pamela Carleton and Joe Mahon was appointed to that position. No one had filed for the seat at press time.

Two other school districts have an unexpired term and they are both Position 2. Those

districts are Oskaloosa and Perry-Lecompton. These terms are for two years. Bill Culver was appointed to the position in Perry-Lecompton and he has filed for re-election. Stephan Metzger was appointed to the vacancy in Oskaloosa and no one has yet filed for that seat.

Four candidates have filed for two council seats in Nortonville creating the first contested offices up for election. Those candidates are Jacob Abel, 33, Jack Weishaar, 68, Robert E. Hauk, 74, and Steven L. Noll (age unknown).

Other candidates filing this past week are James Copeland (I), 56, McLouth, Pos. 5., USD 342, McLouth; Julie Newman (I), 62, Oskaloosa, seeking re-election to represent Jefferson County on the Meadowlark Extension District board; Michael Smith, 60, seeking re-election to the Oskaloosa city council; and Robert L. Fisher, 52, an incumbent Ozawkie city councilman.

15 applicants seek Supreme Court vacancy

The Supreme Court Nominating Commission will convene June 9 and 10 to interview applicants to fill a Kansas Supreme Court vacancy that will be created when Justice Evelyn Wilson resigns July 4.

Wilson resigned for health reasons after a diagnosis of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, commonly called ALS or Lou Gehrig disease.

The commission will convene at 8:30 a.m. Monday, June 9, and interviews will begin at 9 a.m. Interviews are open to the public and will be livestreamed on the Kansas judicial branch YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/@kansasjudicialbranch4804 streams.

Interviews will be in a first-floor meeting room in the Kansas Judicial Center, 301 SW 10th Ave., Topeka.

The applicants are:

- Meryl B. Carver-Allmond, lawyer, Lawrence
- Carl A. Folsom III, district judge, Lawrence
- Amy J. Hanley, district judge, Lawrence
- Randall L. Hodgkinson, Lawyer, Topeka
- Krishnan C. Jayaram, district judge, Lenexa
- Larua E. Johnson-McNish, district judge, Troy
- Brant M. Laue, Lawyer, Topeka

- Kathleen M. Lynch, district judge, Kansas City
- Brian L. Mizer, Lawyer, Lawrence
- Cheryl A. Rios, district judge, Topeka
- Anthony F. Rupp, lawyer, Olathe
- Krystal L. Vokins, lawyer, Lawrence
- Larkin E. Walsh, lawyer, Leawood
- Kristen D. Wheeler, lawyer, Wichita
- Robert J. Wonnell, district judge, Olathe

The interview schedule, brief applicant biographies, and interview guidelines are on the Kansas judicial branch website.

After interviewing applicants, the Nominating Commission will decide which three to recommend to the governor to fill the position. The governor will then have 60 days to choose which one to appoint to fill the vacancy.

The commission will conduct its activity subject to the Kansas Open Meetings Act, the Kansas Open Records Act.

By a majority vote, the commission can recess into executive session to discuss sensitive financial information in the personal financial records or official background

See Supreme Page 4

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Pia . . .

(Continued from page 1)

have been doing an amazing job getting the space ready for us,” Gerety stated.

In 2024 alone, the company served over 140 buyers and sellers, with production numbers topping \$40 million. The Atchison location allows the team to continue delivering personalized, hands-on service in multiple locations. “We believe in meeting face-to-face, walking clients through the process, answering their questions, and providing the professional attention they deserve,” said Gerety.

Established in 1999, Pia Friend Realty has been a trusted name in Kansas and Missouri real estate for over two decades. Many of its agents have served for 15-plus years, offering experience and dedication. Now, with a secondary brick-and-mortar location in Atchison, the firm is more accessible than ever, whether you come to the Oskaloosa office located at 524 Liberty St. Oskaloosa, or to the Atchison branch.

“We’re excited to continue serving this wonderful community with a presence,” Gerety shared. “Whether you’re buying, selling, or just curious about the market, we’re here to be your ‘friend’ and real estate expert.”

Stop by the new Atchison location to meet the team and learn more about what Pia Friend Realty can offer. The phone number for the office is 913-372-0040.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

(Published in The Oskaloosa Independent May 22, 2025)1t

NOTICE OF INTENT TO SELL REAL ESTATE THE COUNTY OF JEFFERSON, STATE OF KANSAS TO: ALL PERSONS WHO ARE OR MAY BE INTERESTED

TAKE NOTICE: pursuant to KSA-19-26,109 the Jefferson County Land Bank will sell the following parcels of Real Estate thirty (30) days from the published date of this notice.

Lot 1 Block P in Lake Ridge Estates

BOARD OF TRUSTEES, JEFFERSON COUNTY LAND BANK JEFFERSON COUNTY, KS

EARLY COPY NOTICE DEADLINE FRIDAY, MAY 23, 10 a.m. FOR THE May 29 ISSUE



The Vindicator and The Independent offices will be CLOSED Memorial Day Mon., May 26 in observance of the holiday.



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