



Reflector-Chronicle

50 cents

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City discusses publishing of public notices

By Ed Boice

Abilene Reflector-Chronicle

The Abilene City Commission had a meeting free of personality issues on Monday, May 12. Also, the commission discussed the publication of public notices and the fate of the former nursing home at 1601 W First Street.

Regular meeting

Regarding the building at 1601 W First Street that was nearly demolished, City Inspector Travis Steerman said the roof is repaired and vegetation is trimmed. All that remains to be finished is cleaning up construction debris and tree branches. Roger Seymour, owner of the business that owns the building, said the debris will be removed.

Among his comments, Seymour said he is looking for someone to make a tree carving out of a stump of tree more than 99 years old.

Seymour critiqued the city, saying, in his experience as a roofing contractor, Abilene is one of the most difficult cities to work with. Seymour also said Steerman was in “over his head” and “not very user friendly.”

Seymour said a local group has approached him to use the building to house “battered women,” and Seymour is in discussions with the group.

Seymour also asked the city to align their city code with the state’s when it comes to roofing requirements. Specifically, the state does not require general contractors and property owners to acquire a roofing license. Seymour said Steerman required him as the property owner to obtain a roofing license.

“It’s not required by state law. It’s not required by statute,” Seymour said. “State law and statute overrule your city ordinance that does require it.”

Aaron Martin, city attorney, said he will look into the matter.

Official notices

The commission then discussed the designation of the city’s official newspaper. The city’s ordinance states that notices must be published one day a week for a certain period of time in the print edition of the Abilene Reflector-Chronicle.

Recently, the Reflector-Chronicle decreased its print schedule from every weekday to Tuesdays and Thursdays. However, the newspaper still publishes an edition every day online.

Kim Maguire, general manager of the newspaper, said the Monday, Wednesday and Friday editions are on the newspaper’s website, while Tuesday and Thursday edition are available in print and on the RC website.

Maguire also said she and staff are always willing to help someone with accessing the newspaper’s website, especially people who may never have owned an internet device before.

The commission generally agreed to prioritize publishing in the print editions of the Reflector-Chronicle. After discussion, the commission directed staff to add a prioritization of where to publish notices to the resolution.

The prioritization would be in the print edition first, the Reflector-Chronicle’s online edition second and the city’s website third.

City manager report

Ron Marsh, city manager, said Kelsey Briand will serve as the city’s interim finance director.

The city received a dividend check from EMC Insurance for \$28,543.60.

The Community Foundation of Dickinson County and the city are collaborating to develop some form of public restrooms for the downtown area.

A shade structure has been installed at the Abilene Municipal Pool. The pool will be power washed and filled this week.

Study session

The commission decided to allow the sale of fireworks to start June 30 and end July 5. Fireworks may be discharged starting July 1 and ending July 5. The commission will vote on the fireworks ordinance in the next meeting May 27.

The item of the Reinvestment Housing Incentive District in Golden Belt Heights and the contract with Ross Vogel and Heartland Housing Partners was postponed to the next meeting.

John Kollhoff, city commissioner, then voiced that the Sports Complex Task Force did not follow the city’s purchase policy in hiring local architect Kristyn Anderson.

Kelley Timbrook, Parks and Recreation Department director and member of the task force, said Anderson’s price is under the \$2,500 threshold that allows a department head to make a purchasing decision and Anderson is only aiding in the creation of the RFP for the sports fields.

Trevor Witt, city commissioner and task force member, approved of Timbrook’s reasoning.

The Abilene City Commission’s next meeting is at 4 p.m. Tuesday, May 27, in the Abilene Public Library.

Abilene seniors ready to graduate

Commencement exercises planned for 1:30 p.m. Sunday, May 18

By Gail Parsons

Abilene Reflector-Chronicle

Laughter, tears and the tossing of graduation caps will mark the end of an era as seniors at Abilene High School say goodbye to high school and step into their future.

The graduation ceremony will be at 1:30 p.m. Sunday, May 18. Doors will open at 12:30 p.m., allowing families and guests time to find their seats and get settled before the celebration begins.

This year, the school expects 106 seniors to graduate, a number that falls in the middle range for class sizes in recent years, which have varied from 88 to 135 students, said High School

Principal Ben Smith.

For the 2025 ceremony, the school will continue to honor all students earning a perfect 4.0 Grade Point Average. This year, that includes 12 valedictorians.

However, beginning with the Class of 2029, the district plans to transition to a single valedictorian and salutatorian model, following a recent school board decision.

“In about four years from now, we will have it narrowed down to one valedictorian and one salutatorian,” Smith said.

“Starting with next year’s freshman class, when they become seniors, will put some filters in there to narrow it down.”

The graduation will be live-streamed through the district’s Five Star Video page, giving friends and family unable to attend in person an opportunity to tune in.

The broadcast will be available live



and stored for future viewing. To view the ceremony, go to <https://www.abileneschools.org/page/5-star-studios>.

Each graduate will receive eight reserved-seat tickets for guests. Additional attendees are welcome to sit in the general admission.

Retired educator turns attention to senior issues

By Gail Parsons

Abilene Reflector-Chronicle

Retired educator Tom Schwartz spent years looking after the needs of Abilene’s youth. Now, as Dickinson County’s newly sworn-in Silver-Haired Legislator, he is turning his attention to the senior population.

When he was first approached about accepting the position, Schwartz said his first thought was no, he didn’t want to take on anything more.

“But it seems like Neighbor to Neighbor and the CARES Coalition (two groups he helps with) are already involved in a lot of things that involve seniors and families in need,” he said. “So, I thought, why not? I might as well advocate for those services, because I see how important they are and how important it is for seniors to continue receiving the services that they are getting now.”

His decision was also influenced by actions being taken at the federal level. He was particularly concerned about the potential cuts to the Older Americans Act, enacted in 1965 to promote services for seniors, as outlined in the Reconciliation Bill.

“Right now, there are lots of cuts, in some cases, to get rid of some of the programs



Reflector-Chronicle file photo

Tom Schwartz of Abilene is Dickinson County’s new Silver-Haired Legislator and is ready to tackle a number of issues that affect senior citizens. Schwartz, a long-time principal of McKinley Elementary School retired in 2017 after 37 years in education.

that are involved with that,” he said. “It’s just too important to ignore, and we need to get the word out. I need to make sure people know what’s going on, so that we can advocate for keeping services.”

He said he’s thinking about critical programs like Meals on Wheels, senior centers, and chronic illness support through Medicaid — services that impact countless people, not just seniors. But seniors will be hit especially hard. Two-thirds

of nursing home residents rely on Medicaid, and with proposed cuts of up to 22%, the consequences for nursing homes and Kansas hospitals could be severe. Programs like the State Health Insurance Assistance Program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, senior transportation, and low-income utility assistance are also facing potential cuts. Even home health services, often the only support many seniors have, are at risk.

“That’s why I said yes

when I was approached by the Silver Haired Legislature,” he said.

While the SHL does not have a vote, they advocate for older Kansans by identifying concerns, developing bills and resolutions designed to address those identified concerns, and presenting those resolutions to the Kansas Legislature and Governor as recommendations for state policy.

“A lot of times when these programs are cut at the federal level, they say, ‘Well, the states and the communities can pick up that cost,’” Schwartz said. “We can’t because we’re already struggling, especially at the local level.”

States and communities often do not have the resources to pick up the slack. He said he and other Silver-Haired Legislators recently talked about how the same philosophy was used when the state started eliminating mental health services in the 1990s. Communities were not able to pick up the slack.

“Once they start diluting things like that, what usually happens is you lose the whole service,” he said. “When you lose the service, it’s too late. If the federal money doesn’t come, it’s not going to be made up by the state and local.”

When your income drops look at money-saving tips

By Pat Melgares

K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. — A family’s or individual’s income may drop for a variety of reasons.

Kansas State University family resource management specialist Elizabeth Kiss said individuals may lose a job, or get fewer hours at a current job. Entrepreneurs might make less money than they anticipated.

“Or,” Kiss adds, “you may be noticing that a lot of the things you buy are suddenly costing more, which in effect is a drop in your income.”

Kiss and colleagues have

written a publication, titled ‘When Your Income Drops: Making Ends Meet,’ that is available online through the K-State Research and Extension bookstore.

She said that making ends meets comes down to five ‘C’ words — control, claim, communicate, confer and change.

Control your spending. “We don’t always like to examine our spending too closely,” Kiss said. “We like to do some things on autopilot.”

But she notes that taking a look at how you spend your money can be an opportunity to change spending habits that you’ve already wanted

to change.

“Some of the changes you need to make may be out of your control,” Kiss said. “Income loss and price changes are all out of our control right now. Look at your income, look at your expenses and figure if you can earn more or spend less — or do some combination of the two.”

Claim benefits available to you. If a drop in income is due to losing a job, you may be eligible for unemployment benefits.

“You should definitely take advantage of that because you and your former employer have paid into that,” Kiss said.

Families on low income may also be eligible for SNAP benefits, a federal

program once known as food stamps. Kiss suggests searching the online marketplace for health insurance, if the loss of a job has left the family without employer-provided health coverage.

Guidance on claiming benefits is available at many local extension offices in Kansas.

Communicate within the family. Adults should talk calmly about the family’s financial situation, and share age-appropriate details with children.

“Children may have ideas about things they’re willing to give up or substitute,” Kiss said.

“The other thing about communicating out loud is

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Weather Watch Record

Today’s forecast high — 84
Today’s forecast low — 55
Wednesday’s high — 90
Overnight low — 59
Precipitation — 0.00
2025 precipitation — 41.24
Sunset Thurs. — 8:33 p.m.
Sunrise Fri. — 6:13 a.m.



Friday

High: 83
Low: 52
Partly cloudy



Saturday

High: 80
Low: 59
Partly cloudy





Abilene Ks. Farmers Market

Every Saturday 7am-11am

Every 3rd Saturday Triple-up food bucks!

NEW LOCATION!
2104 N Buckeye St
(old Green Ford building)

Starting May 24th