

County

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CULVERT LINING

Public Works Director Tim Eisenbarth requested approval to use \$250,000 for ultraviolet light cured culvert lining of five tubes in the county, most of which are located on Wheaton Rd. The tubes have rusted bottoms and are at their end of life. This is the same process Public Works has used for the previous two years.

The cured-in-place process is trenchless, requires no digging, and offers minimal to zero disruption to traffic. The cost upfront is more expensive than simply digging out the old tube and replacing it. But the cured lining is engineered and structural and will last four times longer than simply replacing the tube. While the process is not new to the county, it is new to the four recently elected commissioners.

Eisenbarth offered a detailed explanation of the process and brought in samples of the product for the commission to view.

“This process was initially started a couple of years ago to deal with linings under asphalt roads,” he

explained. “Removal of a tube under an asphalt road is very hard. No matter how good of a compaction job you do, you will always have settling. Along with that, any time you tear up that road you are going to have downtime, which means the road is going to be closed. When we initially did the numbers three years ago, and we compared what the cost would be for us to remove that tube, put a new tube in, compact it, patch it with asphalt, and then come back typically one to two years later and patch again, the cost was almost the same. Within a thousand dollars of being the same.”

Eisenbarth went on to explain the benefits of using the UV light cured process. “There’s no interruption to traffic throughout the whole process. Longevity wise, there is 75 to 100 years on this product,” he said. “Your price is going to range somewhere from \$400 to \$900 a foot.”

Eisenbarth also stressed that simply replacing the tube may last 25 years and would result in repeated road patching. Whereas, the cured lining would last up to four times as long,



Annie Wolfe | The Times
Area veterans examine the new names added to the Pottawatomie County Veterans Memorial. A new plaque is installed each time 50 names are collected.

and required no digging or disruption to traffic.

Commissioners Merl Page and Bill Drew requested more specific cost comparisons of replacing

the tubes versus using the UV cured lining method. “For me it isn’t enough information to make a decision,” said Drew. “Maybe the past commissioners got

that information.”

“We did have the people come out and talk about it, and walk through it. And answered our questions,” said Commissioner Dee McKee, the only commissioner who was serving on the board when the county first decided to use the UV cured liners.

Force felt it was important to move forward. “What we are doing here is we are just giving them a budget of \$250,000 to do what they’ve done in the past. I’m not of the mind to reinvent the wheel, because I can understand time is of the essence. We need to get on their schedule in order to get in the rotation, possibly pick up some discounts and that kind of thing. Personally, what I’d like to do is authorize this thing today so you guys can get going on that. And next week maybe bring back that sheet from last year about cost. I understand where you are coming from, but this is a process they’ve done the last two years that is proven.”

In the end, the commission approved \$250,000 to be earmarked for the UV cured linings with the understanding that staff would present cost comparison

data at a future meeting.

TIRE AMNESTY

May is Tire and Refrigeration amnesty month at the county landfill. Beginning May 1, county residents can drop off passenger tires and refrigeration appliances at the landfill for no cost.

County Sanitarian Scott Schwinn stressed that amnesty month is for county residents only. “This does not include out-of-county individuals. We’ve had a lot of trouble in the past with out-of-county individuals trying to slip through. But we are pretty good at catching them,” he said.

In addition to free disposal of passenger tires, all larger non-passenger vehicle tires will be charged half the normal rate for disposal

BACKHOE PURCHASE

The county commission approved \$50,000 for the purchase of a used backhoe for the Blue Township Utilities Department. The money was already in the budget, and now having commissions approval, staff will begin looking at auctions to find the best option to purchase.

St. George has Hoppy Day!



Beth Day | The Times

The St. George Enrichment Team on Sunday helped youngsters have a Hoppy Day. There were Easter activities, a hunt, and the opportunity to meet the Easter Bunny.

Pictured with the bunny are Axton Myers, 10, and his sister Emberly Myers, 6, both of St. George.



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TECHNOLOGY

Jared Brazzle, district technology director, told the board they are looking at going with all iPads instead of iPads for K-8 and MacBooks for the high school.

He cited the fragility of the MacBook screens and the success of other school districts which use all iPads.

“Holton has gone all the way through on iPads,” he said. “You can do almost everything on them. It’s also easier on the tech people. We’ll have to talk to the teachers and see where the pain points would be and what we would need to do.”

The district went to one-to-one technology in 2017. Originally, K-5 had iPads, sixth through 12 had MacBooks. In the first refresh, 6-8 went to iPads.

WRESTLING

The board unanimously approved the new wrestling plan. Currently, there is one head coach and four assistant coaches – two for the girls, two for the boys.

With the boys program holding steady and the girls program growing, the board opted for a head coach for each, along with two assistant coaches for each.

Superintendent Rob McKim said the cost would increase around \$7,000 depending upon the experience of the coaches. The district will need to hire two, as Kevin Brown, former head coach, submitted his resignation last month.

PERSONNEL

After an executive session, the board voted 7-0 to approve a resolution concerning the non-renewal of the teaching contract for Rebecca Hitch, a WHS math teacher, for the 2025-

2026 school year.

The board also agreed 7-0 to add a year to the contracts of the following administrators, making them two-year contracts: Scott Meitler, assistant superintendent; Brad Couture, WMS principal; Amy Flinn, West Elementary School principal; Shane Neel, Central Elementary School principal; Erica Bammes, Special Services Co-Op director; Teri Bailey-Johnson, Special Services Co-Op assistant director; Travis Graber, WHS athletic director/assistant principal; and Brian McIntosh, WMS athletic director/assistant principal.

RECOGNITION

The board recognized the areas students who participated in the Kansas Music Educators Fifth Grade and Middle School Honor Choirs.

MISCELLANEOUS

- The board approved up to \$35,000 for a new district vehicle. It will be available for district wide use as well as Drivers Education.

- A facility master plan contract not to exceed \$90,000 with BBN Architects was approved.

- The board okayed the enrollment capacity and expected open seats report required by state law.

- Three additional Special Education teaching positions were approved, one at WHS, one at WMS and one at Rock Creek High School. This will not change the budget, as funds are being allocated differently to cover it. A para-facilitator was also approved to be used if needed.

- The board agreed to hire Varney & Associates for the next three years. They are a local company from Manhattan, can work on line, and will save the district approximately \$8,000.

Westy

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for joint projects, which she called “cross-community grants.”

According to Goodman, it “makes a more compelling story (for the grant writer) if it involves multiple communities.”

Goodman asked the council members what they saw as their top priorities.

Purvis informed her streets are one area where the council has been planning to make significant improvements.

“I have a hard time with a comprehensive plan to make Main Street beautiful, then you pull off Main and get crappy roads,” Purvis said.

Councilman Bruce Meininger also talked about the need for sidewalks and other infrastructure near where

the new pool is being built.

2024 AUDIT REPORT

Alex Mittie of Adams Brown attended the meeting to present his findings in the 2024 financial audit. The city received an “Unmodified Opinion”, which according to Mittie is the best opinion they could receive.

Following the report, the council voted to approve the audit.

Money Made Simple



Times of Opportunity
The past couple of weeks have been eventful, to say the least. For many investors, it served as a reminder of the uncertainty that arises when the market pulls back. The last two years have primarily been smooth sailing for stock owners and bondholders. It’s beneficial to be reminded occasionally that the market won’t rise endlessly in a straight line. Moreover, when the market does decline, it can present a moment of opportunity for all investors.

We all experience moments in our lives that significantly influence us, for better or worse. When speaking with retirees and those nearing retirement, they naturally have more such moments than a 30-year-old. They remember the historically high mortgage rates of the 1970s and 1980s, the elevated rates of return on CDs during the 1980s, the tech boom of the 1990s, the Great Recession of 2008, and, more recently, the downturn of 2020. Some reflect on times when money was tight, deciding whether to stay the course or change paths, for better or worse. They might also recall instances when they had a bit of extra cash, allowing them to adjust their financial situation and adopt a longer-term perspective.

I have yet to hear from a retiree who regrets making the decisions that helped them advance financially to their current position.

Occasionally, you might hear a story from an investor who sold an investment at a profit but then watched that stock soar from there. For example, buying Amazon stock for around \$5 per share in 2010 and selling it at closer to \$40 per share in 2017. It is now worth \$180 per share as of this writing.

I have also heard several stories of regret from inaction. “I wish I had started investing in my 20s or 30s.” “I should have gotten back into the market after Covid.”

And these stories are not an indictment of the investors themselves. Far from it. Investing is not an easy thing. It is simple due to the access the internet gives investors, but it is far from easy.

The question then becomes, “Are we in one of those times of opportunity, and if so, how can you take advantage of it?”

Frankly, it’s all about how you frame opportunities, which aren’t always based on the stock market and its performance.

Perhaps this may be an opportunity to set aside an emergency fund due to a significant tax return. Your tax return can help you pay off some debt. Perhaps this is a chance for you to meet with your advisor to review your investments and evaluate any opportunities in the coming year.

The point is that everyone has different times of opportunity. Some present themselves when the market moves up or down. But most are based on your circumstances – a new job, a pay raise, a newborn, or nearing full retirement age for Social Security.

Whether or not the stock market is a source of opportunity today will only be known with the benefit of time. But don’t limit your opportunity set to the market alone. There are evergreen financial moves you can always make, such as increasing your contribution rate in your 401(k) plan, contributing to an IRA or Roth IRA, or executing a Roth conversion.

There’s a world full of financial opportunities. You just need to know where to look.



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