

By Jan Rahn

Managing Editor

The future of the Grant Municipal Airport was discussed by Grant City Council members at their regular meeting on Sept. 13.

- Council terminated the contract of the current airport manager at their previous meeting due to budget constraints. The contract ends Oct. 31.

Bill Besarick, who has been the on-site airport manager since October 2004, had a salary in the range of \$14,000 plus benefits.

Council has not decided what to do about upkeep of the facility and maintenance of private planes.

- Council once again discussed installation of a new AWOS (Automated Weather Observing System) at the airport and the benefits it would provide.

The project would be 95 percent financed by the FAA. Maintenance of approximately \$5,000 per year for the tower, phone system, etc. would be up to the City of Grant to fund.

Before such a system is installed at the Grant airport, the city must acquire approximately one acre of land for it to sit on.

A new AWOS system would be beneficial to Grant and the surrounding area by providing up-to-the-minute weather conditions.

AWOS can be used for instrument approach by local pilots and pilots landing emergency life saving aircraft to pick up critical patients and airlift them to regional hospitals.

Economic Loans

Two economic development loans were approved by council at the recent meeting.

- A loan for \$22,500 was approved for Ride Rite Garage. Owner James Deaver, whose current economic development loan will be consolidated with the new one, is moving his business to a new location and will use the additional funds for updates and new equipment.

Ride Rite Garage will occupy a portion of the former IBP (Innovative Building Products) building south of Highway 23. The IBP business was bought out by another company and recently relocated, leaving the large structure available for sale.

- Council unanimously approved an economic development loan for Grant Family Restaurant. A \$5,000 loan will be used to install a newer and larger salad bar, along with additional equipment.

In Other Business

- Council accepted the water and lotto reports presented.

- A tax rate of .455199 was unanimously approved for the city's new 2011-12 budget which has a tax asking of \$203,426.

- An ordinance was passed to increase compensation to employees by 2 percent in the new fiscal year.

- City Superintendent Tyson McGreer reported on recent sewer pipe testing along eight blocks at a cost of \$4,200.

Two sections in the old clay pipe tested were reported as "severely needing repair," according to McGreer. Cracks were identified in five more areas.

Council requested the agenda item be forwarded to the next meeting so action can be taken.

Downtown Trees

Approximately five trees were removed along Central Avenue over the summer. Additionally, a

dead tree was removed last Thursday near the senior center.

According to McGreer, replacement of better quality trees will begin this fall.

The city will install grates that surround the trunk of the new trees to prevent suckers, eliminate unsightly weeds, and provide a neater appearance.

Abatement Progresses

The city is moving forward in the cleanup process, with one property in the 600 block of Washington to be abated in the near future.

Two other properties that have the same owner have been declared a nuisance and steps are being taken to get the sites cleaned up.

After passing a resolution declaring the properties a nuisance, a letter from the West Central Nebraska Development District has been sent giving the owner a time frame to clean up the sites. If cleanup does not occur, the city will abate the properties at the owner's expense upon approval by the council.

Water/Lotto Figures

Water and lotto figures were presented to council members for the month of August.

- Water: The use of 26,943,500 gallons of water during August was an increase over the previous month of July by 5,464,400 gallons.

The figure also reflected an increase in a year-to-year comparison. There were 2,941,100 more gallons used this August than in August 2010.

- Lotto: Gaming sales at DJ's Bar and Grill totalled \$7,803.90 with a payout of \$4,300.29 which leaves a net of \$3,503.61.