



THERMOPOLIS INDEPENDENT RECORD

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Luhm advocating for full-time HSC magistrate

by Cindy Glasson

The Hot Springs County Commissioners met on Tuesday afternoon with Ed Luhm, the incoming magistrate for Hot Springs County, parts of Park County and Washakie County.

Luhm, an attorney out of Worland, wanted to assure the commissioners he plans on advocating for a full-time magistrate for Hot Springs County.

He will have a large area to cover and does not feel the rights of those arrested will be served fairly if he is not able to get to Thermopolis in a speedy manner. His feeling is the efficiency of the system outweighs everything else.

Luhm has spoken with Cheyenne previously regarding the magistrate system, especially its ineffectiveness in rural areas. He said it works just fine in areas like Cheyenne, Casper and Gillette, but in the rural areas inmates may be forced to wait days until a magistrate can see them and set bond or other conditions.

It has been suggested that a televised system could be put in place in rural areas so Luhm could do his job remotely, but he is adamantly against that suggestion, saying that the accused have the right to see him face to face.

Luhm plans to speak with the Wyoming

Supreme Court about this as soon as possible.

Judy Carswell spoke with the commissioners regarding the GIS system used by the county to map everything within our borders.

She has done some research into a job description and salary requirements for a specialist for the position and found that runs about \$55,000 per year.

Prior to her retirement, she had been working with Cody Stewart on the mapping system and would like to have the commissioners send her to some additional training as she has grasped the system and its inner

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photo by Cindy Glasson

Holiday harmony

Thermopolis Middle School held their Christmas concert in the auditorium last Thursday, playing a variety of tunes to set the mood for the holidays. Here, l-r, Alyssa Warman, Jayssie Owsley and Sharon Burgess add their talent to the fifth grade band's performance.

Hospital project enters into final financing phases

by Mark Dykes

At a special meeting last Thursday, the Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees signed documents to issue revenue bonds for the purpose of financing the addition and renovation of the hospital.

Hospital CEO Margie Molitor explained the bank will officially close on this Thursday, Dec. 20, and the USDA, architects and construction staff are doing pre-construction meetings this week. Following those steps, she said, construction on the project could begin at any time.

It's the final steps in a project that has been two years in the works, but not the first time the project has been presented.

Upgrades to the facility were discussed in 2011, and the establishment of a hospital district was shot down in the 2013 election. During the 2016 election, the majority of more than 1,600 voted for two propositions for the hospital — one to establish a hospital district, the other to establish a one percent tax to provide for the renovation and expansion of the hospital.

Since those decisions, the past couple years have been a whirlwind of securing additional financing for the project, consulting firm, architects and construction firm.

Following the passing of the district tax proposition, the hospital chose Piper Jaffray as the financial consultant for the project in February 2017. The same year, they went through requests for qualifications and proposals between April and July, ultimately choosing to work with Sletten Construction and Plan1 Architects.

Later in 2017, the board and hospital staff went to sites in Wyoming and Montana to look at hospitals

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Council approves contract renewal

by Mark Dykes

During their Tuesday night meeting, the Thermopolis Town Council approved renewing a 40-year contract with the Bureau of Reclamation, for water storage at Boysen Reservoir.

The current contract runs out on May 8, 2019. The motion approved last night is for a memorandum of understanding to pay the bureau \$15,000 for all the work in getting the contract renewed, sending a check off and budgeting for it.

Mayor's Assistant Fred Crosby said the \$15,000 for a 40-year contract is about \$370 per year. Crosby also added that the town has gotten into the storage in the past and needs it. The storage in the reservoir provides for 200 feet guaranteed, with 1,000 feet available.

In other action, council approved a new bank account/HRA. Clerk/Treasurer Tracy Van Heule explained when the contract for insurance was approved the initial idea was the deductible for individuals would be \$1,500. In further discussion with the insurance consultant and administration, it was instead decided to go with a \$4,000 deductible with the town picking up the difference between the \$1,500 and \$4,000, as it meant a better rate.

The difference will be paid out of the new account on an as

needed basis.

A \$6,000 contract with insurance consultant Brad Johnson, for him to provide services over the next year, was approved.

Meri Ann Rush provided some updates on what the Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce, Thermopolis Main Street and Thermopolis Spark! are doing.

The chamber will celebrate 100 years in 2019, and various celebrations and quarterly activities are being discussed.

Rush spoke to the result of a recent placemaking seminar and the resulting work done to Bicentennial Park such as the large checkerboard and information sign. From there, surveys were done during Oktobrewfest of what people would like to see. The top answer was decorative lighting, which is planned to go up in February. The second highest answer was more murals, and the third highest was bike lanes.

The group from the placemaking is called Thermopolis Spark! Rush said growing up here we had community pride, like a spark, but that has dwindled a little so they are looking at ways of keeping some forward momentum going.

Another project, she said, is the Wyoming Business Council is doing a grant application, due in February, for a community review

program. She further explained the council will pick two communities in the state for the grant, which will provide for people to come in and do a strategic plan.

As for Main Street, Rush said the grants are coming along for the flowerbeds and they are waiting for warmer weather to finish them. Wayfinding signs are also being completed and will be ready to go up when the wreaths come down and metal signs go back up.

Town Engineer Anthony Barnett spoke to the filter bed replacement project at the water treatment plant, noting there are several parts that are obsolete. The beds haven't been replaced in 10 years and though discussion's begun any work won't start until at least a year from now.

Director of Public Works Ernie Slagle reported the loader at the landfill was returned following a removal of the old engine and installation of a new one. However, after about 15 minutes a seal went out in the new engine and leaked all the hydraulic oil out, so the engine has to be pulled again.

Crosby reported the hot water agreement with the state park has gone through, which will allow for some hot water to be used to clear gutters as needed. A check has also been sent off to Rocky Mountain Power as well, Crosby said, to pay for the three new light poles south of town.

Area Christmas services

Christmas will soon be here and area churches have special services planned for the season.

St. Francis Catholic Church will have a Childrens Pageant on Christmas Eve at 5:30 p.m. followed by mass at 6 p.m. On Christmas day they will celebrate mass at 9 a.m.

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church will be celebrating with a Christmas Eve service starting at 10 p.m.

Risen Son Southern Baptist Church will have their regular Sunday service on Sunday, the 23rd, but will not have their evening service that day. There will be a Christmas Eve service, however, beginning at 6 p.m.

St. Paul Lutheran Church will have their Children's Pageant on Christmas Eve beginning at 7 p.m. and a Christmas Day service at 9 a.m.

The Federated Community Church will hold a Christmas Eve Candlelight service at 5 p.m.

A Christmas Eve service will begin at 6 p.m. at the First Baptist Church.

Living Waters Assembly of God will hold a Christmas Eve service at 6 p.m. Christmas day service will begin at 10:30 a.m.