

by Mark Dykes

During Tuesday night's meeting, the Thermopolis Town Council — with Mayor Mike Mortimore absent — approved the third and final reading of Ordinance 854, with an effective date of Nov. 1.

The ordinance amends Chapter 4 of the town code, updating fines and fees as well as providing definitions for "bit or bitten" and "dangerous animal" and adding language for domesticated animals which are bitten.

Among the fee changes is the increase from \$5 to \$50 per head of impounded animals and from \$3 to \$30 per head for sustenance of said animals.

Also increased were license fees, from \$5 to

\$10 for neutered animals and from \$15 to \$20 for unneutered. Fees for unlicensed animals, at large animals and nuisance animals are increased from \$25 to \$50 for a first offense and from \$50 to \$100 for a second offense.

Impoundment fees are also increased from \$15 to \$30 for first impoundment, from \$35 to \$70 for second impoundment of the same animal, from \$50 to \$100 for third impoundment of the same animal, and from \$75 to \$150 for the fourth or subsequent impoundment. Each of these has an additional \$10 fee for each day of impoundment or any part thereof.

In other action the board approved a retail liquor license transfer for Grand Cru Enterprises, effectively allowing the business to

move from its location on Arapahoe to a section of the building at 735 South Sixth, the former F.O.E. building.

Harry Hughes was at the meeting and explained the business does not sell drinks or liquor by the bottle, but rather by the case. The area of the building used — a 10-foot by 20-foot space — would be as a dispensing room, and Hughes noted typically when stock comes in for people it is picked up the same day.

A signature card name addition was approved, allowing Jolene Esquibel to be added to replace Linda Hendrickson, who is retiring after 36 years.

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photo by Mark Dykes

Water blast

Firefighter Kenneth Annan helps Garret White hit a target with a fire hose stream as part of the Thermopolis Volunteer Fire Department's activities for Fire Prevention Week. The department also set up their smoke house for kids to explore, visited schools, helped deliver pizzas, played giant games of Jenga using tools like the Jaws of Life and had plenty of information to hand out about fire safety.

Town officials say poor circulation led to failed water test in July

by Mark Dykes

Though it's died down a bit, one of the bigger topics of discussion in recent months has been the quality of water, particularly in town and area districts. One item that has been a concern is the amount of total trihalomethanes (TTHM) and them being in compliance with the EPA standard of .080 micrograms per liter.

In July, the water for the town tested at .087 micrograms of TTHM per liter, though the construction for the water line rehabilitation project factored into that reading according to town officials.

Mayor Mike Mortimore explained, "The testing spot at the sewer office on Second Street failed in July due to the water project construction. It was found that due to water being shut-off and rerouted, this area did not have the adequate circulation. This is a dead-end area that primarily serves the office there and because of this we have made it one of our test areas and flush sites. We immediately informed the EPA and they concurred that it was most likely due to the construction."

"I do know that when the initial reading came through, I directed the engineers to put together a plan to run that line through to Park Street, thus fixing the dead-end problem."

"There was no panic on our end due to the construction variable, and that in fact proved to be the unusual culprit. We have also located the metered water to this location for the project and are considering keeping it located here

as its use has helped with circulation and levels."

Chief Water Plant Operator Chris Seilaff further explained, in regard to testing, one of the regulations is that there be a free chlorine residual in the line in case there is a break, to protect from any contamination that could happen after the water's been treated and made safe to drink. He noted the EPA regulation is to have a trace of chlorine. "But, of course," he said, "you have to chlorinate to a specific level to make the water safe, so this is the residuals sitting out here after that."

He pointed out that, though E. coli is listed on the testing, it is just the EPA gathering data and this is for a sample directly from the river.

Seilaff explained every year the town is required to do a bunch of testing for several items, including TTHM and haloacetic acids (HAA5) — another by-product created commonly with chlorine — and that test is done at the tap, on the first water leaving the plant, and does not relate to what's been happening in the system. He further explained that the overage of TTHM is based on a running average, so unless an entity is consistently over it is still within regulations.

"That's why when we had that," he said, referring to the high reading, "we didn't have to do public notices or anything like that." He was aware Owl Creek had to do notices in the past, but it was due to consistent breaking of the acceptable TTHM limit.

If the average were to be consistently over, Seilaff explained he has to notify the town so everyone is aware there is a problem. With that, the EPA puts out a document explaining the dangers. Seilaff said the EPA has specific information that has to be used to notify the public.

When it comes to TTHM and HAA5, Seilaff said there is a potential correlation between the compounds and cancer after long-term exposure. "The EPA has never done the study themselves, the government has never done the study to make sure that it actually does cause cancer," Seilaff said, noting that a university did a study and found they might be linked to cancer but now TTHMs are being treated like the definitely cause cancer after long-term exposure at a high level. "Even though it's actually just one of those minor correlations," He pointed out there is no set definition through the EPA for what is "long term."

When the high reading came in, Seilaff started investigating and found the reason to be issues caused by the water line project, noting there were valves closed on a main line that weren't opened when they should've been. That and other issues "messed the flow of our system up. And that happens with construction." He added the EPA understands that this was a brief issue.

"I was a little stunned in July," Seilaff said, as testing was done at the

Fourth grade teachers report on challenge

by Cindy Glasson

The Hot Springs County School District's Board of Trustees met on Tuesday night and heard a report from the Ralph Witters Elementary (RWE) fourth grade team.

RWE principal, Catelyn Deroemedi, learned about a new system during a conference she attended called the "15 Day Challenge", and turned that information over to the fourth grade teaching team, asking them to give it a try.

The teachers took the information and ran with it.

The challenge had them identifying the essential standards for fourth grade learning along with all the pieces that go along with it and consolidate their resources.

They created a tier system for interventions with students, from basic to intensive and set up a system to use the entire year in nine-week increments, using math as their initial test.

The team did pre-testing of the students to compile a base level for each one, did the teaching on the concepts and then re-tested the students 15 days later to find out what the difference was.

They reported seeing large jumps from the initial test to the second one, showing the process they had implemented was

working.

Through all of this, the team worked together, teaching the exact same concepts.

In the end, they determined it was not only a good process for the students, but it also kept the teachers on track, using their time and resources more wisely, hitting targets in a more streamlined manner.

The board also heard a report from Nichole Ciz who is now in charge of the Title grants for the district.

Ciz reminded the board that RWE gets Title 1 funds each year and the Title 4 funds are divided between the middle school and the high school.

The funds do have certain stipulations on them such as how they are to be spent, like strictly for technology or for educational opportunities for staff.

The conferences various teachers attend are all paid for out of grant funding rather than coming out of the general fund, ensuring money is not taken away from the students.

Ciz indicated the district will be receiving about \$30,000 more in Title funding this year than last, and they are working to find the right places to spend the funds.

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