



DICKINSON COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

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11.18.2021 Dickinson County Commission Meeting

By Kathy Hageman

Dickinson County Public Information Coordinator

The Dickinson County Commission approved a resolution Thursday, Nov 18 allowing a stop sign to be installed at 2500 Avenue and Daisy Road.

County Administrator Brad Homman said Willowdale Township requested the stop sign after a number of "near miss" accidents. The area sits between Willowdale and Lincoln townships, but Willowdale maintains the road.

"I actually remember a lot of accidents over the years," Homman said, explaining it's located in the Sand Springs area and blowing sand often causes the road banks to get higher making it difficult for motorists to see from the east for north and southbound traffic.

"It's never had any traffic control or stop signs," Homman said.

New phone system

Commissioners approved purchasing a new phone system from Twin Valley Telephone of Miltonvale at a cost of \$27,944 a year for the next five years. Basically amounting to a little more than \$2,300 per month.

Dickinson County IT/GIS Director Sherry Massey said the county's current phone system is "way older technology" and that onsite phone servers are a "thing of the past." Massey told county department heads the new service not only was the lowest cost option, but offered the most features.

She said the new system is IT based so staff will be able to answer the phone various ways, including answering on a computer outside the office— which would come in handy if the county ever had to deal with another office shutdown.

She explained the county will still have one "copper phone line" that will be used when the internet goes down.

Homman said Twin Valley not only had the low bid but is also a local company. It expanded into Dickinson County in 2021.

The company will provide 138 desk sets, 74 ported lines, eight special lines for conference rooms and nine fax lines. The agreement includes full maintenance and service for five years.

"The nice thing is it's cheaper than what we've paid in the past," Homman said. "We have set aside ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) money to pay for it for the next five years. It's not going to come out of our regular budget."

Courthouse remodel

Homman said remodel work on the courthouse still is progressing. In recent days:

- Sheet rock was installed in the small courtroom and tapers and mudders are expected to do finish work. "That's the last area to be studded and sheet rocked because we had to wait until the inmates were moved out of the jail," Homman said.

- The outside of the courthouse is finished, except for a couple windows that need to be installed.
- The security electronics vendor has started running wires; tile setters, HVAC controllers, ceiling grid workers and electricians are working diligently to "put things together," he said.
- The second generator is now scheduled to be delivered around the first of December rather than in January. During a recent Saturday the power was taken down completely to reconnect the power to its new location.
- Pews have been ordered for courtroom seating along with jury chairs, which will take about eight to 10 weeks for arrival.
- There is still no news from the elevator contractor regarding when crews will come in to refurbish the original elevator.

Employee appreciation

- Commissioners gave the go ahead for county employees to receive \$40 for the holidays. Initially, Homman said the amount would be \$35, but Peterson said he would like that amount increased to \$40.
- Each year the county honors employees who achieve various years of service milestones by awarding plaques to qualifying employees. Homman said in recent years the plaques don't mean as much and some employees prefer other forms of appreciation.

Budget Director Janelle Dockendorf, Human Resources Director Diane Greenough and Homman met and discussed a new longevity appreciation policy which includes monetary awards for those starting with 10 years of service. Five year employees would receive 8 hours of personal time.

Based on all who will qualify for longevity awards, the new monetary policy would cost \$2,500 the next time awards are given.

"We feel money in the pocket means more nowadays than a plaque probably would," Homman said.

Peterson said he didn't want to "come across as Scrooge," but said he felt the amount was a little high.

Dockendorf explained the money is taxable so employees will not receive the entire amount specified for their years of service.

"It is taxable so Uncle Sam gets an award too for the employees putting in their time at 30 percent," Homman added, explaining the group could not come up with anything that was not taxable.

He also noted that most employees will never get 15, 20 or more years of service because people don't stay at jobs that long.

- Commissioner Ron Roller said he was not speaking for the employees, but said after he was retired about four years he appreciated the years of service pin he received from the department of defense. He thinks it would be nice if employees could also receive a pin or something that recognizes their service.

Other

- County resident Jan Sexton met with commissioners in work session to discuss problems caused by increased traffic in front of their home in the 800 block of 2100 Avenue. Problems are magnified by the trains blocking traffic in Abilene which sends many motorists to use alternate routes, including driving by her home.

- The health department is doing vaccination clinics in Abilene and at various locations in the county. The COVID-19 booster shot was opened up to anyone over the age of 18. Anyone wanting information or an appointment should contact the health department or find more information by going to the health department link on the county website at www.dkcoks.org.
- Although the commission gave the sheriff's department the go ahead a couple weeks ago to purchase a new vehicle that did not happen because it was sold to another agency before the county could act on it.
- County Counselor Doug Thompson said plans for the next county tax sale still are moving forward. February 2022 will be the probable time frame.