

Storm

Continued from Page 1

Wrestling tournament, Lyon County Junior High League basketball tournament and St. Marys basketball tournament, in which the BMS Bobcats were to compete, were all postponed.

In total, four inches of snow were reported three miles west of Burlington, two miles south of Burlington and in Waverly. Three inches were reported four miles south-southeast of BETO Junction and three miles west of LeRoy. In Lyon County, 1.5 inches was reported in Reading and two inches were reported near Olpe. Totals in other nearby counties included 1.5 to three inches in Osage County, three to four inches in Franklin County, 2.5 to four inches in Anderson County, 2.5 inches in Allen County. Only three locations reported totals higher than four inches. Yates Center, in Woodson County, and Fall River Lake, in Greenwood County, both reported five inches. Six inches was reported in Longton in Elk County, which is to the south of Greenwood County.

Behind the storm, cloudy weather remained in place the rest of the weekend and some areas saw freezing drizzle Sunday. The area was also impacted by fog, at times thick enough to prompt dense fog advisories, on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings. Temperatures warmed to the 50s Monday, melting off the snow, but more may come later this week. Snow and sleet are in the forecast Thursday night. Warming temperatures Friday will likely see the precipitation transition to a wintery mix then to all rain. Friday night, the precipitation will come to an end but snowflakes could mix into the rain before the system fully exits the area, as temperatures drop into the upper 20s. Skies will quickly clear, and a sunny but cool weekend is on tap, with tem-

peratures in the upper 30s to low 40s and no further winter weather in the forecast.

Clerk

Continued from Page 1

grace and dignity," Humlicek said. "I think some people wanted her to blow up and she did not. I think that is why she is getting so many phone calls. The community saw that."

Later in the meeting, Sheriff Randy Rogers had questions concerning building, grounds and maintenance, all which were handled by Kirchner until last week's decision.

"I'm not here to throw gas on the fire," Rogers said. "... my question is, are there policies and procedures about how we are going to take care of grounds after-hours ... we are affected by this ... how do we move forward ... I don't want the responsibility of the HVAC system ... can we find a better way to do this?"

"I knew something like this would come up," said Commissioner Tom Hugunin, who made the motion last week. "I thought I was being helpful to take some load off of Angie ... did I think about the HVAC, no I did not."

"I have never expressed that I was unable to handle the grounds and maintenance. I have been doing it for 17 years," Kirchner said. "Prior to me it was the previous county clerk. It has worked fine. ... when I was pregnant ... I took care of this building ... I have had no issues ... I have worked with this HVAC system for nine years; I handled it just fine."

Kirchner listed some of the major projects she has overseen, including a new electrical system, new roof, sealing the building, replacing concrete and many other things. "When I took the job of county clerk, I knew what was involved. I knew maintenance was part of it. I think I have done a very good job of

taking care of this building," Kirchner said.

"Just because two or three people didn't like what was going on or didn't like the person in charge, we make a motion to change it," Saueressig said. "We didn't even have a plan in place. If we would have discussed this and had a plan in place and made changes, it might have been a perfect situation. Just because you don't like somebody, it is not a reason just to up and do things. You have to have a plan in place."

"We are better than this, guys," Rogers said.

"I didn't say anything about not liking anybody," Hugunin said. "Did I pull a freshman mistake and say hey I'd like to talk about this? No I didn't. I made a motion instead of talking about this. Maybe we need to relieve her stress level just a little bit with everything she is going on. That was my ultimate goal."

"When you were running for commissioner, you had made a comment that an item on your agenda was to get me out of office," Kirchner said.

"No," Hugunin responded.

"That's what I was told by a very good friend of mine," Kirchner said.

"No. That was not my agenda," Hugunin said. "Sorry."

"What can we do going forward?" Chairman Haddock asked. "Randy has an issue and a concern and we need to address it."

"I think for the time being we need to put it back the way it was until we get something figured out. It was working," Saueressig said.

"I wasn't saying it wasn't working," Hugunin said. "Should I have said we need to talk about this as opposed to making a motion. Yes, probably so."

Emergency Management Director Russel Stukeley cited an example of not thinking things through referring to the policy manual and procedure for closing the courthouse due to inclement weather. The county clerk is supposed to discuss the situation with the board chair-

man, but last week's motion took the responsibility away from the clerk.

"I guess I miss the days of us talking and being able to agree to disagree and move on," Rogers said. "I want to make our relationships better. I feel like there are so many things going on that are counterproductive to all of us. Tom, I don't think it is freshman mistakes, I feel there are people out here ... pitting me against you and me against her ... how do we bring leadership back together? The politics in Washington, D.C., makes me sick because nothing gets done. Then we see the politics at the statehouse and nothing gets done. Now I see it happening here with us. We are better than this, guys ... We've all made mistakes, including me ... this is dysfunctionality ... I want to fix it."

Commissioner Meats referred to three meetings county employees participated in concerning leadership, accountability and communication. "Hopefully that was going to head us in a better direction," he said. "I think we are all after the same goal to work together and find some common ground."

Meats admitted things may be worse now than several years ago. "In the 50 years I was in business, I never ever experienced anything like this," he said.

"I think we are worse off," Rogers said. "I think we lack one key thing - trust ... do we really trust each other or do we always think ... there is an ulterior motive."

"I think the trust is there, but in the back, there is always a little doubt," Meats said. "I think we have trust in everybody to a point."

"I disagree that there is trust," Kirchner said. "I handled this building for 17 years; you guys have no trust in what I have been doing all of these years ..."

"If we have a problem, we need to figure it out," Saueressig said.

"I don't have an answer ... everyone is in defense posture," Rogers said. "I think

we can all do a better job listening ... today's society of everybody being offended and social media, it is out of control."

"I made a motion. I probably should have said 'let's talk about it,'" Hugunin said. "I had three other commissioners side with me, I guess, so we were all thinking along the same lines, it sounds like ... the solution for the HVAC problem, I don't have one at this point. Like Bob said, it wasn't completely thought out. I call it a freshman mistake."

"I guess my question would be, how did three or four of you think along the same line when it should have been a surprise to every one of us, just not to me?" Saueressig asked.

"Did you see how long it took for everyone to decide?" Hugunin replied.

"It didn't take very long, we were just waiting for someone to make a second," Saueressig said.

"Tom, what made it a hard pill to swallow for many of my employees is when it appeared to be personal when you made the statement about taking it off of her plate because of her son's illness or condition," Rogers said. "My women employees perceive that as not a positive thing. They bent my ear about it."

"I don't know why it wouldn't be positive. I have three handicapped grandchildren," Hugunin said.

"You should never bring that up in a public meeting - family. From my perspective, you should never bring up family," Rogers said.

"I do things all I can to relieve their stress ..." Hugunin said.

"I was one of the people upset," said Tasha Rogers, administrative assistant in the sheriff's office. "The reason I was upset, not just on Angie's behalf, but on my behalf, is because I am a woman and a mother and I felt like you made the inference that if it had been a man, they could have handled the stress."

"I didn't mean it that way," Hugunin said.

"That is exactly how it was taken by many of us," Tasha said. "Because I am a woman and a mother I can't handle my job?"

Kirchner asked Hugunin, "Did you ever talk to me and ask me if I had a problem with that?"

"No," Hugunin said.

"No you did not, thank you," Kirchner said.

"I am going to suggest putting it back where it was before until we figure out what to do," Saueressig said. "I hate to say this, Randy, we did this with the (Coffey County) lake. 'By golly, we are going to take this away from the sheriff,' then we put the sheriff back in charge and we pay him \$7,500 more per year than we did. Now, that was one of the smartest things we ever did. Here we are in the same situation, basically, because that was a knee-jerk reaction before anyone ever thought what the results would be ... let's talk about it ... I think everybody basically admitted we screwed up."

County Counselor Wade Bowie II offered some advice. "Two words come to mind - communication and compromise," he said. "There are things in the policy manual that are problematic because of (last week's decision) ... I think a decision needs to be made if things go back to Angie temporarily ... it can't be a commissioner. Someone needs to be in charge."

Bowie also had advice about family. "I would encourage anybody in the public not to mention anything about family," he said.

Commissioners unanimously approved rescinding the motion to put the supervision of janitorial and the maintenance staff under the direct supervision of the commission and decided to place the topic for discussion on the meeting agenda for Tuesday, Jan. 21.

Prior to voting, Hugunin again restated, "I meant no ill-will. I didn't mean anything against any woman at all. That was not my intent at all," he said.

Attorney

Continued from Page 1

current design is not going to cut it. I am not here to make waves, but we need to make sure victims are protected."

Bowie said he did not expect any answers immediately. "I would like an open dialogue," he said.

Saueressig suggested a possible temporary solution could be moving into the metal building across from the courthouse. He also suggested taking the county attorney's concerns into consideration when doing the jail study.

Bowie preferred remaining in the courthouse for undisclosed reasons.

"The jail, the court and the county attorney's office are intertwined," Haddock said.

As far as additional staff, Breshears and Kirchner related how their jobs are changing, including mandatory electronic filing of cases in district court.

Breshears said their caseload and the number of crimes and the number of victim crimes are all going up. "That increases the busyness in the office," she said. "The court is now on an e-filing system, which has totally changed the way we do things and the way they do things. It has put a lot of work back on us ... we are spending a lot of time just printing things out of this system."

Kirchner explained that district court on June 1 will be implementing a state-mandated statewide system. "We will be doing double the amount of work in filing a case, unless we go with an additional \$50,000 program," Kirchner said. "We just can't push a button to e-file it."

In addition, Kirchner said cases are becoming more complex and are taking more time. And two new Kansas Highway Patrol troopers in the county are generating more traffic cases off of Interstate 35.

"And the forms we have to fill out are constantly changing," Breshears said. "It is not just the standard form ... there are pages and pages just for one case. It is time-consuming."

"The days of filing a piece of paper with the court are over. Everything has to be done electronically," Bowie said. "The frequency of the

more serious crimes is more frequent than in the past ... which requires more time and attention."

Sheriff Randy Rogers said body cam footage and in-car video have also contributed to more work. "We have hours and hours of video ... that have to be reviewed," Rogers said. "We have been telling Wade he needs to get some help ... he is not afraid to take on a case, but it takes time."

Bowie said there is enough work in the office to keep someone busy full-time.

"Are you looking at someone with more clerical ... or more of a legal background?" Haddock asked.

"Preferably a legal background, but someone can be trained," Bowie said. "I didn't consider this with my budget this year. I don't have an answer ... I would like you to think about it."

Saueressig said he appreciated Bowie coming in and giving commissioners a heads up and not wanting an immediate answer.

Emergency Management

Emergency Management Director Russel Stukeley gave his monthly report. He informed commissioners about the possibility of attending two out-of-state conferences. NRC will be holding a Training, Outreach and Planning (TOP) Conference in Texas where they will plan an eight-year calendar. They will have a panel to discuss IPAWS and there may be a possibility Stukeley and Cortney Bartley could sit on the panel, since Coffey County was the first in the nation to implement IPAWS. Attendance will be contingent on an invitation to sit on the IPAWS panel.

Stukeley said he, Bartley and a Wolf Creek representative have been invited to present at the National Radiological Emergency Preparedness (NREP) Conference March 30 to April 2 in Nashville. He said this conference is more broadbased. Commissioners did not voice any opposition to attending either conference.

Stukeley researched options for replacing the 2007 Ford Expedition, including trade-in, state contracts and local dealer prices. He has budgeted funds for a new vehicle - either an Expedition or a Chevrolet Suburban - for several years. Stukeley will continue to gather information.

Stukeley briefly discussed the ALICE training set for Wednesday and possibly changing fuel storage from an underground tank to an above ground tank.

Jail Study

Sheriff Randy Rogers said all three architectural firms interviewed for a potential jail renovation project are "solid" firms. He thought Goldberg Group Architects (GGA) stood out with their presentation.

Following discussion, commissioners agreed a meeting should be held to determine the scope of the project, to include representatives from the sheriff's office, jail, county attorney and district court. Haddock will represent the commission. At this point, it is unknown whether the project will be a remodel, expansion or possibly a law enforcement center.

Crosswinds

Amanda Cunningham, CEO of Crosswinds Counseling and Wellness, gave a year-end review of the services provided in Coffey County. Crosswinds provides behavioral health care to residents of Chase, Coffey, Greenwood, Lyon, Morris, Osage and Wabunsee counties.

Cunningham said they continue to serve many people who are not insured or who are underinsured. During 2019, in the seven-county area, Crosswinds: provided services to more than 1,200 children; trained 110 people in mental health first aid; provided services in schools located in 17 school districts; provided \$148,180 in free services to uninsured consumers; and recognized five new partner level constituents donating \$1,000 per year for five years.

Emergency Management Director Russel Stukeley reminded commissioners that Crosswinds is a partner with Coffey County in a reception center that is part of the emergency plan for Wolf Creek.

County Engineer

County Engineer Wayne Blackburn said on Friday they had four trucks ready to work the roads for a winter storm that dumped three to four inches of snow in Coffey County. The storm began with freezing rain and sleet Friday. Blackburn said two shifts worked on Saturday. Trucks worked hard surfaced roads and blade operators worked school bus routes

on Sunday. Blackburn said the rear end went out on the small route truck that is used in the cities and on Embankment Road.

Two zoning permits were issued during the past week in areas zoned A-1 Agriculture. One permit was issued to Kevin Lingenfelter to build a 1,500 square foot single-family metal building with 600 square foot attached garage at 815 Emmer Road and the other to the owners of Wolf Creek Generating Station to update a 4' by 12' Wolf Creek sign with a new face.

Miscellaneous

County Treasurer Karen Maley presented commissioners a document about interest earned on investments. Maley achieved a goal of earning \$1 million in interest for the year; however she indicated declining interest rates may make that unattainable in 2020. Maley plans to draft a resolution to address uncashed checks. She is also exploring how other counties handle overpayment checks, especially for very small dollar amounts.

After hearing employee concerns about discussing payroll changes out in the open, County Clerk Angie Kirchner made some changes in her office. Addressing potential privacy issues, Kirchner moved Benefits Coordinator Denise Humlicek to Kirchner's former corner office and Kirchner moved her office to the room adjoining the commission chambers, where the shredder and postage machine had been located. The shredder and postage machine were moved to another place in the office.

Bowie received two proposals for the "rebid" compensation study and HR audit, one from McGrath and the other from Gallagher. Five firms submitted bids in the original solicitation; however, three firms chose not to submit proposals when commissioners decided to rebid the compensation study to include an HR audit. Bowie opened the packages in the meeting and presented them to commissioners, who will peruse the proposals before next week's meeting.

Meats noticed while attending several city council and area county commission meetings, the chairman usually sits in the middle, which he suggested doing. Saueressig said the question had been raised in the past;

however, the chairman of the Coffey County Commission has been seated next to the administrative assistant, primarily because of convenience when signing checks and documents.

Saueressig asked about the status of the second camera for the commission room. Berland said IT Director Brad Scheibmeier is waiting for Kansas Security to contact him.

In other action, commissioners approved:

- Authorizing the chairman to sign three tax abatements to the county tax roll in the amount of \$62.46.

- Resolution 816-Fa, a revised resolution transferring funds to the Coffey County Risk Management Reserve Fund.

- Resolution 731-Oa, a revised resolution transferring funds to the Coffey County Equipment Reserve Fund.

Prior to adjourning, commissioners met in two executive sessions, for 20 minutes and five minutes, respectively, to consult with the county counselor about ongoing litigation No. 1, under the attorney-client exception to the Kansas Open Meetings Act. Bowie, County Treasurer Karen Maley and insurance attorney David Seeley (by phone) were present.

The five-minute executive session, called for the same reason for ongoing litigation No. 2, included Bowie.

The meeting adjourned at 12:01 p.m. Commissioners will meet next at 9 a.m. Tuesday in Room 201 of the Coffey County Courthouse; the courthouse is closed Monday in honor of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

USD 244

Continued from Page 1

was excited for the opportunity. Also in attendance were Marshall, Reed, Watkins, Spring, Long, Graf, Vander Linden and board clerk Tracey Moerer.

One 10-minute executive session was held to discuss an individual's performance, with the board, Marshall and Reed present.

The board accepted, with regret, the retirement request of Judy Smith as a paraprofessional, effective Dec. 31. Also approved were the hires of Christina Kendrick as BMS

paraprofessional effective Jan. 6 and Diani Myers as custodian/cook for the district effective Jan. 13, and the transfer of Robert Reynolds from BMS paraprofessional to BHS custodian effective Dec. 20.

Revisions to the tuition reimbursement program were approved, and include:

- Those who wish to be considered for the program must submit a letter of interest or email to be reviewed by a committee and/or the superintendent.

- A receipt from the university for payment will be needed before reimbursement is issued.

- The program will be for classified staff looking to become certified teachers.

- For participants in the program, when student/teaching, reimbursement for the student/teaching semester will occur even though the applicant will not be employed by USD 244. Applicants cannot be paid and student teach at the same time.

Training for negotiations has been scheduled for 8:30 a.m. Friday, Feb. 21, at the district office. Board members participating in negotiations this year will include Hart, King and Allen.

In other action, the board approved the English language arts as a reasonable interpretation of the board's results policy; the December KASB policy update for policy DFE investment of funds, which cleans up the investment of funds language to remove any reference to bidding so the district will be allowed to request proposals from financial institutions and act on them in a more timely manner to get the best interest rates; a donation in the amount of \$100 for transportation from the Norman and Velma Settlemeyer family; bills and financial reports; the Dec. 9 regular meeting minutes and the agenda.

The next meeting will be 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 10, at the district office.

ADVERTISE YOUR BUSINESS HERE

Your Community is Looking!

Call today for advertising info
(620) 364-5325

