



President's Message

Starting a new year with the League

By Karen Mayse

Several major events top our local League calendar. Program planning, our opportunity to decide which issues we will study and take action on in the upcoming year, takes place annually in January. This year we are using online survey technology as a new way to collect your suggestions and opinions. To view the online survey, click the following link or copy and paste it into your browser: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=VpyrZ_2fEZ1RGjYTTFiegy9A_3d_3d

This survey takes the place of the program planning form you have completed in prior years. Only those who request a paper copy will receive a paper version. Call me at 776-1637 or send an e-mail to karenluvsjazz@cox.net to request a paper version of the survey. The deadline to submit surveys is January 11.

Attend Lunch With League Tuesday, January 13, noon to 1 p.m., at the Manhattan Public Library to discuss local League program for 2009-2010. The full text of our local positions may be found are on our website at: <http://lww.manhattanks.org/issues.html>. Come to the Brown Bag meeting, Tuesday, Jan. 27 at the Riley County Courthouse to review state program planning.

In mid-December, the Obama-Biden transition team sent e-mails to encourage community dialogs on health care reform. The team requested that results of the dialogs be returned by the end of December. Even though the time window to organize a forum was very short by League standards, and even though the forum would occur during the holidays, when Dr. Gardner of the Kansas Chapter of the

American College of Physicians Organizations contacted me to request that the League co-sponsor a forum, it occurred to me that there is no better group in our community to coordinate such an event.

Our local League has previously co-sponsored forums to study and learn about health services, providers and insurance within our community. Also, the LWVUS has a strong position on health care reform, which may be viewed online at http://www.lww.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Health_Care1. Now we have an opportunity to comment on this important subject to those who will soon have the power to set policy.

On Dec. 30, 7 p.m., at the Manhattan Public Library, we gathered to discuss health care reform. Co-sponsors for this event were the League of Women Voters of Manhattan and Riley County, the North Central-Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging, Kansas Chapter of the American College of Physicians Organizations, and the Riley County Medical Society.

January is also the time of year when we turn our thoughts to our annual Finance Drive. Please remember your contributions are the main funding source for your local League. We appreciate your generosity to help us carry out our forums, programs, and advocacy. I wish to thank you in advance for continuing to support our League.

Flint Hills Community Radio

Spring Citizen Journalism Classes

As part of the League's on-going efforts to help establish the first public radio station in Manhattan, we encourage members to consider taking one or more of the following citizen journalism classes offered this spring through UFM Community Learning Center.

Introduction to Citizen Journalism.

This course will focus on developing a news story, preparing a news program, script writing, journalism ethics, different writing formats for print, web, and radio stories, developing a "beat," etc. Participants will have weekly assignments that require reading and writing. Participants need to have access to a computer to write their news stories and feature articles on. This course will meet on Thursdays for 10 sessions of 1.5 hours each beginning January 22.

Audio Recording for Radio News/Features

This course requires no previous recording experience. You must be interested in making recordings of radio news items and recording radio features. Previous or concurrent enrollment in Introduction to Citizen Journalism is encouraged. This course will introduce you to several types of microphones, will demonstrate vocal microphone techniques, and will show you how to operate portable equipment for recording radio news and features. This course will meet on Wednesdays from 7:00 - 9:00 pm for three sessions beginning January 28.

Audio Editing for Radio News/Features

Students must have enrolled in Audio Recording for Radio News and Features, or similar experience, in order to take this course. Previous or concurrent enrollment in Introduction to Citizen Journalism is encouraged. This course will introduce you to Audacity, a freeware audio editing program. Class projects will allow you to create longer, more complex, more professional news and feature stories for radio. This course will meet on Wednesdays from 7:00 - 9:00 pm beginning February 18.

Flint Hills Community Radio will be a volunteer-ran efforts to bring high quality, local news and programming to the northern Flint Hills. Individuals wishing to be on-air hosts and reporters will have to complete a series training courses in addition to completing an exam over the content covered in the courses, with special emphasis on FCC regulations and station policy.

For more information on this project contact:
Linda Teener at 539-8763, or
Christopher Renner at 341-9459.



Observer Reports: Riley County Law Board, December 15, 2008

Bob Kruh, Observer

Present: Hatesohl, Johnson, Kearns (presiding), Phillips, Snead, Urban, Wilkerson

Jayne Morris-Hardeman updated the board on the operation of the newly established Child Advocacy Center. This Riley County agency opened on July 1, and it cooperates with SRS, the police department, Pawnee Mental Health, and other agencies in handling children's legal issues, mainly those arising from physical and sexual abuse. As a single, central site for handling such cases, it avoids the use of multiple, sometimes traumatizing, interviews – with a patrol officer, an investigator, attorneys, a social worker, a medical examiner, etc. Sadly, a number of the perpetrators are themselves juveniles. The center was created in response to a recent incident in which the family was seriously concerned about their experience in an alleged abuse case.

Chief Schoen reported that the city's earlier shortfall in paying the its full share of the RCPD budget had been remedied.

He also commented on the development of practices for enforcement of the recently enacted anti-smoking

ordinance, expressing the department's preference for creating compliance through public understanding as opposed to aggressive police action. He added that there needs to be tolerance for the learning process and for unavoidable and accidental violations.

There was lengthy consideration of the police department's current responsibility for transporting individuals to the state hospital for the mentally ill. In particular, there are cases where there is neither criminal involvement nor any initial police contact. But the local courts have increasingly ordered examination or involuntary commitment, with the police chosen as the provider of transport. The immediate concern had to do with the cost of transport and the need to identify the parties with more likely responsibility. The board noted that current policies for police transport involve degrading treatment, such as shackling, and, with a 300-mile round trip to Osawatomie, costs have risen to over \$30,000 per year. The board recommends consultation with the chief judge in District 21 as part of creating a more reasonable system for transport and cost payment.

Urban Planning Board, December 1, 2008

Barbara Withee, Observer

The rezoning of McCall Landing Planned Unit Development tract of land, located north of McCall Road and west of McCall Pattern Company was approved. The owner is McCall Pattern Company and the applicant McCullough Development – Charles Busch. Initial occupants of the area will be Orschelns, moving from the south side of McCall Road, and Menards, a hardware chain new to this area.

With the changes in the P.U.D the storm water problems in the area will be addressed as well as improvements to McCall Road. Twenty percent of the costs will be funded by the property owners. Corridor improvements and construction of the stores

will begin in 2009. The street project may be done in two stages with a grant application to KDOT for the McCall Road and US 24 intersection.

The annual review of the Urban Area Comprehensive Plan followed. No citizens offered input.

Eric Cattell requested the re-establishment of a joint sub-committee of Parks and Recreation and the Planning Board to revisit parks and open space issues which has been determined by both boards to be important for the future of Manhattan. The sub-committee will consist of 2 members of each board plus representatives of various community stakeholders, including developers and others. Nikki Miller and Stephanie Rolley volunteered to represent the Planning Board.

USD 383 School Board

Kathy Dzewaltowski, Observer

November 19, 2008 - Work session:

The work session focused on the next steps to be taken now that the bond proposal was approved. The board discussed talking to other districts which have completed construction projects, seeking legal advice, and using consultant services. Board members debated between using a “general manager at risk” approach or “design-bid-build” for the projects.

Regular meeting:

The district’s bond financial advisor recommended that the board sell \$10 million or less in bonds before the end of 2008 to take advantage of lower interest rates. The board approved 7-0 to sell \$9-10 million of bonds with the bond advisor deciding on the exact amount based on interest rates. The board will approve the final sale at its Dec. 3rd meeting.

The board discussed the creation of the “Citizen Facility Care Committee.” The group will be comprised of about 20 members, will meet monthly, will help oversee construction and visit construction sites, and will report to the school board. Board member Beth Tatarko wanted to see the committee as independent as possible with members of the committee not allowed to bid on

district construction projects. The board voted 6-1 in favor of creating the committee, with Tatarko voting “no.”

December 3, 2008

On the recommendation of the district’s bond financial advisor, the board approved 6-0 a resolution to issue \$10 million of bonds for the construction projects.

The board discussed the Citizen Facility Care Committee and whether the group should be comprised of construction experts or of average citizens who will ensure that projects are completed according to what was proposed to voters with the bond election. The board consensus was to charge the committee with overseeing construction related to the building project as well as providing advice for regular district maintenance. Board members also agreed that committee members should not be allowed to bid on projects or have financial interests in the building projects.

Because negotiation with property owners in Ogden was unsuccessful, the board approved 6-0 a resolution to condemn by eminent domain three properties next to Ogden Elementary for expansion of the school and grounds.

City Commission

No City Commission report. Observer needed.

Board of Zoning Appeals, November 12, 2008

Barbara Withee, Observer

Manhattan Medical Center requested and was granted a 180 day extension of an approved exception that will allow them to increase the maximum structure height of thirty feet to thirty-four feet for the proposed Radiology Center to be built on Claffin Road west of the existing Medical Center.

It also allows a reduction of the minimum twenty-five foot front yard setback to a minimum of ten feet along Claffin Road for proposed and existing off street parking and an approved variance to not provide sight obscuring screening for portions of the property associated with the new office building and the existing Building E, Manhattan Medical Center at 1133 College Avenue.

Observer Reports:

Riley County Commission

Jan Kruh, Julie Merklin, Lyndal Nyberg, Joan Strickler, Observers.

November 24 – County Historical Director Collins read a letter from Laura Bush designating Riley County as a Preserve America Community. Also, Edna Williams has recently been recognized by the Kansas Museums Association for her service as a trustee of the Riley County Historical Museum and her more than twenty five years of service to the Historical Society, receiving one of only two Distinguished Service Awards for 2008.

December 1 – The commission heard a report by Salary Consultant Victoria McGrath, who noted that 1) the county's salary schedule should be reviewed regularly with a five-year lifespan, 2) the health premiums and leave schedule should remain as is, 3) salary parity for the treasurer and clerk should be reviewed, and 4) the county is reasonably competitive.

December 8 – The commissioners reviewed Victoria McGrath's recently completed salary study. Although the county has enough money to fund the recommendations, there was disagreement about their applicability, with Commissioner Newsome alleging they were biased.. The recommendations include a 4% cost-of-living allowance and step increases for satisfactory performance.

County Treasurer Eileen King objected to her assigned level and asked for special consideration of her duties. Commissioner Kearns expressed confidence in the study, and Commissioner Johnson reserved judgment.

In response to the questions of Debbie Register, Register of Deeds-elect, the commission set her salary at the level of the incumbent. And they also approved County Attorney Barry Wilkerson's request for flexibility in setting salaries of staff attorneys, depending on qualifications.

Finally, in the Public Works Division, the commission declined to make new distinctions between the step salary scale and salaries for professional designees. But they agreed that Director Hobson could adjust assignments.

Budget Officer Shepek reported on financial

arrangements for replacement of two ambulances for Emergency Services.

December 11 – Bill Muir presented Commissioner Newsome with the Intergovernmental Distinguished Service Award for twelve years of service.

The commission continued its discussion of salary levels, noting that, as a result of a court ruling, the recommendation for the treasurer was based on only duties for the county and did not recognize functions as a deputy for the Kansas Department of Motor Vehicles. Salary Consultant Victoria McGrath advised that the commission can adapt her recommendations as appropriate. Later on, the commission added an additional \$3,000 in keeping with the deputy role.

Without final action the commission considered remedies for the eroding brick and paint on the east and south sides of the courthouse house office building.

Chamber of Commerce President Butler noted that there is a period for public hearings on the NBAF installation ending January 12, 2009 and that, as the project moves forward, improvements are needed for US 24 and KS 18.

December 15 – Architect Bruce McMillan recommended acceptance of McPherson Contractors' base bid of \$3.063 million for the jail expansion, with alternates totaling \$47,700. Financial Officer Shepek reported there is \$3,557,994 available for the expansion and added that the estimated cost of the project is \$3,394,300, which leaves a balance of \$163,694. The motion to approve carried 2-0 with Newsome abstaining.

Public Works Director Hobson reported on the urgent need to replace a 600 ampere breaker for the emergency generator that powers the 911 system, and the commissioners agreed, with a cost of \$3,900.

County Clerk Vargo read a statement by the KSU Student Governing Association recognizing his office's establishing an advanced polling place in the K-State Student Union. He added that the cost of the 2008 was \$77,390 excluding staff wages. Purchase of additional voting machines, opening of more polling places, and the recount created extra cost.

Commissioner Newsome discussed the pay raise for

continued on the next page --

Riley County Commission continued...

commissioners. Although he approved the raise, from \$33,467 in 2008 to \$36,144 in 2009, he complained that it was more than 7% rather than the intended 4%. After it was explained that 2009 includes one extra pay period and that the change in hourly rate from \$16.09 to \$16.73 is only a 4% increase, he remained unconvinced.

A bid of \$3.11 million was accepted for the law enforcement center. The expansion will provide enough space to segregate inmates by age, sex, and nature of offense. Johnson and Kearns approved, Newsome abstained without giving a reason.

Discovery Center

Glenda Phillips, Observer

“Aaaaah, Downtown Redevelopment” – the words send several images to our minds both positive and negative. Yet, the one item you need to separate from these words is The Flint Hills Discovery Center or, as the marketers like to call it, The Flint Hills Discovery Experience (FHDC). Whether or not the commercial sites were planned for development, The Discovery Center could exist on its own.

The FHDC is planned, at the moment, as a 35,000 square foot facility exploring all of the facets of the Flint Hills. This includes the natural elements as well as the human culture/ historical elements. According to Museum Consulting Services, the term ‘Flint Hills’ has a very broad definition, yet, no matter the definition, it always needs to have the support of those who live here. Those in the Flint Hills, long and short termers, need to believe that the Discovery Center is offering an ‘authentic representation’ of the area. The way to achieve authenticity is through much research and discussion with those who care about the Flint Hills and what to show visitors to the area.

There are four main exhibits areas being considered –

- 1) Core exhibits which will be the same over time with minor updates and modifications as needed
- 2) Temporary exhibits which will be short term traveling or one-time explorations
- 3) Educational exhibits which will have hands-on events for children/adults to explore
- 4) Special Events which could be performances, receptions, speakers, etc.

The Plan states that there will be 45,000 visitors per year and the cost of running the facility will be covered partially by entrance fees. If STAR Bonds are used for

December 18 – The auditors reported that the county’s financial records meet the highest standard.

Commissioner Johnson reported that the police department has been transporting mentally ill individuals to and from Osawatomie, but in the case of those not involved in criminal activity the Law Board will ask Riley County to cover that expense. He asked for a legal opinion from Counselor Holeman if the county is statutorily responsible for the cost.

Other business was on a variety of routine items.

building then 35% of visitors need to be from outside of Manhattan. The other 65% is made up of 4 groups – Local Families, K-State, Fort Riley and School Groups. The goal is to have repeat visitors to re-explore Core exhibits as well as Temporary exhibits that change over time.

Cost for the FHDC is estimated between \$20 & 30 million. The STAR Bonds, if the City chooses to use them, have the capacity of up to \$50 million. At this moment, STAR Bonds cannot be sold until the financing for the North End Redevelopment is settled. There is a lawsuit in the works that will take some time to clear up before financing can be settled. It is possible for the FHDC to be built without STAR Bonds if the costs are taken up by the City of Manhattan in some version.

Every single bit of information I just gave you is available on the City of Manhattan website. The city’s address is www.ci.manhattan.ks.us – visit it NOW. At the meeting on Monday evening, the architects had preliminary drawings for various options. They even had a model to look at inside and out. Exhibit drawings were included as well – all of which was to be downloaded for everyone to see the next day by Lauren Palmer, our Assistant City Manager, and her e-mail address is palmer@ci.manhattan.ks.us She and the Verner-Johnson group caroline@vernerjohnson.com are still begging for input on ideas for the FHDC. If you have items, ideas, stories, plants, pictures or anything to do with the Flint Hills write to either of these addresses and share them. The steering committee plans to wrap up input time by February 15.

There have been several meetings this fall, but the feeling is that not enough people have connected with them, so tell them what you know and take time to discover the Flint Hills Discovery Center.

League Members Discusses Health Care

Community members attended a public forum to discuss ways to improve our health care delivery system on December 30th at the Manhattan Public Library auditorium. Forum participants shared their opinions and their experiences as being consumers of health care in the US. A summary of the forum comments and anecdotes was forwarded to the Obama-Biden Presidential Transition Project.

Sponsors for the forum included the Kansas Chapter of the American College of Physicians Organizations, the Riley County Medical Society, the League of Women Voters of Manhattan and Riley County, and the North Central-Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging.



League members Ann Smith and Karen Mayse at community forum.

League Marks Bill of Rights Day

League President Calls for Continued Protection of Civil Liberties

Washington, D.C. – In December, League of Women Voters President Mary G. Wilson marked the 218th anniversary of the signing of the Bill of Rights with a call for civic vigilance and participation at home and a continued commitment to fostering democracy abroad.

“For 88 years, the League has worked to defend civil liberties and promote citizen engagement in democracy, and we continue this emphasis today. In the aftermath of an historic election season, it is particularly important for Americans, especially all those who voted for the first time in 2008, to recognize the critical importance of protecting and honoring our most cherished constitutional rights.”



“Throughout the year, League members work in their communities to protect our liberties and make the most of them by encouraging voting, discussing important issues, and holding elected officials accountable for their actions,” said Wilson. “At the same time, the League works to promote democratic participation and respect for civil liberties across the globe.”

The protection of the individual liberties laid out in the Bill of Rights has been central to the League’s work throughout its history. During World War II, the League worked to balance the preservation of civil liberties with the importance of national security. During the Communist “witch hunt” period of the early 1950s, the League conducted a community education program

known as the Freedom Agenda, providing Americans with the opportunity to discuss and learn about the Bill of Rights. More recently, the League has urged lawmakers to protect civil liberties, promoted an independent judiciary, and sponsored numerous education projects aimed at informing citizens of their rights.

“The Bill of Rights is not only an important part of our nation’s history, but also a living document that will guide us into the future.” Wilson concluded.

Join us in making democracy work! Visit www.lwv.org or contact your local League for more information.

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS NEWSLETTER January 2009

League Calendar

Keeping up with the League

- Jan. 13** –LWL – LWV MRC Program planning -- noon to 1:00 pm, Manhattan Public Library, 2nd Floor Auditorium, 629 Poyntz Ave.
- Jan. 24** -- Finance drive signing event, 9 a.m. to noon, Flint Hills Center, 401 Houston St.
- Jan. 27** – Brown Bag Lunch -- LWVK Program planning, noon to 1:00 pm, Riley County Office Building, second floor meeting room, 110 Courthouse Plaza
- Jan. 27** – Board meeting, 7:00 p.m., Bluestem Bristro.
- Feb. 10** -- Lunch with the League -- Flint Hills Community Radio -- noon to 1:00 pm, Manhattan Public Library Auditorium, 629 Poyntz Ave.
- Feb. 24** -- Brown Bag Lunch -- topic to be announced, noon to 1:00 pm, Riley County Office Building, second floor meeting room, 110 Courthouse Plaza.
- March 19** - 2009 Day at the Capitol, Topeka
- May 2** - Kansas League of Women Voters Convention, Great Bend