

Kanopolis water tower proceeds forward

BY KAREN BONAR  
Ellsworth County I-R

KANOPOLIS — Slowly, the new water tower project is moving forward.

“We have an actual agreement in front of us,” said Thaniel Monaco, BG Consultants, during the June 12 meeting. “Based on motion in April, we’re moving forward with the project.”

The paperwork required a signature from the city clerk and mayor.

Monaco said a pre-construction meeting is planned.

“We’ll have a meeting, go through particulars, then go to the site,” he said. “They want to get that moving. Foundation work, water main work (will be) this summer/fall.

“I know the contractor is looking forward to moving forward on this.”

In addition to paperwork for the contractors, the city clerk needs to file a tax exemption form for the project.

Monaco said the tower itself will go up in 2026.

The council did not meet as originally scheduled June 10 for lack of a quorum.

In other business:

- The council reviewed the street resurfacing project. The bid was slightly higher than budgeted.
- “I think with the water tower, we’ll conserve this year (rather than spend from general fund),” Mayor Anthony Hopkins said.
- The council agreed to cut some portions of the project.
- A cereal malt beverage license for the Fort Harker Committee was approved. The council also approved a \$2,500 dona-

tion to the committee.

“Donations are down significantly,” Hopkins said, which is why the committee requested a higher donation from the city than in previous years.

- Approved a resolution to adopt the Kansas Homeland Security Region F Hazard Mitigation plan.
- “If we had a natural disaster, FEMA wouldn’t give us money if we didn’t have it,” City Clerk Debbie Kralik said.
- Maintenance Supervisor Mike Bunch discussed code enforcement.
- “In the code book, it says there has to be a written complaint,” he said. “Do we want to change the wording? Code enforcement has authority without complaint.”
- Hopkins said he is open to a wording change in

the code enforcement book.

“When someone would complain to me, I would tell them to call city hall and make a formal complaint,” he said. “At this point, to keep it simple, I would say approve whatever’s on your list.”

In terms of code enforcement, Bunch discussed the topic with the municipal judge, who said she wants court on the fourth Thursday of the month at 5:30 p.m.

Bunch sends a letter and a resident has 10 days to fix the issue, then, if the issue isn’t taken care of, the resident is scheduled for an appearance before the judge.

- Kralik said Maria Meier was hired as the new librarian.
- The next meeting is at 5:30 p.m. July 8 at city hall.

County starts process to declare some roads minimum maintenance

BY ALAN RUSCH  
Ellsworth County I-R

A request for a minimum maintenance road was considered by the Ellsworth County Commission Monday.

Carneiro Township Trustee Kelly Cikanek requested portions of 27th Road and Avenue J be officially declared minimum maintenance roads.

He noted drivers are ignoring the state-mandated detour. However, when it rains, portions of those roads become impassible due to deep mud. Cikanek said several drivers have gotten stuck trying to navigate them. He said signs to warn drivers “Minimum Maintenance Road, Travel at Your Own Risk” are needed.

Commissioner Shawn Thomas and County Road and Bridge Superintendent Bret Dunlap each said they have received several telephone calls complaining about the matter.

County Attorney Paul J. Kasper noted a resolution to set a public hearing must first be approved. Then, after that hearing is conducted, a second resolution declaring portions of the designated roads as minimum maintenance roads needs to be approved and published in the official county newspaper before signs could be officially installed.

“We’ll go ahead and start the process,” Thomas told Cikanek.

Kasper then quickly prepared and presented

to the commission Resolution 2025-R06, declaring the public hearing date to discuss road classification for 27th Road from K-140 Highway to Avenue K and Avenue J from K-140 Highway to 27th Road, with a hearing date of Monday, June 30, at 9:05 a.m. in the commissioners’ meeting room at the Ellsworth County Courthouse.

Commissioners approved the resolution.

In other business:

- Dunlap presented his 2026 budget request. For 2026, he is requesting \$3,174,191. For 2025, he requested \$3,104,923.

Dunlap said in 2026, he would like to purchase a bat wing mower, a skid steer and possibly a bucket loader. Thomas noted one fund still had significant money in it that Dunlap could purchase those items now from, then that fund could be reduced for 2026. In fact, Thomas said he thinks the road and bridge budget could be significantly reduced.

- EMS Director Nathan Florian said he plans to repair an ambulance that accidentally sideswiped the bleachers at the county fairgrounds.
- Florian will get an estimate.
- Sheriff Kenny Bernard briefly presented his contractuals with commissioners.
- The next meeting of the Ellsworth County Commission will be at 9 a.m. June 23, at the county courthouse.

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family from France.

“They found us as we were making our way to the WWII memorial,” Gonzalez said. “The woman, in her broken English, asked where dad served. I told her he served in France. Both she and her husband about broke down in tears and were thanking him and thanking him for saving their country.”

The 100-year-old milestone is one Hernandez said he isn’t surprised about.

“(Turning 100) wasn’t accidental. We work hard at staying fit and trim, eat the right stuff,” he said. “I drink good wine, I smoke good cigars and I have a daughter that

cooks some of the most delicious meals on the planet. I have it all.

“I plan to be around for quite awhile and doing a few more things. Crazy things. As long as my feet will carry me and my arms will do the things I want to do and my stomach likes good stuff, I’ll be around.”

Hernandez said his advice for others is simple: Do it.

“All I have to say to the young and old, do it now while you can,” he said. “Do it, don’t just talk about it. Do it.

“If you’re thinking it, you should do it. You won’t be wondering later on in life, ‘I should have done it.’ It could be too late. You might pass your chance. I’m not letting any chances go by me. I’m going to take what comes.”



The team at Skydive Kansas State in Abilene prepares Eli Hernandez, left, to skydive.

Wilson prepares for Fourth of July, Czech Fest

BY ALAN RUSCH  
Ellsworth County I-R

WILSON — With the July 4 holiday fast approaching, the Wilson City Council approved when residents can shoot off fireworks to celebrate Independence Day during Monday night’s meeting.

Residents will only be able to shoot fireworks in Wilson from noon to midnight Friday, July 4, and from noon to midnight Saturday, July 5.

Fireworks can only be shot off if there is no county burn ban in place at that time.

In other business:

- After a seven-minute executive session to discuss nonelected personnel (wages), city employee Marsha Martin’s salary was raised to \$14 per hour.
- After a second five-minute executive session to discuss nonelected personnel (wages), city employee Kathy Smith’s salary was raised to \$15 per hour.
- Judge Crystal Miner was appointed Wilson Municipal Judge. She succeeds Judge Jennifer O’Hare, who was elected as a new district judge in Cloud County.
- Bills in the amount of \$19,463.53 were approved, as was payroll in the amount of \$12,298.34.
- A resolution was approved for the property at 2211 Ave. C as it is still not in compliance with the City Board of Health

ordinances.

- City Clerk Susan Kriley presented the council with a rough draft of the 2026 budget to review. She and city council member Jessica Loveland will work on the document and present it at the next council meeting for approval.
- Approval was given to adopt the FEMA Region 7 Hazard Mitigation Plan as presented.
- Approval was given to Dereamer Zelenka and Takota Anderson to conduct a nine-team softball tournament on July 26 during the Czech Festival

at a cost of \$150 to rent both ball fields. The alcohol restrictions at the ball field will be waived for that day only, as well as the Jellison Park curfew.

- Approval was given to the Czech Fest committee to close the alley south of the Wilson American Legion, the Czech Egg and the Wilson Tourism Hub between Avenue D and Avenue E on July 25 and from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. July 26, with alcohol restrictions waived until 5 p.m. July 26. That area will be fenced off.
- City Superintendent Joe Soukup said the

sewer pond irrigation system has been started and the first sample has been taken. He reported everything is working properly.

Soukup also said the sewer cleaning in town was done June 2 and he is pleased with how it turned out. He noted it was \$1,600 well spent.

Soukup said he plans to spray for mosquitoes this week, and city crews got the concrete poured at the cemetery and are waiting on the fence panel.

- Approval was given to repair the fuse box, air conditioning and other

related repairs in the Wilson Police patrol car at a cost not to exceed \$4,228.14. The work will be done by Lewis Automotive, Hays.

- Approval was given to reimburse Brad Whiteside \$560.16, which is half the cost he incurred to repair a sewer problem at 2016 Ave. D.
- Council President Jeff Keith said he purchased the commercial refrigerator which was approved at the last meeting. Total cost was \$2,310.24.
- Keith said he found a baseball scoreboard in Lenexa at a cost of

\$26,910, installed. That cost does not include electrical. He plans to pay for the scoreboard using \$25,000 from the grant the city received plus an additional \$1,910 from the parks and rec fund.

Soukup said he would like to first look at the possibility of the city crew setting the two posts for the scoreboard in concrete to save money.

Keith said if approved, the scoreboard will not be used this year.

The next meeting of the Wilson City Council is at 6 p.m. July 7 at city hall.

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