

Community Calendar Text
2nd Quarter 2022

Great Bend committee to formulate 'quality of life' top 10 list

4/4

The top 10 list for quality of life improvements and wants in Great Bend is expected to be revealed in a couple of weeks. Following an approved .15% sales tax increase last November, a committee has met two times to determine what they want to do with the funds. The 13-person committee created lists of ideas of what they would like and thoughts from the community as to the use of the sales tax collection. Many outdoor recreational ideas were pitched from camping spots, walking paths, basketball courts, community center, city-owned golf course, shooting range and pickleball courts. Committee member Stephen Patton suggested city-wide wi-fi internet.

(PATTON – TABLETS)

26 Seconds

It's estimated the .15% tax will generate \$565,000 per year. While there were dozens of ideas for creating new features or facilities, a common thought was to use a portion of the funds for maintenance. Great Bend Mayor Cody Schmidt pitched the idea of sprucing up existing features around town to save money on some of the projects.

(SCHMIDT – ATTRACTABLE)

26 Seconds

As each committee member's ideas are formalized into a master list, the group will create a top 10 list at their next meeting.

Great Bend adjusts voting boundaries to correct disparities

4/5

Great Bend City Attorney Allen Glendenning noted Monday night that Kansas statutes and common sense indicate voting wards should be divided into populations that are as equal as possible. The City of Great Bend is divided into four wards, with two councilmembers representing each ward on the city council. The ward lines were last drawn in the mid-1990s and the population has shifted since then. Councilmember Cory Urban took on the task of sorting through the latest census data to realign new voting wards within the city.

(URBAN – PURPOSES)

26 Seconds

The city council voted 6-0 to adopt an ordinance changing and redefining the boundaries of the wards.

The latest census showed Great Bend having a population of 14,733. To have fair representation, there should be close to 3,683 citizens residing in each ward. Before the realignment, Ward 4 in the southeast corner of the city, was underrepresented by more than 450 citizens.

Hopeful to have Airport Road resurfaced by the end of the year

4/6

Barton County and the City of Great Bend are hopeful the resurfacing project on Airport Road can still occur by the end of the year. The county's application to the Kansas Department of Transportation Cost Share program was successful to repave Southwest 40 Avenue, or Airport Road. City Administrator Kendal Francis said the project is anticipated to cost \$800,000.

(FRANCIS – MATCH)

15 Seconds

With KDOT covering approximately \$600,000, the county and the city will split the remaining cost with each share being roughly \$100,000.

Barton County Engineer Barry McManaman is preparing the bid documents and will send the project out for bids soon. The project's status will depend on contractor availability.

Looking back at Barton County's Covid response

4/7

Barton County Health Director Karen Winkelman spent some time Wednesday reflecting on the county's response to the COVID-19 pandemic during the past couple of years. She addressed her remarks at the monthly meeting of the County Board of Health.

Winkelman and three of her staff attended the Kansas Governor's Public Health Conference in Manhattan last week. She showed board members a copy of the printed program from the conference which featured a herd of buffalo on its cover page. She explained that the buffalo was chosen as the conference symbol because of the way that particular animal faces stormy weather on the plains. She said it symbolizes how county health professionals in Kansas have weathered the challenges presented by the COVID-19 storm.

(WINKELMAN - PANDEMIC)

39 SECONDS

Winkelman told the Board that her department still provides free testing for COVID-19 and has every preparation of the COVID-19 vaccine available for the public.

The County Board of Health is comprised of the five members of the Barton County Commission.

GBPD: Traffic enforcement keeps people safe

4/7

Everyone knows it's easy to avoid a speeding ticket by simply not speeding. According to Great Bend Police Chief Steve Haulmark, the goal of reducing speeding and other traffic enforcement measures is to keep people safe.

Haulmark was a guest Wednesday on 1590 KVGB and 95-5 FM'S City Edition. He explained where officers are most likely to be patrolling.

(HAULMARK - JOBS)

16 SECONDS

Haulmark became Great Bend's police chief early last year. He says the police department will also respond to citizen complaints about speeding.

(HAULMARK - THAT)

21 SECONDS

Haulmark added that officers are not handing out tickets as a way for the city to generate revenue as many people believe.

Families invited to explore early learning resources in Great Bend

4/7

Parents and families of preschool and kindergarten age children are invited to attend the Great Bend school district's second annual Preschool and Kindergarten Pre-Enrollment Information Fair Tuesday, April 12 from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Great Bend Events Center.

Andrea Bauer, USD 428's Public Information Officer, explains what will be happening at the fair.

(BAUER - AS WELL)

20 SECONDS

Other exhibitors at the event include community preschools, the Barton County Health Department, Great Bend Public Library, United Way of Central Kansas, Parents as Teachers and the Great Bend Recreation Commission.

Bauer says parents can get a head start in enrolling their children in preschool or kindergarten for next fall.

(BAUER - OPPORTUNITY)

24 SECONDS

Bauer said the school district will still have on-site enrollment at the schools in August.

USD 428 operates half-day preschool programs at Little Panthers Preschool, Riley Elementary and Washington School.

Private preschools are also invited to attend.

USD 428 offering K-5 summer school in July

4/11

Great Bend's school district will be offering an extra three-and-a-half weeks of summer school in July this year for kindergarten through fifth grade students. That decision was approved at Monday night's USD 428 school board meeting.

In the past, summer school was offered only in June for half-days for students from kindergarten through 12th grade. The June session will be held again this year with only one change. Incoming kindergarten students will be allowed to participate unlike previous years. The June session will be held from June 6 through June 30.

The added session will run from July 5 through July 29 and will only include kindergarten through 5th grade students. All of the July classes will be taught at Park and Eisenhower Elementary schools.

Assistant Superintendent Tricia Reiser told school board members why the extra weeks were proposed.

(REISER - SCHOOL)

19 SECONDS

Reiser listed some of the subjects the students will study in the July summer session.

(REISER - KNOWLEDGE)

9 SECONDS

The school days will be longer in July. Students will attend school from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m. to noon on Fridays.

Security upgrade at Great Bend public schools

4/12

The Great Bend School Board voted Monday night to tighten security at all of Great Bend's public schools and USD 428's district office. Board members approved paying NexTech just over \$5,600 per month to secure the main exterior doors at all of those buildings with an electronic access control system.

Keys will no longer be used to get into schools. The district's assistant superintendent John Popp told board members how the new system will work.

(POPP - COME IN)

9 SECONDS

Ryan Axman, the district director of information technology, explained what school staff will do if a school needs to be locked down for security reasons.

(AXMAN - DOWN)

8 SECONDS

The district will lease the electronic system for five years with NexTech providing maintenance as part of the lease price. Axman said he believes the system will be installed by late summer if there are no supply chain interruptions.

School board votes to move Wilson students to Claflin high school

4/13

If you look on the Central Plains school district website for building contact information, USD 112 has locations in Claflin, Wilson and Holyrood. It wasn't too long ago that the district used to include Bushton too. School consolidation happens to many rural towns to combine resources and keep education options available to area families. For more than a decade, Central Plains High School and Wilson High School have operated under the same USD 112, despite being separate high schools. On Monday, the Central Plains Board of Education voted 5-2 to have all 7th through 12th grade students in USD 112 to attend school in Claflin, under Central Plains Junior/Senior High School. Superintendent Greg Clark said the plan would take effect in the 2023-2024 school year and would help with staffing shortages.

(CLARK – YEAR)

24 Seconds

Under this approved move, all 7th-12th grade students in Wilson would attend school in Claflin, just over a 20-mile commute. Clark said staff has worked to create and estimate transportation costs for transporting students, including routes for after school activities. A state-mandated consolidation decades ago lumped Wilson, Holyrood and Bushton together into the same district. In 2011, Claflin joined the district and formed USD 112.

(CLARK – EFFICIENCIES)

30 Seconds

Clark added there is room for roughly 200 students in the Claflin high school and there is currently 119 in there. Clark anticipated the Wilson high school would remain open after the consolidation since Wilson Elementary School is still housed in the same building.

Barton seeking \$16.8 million in private funds for athletic improvements

4/14

In 1995, Barton Community College sponsored 13 sports teams with just under 230 athletes. In 2022, the college just outside of Great Bend has 22 programs with over 370 student athletes. Despite that growth, there has not been any structural additions to the main gym since 1995, when the Kirkman Student Activity Center was established. With a need to expand, Barton Athletic Director Trevor Rolfs said he is ready to move forward with a fundraising campaign, collecting private funding, to raise \$16.8 million.

(ROLFS – RECRUITS)

28 Seconds

The plan calls for a major addition to the south of the main gym facility that would include a new training and fitness facility, wrestling room, cheer and dance space, eSports facility, Hall of Fame room, trophy cases, locker rooms, offices and storage space. The proposal also calls for the addition of three tennis courts, press box and restrooms at the track and soccer complex and a press box for the softball field. Barton President Carl Heilman said all the shortfalls and needs were assessed in a two-year study.

(HEILMAN – INDIVIDUALS)

32 Seconds

Along with new construction, the plan calls for several transformations of current facilities.

The goal is to have Rolfs collect enough private donations for the project but Heilman noted financing through Certificates of Participation (COP) is a possibility. A COP is where an investor purchases a share of the lease revenues of a program rather than the bond being secured by those revenues. As a last resort, the college could access their reserves.

At Tuesday's study session, the Barton Board of Trustees were in favor of giving Rolf's approval to proceed with the private-donation fundraising.

Owners remove trees along JUCO Road intersection to improve safety

4/18

A mast arm pole with flashing approaching traffic signs still needs to be installed, but major safety improvements are noticeable at the Great Bend intersection of North Washington Avenue and North 30 Road, also known as JUCO Road. Barton County Engineer Barry McManaman said an added bonus to the project happened after discussions with Greg and Kimberly Schenk. The Schenks own the property on the southeast corner of the intersection and chose to remove several trees on their property line to increase the sight distance at the stop sign.

(McMANAMAN – AREA) 22 Seconds

The Kansas Department of Transportation is picking up 90% of \$604,000 project, leaving Barton a \$61,000 share.

(McMANAMAN – US) 12 Seconds

L & M Contractors is handling the project that also includes widening a section of Northwest 50 Road where a concrete drainage box causes sharp drop-off next to the road.

Great Bend's downtown consumption district expanded for events

4/19

Your ability to walk outside in downtown Great Bend with an alcoholic beverage on select Fridays has just expanded. The Great Bend City Council approved the requested extension of the boundaries of the Common Consumption Area for Great Bend Alive, Inc., the group organized by the Great Bend Economic Development. Last August, the city council approved barricading a portion of Forest Avenue, from Williams to Main, to provide live music, food and beverages. Great Bend Eco Devo Director Sara Hayden said based on popularity, there is need to grow the Common Consumption Area down the alleyway between Forest and Lakin Avenue.

(HAYDEN – WELL)

19 Seconds

The last Friday of the month, during nice weather, is designated as “Final Fridays on Forest”. Hayden said last year there were well over 500 people that attended each event.

The first “Final Fridays on Forest” is scheduled for April 29 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

With staffing shortages, Barton Co. Health Dept. adjusts hours

4/25

Earlier this month, Barton County Health Director Karen Winkelman approached the Barton County Commissioners on the health department's operational hours. With a handful of staff openings, covering the hours was becoming difficult without creating a lot of overtime for workers. Previous hours at the health department had the facility opening at 7:30 a.m. each weekday except for the 9 a.m. opening on Monday. The clinic remained opened until 5:30 p.m. except for the 7:30 p.m. closure on Thursday.

(WINKELMAN – WALKIN)

15 Seconds

Winkelman's approved proposal has the health department opening 30 minutes later and closing 30 minutes earlier. The office still opens at 9 a.m. on Mondays, but will open at 8 a.m. the rest of the weekdays.

(WINKELMAN – ABANDONING)

23 Seconds

The Barton County Health Department on Kansas Avenue will still have late hours on Thursday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Court upholds sentence for murder of couple at Barton County Fair

4/26

The Kansas Supreme Court Friday upheld two hard-50 life sentences and a felony theft sentence for a Florida man, 56-year-old Michael Fowler, who was convicted in the murder of a Kansas couple who were vendors at the Barton County Fair.

Following Fowler's convictions for both counts of premeditated first-degree murder and one count of felony theft, Court records indicate the Barton Co. District Court denied Fowler's motion for his sentence to be reduced.

In July of 2020, Fowler, who is from Sarasota, Florida, had originally received a sentence of two consecutive hard-50 life terms by District Court Judge Mike Keeley for the murders and one concurrent 21-month term for the theft.

On direct appeal, the Court said it affirmed Fowler's sentence.

Fowler pleaded guilty to the charges in March 2019. Fowler was charged with the crimes in connection with the July 2018 deaths of Alfred "Sonny" Carpenter and Pauline Carpenter.

Their bodies were discovered in July in shallow graves near Van Buren, Arkansas. Prosecutors say the Carpenters were killed at the Barton County Fair, where they were vendors. Fowler and other suspects worked for the carnival company at the fair.

Hoisington daycare looking to meet safety requirements, hosting fundraiser

4/28

Three years ago, GPS Kids Club ran into a tough financial spot needing to meet certain fire safety requirements inside their building after two citations were issued to the daycare facility. The Kansas State Fire Marshal's Office told the Hoisington-based facility the building needed a fire alarm system and fire resistance construction throughout the structure. GPS Board President Kelci Burkey said the daycare was able to purchase the fire sprinkler system, which bought them more time to meet the other needs.

(BURKEY – REQUIREMENTS)

18 Seconds

GPS serves approximately 40 students during the school year and more than 60 during the summer. The daycare will host a fundraiser Sunday, May 1st at Dry Lake Brewing from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Along with a brunch-style food selection and drinks, Burkey said there will be Mother's Day crafts for the children to complete.

(BURKEY – POT)

13 Seconds

Plates will consist of biscuits and gravy, sausage, scrambled eggs and fruit. A suggested donation for a single plate is \$5 and \$10 for a double plate.

Money raised will go towards installing fire doors at GPS and updating the daycare's air conditioning.

Barton County sheriff behind constitutional amendment

4/29

Voters in Kansas will decide in November's general election if the state constitution should be amended to require county sheriffs be elected. Of the 105 counties in Kansas, only Riley County does not have an elected sheriff. If the amendment is approved, Riley County would not be required to reinstate the position.

Barton County Sheriff Brian Bellendir explained why he has lobbied in favor of the amendment.

(BELLENDIR - ELECTED)

20 SECONDS

The amendment also changes the manner in which a sheriff can be removed from office. It gives the state attorney general the only authority to start removal proceedings. Bellendir also supports that part of the amendment.

(BELLENDIR - REASONS)

16 SECONDS

County sheriffs in Kansas are currently elected to four-year terms. That will not change if the constitutional amendment passes.

Great Bend to ask citizens to rank 'quality of life' projects

5/3

The Great Bend quality of life sales tax committee will soon be sending out a survey for residents to prioritize the projects they want accomplished. The 13-member committee is in charge of determining how to best use the collections from the .15% sales tax increase for quality of life improvements. Great Bend City Administrator Kendal Francis said he expected the online survey to come out this week at the city's website, greatbendks.net.

(FRANCIS – TO US)

25 Seconds

The city plans to separate the project ideas in three categories based on projected costs. Easier projects will be listed in category one, costing under \$50,000. Category two will consist of projects ranging from \$50,000 to \$200,000 and the third category will include anything costing more than \$200,000.

Collections for the new sales tax started in April and the city expects to see the first payment of those taxes in June. The committee felt it was important to check off a "low hanging fruit" project soon so taxpayers could see the impact of the sales tax. Committee member Bruce Swob liked the idea of organizing a city-wide cleanup like other area towns.

(SWOB – FULL)

18 Seconds

The city will advertise access to the survey once it is prepared.

Longer delay for left-turn signals at 10th & McKinley

5/6

Last September, it was announced left-turn signals for the stoplights at the 10th Street and McKinley Street intersection were in the works. At that time, Great Bend City Administrator Kendal Francis imagined it might be up to two years before the upgrades started. Francis informed the Great Bend City Council this week that engineers from the Kansas Department of Transportation told him it will be even longer.

(FRANCIS – THAT)

17 Seconds

The 10th and McKinley intersection can cause delays for north and southbound traffic on McKinley trying to turn left without a designated turn signal.

The KDOT plan also calls for new LED pedestrian signals and ADA improvements to the intersection.

Road construction slated for downtown LaCrosse

5/4

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) will be spending almost a half-million dollars to reconstruct pavement on U.S. 183 in downtown LaCrosse. KDOT approved a bid for the project last month.

Tim Potter, KDOT's regional public affairs manager, said the state will pay for 100% of the costs.

(POTTER - PROJECT)

6 SECONDS

Potter said the pavement reconstruction is expected to begin by June 27th. The total cost of the project is just under \$484,000. Morgan Brothers Construction of LaCrosse will complete the work.

Sometimes the Barton County Sheriff doesn't have to go far to catch a criminal

5/9

57-year-old Kris Hanson was arrested last week when he came to the Barton County Sheriff's office to get a VIN inspection for a car with an out-of-state title. Identification was required to get the inspection. It was discovered that Hanson was wanted for an outstanding warrant in Arkansas when the records clerk ran a check on his ID.

Hanson bolted from the sheriff's office when he realized he was going to be arrested. After a chase that included dashing through the Barton County Health Department, officers were able to subdue Hanson. He was booked on the Arkansas charges and for resisting arrest.

Barton County Sheriff Brian Bellendir explained that it's not that unusual for an arrest to be made in the lobby at the sheriff's office.

(BELLENDIR - DOWN)

17 SECONDS

Bellendir said some arrests are also made when people bring in a stolen car to get a VIN inspection.

Finding equity for everyone in Barton County

5/9

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a new collaboration in Barton County was formed called Communities Organizing to Promote Equity (COPE). The goal was to reduce barriers to healthcare that members in the community face. Organizer Callie Miller said the group has expanded to identify any social deterrent creating an equity divide.

(MILLER – EVERYBODY)

22 Seconds

The University of Kansas Medical Center and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment have coordinated the program which is funded through the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The Barton County group is tasked with finding resources on making every resident equal with access to resources for healthcare, employment, daycare and housing. Miller said the COPE program also created a community health worker.

(MILLER – CREATED)

31 Seconds

Follow Barton County COPE on Facebook to stay updated on activities.

Hoisington proposing daycare homes for up to 84 children

5/9

In Hoisington, there are five buildings in the northern part of town that used to house 30 apartment units. The City of Hoisington acquired the vacant buildings this past January and considered demolishing the structures to create housing lots. The city then determined to leave one building for a child daycare facility. A private funding partner convinced the city to invest in renovating two of the buildings to become daycare units. Hoisington City Manager Jonathan Mitchell said the city is looking for funding partners to raise approximately \$629,000 for renovations.

(MITCHELL – DEVELOPMENT)

34 Seconds

To avoid rigorous Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) regulations, Hoisington is avoiding a daycare center and instead providing daycare homes. The city is teaming up with GPS Kids Club, a nonprofit daycare in Hoisington, to manage the new daycares. With seven separate units in the buildings, the new daycare could accommodate 70 to 84 children. While there were concerns from other home daycare providers, Mitchell felt there was enough demand for daycare to keep everyone in business.

(MITCHELL – LEAVE)

26 Seconds

GPS Kids Club has a staff of 17 and will provide care to roughly 60 school-aged children this summer. GPS also manages two daycare homes where there are 10 infants to toddlers in each home.

Mitchell said the city is looking to secure funding by July 1st to begin ordering supplies and starting renovations. The hope is to have the daycare homes operational by next spring or summer.

Daycare proposal in Hoisington meets pushback from existing providers

5/12

The proposed idea for the City of Hoisington to renovate vacant apartment buildings into childcare homes was met with concerns Monday night at the Hoisington City Council meeting.

The city acquired the five apartment buildings on north Vine Street and was looking to turn two of the structures into daycare units with \$629,000 of renovations. The complex could accommodate up to 84 children. The city planned to deed the property of one of the units to GPS Kids Club, a nonprofit daycare in Hoisington, to manage the business.

Lori Mitchell runs a daycare home in Hoisington and expressed her concern of what the proposed daycare would do to smaller operations like her own.

(MITCHELL – CHARGING)

27 Seconds

Hoisington is seeking private donations for the project, but Barton County could be a major financial contributor. Stacy Weber, another daycare provider in Hoisington, questioned tax dollars going towards a potential competing business.

(WEBER – ARE)

35 Seconds

Hoisington City Manager Jonathan Mitchell estimated the GPS Kids Club rate would be \$150-\$165 a child, per week. The city council noted it would be wise to make sure GPS Kids Club could not undercut other providers' rates.

While the city still considers the plan, the city council was in favor of having a structural engineer inspect the old apartments.

Hoisington's pool opening delayed until July

5/12

Due to delays in the construction process, the pool in Hoisington will not open until July 1st.

With savings and "quality of life" sales tax revenue, the City of Hoisington approved a \$3 million pool replacement at Bicentennial Park. The hope was to have the new facility completed by the end of May, but Hoisington City Manager Jonathan Mitchell said Carrothers Construction has hit several delays in acquiring supplies and materials.

(MITCHELL – DELAY)

25 Seconds

Mitchell said the contractor's staff has averaged 20-30 hours of overtime each week. When the pool does open, there will no after-hours parties this year at the pool because the light poles are not expected to arrive until the end of July.

Speeding motorists a concern for Hoisington City Council member

5/13

Hoisington City Council member Carrol Nather approached city administration and the rest of the board with a concern of the speed motorists are traveling on side streets. Nather referenced a recent trip to her friend's house where she was parked on the street and a motorist "raced" by prior to her getting out of her vehicle. Hoisington Police Chief Kenton Doze stated the city does not have the authority to lower the speed limit.

(DOZE – WHATEVER)

15 Seconds

State law states side streets have a speed limit of 30 mph, unless posted in a school zone. Nather also asked about the placement of stop signs to slow down traffic, but City Manager Jonathan Mitchell said it would be challenging to determine how many to install and at which locations. Councilmember Darren Reinert said there is no way to slow the entire city down.

(REINERT – TO DO)

22 Seconds

Mitchell said the city will try to get the word out about the issue and encouraged any citizen to notify the police department if they continue to see traffic violations.

Cost of new GB police station increases by \$1 million

5/17

The cost of the new police station in Great Bend has gone up more than \$1 million in the span of just over three months. The Great Bend City Council voted 6-2 Monday to move forward with the inflation expenses for a facility now projected to cost more than \$9.1 million.

In early February, the city council approved a conceptual design and budget estimate for the new police station to be built at the southwest corner of the 12th and Baker intersection. At that time, the cost was more than \$383,000 above budget at \$8 million.

Due to rising costs of materials, construction and architect officials told the city council the estimated price has increased again. Paul Michell, Managing Vice President with GLMV Architecture presented options to reduce 3,400 square feet of the facility.

(MICHELL – DOLLARS)

14 Seconds

The proposed 20,100 square-foot police station includes a new municipal courtroom. Michell presented a plan to eliminate the court room from the design, saving the city \$1.2 million. This would force the courtroom to remain in its current location, attached to the police station on Williams Street. The council voted in favor of keeping the new courtroom as part of the construction.

(MICHELL – MADE)

27 Seconds

Citizens voted in favor of a .10% sales tax increase last November to go towards bond debt for the police station. The city anticipates more than \$5.6 million from the bond proceeds over the 20-year sunset. The city will find savings to make up the difference.

Man arrested in Great Bend for rape, indecent liberties with a child

5/17

A man was arrested in Great Bend last Friday for reported sex offenses involving two juvenile females.

Officers and detectives began compiling details and evidence of the report alleging multiple sex offenses that had begun within Kansas back in 2015 and 2016. It was reported that the suspect involved in this investigation had left his residence in a black 2013 Dodge Ram pickup.

During the course of the investigation, detectives requested a ping of his location using the suspect's cell phone. A number of locations were checked and the suspect, 41-year-old Joseph Cruse, was located a short time later by officers in a motel parking lot in the 700 block of 10th Street in Great Bend.

Cruse was arrested and booked on charges of rape, aggravated indecent liberties with a child and aggravated criminal sodomy.

Cruse remains incarcerated at the detention center in lieu of a \$1,000,000 bond.

New daycare plan nixed, Hoisington to demolish apartment complex

5/26

After hearing proposals to renovate an old apartment complex into child daycare homes in Hoisington, the city council voted Monday to nix the idea and have the buildings demolished instead.

The City of Hoisington acquired the vacant Windgate apartment site on north Vine Street that consists of five buildings. The city proposed raising \$629,000 to renovate two of the structures into daycare homes to provide care to up to 84 children. Hoisington City Manager Jonathan Mitchell said staff and partners raised more than \$400,000, but ultimately it was decided to not move forward with the project.

(MITCHELL – COMMUNITY)

17 Seconds

The city planned to team up with GPS Kids Club, a nonprofit daycare in Hoisington, to manage part of the new daycare. While understanding there is a need for more daycare, the city council heard a few concerns from existing providers on the impact of building the new facility.

Mitchell said the three main needs the community has heard for growth and development are workers, housing and childcare.

(MITCHELL – WERE)

16 Seconds

Mitchell said the city will continue to look for the right solution to the childcare need.

158 properties on Barton County's tax sale currently

5/26

Barton County is already preparing for the 2022 tax sale in October. There were 158 notices sent to owners in the county letting them know they are behind on property taxes. County Counselor Patrick Hoffman said that number will get down to around 50 by the time the tax sale arrives as more owners pay off what they owe. Usually, the properties that make it to the sale are houses the owner is not interested in keeping.

(HOFFMAN – PURCHASE IT)

24 Seconds

Commercial properties are listed on the tax sale if they become two years behind on property taxes. Residential houses become part of the sale if they are three years behind on taxes.

(HOFFMAN – DECISION)

24 Seconds

The 2022 Barton County tax sale is scheduled for October 11th at the Great Bend Events Center. Landowners have until October 7th to pay off their back taxes.

Great Bend school district to offer free lunches this summer

6/1

USD 428 in Great Bend is providing free summer meals for children with multiple pick-up locations again this year. Anyone between the ages of 1 and 18 can participate in the summer food program. Each weekday in June, meal packages containing both lunch and breaks for the following day are available from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at all five elementary schools. In July, they'll be ready at Eisenhower, Park and Riley schools. USD 428 Food Service Director Kristy Alvord said the program is returning more to normal after two years of COVID restrictions.

(ALVORD – WANT)

31 Seconds

The Summer Food Program is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture. USDA collaborates with districts like USD 428 to provide free meals to children when school is not in session. For those parents wanting to utilize the grab-and-go approach, Alvord said they will need to fill out a pick-up permit the first day.

(ALVORD – GO TO)

31 Seconds

The Great Bend school district has been offering the free lunch program for over 25 years.

Barton Co. WIC program searching for baby formula

6/2

Barton County Commissioner Jennifer Scharz said any time she goes to Walmart, she is curious on the status of baby formula supply. Scharz said the shelves have never been completely empty, but understands specific varieties might not be in stock. There has been a nationwide shortage of infant formula since the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) shut down a large manufacturer in Michigan over safety concerns.

Barton County Health Department staff, including Karen Winkelman and Christy Huslig, said the local Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program has been working with parents to track down needed formula.

(WINKELMAN – SAID)

18 Seconds

The manufacturer in Michigan, Abbott Nutrition, had dangerous bacteria in parts of their plant. The FDA forced the facility to close and a large recall was made on its formula in February.

St. John, Stafford County addressing childcare needs with modular

6/3

Last fall, the Stafford County Childcare Committee formed to identify the childcare need within the county and how to address the issue. The committee determined there is a need for daycare services for 70 to 100 children in Stafford County. Nearby Edwards County has experienced success in securing locations to rotate providers to run their business out of a building. Stafford County Economic Development Director Kathleen Norman said the City of St. John committed \$65,000 to bring in a modular classroom building to allow two providers to operate a daycare. The modular would create 18 new slots for children in need of daycare.

(NORMAN – STABILITY)

25 Seconds

Stafford County contributed \$55,000 to help construct the concrete footings, anchor the modular into place, add decks and skirting and meet Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) guidelines.

Norman said there are only two licensed daycare providers in St. John.

Child Care Aware of Kansas connects parents, providers, businesses and local and state leaders to information and ideas to take action to produce child care. Norman said Child Care Aware informed the Stafford County Commission that if the county could meet their daycare needs, more than \$1 million would go back into the local economy.

(NORMAN – AREA)

31 Seconds

Norman stated the local childcare committee is working with other Stafford County towns, such as Macksville and Stafford, to address daycare needs.

Work to begin on Broadway and intersection of 19th & Harrison

6/8

Work is expected to begin soon on a project that will repave a portion of Broadway Avenue and reconstruct the intersection at 19th Street & Harrison Street.

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) project will start with the 19th & Harrison reconstruction next Monday, June 13th. The intersection will be closed to all traffic. Access to the middle school will be available through detours.

The second part of the project is the repaving of Broadway from Polk to Morton. Starting June 20th, Broadway will be restricted to one way traffic. One lane will be blocked off while work is being performed. Once work in that lane is completed then the opposing lane will be shut down.

Expect approximately four weeks for completion of the two projects.

The total cost from Venture Corporation is just under \$1.1 million with a 50% reimbursement from the CDBG, up to \$600,000.

Central Plains school superintendent accepts position in Osawatomie

6/10

Greg Clark grew up in Great Bend and served the last eight years as the Central Plains USD 112 Superintendent of Schools, overseeing the schools in Claflin, Wilson and Holyrood. Clark stated leaving his hometown area was not an easy decision, but ultimately decided to accept the superintendent's position for the Osawatomie school district.

(CLARK – HAVE)

22 Seconds

The school board in Osawatomie voted to hire Clark at the end of May and he will begin working with USD 367 starting July 1st.

Clark departs the Central Plains district at a time when the school board voted in April to move all Wilson Junior/Senior High School students to Claflin to attend Central Plains High School by the 2023-2024 school year. The move is anticipated to help with staffing shortages and provide more opportunities to students after Wilson's enrollment has dipped.

(CLARK – FULL)

18 Seconds

Clark begin his career as a teacher, spent eight years as a principal and the last eight years as Central Plains' superintendent.

Great Bend discusses city-wide surveillance cameras

6/13

The Great Bend City Council had their first public discussion about a city-wide surveillance camera system and license plate readers the police department is considering.

Great Bend Police Chief Steve Haulmark told the governing body at last week's work session the project is designed to enhance policing capabilities.

The license plate readers, located throughout town, would allow for alerts for stolen vehicles or vehicles driven by people suspected of being involved in criminal activities.

(HAULMARK – HAVE IT)

18 Seconds

The plate readers could be placed in police patrol cars or as static devices throughout the city. Haulmark said more than 10,000 vehicles travel across 10th Street, or Highway 56, each day. Great Bend City Administrator Kendal Francis said there are probably a lot of criminals that pass through the city every day.

(FRANCIS – READERS)

19 Seconds

The city also discussed smart cameras positioned around town that would include face and vehicle recognition capabilities to help deter, track and solve crime.

To get the project started, the city considered putting \$50,000 towards the purchase and looking for grants and private funding. The city council was in consensus that the surveillance had value but to prioritize other city projects at the moment.

Kansas livestock battling dangerous heat, humid conditions

Disturbing images emerged out of the southwest corner of Kansas earlier this week as several thousand head of cattle died, reportedly due to extreme weather conditions. Estimates on the number of dead cattle ranged from 2,000 to 10,000.

Temperatures had been relatively mild around the state until June 11th, when the thermometer began climbing towards the century mark. Not only did it remain there for several days, but warm evenings and humid conditions provided little reprieve for the animals. Innovative Livestock Service Vice President of Cattle Operations Brandon Depenbusch said those conditions likely played a role in the deaths.

(DEPENBUSCH-SCENARIO)

11 seconds

Depenbusch said feed yards try and combat the conditions with things like sprinklers and water trucks. Straw or corn stalk bedding can reduce temperatures coming off the soil by 30 or 40 degrees. The goal, he said, is to take care of the animals as best as possible.

(DEPENBUSCH-EMOTIONS)

15 seconds

Conditions are not likely to improve anytime soon with highs expected at or near 100 through Tuesday.

Aging housing in Stafford Co.; program proposed for new construction

6/27

Stafford County has been working on a county-wide housing assessment the past year to see what their housing status is and also what they need to do to address any deficiencies. Getting information from the county appraiser, the study showed the average “age” of a house in Stafford County is 87 years old. Less than four percent of the current housing stock in Stafford County was built in the last 20 years, and less than 13% were built in the last 50 years.

Stafford County Economic Development Director Kathleen Norman said housing development in the county dropped off in the 1960s.

(NORMAN – OLD)

20 Seconds

Norman estimated in the past 20 years, Stafford County has lost 13 houses per year while building just three a year. Based on tax valuation, not fair market value, 71% of all housing in Stafford County is valued at \$100,000 or less.

The county has pledged \$350,000 for a new housing program with a goal of building 10 houses throughout the county in the next two years. Norman said the idea is to apply for a moderate income housing grant, but will need individual city governments to commit funding too.

(NORMAN – AMOUNT)

29 Seconds

The proposed houses would range between \$145,000 and \$200,000, but prequalified buyers could choose their own design. The program would be designed to sell the houses to new owners, but the county would be open to renting the homes that don't sell immediately. With the sale of the home, the county would reinvest the funding into the development of more housing.