

Herald-Chronicle

Mill levy decrease approved for county's 2025 budget

Daniel Davis | Managing Editor

LYNDON — The Board of County Commissioners approved a mill levy decrease for 2025 during a budget hearing at its meeting Monday.

"Of course, I own property and pay a lot of property taxes so when you're telling me that we have money that we can give back to the taxpayers, I'd like

to look at that a little more I think," said Commissioner Jay Bailey. "And if we have half a million dollars, \$500,000 in my calculations, that's two-and-a-half mills. We could lower our mill rate to 45.704 for a year and see where that takes us, and if that's not going to hurt us financially in the county ... I don't know why we wouldn't do that."

The county's auditor, Scot Loyd, was hesitant to recommend the move but said he had "no problem saying we can do it for one year." He recommended

the county continue to save money to cover unplanned expenses, such as the new jail. For the first four years, it will be paid for with sales tax but after that, the county will need money to fund it if prisoner fees aren't enough.

The board unanimously approved the mill levy decrease to 45.704 from 48.204. It also approved removing capital outlay line items from most departments, in a 2-1 vote, with Chairman

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Delinquent taxes list

The Osage County Treasurer's Office has submitted for publication in this week's Osage County Herald-Chronicle (Pages 9-14) a list of names and dollar amounts owed for delinquent real estate taxes for 2023. Questions pertaining to the list can be directed to the treasurer's office, (785) 828-4900. A list of delinquent personal property taxes will be published in early October.

OVERBROOK CITY COUNCIL

Fall festival needs vendors, sponsors

Caitlin Curtis | Reporter

OVERBROOK — With the exception of councilman Kyle Michaels, a quorum was present at the monthly Overbrook city council meeting Aug. 14. Jessica Frye, a representative from the Overbrook Historical Society, opened the meeting by giving an update to the council about the status of the Santa Fe Trail Festival, slated for 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sept. 21, to be held on Maple Street in Overbrook.

"I don't have much of an update other than what I have given before," Frye said. "We are still asking for vendors and food trucks. We did not realize [the festival] was the same day as the Auburn Fair, as Cider Days, and the big car show in Ottawa, so we are up against those, but we do have about 10 vendors at this moment in time."

The Overbrook Historical Society is still looking for people or groups to sponsor trophies for the car show.

Mayor Jon Brady moved the meeting onto special reports. "... We did have some discussion on the LMI (Low-to-Moderate Income) survey, [Governmental Assistant Services] provided us a cost on an LMI survey," Brady said. "If we are going to apply

for CBDG (Community Block Development Grant), we need to do an LMI survey because our other one expired."

Since HUD released new LMI projections, the LMI survey the city used previously is no longer valid, Brett Waggoner, grant specialist from Governmental Assistant Services, told the city.

The City of Overbrook is considering performing a new LMI survey before they are due on Nov. 1. The cost to do this survey through GAS would be \$9,900. The last time the survey was performed for Overbrook was in 2020, also by Waggoner and his team, and found that Overbrook was at 60.9% LMI as opposed to the 38.7% LMI that CBDG stated.

Councilwoman Hanna Smith commented that she felt like the council should wait on completing the survey. No other motion was made.

Brady also stated there will be a public hearing 6 p.m. Aug. 21 at city hall for the sewer project approved by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment]. Overbrook is working with civil engineering firm Schwab Eaton, Manhattan, on their waste water project. "... We are just waiting for the public hearing and then we will enter into design phase and construction phase," Brady said.

Jim Koger, city clerk, mentioned later in the meeting that potentially, the waste-

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OSAGE CITY COUNCIL

Property owner responds to nuisance complaint

Daniel Davis | Managing Editor

OSAGE CITY — The owner of 204 E. Lord St. answered for her property at the Osage City Council meeting Aug. 13. Vanessa Burkdoll was notified in April that the city declared the home and garage "dangerous and unfit for occupation." At the July 23 meeting, the council approved a motion to hold a hearing for the property, which prompted Burkdoll to attend.

"I had wanted to have that house condemned a year ago," Burkdoll said. "I know to fix it would be very costly."

She explained that she had been taking care of her late mother in Beloit and didn't have time to work on the property. Burkdoll is a nurse and her contract ends on Saturday, giving her more time to clean out the residence, she said.

"I had been making trips down here, getting rid of stuff around the property, getting it cleaned up," Burkdoll said.

She made it clear to the council that it is her

intention to have it torn down. When Mayor Brian Stromgren asked Burkdoll what her plans are after it's torn down, she replied, "I don't know for sure. I haven't been able to look that far ahead."

Stromgren asked if she would be able to keep the lawn maintained after that and Burkdoll said she would.

The council discussed how much time to give her to clean out the property before condemning it.

"I don't want it to drag out forever," said councilwoman Cathryn Houghton.

Councilwoman Susan Smith asked Burkdoll if October is enough time, but the homeowner thought the cleanup would be closer to the end of October. The council ultimately settled on giving her 90 days to clean out the property and report back at the Nov. 12 meeting.

Dale Schwiager, utilities director, made the case for purchasing two 2.25 kilowatt generators for the power plant. Members from

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OSAGE CITY USD 420

Test scores highlight academic status

Daniel Davis | Managing Editor

OSAGE CITY — Superintendent Ted Hessong gave a review of the previous academic year at the Osage City USD 420 Board of Education meeting Aug. 14. He also delivered an update on the 2024-2025 budget.

The graduation rate for Osage City High School was 85%, lower than the state average of 88%, but still high enough to earn it gold-tier recognition from the Kansas State Department of Education. When considering the effectiveness rate, which takes into account risk factors such as social economic status and absenteeism, the school was above the target the state model predicted.

On state assessments, the schools "have got some work to do" in English Language Arts, but compared favorably to statewide results in math. The tests divide students in four levels, with high performers categorized as level 4.

"What I really ask staff to do is to look at level 1 and 2," Hessong said. "What can we do to get kids out of level 1

and 2?" ACT scores went down slightly in 2023-2024 and the total enrollment was 692 with

a full-time equivalence of 682.5 after calculating for 46 preschoolers.

Hessong said the district is

exploring the idea of adding an early childhood center and will hold a town hall

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Daniel Davis/Herald-Chronicle

Members of the Osage City USD 420 Board of Education inspect renovation progress in the girls' locker room at Osage City High School. Construction crews finished the new floor in the boys' locker room and Superintendent Hessong hopes they are both finished by Saturday.



Ashley Carr



Miranda Gardner



Taylor Montgomery



Amanda Belew

Local districts welcome new staff

All Osage County school districts are now back in session. Last week, we introduced new staff from Lyndon, Marais des Cygnes Valley, Osage City and Santa Fe Trail to help readers become better acquainted with those who will be working with their children.

This week, we are featuring an introduction of new staff at Burlingame and Three Lakes Educational Cooperative.

Burlingame USD 454

Ashley Carr

Ashley Carr, who lives in Harveyville, is the new junior high science and ag teacher at Burlingame Junior High/High School. She is also the new junior high girls' basketball head coach.

She graduated from Kansas State University with a bachelor's degree in agriculture.

Carr previously taught for two years at Wamego USD 320.

Her goal for the school year is to create a productive learning environment that includes all students in the school in some way. She said she would also like to work on grant funding, to eventually build a school farmland lab for students, so they can learn hands-on about agriculture.

In her leisure time, Carr enjoys working with her photography business, deer hunting, and hunting waterfowl with her dog, Daisy.

Miranda Gardner

Miranda Gardner has been hired as a fourth-grade teacher at Burlingame Elementary School.

She is a graduate of Emporia State University, and holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education.

Gardner previously taught third grade for nine years and fourth grade for one year at Lyndon Elementary School.

She said her biggest goal for the school year is to

build positive relationships with her students and their families, as well as with her co-workers and school administrators. She would also like to get involved in the Burlingame community and push her students to learn as much as they can.

Gardner and her husband, Colby, who works at Wolf Creek Nuclear Power Plant-Every, live in Osage City with their children, Harper, 8, Colt, 4, and Maesyn, 1.

Her hobbies include chasing her children around in their sports and 4-H activities, camping and spending time outdoors.

Taylor Montgomery

Taylor Montgomery is the new principal for grades 6-12 at Burlingame Junior High/High School.

He holds a bachelor's degree in fisheries and wildlife and a master's in teaching, learning and teacher education, both from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Montgomery has 10 years

of experience teaching science at Nebraska schools.

His goals for the year include building relationships with staff and students, supporting staff, creating a positive culture and learning environment, and establishing a supportive cell phone policy.

Montgomery and his wife, Shawna, a Lyndon native and science teacher at Washburn Rural Middle School, moved to Burlingame from Grand Island, Neb. They have two children, Elliette, 3, and Jace, 9 months.

His favorite activities are spending time with his family, traveling, trying new foods and spending time outdoors.

Three Lakes Educational Co-op.

Amanda Belew

Amanda Belew has been hired as a speech therapist through Three Lakes, to work

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