



A LARGE CROWD of city, county and local city council members gathered at a special meeting on Monday, March 17.

Special city meeting held

By Jeff McCullough
Monday March 17 at 5 p.m., Yates Center Mayor Justin Weston called special meeting to order. City council members present were Charyl Stewart, Amber Barney, John Atkin, Lyle Kee, Jason Cathcard, and Kelly Shaffer.

The purpose of the special meeting was to discuss the recent fire and destruction of Yates Center Health and Rehab, 810 S. Fry, in Yates Center.

Mat Godinez, Kansas Deputy Secretary of Commerce, was present to speak to the council and the many that were present on what the State of Kansas can help with and resources available to rebuilding and possibly even expanding many of the services

that the nursing home was providing. Godinez also turned to Cari Spoon who is a grant writer in southeast Kansas. The city council and county commissioners will be working together with the nursing home stakeholders to bring the nursing home back to Yates Center.

It seemed in the meeting that there was definitely a need and a want for Yates Center to have the nursing home and rehabilitation center that was an excellent asset in Yates Center until last Friday afternoon. The nursing home in Yates Center was very highly recommended and was a recipient of several high awards in its care for residents and patients for rehabilitation, being named the number one nursing home in

Kansas.

Thirty eight residents were removed and rescued from the fire last Friday afternoon. The many in attendance at the special meeting spoke of the need for a nursing home of the caliber that was present for Yates Center and the surrounding area.

Although it is very early in trying to secure funding, it was mentioned that there are federal funds available and the grants need to be getting completed rather quickly as grant money will begin being distributed of May 1, 2025 will begin the review process for federal grants of this nature. There will be more reporting on this project as becomes available.

Council takes action on ATV/UTV requirements

By Jeff McCullough
Monday March 17 at 7 p.m. after the Pledge of Allegiance, mayor Justin Weston called the meeting to order. City council members present were Charyl Stewart, Amber Barney, John Atkin, Lyle Kee, Kelly Shaffer, and Jason Cathcard.

Kee made motion to approve the amended agenda with Cavender seconding. Motion passed.

Kee made motion to approve the minutes of the Monday, March 3 meeting, seconded by Barney. Motion passed.

Dave Farmer came to the council asking questions about the stop signs installed along the bus route to the schools. The council explained that USD #366 had changed the bus routes to the schools and the council was accommodating the schools request.

passed.

ATV/UTV were discussed and anyone driving an ATV/UTV must be a licensed driver and any rider under the age of 18 must have a helmet on. The city attorney will be looking into this matter further about the safety and restraints.

The council talked about the two parking stalls just west of the city hall on Rutledge Street. After a short discussion the council decided to take no action at this time.

Cathcard motioned with Kee seconding to allow the mayor to sign a contract with ACARF to house the dogs that the city has held over 120 days at a rate of \$95. Motion passed.

passed.

The mayor made a four year appointment of Connie Schmidt to the library board; Barney motioned with Stewart seconding for the mayors appointment. Motion passed. The mayor made a four year appointment of Judy Smith to the library board; Barney motioned with Stewart seconding for the mayors appointment. Motion passed.

The mayor expressed appreciation to the many agencies that came to Yates Center from other cities and counties in Kansas who sent help Friday, March 14, and helped contain the fire to the nursing home and no other structures were lost. The mayor stated it was very humbling to see all the outside agencies that came to help out our own first responders who were exhausted from the work they had been on. The mayor expressed his heart felt appreciation to our local first responders in Woodson County; but wanted everyone to know how much he and the city council appreciated the outside help and many stayed to help for a couple days after the tragedy.

Kee motioned with Atkin seconding to sign vouchers in the amount of \$130,866.72. Motion passed.

Debbie Almada came to the council to ask about trees that were on easements as she resides at 401 E. Mary and has a tree that is buckling the sidewalk and needs removed, but it is on the easement. The council explained that the city does not own sidewalks or trees and stated that it is the owners responsibility to maintain their trees and sidewalks.

Yard clean up of code mowing was discussed. There are some yards that are going to need code mowing conducted and some have trees that are in bad shape or falling down and typically code mowers do not do tree clean up on property where code mowing is being done.

Atkin motioned with Kee seconding to approve the nuisance ordinance that was drafted by the city attorney to fine those in violation of false fire alarms at commercial property.

Cathcard brought up to the council of having its own probation officer for municipal court. A discussion took place and Cathcard motioned with Kee seconding to hire Julie Strode as the municipal court probation officer for \$100 per month on a trial basis and to be re-evaluated in October of 2025. Motion

At 8:04 p.m. Atkin motioned with Cathcard seconding to go into executive session for five minutes for attorney client privilege with the mayor, council and city attorney. Motion passed. Council was back in session at 8:09 p.m.

At 8:16 p.m. Cathcard motioned with Barney seconding to go into executive session for attorney client privilege with the mayor, council and city attorney for five minutes. Council was back in session at 8:21 p.m.

Scott Grogg, the water department supervisor, brought bids to the council for installation of the lift stations. After some discussion, Atkin motioned with Kee seconding to have Tim Splechter install two lift stations in the amount of \$55,000 each.

The property at 204 E. Washington was up for sealed bids and Kee motioned with Cavender seconding to accept a bid in the amount of \$1,500 from Kim Lacrone.

Fish food bids were opened, Cathcard motioned with Shaffer seconding for SEK Coop to provide three tons of sinking food, and Leroy Coop to provide four tons of floating fish food. Motion passed.

Cathcard motioned, with Barney seconding, to have the high school build a chemical building to house the chemicals for the swimming pool with cost not to exceed \$4,300. Motion



VOLUNTEERS HELP UNLOAD the Mission Health Residents after being evacuated away from the fire.

Volunteers make a big difference in community

By Kathie Hamman
According to varied statistics, Woodson County is one of the poorest in the state, but I say we are the richest. Maybe not in money but in people full of caring, heart, and compassion. Lately, many have even asked where has all of the school pride gone at our Yates Center High School. Last week you would have realized that it is everywhere. School was just out for spring break when the sirens sounded. A fire had broken out south of town, and Yates Center Health and Rehab was in the danger zone. The evacuations were quickly underway using facility vans, ambulances, and a school bus to transport the residents to safety. There were volunteers everywhere with trucks and rangers for wheelchairs and other needed items.

began helping to unload the residents and move them into the gym. When the students saw the uncertainty and apprehension and a little fear in the eyes of the residents, who had been taken from their home so quickly. The students immediately went to them, sat next to them, held their hands, and began assuring them all would be okay, and soon the room was full of smiles.

The caregivers, administrators and staff of Yates Center Health and Rehab could then focus on the medical and safety needs of their residents. The students also stepped up moving chairs, oxygen tanks, putting together wheelchairs, grabbing walkers, serving drinks, and so much more. As they were handing out snacks, they realized they even had to open them, as well. They continued on until dinner, many helping the residents eat, with some students staying to help until the last wheelchair was loaded and all were headed out to other facilities.

If there had been more room or a longer day, I am sure every student at the school would have taken a turn to help make this unexpected life changing moment for 38 members of our community a safer day. I am sure it will be a memory the students

will take with them forever.

Every day our students practice hard and give their all on the playing field, and they study and perform and then compete with the best of them in academics and the arts. Well, this old teacher is here to tell you, Yates Center High School has always been full of pride, you just have to know where to look. When you see a high school student, especially the track team, give them a pat on the back for stepping up and doing what needed to be done from helping with the Yates Center Health and Rehab residents, and for compassionately reassuring them all was going to be okay. So speaking as a family member, former teacher, and alumna, the Mighty Wildcat Blue and White was flying high at Yates Center High School last week, and I was proud!

Editors Note: A drop off for goods needed for Yates Center Health and Rehab residents was established at Superior Building Supply. Due to a generous outpouring from the community Yates Center Health and Rehab officials have discontinued that request as all needs for the residents have been met at this time.

The Yates Center NEWS

Serving Yates Center and Woodson County Since 1877



113 S. Main, P.O. Box 285
Yates Center, KS 66783-0285
Phone (620) 625-2181
Email ycn@sekansas.com

Published every Thursday from The NEWS Building, 113 S. Main, Yates Center, KS 66783
Periodical Class Postage
Paid at Yates Center, KS 66783
Woodson County, KS

Publication No. (USPS 695-520)
POSTMASTER
Send address change to: The Yates Center NEWS, P.O. Box 285, Yates Center, KS 66783

Official newspaper of Woodson County, Yates Center, Neosho Falls, Toronto, Piqua and U.S.D. #366.
Member of the Kansas Press Association.

Cliff and Kim Ralstin, Owners, Publishers, Editors



SUBSCRIPTION RATES PER YEAR
In County \$47 + tax ~ Adjoining Counties \$49 + tax
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PUBLIC AUCTION EQUIPMENT AUCTION

Saturday March 29., 2025, starting at 10 a.m.
7.5 miles north of Yates Center on Highway 75
TRACTORS: EQUIPMENT: MINI EXCAVATOR: CATTLE
EQUIPMENT: TRAILERS: UTV and ATV: MISC.

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