

Misc.

• CCC Trustees hear public

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area to try and trim back anything considered to be unnecessary for the operations of the college. “Obviously, the thing that’s really hurt us in the last nearly four years, five years, has been just the costs of operations that have happened.”

Thornburg stated that last year, property insurance alone increased by \$400,000. However, this year there was not a large increase, which Thornburg said has helped this year’s budget. “Just rising costs all along have run that up. Our health insurance this year was up 20%.” He noted that utility costs have also increased.

“So yes, have we have tried to trim everything back as much as we can? Absolutely,” Thornburg said.

Williams asked if there was more that could be done. “Without eliminating programs, which then you start eliminating revenue,” he continued.

Williams then asked how much the assessed valuation increased, and Young said that it increased by \$9 million. Thornburg noted that this year the college is remaining revenue neutral with a rate of 39.986.

“We’re levying the same amount of money — tax dollars — that we did a year ago. Even though the assessed valuation went up, that dropped our mill levy down,” Thornburg said. “Our mill levy is down a little over 4% for next year.”

Tom Macaronas also spoke during the hearing. “I concur with Mr. Williams about the asset this college is, but I also have to agree with him about taxes,” Macaronas said. “As I look at the budget today, I notice there was one item — capital outlay — doesn’t have a mill levy. It all got lumped into the general fund, so how are we go-

ing to handle the capital outlay is one question.” Macaronas also asked if the college was collecting everything they could from the students so the tax burden could be dropped off citizens.

“My tax statement shows that the allotted amount or project amount is \$8,166,000 for CCC. I confirmed that today with the County,” Macaronas said. “And yet, your amount of levy is \$9.2 million. So there’s a \$1.1 million difference.”

Thorburg said there was an error made somewhere between the County and the outside contractor who prepares those statements. Young said he had spoken with the County, and he said that they told him they were looking into why the capital outlay levy was not completed.

“Do you know when the County is going to issue that, so we can validate that your budget is there?” Macaronas asked.

“They emailed me Friday and said they were hoping to have a solution today, but I haven’t heard anything at all,” Young said. In closing, Young said that the revenue neutral rate is calculated by the County Clerk’s Office for each taxing division. “It is the tax rate for the current tax year that would generate the same property tax as levied in the previous year’s tax based on the assessed valuation.”

The assessed valuation for CCC is \$230,293,211 and this year, it will receive \$230,000 per mill. While no capital outlay mill was published, Young said they absorbed it into the general fund and there will still be funds used for construction projects.

The trustees voted to approve the budget as published.

Following the budget hearing was the

general meeting. Trustees heard marketing reports and reports from Student Life on how Welcome Week went for students. In his President’s Report, Thornburg highlighted a recent partnership between Kansas City University’s Joplin campus and eight regional community colleges, as well as Pittsburg State University and Missouri Southern State University. This partnership will offer students the opportunity to begin their education for medical school through concurrent or community college classes, designed for easy transferability to medical school. This is an effort to increase the number of doctors and dentists in the region and fast-track that education, according to Thornburg. He also noted that the college was looking into grant funding for solar energy sources to decrease utility costs.

Bryce Saia highlighted the annual Golf Classic had a record-setting 37 teams participate. He also noted that

the community will soon be welcomed to see the renovations of the Dick Foster Family Complex. An open house will take place ahead of the first home game on Saturday, September 6, from 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Vice President for Career and Technical Education Heather Pollet said that CCC was sunsetting three programs: automotive collision, medical laboratory technology and information systems. However, CCC will soon have a plumbing, HVAC and power sports program, which will begin in a year, according to Pollet. HVAC and plumbing will be part-time programs, which will work for high school students wanting to participate. Pollet said that students could potentially graduate high school with certifications in both HVAC and plumbing.

The next Coffeyville Community College Board of Trustees meeting will be held Monday, September 15, at 4:00 p.m. in the board room.

• Coffeyville Commissioners

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on this matter, stating: “What we wanted to do is amend the language of this ordinance to allow City management and City Commissioners to make determinations regarding the budgeting of these idle funds and how they’re invested.” Cummings went on to note that this ordinance is not changing existing language, only adding to it. Commissioner Faulkner asked Cummings how much money was sitting in the City’s bank accounts. Cummings shared that there is \$31 million sitting in the bank accounts and \$24 million worth of investments. When asked if the funds in the bank account could be moved quickly if there was an emergency, Cummings noted that all funds at the local bank are liquid and could easily be accessed within “a few mouse clicks.” Brubaker interjected, wanting to explain that the term idle funds is not exactly what it sounds like it should be, but rather they are funds that have been assigned, budgeted and managed.

- An ordinance to amend the electric rate schedule as it was adopted on January 9, 2018 to include a policy for electric service upgrades and line extensions

for facilities within the retail service area of Coffeyville. Executive Director of Electric Services, Chris Weiner, spoke on this matter, noting that the ordinance is mostly to repeal the former line extension policy. Adoption of the police provides the utility with a more accurate and fair method of assessing cost to extend the utility service, but also for the utility to bear some of the expense.

- The purchase of a skid steer for the Electric Department to help elevate some of the stressors of having to borrow equipment between factions. With the skid steer, crews could carry poles and other equipment. The City was able to acquire a skid steer with implements for \$133,722.

- The demolition of Cooling Tower #3, which was retired in December 2018. The tower is currently collapsing in on itself, with debris strewn across the lot and it is proving to be a significant insurance risk to Coffeyville. Once demolished, the area would be filled in and covered with rock for either parking or storage use. Staff received a quote from Muller Construction in the amount of \$59,675.

• Child abuse horrors

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the trauma of a child abuse investigation before they are 18, and more than 14% will endure foster care — only nine other states are worse.

Still another indication that Kansas tears apart families needlessly can be seen in those police protective custody placements. Those that do not become official foster care placements last no more than six days. Potential child rapists and murderers don’t get rehabilitated in six days. But six days torn from everyone a child knows and loves is plenty of time to traumatize that child. If you can send the child home within six days, you almost certainly never needed to take the child at all.

Consider the harm: The rotten outcomes for many foster children were vividly documented by the Kansas City Star. When the Star went looking for young people who’d been in foster care, they started in one of the places they are disproportionately likely to be found: Jails. So it’s no wonder multiple studies find that, in typical cases, children left in their own homes fare better even than comparably maltreated children placed in foster care.

Multiple studies also find abuse in one-quarter to one-third of family foster homes; the rate in group homes and institutions is even worse. This is, of course, far more abuse than DCF acknowledges. But, as we’ve recently seen, DCF has a system that virtually guarantees a lot of abuse in foster care will be overlooked.

Even that isn’t the worst of it. All the time, money and effort wasted on thou-

sands of false reports, needless investigations and needless foster care placements is, in effect, stolen from finding children like Zoey Felix.

Two key steps can start Kansas down the road to making all children safer:

- Become laser-focused on ameliorating the worst harms of poverty. Small amounts of additional help can go a long way. Kansas can afford it. Because foster care is so much more expensive than better alternatives, Kansas actually spends on child welfare at one of the highest rates in the nation.

- Provide every family with high-quality defense from the moment DCF shows up at the door. That means a lawyer with a reasonable caseload, a social worker and sometimes a parent advocate who’s been through the system herself. No, it’s not to get “bad parents” off; it’s to craft alternatives to the cookie-cutter “service plans” doled out by DCF. This approach has been proven to safely reduce foster care with no compromise of safety. The federal government will pay half the cost in many cases, and the rest is likely to be covered by reduced foster care expenses.

Reducing needless placements does not guarantee fewer tragedies like the death of Zoey Felix, but it’s an essential prerequisite. Failing to reduce needless placements guarantees such tragedies will repeat over and over.

Richard Wexler is executive director of the National Coalition for Child Protection Reform. Through its opinion section, Kansas Reflector works to amplify the voices of people who are affected by public policies or excluded from public debate.

• Two burning questions

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covers how Lenexa police handle an “initial investigation” into allegations of criminal activity, officers are to advance the case only if “information indicates a crime has occurred.” Moreover, officers are not permitted to proceed until they have conducted at least a “ cursory examination” of the allegations.

But department records lay out a timeline that shows an order of operations that does not square with city policy governing the “initial investigation.”

The police department received the tip from the KBI on July 16. Instead of conducting a “ cursory examination,” Lenexa Police Chief Dawn Layman called Arroyo on July 18 to tell her an investigation was about to commence, and on July 21, police provided Arroyo’s identifying information to a federal Homeland Security Investigations agent.

It took two more days, until July 23, for police to review Arroyo’s testimony, even though doing so would seem to be an essential component of completing the “ cursory investigation.” At that point, rather than discovering evidence that a “crime has occurred,” police “assumed” Arroyo had “satisfied” her obligations to hold office.

Still, despite no evidence showing even reasonable suspicion that Arroyo had

committed a crime, the investigation continued through July 28, ending only once she turned over a copy of her naturalization certificate to police and officers verified that the name on her driver’s license matched the name on the naturalization certificate.

Through it all, Arroyo has held her head high, telling the Reflector that she understood why the investigation happened but also was disappointed that police were not “sensitive with how to handle immigration issues.”

It should go without saying that expecting law enforcement to conduct investigations fairly and without bias is a sentiment shared by the public at large. The public also expects police to follow their own rules.

Officials should keep these considerations in mind the next time they think about marshaling a police investigation in response to an uncorroborated tip rife with falsehoods.

Max Kautsch focuses his practice on First Amendment rights and open government law. Through its opinion section, the Kansas Reflector works to amplify the voices of people who are affected by public policies or excluded from public debate.

• Next... month?

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did include a \$50 billion rural hospital relief provision to help offset anticipated losses, Kansas hospitals would only receive approximately \$811 million. This amount falls well short of the funding that would be lost, leaving a multibillion dollar gap and leaving hospitals at even greater risk of closure. Ultimately, the passing of this legislation will disproportionately affect the low-income, elderly, and chronically ill patients, exacerbating the burden on an already fragile rural healthcare system and making it even more difficult to attract physicians to rural regions.

The Rural Cancer Institute is a non-profit dedicated to rural cancer advocacy, research and best practices. Marcus Yoakam is a second-year medical student at the Kansas City University- Joplin campus. Originally from

Pittsburg, prior to medical school he wasn't an oncology nurse and an English teacher in inner-city. When he is not trying to relearn the Krebs's cycle for the umpteenth time, he enjoys cooking, reading, watching nature documentaries and spending time with his wife, family, friends and his cat. Marcus hopes to one day practice in Pittsburg and give back to the community that gave him so much. Send any questions, thoughts and comments to program@ruralcancer.org.

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NOTIFICATION OF CVR ENERGY, INC. AND CVR PARTNERS, LP
EMERGENCY ALERT SIREN SYSTEM TEST
The petroleum refinery and the nitrogen fertilizer plant located in Coffeyville, Kansas, have scheduled a test of the community emergency alert siren system for Wednesday, Sept. 3, 2025, at 10 a.m. A drill of the emergency response plan will also occur in conjunction with the siren test. Please note that the test date is contingent upon safe weather conditions. If there is a likely threat of severe weather during the scheduled test, the test will be postponed. Company employees will be located throughout the community to evaluate the broadcast quality of the sirens. For more information, please call (620) 252-4200.



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