



Courtesy Photo

TORONTO COMMUNITY members were busy mixing concrete for the build and the new playground equipment.

New playground for all

What started with a 12-year-old's birthday fundraiser is finally becoming a reality for the kids of Toronto.

In 2023, the Toronto Booster Club established a "Playground Fund" with a check for \$2,215 from 12-year-old Elliot Hoag, proceeds from her annual birthday fundraiser. Elliot had a big idea, and she went looking for help in just the right place.

Over the next several years, the team of volunteers with the Toronto Booster Club worked to raise the funds needed to bring the project to life. they

also received two reinvestment grants. In all, the club raised more than \$50,000 for a playground designed to serve Toronto's children for decades to come.

Friday, Aug. 14 and Saturday, Aug. 15, more than 20 community volunteers came together with local pros at Playscape Recreation to complete the community build. In temperatures topping 95 degrees, volunteers spent two days digging, hauling, and assembling. The volunteers included many of Toronto's volunteer firefighters, city council members, local business owners,

community members, and Elliot herself. The Toronto Booster Club is planning a ribbon-cutting celebration to mark the occasion once the playground base is installed and it's ready for public use in mid-September.

It's pretty incredible to look at a playground taking shape and know that it began with a 12-year-old with a birthday tradition and a great idea. Sometimes, big things really do start small and sometimes they take a community willing to show up, grab a shovel, and sweat it out together.



Kathe Hamman/NEWS

THESE KINDERGARTNERS and other Yates Center Elementary School students had a beautiful day for their celebrations as they honored our Woodson County First Responders and the fallen first responders from September 11th. The fire trucks and emergency vehicles led the day as the students of all

ages participated in the annual Freedom Walk. The students joined together around the flagpole and had a moment of silence before singing patriotic songs and listening to the sixth graders give readings about the day and raising their flags in honor of the 25th Patriots Day!

Sewer repairs continue

By Cliff Ralstin

Yates Center City Council members met in a rare Wednesday night meeting after the Labor Day holiday. All six council members were in attendance and covered several issues concerning the upcoming sewer plant renovations.

The first item on the agenda was a request from Miss Chelsea's Dance Academy for a \$500 sponsorship. When questions arose about supporting an out of town business, council member Charyl Stewart noted that a number of local dancers go to the studio.

During the discussion both council members Tammy Porter and John Atkin IV questioned the donation and the amount. Both agreed that the city needed to tighten the purse strings before Stewart motioned to give \$100 to the academy. The motion passed 4-2 with Porter and David Waddell voting no.

With football homecoming around the corner, the council approved of blocking off portions of Chellis Street near DeLay Stadium for a couple hours the day of homecoming to allow school activities after the homecoming parade.

A nuisance property that the city has been dealing with is apparently having the desired effect. When quizzed by council members, Yates Center Police Chief Michael Strode said the contractor the city chose to do the cleanup work had gone radio silent, but residents have been taking care of the problem. Strode said he expects the issue to become a non-issue in the near future.

Following up and finalizing a request from the Kansas Department of Wildlife Parks and Tourism, the city approved two motions. The first was to allow a boating safety class at South Owl Lake. The second was to allow the use of the city's fire station meeting room and the gun club to conduct hunter safety education classes.

Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission Director Carrie Spoon returned to present four items for the council to approve concerning upcoming sewer plant repairs.

The first was a motion to allow the mayor to sign an administration agreement with Kansas Department of Health and Environment, with a \$25,000 administrative fee attached. The second was an interlocal agreement, with \$5,000 in administrative fees attached as well.

The third motion was a Kansas Water Office submission for the project, and the mayor's authority to sign that as well, and the forth document was a supplemental application estimating the project would be completed by the end of September, 2028.

As the clock rolled around to 7:30 p.m. the council opened the 2027 Budget Hearing and the hearing to exceed the Revenue Neutral Rate (RNR).

A couple of concerned citizens were in attendance to ask questions about the upcoming budget which were happily answered by the council and mayor.

The city intends to increase the mill levy from 50.606 to 55.066, or an increase of 4.46 mills. This will equate to a tax increase of \$55 per \$100,000 of valuation. The mayor stated that the city had not raised the mill levy the past several years and was now regretting it due the upcoming infrastructure issues the city is facing. He said the current raise is solely driven by those costs.

City water and wastewater superintendent Brent Torrens asked the council about several line items concerning his department that had appeared in previous budgets but not in the proposed 2027 budget. The council could not answer those questions and referred Torrens to the city's auditor as why the changes were made.

After roughly 45 minutes of discussion, the council closed the hearing and voted unanimously to exceed RNR and to adopt the proposed budget for 2027.

A two year old state assessment of school zone signage floated back to the top of the discussion board. Street superintendent Rodney Ryther said the initial cost was for \$9,662.53. He said that included quite a

few new signs and the replacement of most of the current signs. Chief Strode noted that some of the signs have not been updated since the 1980s.

The council requested Ryther to do an inventory of current supplies, such as sign posts and other items, and return with a new number to complete the work. The council also suggested doing the work in phases to ease the all at once cost.

Ryther once again visited what he considers the city's main piece of heavy equipment, the wheel loader. Ryther said the loader is now experiencing hydraulic issues along with the list of issues he spoke about in past meetings. Those issues are going to cost an estimated \$12,600 on top of the unknown costs for the hydraulic repairs.

He presented two bids for a new loader, one from John Deere for \$180,200 and another from Caterpillar for \$185,300. The council immediately balked at those numbers and started looking for ways to cut the amount.

In the end it was suggested to use some of the money budgeted for the street department, remaining street oil monies in particular, and then sell the current loader while it is still operational. Ryther and the council believes these moves will save approximately \$50,000 or more off the top of the new machine. No action was taken and the council requested Ryther to return to the next meeting with more information on currently available inventory.

Torrens then spoke to the council about a sewer pump motor being replaced. He stated the motor has been rebuilt two previous times with the last time occurring one and a half years ago at a cost of \$8,700 for the last rebuild. The council approved \$12,104 for a new motor.

In the mayor's comments, mayor Justin Weston reminded everyone about the upcoming meeting at Town Hall Monday, Oct. 5. The next meeting of the council will be at city hall Monday, Sept. 21 at 7 p.m. The council then signed vouchers in the amount of \$64,283.28 and adjourned the meeting.

Toronto News

By Kathy Cummings

The 25th Anniversary of the deadly terrorist attacks on U.S. soil has come and gone. It is thought that by the time the 50th anniversary gets here, there will be more people that don't remember that horrific day than what do. 9-11 is a day we do not want to forget.

Did a doctor perform a life saving emergency appendectomy on himself?

Hello, to all in area nursing and assisted living facilities. Hello, also, to all in area hospitals and rehab centers.

We offer our sympathy to the family and friends of all who lost loved ones this past week. May they all rest in peace.

Took Taco to Burlington

to see Wade Sunday. It was fun seeing how excited Taco got when he saw Wade. And, boy oh boy, did I run into some heavy rain! I pulled off the highway onto 200th Road for a few minutes as my windshield wipers could not keep up with the rain.

We got three inches Friday and one and a half Sunday. The cooler weather, especially at night, has been great.

Answer: Yes. In 1961, at a Soviet station in Antarctica with 13 men,

one doctor and hundreds of miles from a hospital, the doctor operated on himself using only local anesthesia. Dr. Leonid Rogozov had to stop every few minutes due to the pain. He was successful with the surgery even though it took him nearly two hours to complete the surgery.

Quote: "Winter is an etching, spring a watercolor, summer an oil painting, and autumn a mosaic of them all," Stanley Horowitz.

Neosho Valley Senior Center

By Lana Eckroat

With Fall in the air, we are making plans for our annual Ham & Beans Feed Saturday, Oct. 24. There will be more information in our next month's articles.

Here are our current weekly activities. Join us every Tuesday at noon for lunch, followed by social time and games.

Thursday craft days are temporarily on hold for health reasons. We hope to begin making Christmas crafts soon.

Our next "Fun Night" is Wednesday, Oct. 15, at 6

p.m. Future events will be held on the third Wednesday of each month. Bring a snack and come ready for a good time.

We are still accepting donations for repairs at Neosho Falls Cemetery. Donations may be dropped off at the Center or mailed to 1101 Main Street, Neosho Falls, KS 66758. Please make checks payable to Neosho Valley Senior Center and write "Cemetery Fund" on the memo line.

Visit our Facebook page for the latest activity updates.

For questions about our hours or projects, call the Neosho Valley Senior Center at 620-963-7260. If no one answers, leave your name and phone number, and we will return your call as soon as possible.

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