

Herald-Chronicle

Osage County Spelling Bee

Thompson wins county bee

BURLINGAME — Carbondale Attendance Center sixth-grader Anberlyn Thompson spelled her way to a county bee win at the Osage County Spelling Bee, held Feb. 6 and hosted by Burlingame. She will represent the county at the 2026 Sunflower State Spelling Bee on Saturday, March 21, at Kansas Wesleyan University in Salina. The state bee will be held in Sams Chapel and is hosted by the Kansas Press Association.

Runner-up was Christopher Wood, a sixth-grader from Burlingame.

Other participants in the bee included fifth-grader Emmy

Gibson and eighth-grader John Atchison from Burlingame; sixth-grader Brayden Cook and fifth-grader Kaiden Hardin from Osage City; eighth-grader Hailey Fine and sixth-grader Kylen Moore from Marais des Cygnes Valley; and sixth-grader Dason French from Carbondale Attendance Center.

Anberlyn and Christopher were awarded champion and runner-up engraved plaques, and all participants received inscribed medals, provided by The Osage County Herald-Chronicle.



Anberlyn Thompson (right), a sixth-grader from Carbondale Attendance Center, won the Osage County Spelling Bee Feb. 6. Runner-up was Christopher Wood, a sixth-grader from Burlingame. The bee was hosted by Burlingame.



Participants in the Osage County Spelling Bee, held Feb. 6 at Burlingame, were, from left, front row, Emmy Gibson, Christopher Wood, Kaiden Hardin, Anberlyn Thompson, Dason French, Brayden Cook; back row, Hailey Fine, Kylen Moore and John Atchison.



Osage County Commission

Commission approves contract, discusses accounting issues

LYNDON — The Osage County Commission conducted regular business during its Feb. 3 meeting at the Osage County Courthouse, addressing personnel matters, accounting updates, contracts, and ongoing administrative issues before entering executive session and later holding a work session on the county's Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP).

Commissioners Les Holman, Brandon Smith and Heather Kuder were present, along with Osage County Clerk Michelle Morris. County Counselor Joshua Ney later joined the meeting.

The commission approved the agenda as amended and heard brief public comment before moving into scheduled business items. Commissioners approved a corporate application for a license to sell cereal malt beverages for Pomona Lake Marina and approved a personnel payroll action form for the sheriff's office for Colton Moon with a Jan. 29 start date. The commission also approved tax roll corrections covering tax years 2021 through 2025.

Court personnel requested authorization to enter into a contract for electronic courtroom recording software to replace the county's existing system. Commissioners approved payment for the service from the general fund, with the understanding that the Office of Judicial Administration is expect-

ed to reimburse the county for the expense.

During the meeting, commissioners discussed revisions to a consulting contract with Linda Smith related to accounting and bookkeeping functions within the clerk's office. The discussion included clarification of duties involving accounts payable backlog cleanup, bank reconciliation work tied to 2025 entries, and reporting responsibilities. The commission approved the contract and authorized the vice chairman to sign the agreement.

Representatives from Swindoll, Janzen, Hawk & Loyd (SJHL) Accounting provided an update on payroll and accounting work under way for the county. The update included progress on payroll processing, corrections to employee W-2 forms, and ongoing work to reconcile accounts and prepare records for audit review. Commissioners authorized moving forward with corrections to W-2 forms through the payroll processor, including associated processing fees.

The commission also discussed reopening the search for a county controller position. Ney reported that potential recruiting firms had been identified, and commissioners directed him to request formal proposals for consideration at a future meeting.

A request from the county coro-

ner regarding an indigent burial was tabled for one week to allow additional review and contact with potential family members before any decision is made.

Commissioners approved annual city-county connecting links agreements covering designated streets and bridges in several communities, including Burlingame, Carbondale, Lyndon, Melvern, Overbrook, Osage City, Scranton and Quenemo.

A lengthy discussion was held regarding a property access dispute involving a road near South Shawnee Heights Road. County officials explained that the matter involved potential private property and easement issues, and advised the parties that resolution would likely need to occur through the court system rather than county action.

The commission entered a 15-minute executive session to discuss a non-elected personnel matter involving an employee transfer. No action was taken following the session.

Commissioners later approved payroll totaling \$269,540.58 for the Jan. 30 pay date, and approved bills totaling \$268,371.50.

Following regular business, the commission recessed and later resumed for a work session to review NRP files. No formal action was taken during the work session.

Scranton City Council

Celebration site in flux

Gary Rush | Reporter

SCRANTON — All members of the Scranton City Council, including Alison Vandevord, Amber Rendell, Tim Scheidegger, Kallie Recob and Tim Nedeau, were available for the Feb. 2 regularly scheduled meeting. Mayor Brian Lester oversaw the proceedings.

Sherry Lester approached the council with concerns about the location that will hold the community's largest annual celebration, Saturday in the Park. Historically, the event is held at the city park, but with upcoming efforts in constructing the new community center, a new location for the festivities needed to be established, and she suggested the event be centered upon the road and alleyway adjacent to City Hall.

City Maintenance Director James Palacio said he would contact the county and see if the use of the road immediately to the south of City Hall, which is maintained by the county rather than the city, could be blocked off and used for the event.

"I just want to talk with the council, as there are a lot of people that are concerned with what the budget is and what it currently looks like," said resident Kyle Recob, after requesting the opportunity to speak. "I am just asking you, the council, if you would consider reinvesting the interest we have accumulated over the years back into the community. I do not want to see this town become unincorporated or taken over by the county. I suggest we invest it into something like a police chief, or other consid-

erations this community sorely needs. I just wanted to express my concerns of why returns from maturing CDs have not been put back into the community."

"The new jake brake signs are up," Palacio said, when the agenda directed the proceedings toward the maintenance department. "I hope they have not been put up in vain, and truck drivers pay attention to them."

City Fire Chief Ken Croucher addressed the council with a report of happenings within the fire department. In lieu of a report, Croucher requested the council call a short executive session, with his inclusion, to discuss non-elected personnel. Upon return to open session, no action was taken.

A second executive session was requested by Mayor Lester to discuss "legal matters." Ironically, the session was called without the inclusion of City Attorney Todd Luckman, who was not present for the meeting. The session lasted a full 20 minutes before all members of the council returned to public chambers. Upon return to open session, the council voted to hire Heather McDowell into the position of part-time city office help.

"Where do we stand on code enforcement?" asked Councilwoman Recob "We currently have no one enforcing code infractions."

"I think I can help with that," Mayor Lester said. "When there is no code enforcement, it falls on the responsibility of the mayor to make sure enforcement issues are

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Burlingame City Council

Council votes to condemn property

BURLINGAME — The Jan. 19 Burlingame City Council meeting kicked off with the motion to open the public hearing for the condemnation of the property at 221 East Fremont. Items discussed were the cost to tear down the structure, the cost to rent a backhoe, and the asbestos report. Upon closing the public hearing for the condemnation, the council was all in favor of passing Resolution #465, to condemn the property, with the owner given 90 days from Dec. 11, 2025, to commence the repairs or removal of the structure, to be completed within 120 days (April 11, 2026).

Correspondence to the council included a loan repayment schedule for State of Kansas Utility Gas Loan, an email from Colleen Mendoza regarding KS Dept. of Commerce seeking support to identify vacant build-

ings for redevelopment, and maturing certificate notice on CD #75000.

The council had a discussion with Nikki Manbeck - The Den and David Garrison, regarding the fence in front of The Den, occupancy certificate, and alcohol ordinance. The council voted unanimously to table the item until the next meeting or a meeting when Manbeck could be present to discuss the fence needs for The Den.

Austin Masters from Burlingame Rec discussed the fact they do not have insurance coverage on private property. The reason being Burlingame Rec had decided they do not have anything of major value. No action was taken.

Masters also discussed the issues he is having with the Sales Tax Exemption for the CDBG Grant

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