

Hunhoff Talks About Foster Care Needs

By Emily Niebrugge
Press & Dakotan

Having fostered more than 50 children over the span of 10 years, Sandy Erickson has played the role of mom for a good portion of her life. So when she believed one of her foster children had been sexually abused years ago, it was difficult to watch as nothing happened to help.

"She knew way too much for her age," Erickson said. "She needed to be checked."

Erickson isn't the only foster parent who has faced difficulties with communication upon fostering a child. During a meeting held at the Yankton Community Library Friday afternoon, District 18 lawmakers led a discussion to hear the

concerns foster families in the area currently have.

Following the meeting, with about 25 people in attendance, the three representatives agreed to take the issue to the legislative session in Pierre to potentially propose stricter legislation regarding foster care families.

"We need to get everyone on the same board," said Sen.-elect Bernie Hunhoff (D). "If we just throw a bill out to fight the (Department of Social Services), it's going to be difficult. But if we work with them to create a bill of rights with maybe 5-10 things that should be considered, that would make a good study."

That study would include looking at the problems foster families

are currently going through, particularly in regards to communication and involvement in the child's medical and legal cases.

Those in attendance of Friday's meeting expressed the feeling that they are viewed as being good enough to take care of the children, but when they have a concern or recommendation, they become more of a babysitter, with the Department of Social Services (DSS) or a judge and case worker deciding what's going to happen.

Other concerns mentioned in the meeting include the rights to receive proper training and support, background such as family history or medical records on the foster child more readily

available, a structured plan on how long the child will be in foster care or how to reunite him or her with their biological family, and the right to be informed of changes made to the case in a timely manner.

With approximately 1,500 children in foster care in South Dakota, Bernie Hunhoff said the time to talk about this issue is now — especially with more delinquency cases being prosecuted in South Dakota in the last year.

But the opinions regarding how to go about solidifying legislation vary.

Rep. Mike Stevens (R) encouraged those who attended the meeting to create a task force before he and his political colleagues attend sessions in Pierre in order to educate legislators about the current problem,

since most of them are not aware of the issues.

"We want to be effective, and from a legislative standpoint, you have to get on the radar in the next 37 days," Stevens said referring to the upcoming session. "Most legislators do not have any experience dealing with this topic, so having a group where you put something together so we can take it along helps."

In order to go to legislation, Stevens added, someone will need testify. "It isn't just going to happen; it is a process," he said. "This is a big deal in South Dakota, and there's no organization that represents them, and they need a voice."

Rep.-elect Jean Hunhoff (R) also stressed the importance of not just

getting legislation on the table, but being able to ensure it will be followed through.

"I want to see something accomplished," she said. "If it takes a task force, it's all about the kids. We need the commitment to carry it out."

Stevens also voiced concern that even though South Dakota may be a small state, each legislative district may vary on what it believes should be done to combat these problems, making education about the issues even more important, he said.

Fifteen other states including Alabama, Missouri and Oregon, have passed legislation regarding foster families, and Bernie Hunhoff said that will serve as a foundation for his discussion in Pierre.

CITY From Page 1A

The 105 percent tax levy is based upon some taxes not being collected each year so there is enough funds for the annual debt service.

The ordinance also provided in Section 3 reads: "Except that, when and if appropriations shall hereafter be made into the Bond Fund of cash from any other fund of the City or moneys therefore actually paid into the Bond Fund, the City Council shall have the power to reduce the levy for the ensuing year or years specified in the Certificates as to Tax Levy by an amount equal to the moneys so appropriated, and upon certification thereof the levies above specified shall be accordingly reduced or canceled."

Thus if the City Council appropriates funds for the payment of the General Obligation bonds the tax levy for the payment can be reduced or canceled.

The initial expenses will be the publishing costs and the ordinance will require the levying of additional taxes to pay the annual debt service on the bond unless the council appropriates other funds for the debt service.

The council approved the first reading of Ordinance 1325 to implement a 5 percent malt beverage markup on the wholesale cost and freight of malt beverages as of July 1.

This is with an inclusion of a public hearing at a future city council meeting around the time the city budget meetings begin later this year.

State Statute provides that a community can implement and collect a 5 percent markup on the wholesale cost of malt beverages.

The City Council discussed a malt beverage markup at several different times during

2014. A presentation on having a malt beverage markup and how the receipts might be used was made to malt beverage and liquor license holders at a June 5, meeting.

Public meetings were held on June 25 and July 22 and a presentation was also made to

Rotary on July 1. The two public meetings and the Rotary presentation all included the proposal to use a malt beverage markup as a portion of funding park improvements. A summary of the written comments from those meetings has previously been provided to Council.

At the Dec. 15 noon meeting, the consensus of the council was to bring a malt beverage ordinance forward for consideration and possible action.

The ordinance specifies that the proceeds of the markup would only be used to retire the General Obligation bond for Prentis Park improvements and/or maintenance, operation, capital improvements or expansion to the parks and park facilities within the

city.

The funds can be used for park improvements whether they are bonded or not.

The ordinance includes language that the City Council would annually conduct a public hearing to receive comments on the use of the funds and the continuation of the malt beverage markup ordinance, if adopted.

The annual public hearing required in the proposed ordinance is to be part of the budget adoption process. There they will seek to have an annual review of the receipts and use of the funds during the budget meetings which are in August and September of each year.

The council unanimously approved the temporary closing of Rose Street from Coyote Village north to the Dakota Dome parking lot on Jan. 14-15, 17, 28-29, and 31 and Feb. 5-6, 12, 17, 21, 25-26 and 28 from 2 ½ hours before University of South Dakota game time to 30 minutes after each game begins.

Due to doubleheaders on Jan. 31 and Feb. 28, the closure will be from 11:30 am to 5:00 pm and 11 am to 4:30 pm respectively.

With the construction of the new basketball arena, USD has adjusted their reserved parking plan for home men's and women's Coyote basketball games.

Lots C and D which are the two southern Dome parking lots would be reserved for Howling pack members, handicapped individuals, and VIPs such as game officials and Summit League staff.

The closings are to facilitate the ability to separate reserved parking from the general parking. USD will also have an attendant within their parking lot as a vehicle enters from N. University Street permitting or not permitting vehicles to enter Lots C and D.

The request noted that it is anticipated that impacted vehicles on Rose Street north of Coyote Village on these days and at these times are primarily associated with Coyote athletics.

They believe the impact to the general public should be minimal.

With this request, USD will provide, set up and remove the barricades as they have done in past years for football games. USD will also handle signage indicating the areas that are closed.

Team buses are asked to park in Lot 36. Removal of parking on Dakota Street for visiting team buses is not requested for the basketball games.

The Police, Fire, and EMS Departments have been notified of the closure request and were said to

have not reported safety concerns.

The council unanimously approved of the special permit to allow the consumption but not sale of alcoholic beverages in the Edith B. Siegrist Vermillion Public Library small conference room from 7-9 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 20.

Susan Heggstad, on behalf of the Vermillion Public Library, requested the permit for an adult book discussion at the library that evening.

The request states that Heggstad was given permission to make the request by the library's board of trustees.

The council unanimously approved the Resolution to set a hearing date of Feb. 2 for the special assessment roll for the construction of a portion of North Norbeck Street.

The construction costs to be assessed are \$316,180.58. This assessable cost includes the construction of the road, sidewalks, approaches, the street lighting and the consultant fees.

On Jan. 6 of 2014, the council approved a resolution adopting the resolution of necessity for construction of concrete surfacing and other improvements along North Norbeck Street from Roosevelt and East Clark Streets.

This resolution involved the construction of North Norbeck Street between the aforementioned streets. Work was completed on the improvements in 2014 and the final payment has been authorized.

The special assessments were calculated and filed with the finance office on Dec. 30.

Per State statute, the City is required to hold a public hearing to allow the affected property owners to review and discuss any concerns regarding the assessed value.

The property owners to be assessed will also be notified of the hearing by mail.

The public hearing notice will be published in the Plain Talk.

The council unanimously approved the signing of the agreement with French Investments, L.L.C. and Dakota Construction.

French Investment, L.L.C. is the owner of 18-acres south of East Main Street and north of Lewis Street.

For the last couple of years the owners have been developing part of the land in anticipation of single family residences being constructed.

The construction included sanitary sewer, water mains, storm sewers and streets. The construction took place with minimal city

involvement and only required that the city pay for oversized items and some testing.

The owner was responsible to hire a consultant to complete the construction plans per City requirements and also hired the contractor (Dakota Construction) to complete the project.

This agreement will provide the city with the typical one year guarantee on capital projects. This guarantee is required to protect the City from poor workmanship, or poor materials used on the project.

The guarantee period would start on the day that the agreement is signed by the council.

All of the repairs required during this period would be at the owner's expense, however, the agreement also allows the city to assess the owner for any repairs required if they are not responsive to the city's requests.

Additionally, although not written in the agreement by signing this document the city accepted the road construction and opens it for public use. This acceptance does not remove the owner's responsibility to address any guarantee issues.

The council unanimously approved the Resolution Revising Landfill Rates for Sale of Clay and Black Dirt.

The City of Vermillion is part of a Joint Powers agreement with the City of Yankton, Clay County and Yankton County to provide for solid waste services.

The Joint Powers board at their Sept. 18 meeting -

after hearing the report of an operating loss for the first eight months of last year - recommended a rate increase for solid waste, contaminated soil, asbestos, TV's and monitors be adopted by the City of Yankton and Vermillion to be effective as of Dec. 1.

The Vermillion council and Yankton City Commission both approved the rate increases in October.

The September recommendation from the Joint Powers Board also included a review of rubble and sale of clay fees.

The landfill revenue from the sale of clay and black dirt does not make up a very large percentage of the landfill operating revenues but there is a need to dispose of the clay material and if the buyer also loads the material it assists in digging the next cell.

The revenue from sale of these materials was \$5,726 in 2014, \$4,763 in 2013 and \$53,112 in 2012.

The larger amount in 2012 was that the material was used in rebuilding parts of SD Highway 50 between Vermillion and Yankton.

The revised rates will assist the landfill operations in meeting the operating costs.

The council unanimously approved the resolution and authorized the publication of the complete list of all salaries of officers and employees of the city, thereof as required by law.

State statute requires the publication of the complete list of all salaries

of officers and employees of the city.

The city of Vermillion has traditionally passed a resolution at the start of each budget year adopting the salaries, which is then included in the meeting minutes.

Other changes in salary or new employees during the course of the budget year are included with council minutes as the personnel actions take place.

The 2015 budget includes sufficient funding to cover the wage rates reflected in the salary resolution.

Friday was declared as First Responders' Day in appreciation for their efforts.

The City of Vermillion was recognized for its efforts in financial reporting by the state.

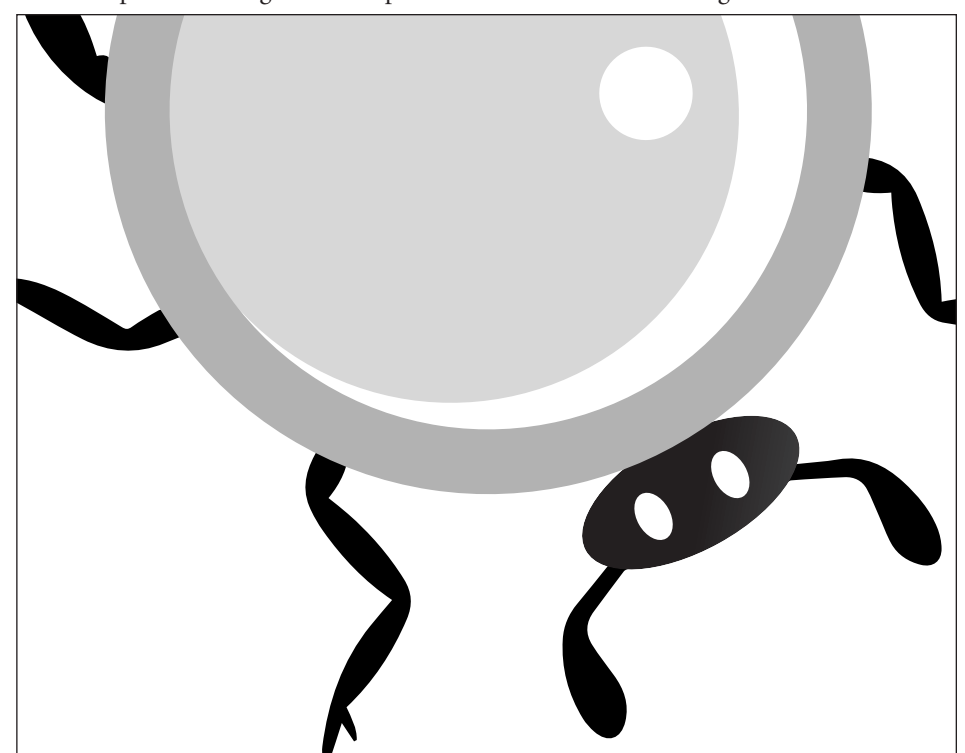
-Most information provided via the City of Vermillion Council agenda

NOTE on the MAIN STREET INTERSECTION:

The scheduled trial run of using stop signs instead of lights at the Main Street intersection in Downtown Vermillion begins a three-month period on Tuesday.

The trial run is in response to potential changes at the intersection and what local business owners would like to see if any reconfiguring of the traffic is implemented.

Main Street will now have no lights at that intersection while Center and Court Streets will have a stop sign put in place of the lights.



**Caught a bug?
Be seen today.**

With Same Day at Sanford, it's easier than ever to get same-day access in four areas of primary care:
Family Medicine • Pediatrics • OB/GYN • Internal Medicine

Contact your local clinic or call
(855) SAME-DAY.
sanfordhealth.org/sameday

SameDay
at SANFORD



KEEP INFORMED ABOUT PUBLIC NOTICES IN SOUTH DAKOTA.
Learn more at www.facebook.com/PublicNotices