

Local levy drops ever so slightly

Written by Deb Egenberger

Thursday, 08 October 2009 22:26 -

DAWSON COUNTY LEVIES BY CITY			GOTHENBURG BREAKDOWN		
CITY	08-09	09-10	ENTITY	08-09	09-10
Cozad	2.408	2.347	County	0.418	0.398
Lexington	2.189	2.189	City/Airport	0.955	0.956
Gothenburg	2.181	2.152	School	1.204	1.186
Farnam	2.284	2.138	ESUTB	0.015	0.015
Overton	2.151	2.138	NRD	0.056	0.047
Sumner	2.141	2.127	CCC	0.091	0.099
Eddyville	2.076	2.061	Ag Society	0.012	0.013
			Hospital	0.020	0.018
			RTSD	0.010	0.010

Commissioners solidify levies, appropriations for county taxpayers.

LEXINGTON—The total tax levy assessed to Gothenburg property owners will drop slightly for the 2009-10 fiscal year.

All the numbers came together for Dawson County commissioners on Thursday as they adopted a resolution setting the final appropriations and levies for the county.

For the fourth straight year, Gothenburg's overall levy will fall from the previous year by almost 3 cents per \$100 in valuation.

The levy drops from 2.18142 to 2.15179 for the 2009-10 fiscal year. The county, school, hospital and natural resources district portions of the levy all went down with slight increases in other areas to make the 3-cent change.

Still, Gothenburg residents pay the third highest total property tax levy of all Dawson County residents behind Cozad and Lexington.

Cozad's total levy is nearly 19.5 cents higher than Gothenburg's and Lexington is nearly 4 cents more per \$100 in value.

At the same time, Gothenburg's valuation is also the third highest in the county at \$143,664,700.

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The community with the lowest tax levy is Eddyville at 2.051. Eddyville also has the lowest valuation at \$1,374,766.

In addition to setting the levies, county commissioners also adopted the budgets of each county office, giving officials authority over their department's funds.

In other business, the county board heard a presentation from Bret Schlyer of MGT of America concerning the county's cost allocation plan.

The county's contract with Maximus Inc. is up for renewal and Florida-based MGT of America would like to compete for that business.

Schlyer said his company's purpose is to identify and attempt to recover county general fund money spent on federal or state programs.

He said the primary example is child support. The county is entitled to reimbursement of a percentage of the county's money spent to collect child support, whether it is cost of staff or more indirect expenses.

For the fiscal year 2008-09, the county received approximately 66% of the \$75,000 claimed qualifying expenses.

Schlyer told commissioners his company would also offer consulting which may allow for added reimbursements, something Maximus is not doing.

The cost for a contract with MGT would be capped at \$1,787 annually for the first three years and would be contingent based on collections.

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The Maximus contract, according to county attorney Liz Waterman, is at \$7,150.

Should the commissioners choose to use MGT at their next regular meeting on Oct. 15, it would be the first county contract for the company in Nebraska.

In other action, commissioners:

approved tax exemptions for vehicles owned by the Cozad Berean Church and the Center for Independent Living.

authorized treasurer Sharon Wood to issue tax sales certificates for real estate with taxes delinquent for two years. The total amount of the tax certificates is \$28,047. Wood said delinquent taxes were up this year from nearly \$1.5 million in 2008-09 to close to \$1.6 million for 2009-10.

referred to the county attorney and zoning commission a conservation easement request from the living trust of Jeff and Lori Anderson to Wetlands American Trust Inc., a supporting organization of Ducks Unlimited. Land involved is 354 acres along the Platte River southwest of Lexington.

learned from commissioner Butch Hagan that the ag society has purchased additional land for expansion of the fairgrounds.