Nothing left to Overton deal except paperwork

LEXINGTON—If the dollar bill Joe Zerr laid on the table at the Dawson County commissioners meeting on Thursday was all it took to settle the question of ownership of a small piece of land in Overton, then adding onto his home would have been far less stressful.

But the dollar Zerr paid for the 24-by-60 piece of land after a public auction during the monthly county board meeting was small beans compared to the time and money he's spent trying to figure out how the county could own a tiny piece of land and not know it.

Zerr first asked the county about the land in September.

During the legal process to make an addition to his home at the south end of the railroad walk-over, Zerr learned he does not own a portion of the land he believed was his.

He told commissioners he had mowed the grass and maintained the lot for at least 10 years believing it was his.

In fact, a corner of his garage already sits on the lot in question.

Apparently the county acquired the land during a tax sale back in the early 1960s but didn't realize it.

After Zerr questioned the county, commissioners followed the legal requirements of surveying, determining value and auctioning the land.

Zerr was the only one to bid.

In other county action, commissioners agreed to allow a small portion of the hike-bike trail route on the north end of Johnson Lake to be constructed on county right-of-way.

Ron Fowler, a representative of the trails committee, told commissioners 8 feet of the trail will be on county right-of-way near where Road 751 meets Lakeshore Marina.

The entire trail will be owned and maintained by Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District.

In other business, the county board:

heard the monthly road department update from superintendent Jon Mooberry and passed a resolution to allow him to conduct a study of Drive 431 in the northeast section of the county to determine if the road should be vacated.

received notice from county treasurer Sharon Wood that $63,000 in uncollected real estate taxes, mostly from mobile homes, would be issued in distress warrants for the sheriff's department to attempt to collect. The amount last year was roughly $101,000.

learned from commissioner Bill Stewart of Lexington that progress is being made on the county's possible purchase of the Council for Economic Development building located on Sixth Street in Lexington but no action was taken.

Stewart said the building would provide climate controlled storage for county files currently kept in the old jail building as well as office space for departments now renting in other areas.

Stewart said the size of the building would allow the county to eliminate any areas currently rented outside the courthouse, such as Health and Human Services.

A contract could be considered at the Nov. 15 meeting.

reviewed general assistance policies with Dwana Flaige from Health and Human Services.

Flaige told commissioners that as long as they follow state statutes, they can administer the general assistance program however they like, including require cremation for deaths covered under the program.

Typically, people apply for general assistance from the county to cover expenses while they wait for approval from Social Security for supplemental security income. Flaige said that period ranges from two to six months.

discussed results of a meeting between officials from Dawson County Transit and Kearney RYDE. Commissioner Dennis Rickertsen said the county transit advisory committee will consider agreements between the two, as well as cities involved, that would provide a more broad service area and more efficient service.