

## **Proposal gives heat pumps different rate**

Written by Elizabeth Barrett  
Thursday, 11 March 2010 22:23 -

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### **Business owner asks council for change.**

Ask and you shall receive seems to be working for one local business owner.

At their March 1 meeting, Gothenburg City Council members introduced a measure that changes how commercial utility rates for heat pumps are figured.

Last year, J Buddenberg installed a heat pump at Electric Rain Inc. to conserve energy but his sewer bill increased dramatically.

Water used by the heat pump flows into the city storm sewer instead of the sanitary sewer.

Buddenberg's bill increased because a percentage of a commercial customer's water use is charged on the sewer bill.

He had asked at an earlier meeting if the rate could be changed for heat pumps.

During that meeting, city administrator Bruce Clymer presented a couple of ideas the council considered for customers like Buddenberg.

Those ideas were brought back to the March 1 meeting and are included in the proposed change which takes two more readings to pass.

Customers can choose to install a second water meter that can be read remotely and used as a "deduct" reading for water used by a heat pump.

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The meter would be billed at the deduct rate and installed in front of the heat pump.

If metering is not required, the customer will be charged the applicable minimum customer rate or 50% of the water charge—whichever is greater.

Buddenberg has installed a deduct meter to see how much water his heat pump uses.

In other action, the council increased lot fees at Gothenburg City Cemetery.

City residents will pay \$200 a plot compared to \$100 while fees for non-city residents went up \$50—from \$200 to \$250.

At an earlier meeting, council members discussed raising fees which was recommended by the city cemetery board.

Cemetery board members think the increase in lot fees will help pay for sidewalks underneath monuments in new sections of the cemetery.

City officials have said the sidewalks could decrease costs for cemetery maintenance and may prevent the heaving and settling of monument foundations.

In other business, the council:

- accepted a \$7,309 bid from Eustis Plumbing & Heating Inc. for a new heat pump at Building Blocks Child Care Center & Preschool. The old heat pump no longer works in the Building Blocks building that is owned by the city.
- passed, on final reading, a law that updates city codes.

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- granted a special designated license for OK Bottle Shoppe to serve alcohol at a business-after-hours event at Horizon Ag on March 19.
- approved payment of downtown revitalization grant funds to the following businesses for facade improvement: \$708 to First State Bank Insurance, \$4,867 to Dee's Floral & Gifts and \$3,532 to Pony Express Dental Arts.
- gave the go ahead for Jason Fiese to be paid \$20,000 for work done in the owner-occupied housing program.
- agreed to pay West Central Nebraska Development District \$2,542 for administering the city's owner-occupied housing program.
- learned that Viaero telecommunications company renewed an agreement with the city to lease equipment on top of the city water tower for another five years. Clymer said the amount of \$6,773 this year will climb to \$7,623 by 2014.

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