

## Council gets rid of uncollectible debt

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

Friday, 12 April 2013 13:26 - Last Updated Friday, 12 April 2013 13:45

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Money loaned to Pony Express Greenhouse taken off city books.

In a quick action, more than \$500,000 in uncollectible debt was removed from city accounts.

During its April 2 meeting, the Gothenburg City Council made adjustments to the city reuse fund by removing \$384,000 in debt from the city reuse fund and \$195,246 to the city sales tax fund.

The funds were loaned to Pony Express Greenhouse, a hydroponic-vegetable growing business built south of town that later declared bankruptcy.

City administrator Bruce Clymer said the two debts have long been considered uncollectible.

Robert Meyer, of RJ Meyer & Associates, recommended the adjustments after a 2011-12 audit of city accounts.

If the city should receive any money toward the debt, Meyer said it could be collected as miscellaneous income or put into the city sales tax fund.

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Meyer also complimented city officials on how they take care of accounts, noting that “everything looked good.”

Council members then approved the 2011-12 audit.

On another matter, the council listened to a presentation by West Central Nebraska Development District Geographic Information System (GIS) specialist Martie Burke.

Burke demonstrated a GIS mobile mapping device and service, available through WCNDD, that can analyze and visually display information through overlays like locations of the city sewer system, property markers, hospital service areas and more.

Improved record keeping is also a benefit of the service, she said, and the data would be more secure than paper records during a disaster.



Clymer said it's critical to gather such data. He gave an example of a new sewer tap being installed on Avenue D.

With the mobile mapping device, city workers could press a button and know the exact location of the sewer and any other information available.

Burke said the device beams off satellites and has a one- to three-foot meter accuracy.

The mobile mapping device and service costs \$8,000.

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An additional \$500 a year would be charged to subscribe to the service.

Burke said she would also train city utility workers on how to record data into the device.

Clymer said money for the service wasn't budgeted this year but added that it would be a good tool to have.

Mayor Joyce Hudson said the council would consider the device and service and put it back on the agenda.

At a previous meeting, the council listened to a presentation about a different GIS mapping system which was more expensive.

In other action, Mayor Joyce Hudson appointed herself to the Dawson Area Development board and Chris Healey and Dan Frerichs to the Tree Board.

The council also:

granted a Gothenburg Fire Department request for special liquor license to serve alcohol at the annual Firemen's Ball on June 1.

The council considered a similar request from OK Bottle Shoppe to serve alcohol at the Gothenburg Roping Club's concession stand during a barbecue event April 27. However members realized the building is within county, not city jurisdiction, and had to turn down the request.

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learned that the water has been drained from Lake Helen and that design plans, to rehabilitate the lake, would move forward. Clymer said construction could begin in July or August.

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