

**By Jan Schultz**

***The Imperial Republican***

Pay increases for city superintendents and employees took up much of the discussion at Monday's city council meeting.

At the heart of the discussion was a wage ordinance listing proposed 2009-10 wage increases the council and mayor have been studying for several weeks. Monday marked the third reading of the ordinance.

The city's budget year starts Oct. 1 and the first paychecks will go out Oct. 12, so council members felt a decision needed to be made Monday.

As with most governmental entities these days, the current economy filtered into the discussion.

Mayor Annie Longan commented that possibly they should consider "cutting back a little" on the requested increases.

"It's not that they are not warranted, but should they be scaled back some?" she asked.

She said she was struggling with the fact that a lot of people may wonder about the size of some of the increases.

"We have some great employees, but at this time and with public perception, maybe we should cut back a little," she said.

Superintendents who oversee employees in their departments usually submit the recommended pay increases for themselves and their employees.

In the past, the council has set the salary for City Clerk/Administrator Jo Leyland. She usually makes the pay recommendation for the community development director and building inspector/zoning officer with council input.

Police Chief Larry Browning's salary was left the same as this past year because of a typographical error made when his five percent increase last year was entered into the computer.

That error upped his 2008-09 salary increase by \$3,000 more than it was supposed to be last year, according to Council President Doug Gaswick.

When it was discovered after the budget year was underway, council members decided to leave it where it was, then take that into consideration when salaries were approved for 2009-10.

After some discussion, the council chose to increase Community Development Director Leslie Carlholm's salary \$2,000 more than the recommendation.

"She is one person I feel is underpaid for what she does and accomplishes," Gaswick said.

Referring to Mayor Longan's comments, Gaswick said he was hearing what she said but felt comfortable with the salaries.

"I hear what you're saying on the economy, but if you've got good people you want to reward them," he said.

No changes were made in the mayor's annual salary of \$3,000 or the council's \$60 per meeting pay.

The council voted 4-0 to give the recommended employee raises with the changes in

Browning's and Carlholm's salaries.

All full-time employees received at least a 3.7 percent increase in their wages. All part-time employees will receive no less than the minimum wage which increased in July to \$7.25 per hour.

**Wages for city department heads, superintendents**

2008-09      2009-10

Mayor    \$3,000    \$3,000

Council Member (per meeting)    \$60    \$60

City Administrator/Clerk/

Treasurer—Jo Leyland    \$59,800    \$63,000

Director of Public Works—Pat Davison    \$58,500    \$60,500

Police Chief—Larry Browning    \$49,304    \$49,304

Zoning Officer/Bldg. Insp.—Nick Schultz    \$11,000    \$12,000

Key Accounts/Community Development

Director—Leslie Carlholm    \$34,235    \$37,500

**Other council business**

- The council may be moving closer to working with an outside group for nuisance abatement services in the city. A representative from West Central Nebraska Development District (WCNDD) spoke to the council several months ago about providing the service, but the issue was tabled. Leslie Carlholm reported to the council Monday, in City Clerk/Administrator Jo Leyland's absence, noting that WCNDD provided a similar service in Venango as a pilot program and has reported good success. The city needs to decide if they want to enter into an agreement for the services with WCNDD and who would represent the city in developing what services they'd provide. Carlholm noted one good thing about contracting with an outside firm to enforce nuisance ordinances is that, "It's a neutral, third party dealing with the community with no exception for who you are." The city's 2009-10 budget includes \$20,000 for nuisance services. The council will address the possible agreement again at their Oct. 26 meeting.

- Resurfacing plans for East 9th Street were again discussed, but action was tabled until October when more firm cost differences between an asphalt overlay and concrete can be reviewed. Engineer Kent Cordes from Miller & Associates is expected at that meeting with the figures. Concrete is planned for East 5th and 12th Sts., but the council continues to discuss what surface to put down on East 9th, from Chase St. east to Longhorn St., in front of the school. The engineer is looking for direction on that so bids can be prepared.

- Two men were approved as new members of the Imperial Volunteer Fire Department, Craig Loeffler and Jamie Hanes.

- The city's public works department will advertise for purchase of a Bobcat Turbo Toolcat.

Supt. Pat Davison said with some additional attachments they will also bid it could be used year-round and would free up another piece of equipment for needs in the summer months. He included funds in his 2009-10 budget for the Bobcat.

- Three pieces of equipment were declared excess property by the city and will be sold by sealed bid, with minimum bids set. To be sold include a 1997 bucket truck, a 1993 Chevy pickup and 1994 Ford mower.

- Bills from Miller & Associates on various city projects were paid—\$20,588.07 for lift station and water main construction services, \$2,287.61 for one and six year street plan preparation, street maintenance reports, etc. and \$9,900 for design on the additional water main improvements to be done on East 12th Street.

- In the monthly report from the Manor and Heights/Parkview, administrator Kathy Andersen noted numbers are rising at the Manor with 36 residents there now. The senior services facilities are two months into their new budget year, and show a \$4,400 profit, according to the report. A new dietary supervisor has been hired, James Brogdon.