

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

At the suggestion of one council member, other locations for a new fire hall for the Imperial Volunteer Fire Department (IVFD) are being discussed.

But, while council member John Arterburn suggested a look elsewhere, others felt the empty city-owned lot between 7th and 8th Sts. on Broadway originally considered remains the best option.

It likely will become a matter of now or later.

With construction costs continuing to rise and good interest rates now, an IVFD building committee wanted to see concrete in the ground before this winter.

Based on discussion at Monday's meeting, city council members hoped to attend next week's board of education meeting at CCS to discuss a possible alternate site—the Wellington St. football field.

Other possible locations discussed included Wellington St. facing East 10th St., the Cornerstone Commercial Park, west of the library on the southwest corner of that block and East Highway 6.

Remodeling of other buildings in town that might be available was also discussed.

Arterburn said he felt it was important to keep open some property on Broadway for future retail business development.

He also said the fire department would be land-locked for any other future development, as well, if they locate on the Broadway lot.

Fire Chief Nick Schultz said it's the consensus of the IVFD to build a new, larger building, and preferred staying away from residential areas as much as possible due to safety issues.

Now, at their current location in the middle of the city between 6th and 7th Sts., on Broadway, the trucks exit right onto Broadway downtown.

While Schultz thought an East 12th St. location such as at the north end of the football field, would be a good site, it's likely that would delay any foundation work this year.

If the site would move, it would mean starting over on plans since the ones developed now are site-specific to the empty lot on Broadway, he said.

IVFD member Doug Mitchell agreed that it's a good idea to have a place for future retail development, but if the fire hall is moved to a less-than-central location, it will affect response time.

Mayor Dwight Coleman said the city already owns the lot on Broadway and placing the hall there would be less expensive and the project would come together quicker.

No action was taken, but there was a consensus to get on next week's school board agenda to discuss possible school property.

In related action, City Attorney Josh Wendell said he will continue to review proposed contracts from at least two construction managers for the fire hall construction.

Five members of the IVFD attended the meeting.

Other council business

- After a third reading, a 1.92 acre lot on which the Broken Arrow Cellars Winery will sit, was

formally annexed by ordinance to the city of Imperial. The lot and two other pieces of ground bordering it are owned by Steve and Deborah Schilke. The Schilkes requested that the 1.92 acres in north Imperial be annexed.

- A resolution approving issuance of bonds not to exceed a principle amount of \$350,000 by the Airport Authority was passed 3-0, which will add a 3.5 cent levy to their budget for 2013-14. Ken Schilke represented the Airport Authority at the meeting, saying the FAA will provide 90 percent of the cost to be matched by 10 percent locally. Funds would replace the apron and taxiways. The plan is to roll a previous bond into this new one due to lower interest rates, resulting in a less expensive initial payment schedule based on averages now, said City Clerk/Administrator Jo Leyland.

- Seven properties in the city were formally declared nuisances by resolution at the recommendation of Karl Elmshausen, representing West Central Nebraska Development District, the city's nuisance officer. The properties are located at Capitol Court #34, Winter's Trailer Court #22, 1136 Grant St., 530 Wellington St., 315 East 5th St., 547 West 6th St., and 418 West 5th St. The council approved each resolution individually after Elmshausen presented slide photos of each property. Nuisance code violations cited by Elmshausen included strewn debris and trash, dead trees, unlicensed vehicles, high weeds, broken out windows, discarded machinery and others. After WCNDD's most recent review of properties to see if nuisance codes were being met, Elmshausen said 19 courtesy letters were sent, from which nine properties were cleared by the owners and three more are pending. That left the seven declared nuisances at Monday's meeting.

- A preliminary look at the 2013-14 budget for the senior services facilities (Manor, Heights, Parkview) was part of the meeting. Director Sandra Palmer noted they have received a better rating for Workman's Comp insurance, so those costs are expected to be lower in the coming year. However, the requirements of Obamacare will add about \$30,000 to their health insurance costs. There is no money in the budget for agency nursing, she said, as they plan to cover shifts with all their own employees. She also reviewed a list of priorities from the environmental services department, and noted she added \$4,000 for new chairs in the chapel to complement 12 that were donated. As has been in the past, no city property taxes are requested for the operation of Imperial's senior services facilities. A public hearing on the budget will be part of the council's July 15 meeting.

- Jonathan Collins, a new Imperial resident who works at Harchelroad Motors, was approved as a member of the Imperial Volunteer Fire Department.