



TIGERS HOPE TO KEEP LATE-SEASON RUN GOING *Page 10*



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NEWS

Local water district seeks funds for failing system

County honors local veterans

Carla Nielsen
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The board of commissioners honored local veterans at their regular meeting Monday by approving a proclamation declaring Nov. 8, 2021, as Larry Crisp day in the county.



A long discussion was held and the board ultimately approved a resolution concerning the county commissioner's district boundaries.

Also approved were proclamations declaring Nov. 8 as Robert Dean, Jr. day, Peggy Thompson day, Matt Ellis day, Nadine Lewis day, and Cliff Wheaton day in honor of their military service.

District 1 commissioner Mike Furnas

said, "I have watched the City of Miami do this for folks for many years. This is the only time since their service that some of these men and ladies from here have been honored. I would like for us to honor them in the same way in the county.

"They are selected by application

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SON AND FATHER CALLING SHOTS FOR TIGER FOOTBALL

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Chris Cawyer calls being able to coach alongside his son, Logan, one of his favorite memories.

Logan is in his first year as head football coach at Commerce with his dad serving as the Tigers' defensive coordinator.

"It's been fabulous. I've loved every minute of it," Chris Cawyer said. "I'm glad I came over here to coach with him. It's an experience that all dads need to do when they are in the coaching business because it's just been a blessing."

And said Logan: "It was one of those things where we hoped would happen and it just kinda worked out."

The Tigers host Pawnee Friday night in a first-round Class A playoff game at Tiger Field.

Kickoff will be at 7:30 p.m.

In a salute to veterans, the Oklahoma Secondary School Activities Association will admit any who are active duty, retired, reserve or National Guard free to Friday night's game along with one guest.

Show a military ID card or driver's license that shows their military status at the gate for admission.

"I've been so blessed to have this young man," Chris Cawyer said. "He's made me so happy and Joni (Logan's mother) so happy. I am proud of him, not just from his coaching but he was a great kid in high school."

Commerce was 44-6 in Logan's high school career.

He played tight end for three seasons at Tulsa then finished up at Northeastern State in Tahlequah.

"The pair butted heads in the past when Chris was head coach at Quapaw and Logan an assistant under Steve Moss.

The younger Cawyer was elevated when Moss was named superintendent of Commerce Public Schools earlier this year. "It's been a really good experience,"



Chris Cawyer (left) and Logan Cawyer form one of the few father-son coaching combinations in Oklahoma high school football.

Logan said. "He's been a coach for all those years and he brings all that knowledge. It's been good seeing those relationships he builds with kids. That's the biggest thing I want to take away from him: building those relationships. It's been fun."

Chris guided Picher-Cardin to a Class A state championship in 1984.

He's also been head coach at Dewey, Afton and most recently, Quapaw, where he spent the previous four seasons.

Chris has assisted at Commerce for about 19 years in a couple stints.

"I can't retire because I have no hobbies at all — except for football. I would drive Joni

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EVENT

Miami Kiwanis hosts Christmas Light Contest

Entries are now accepted

It's time to begin shopping, making plans with friends and family and getting into the festive spirit. In a year that has seemingly raced by, Christmas will be here soon. As your calendar begins to fill up with gatherings and activities the Kiwanis Club of Miami hopes you will save some time to enjoy a recent holiday tradition returning to our community, the club's annual Christmas Light Contest.

For many years, the local Kiwanis Club sponsored the annual holiday home tour; an event in which homeowners opened their seasonally decorated homes to the public. Unfortunately, the pandemic presented a series of challenges which caused the home tour to be discontinued in 2020.

Despite this setback, the club acted quickly to fill the void and establish a fun, new family tradition which would encourage community involvement and spread holiday cheer.

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Boys & Girls Club of Ottawa County student shows off some holiday artwork.

B&G'S CLUB KIDSGIVING GALA SET

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The Boys & Girls Club of Ottawa County KidsGiving, a gala dinner and auction event to celebrate the club's mission to "enable all young people to reach their full potential because together we can build great futures," will be held Thursday, Nov. 18, at the Teen Center (the former Will Rogers Middle School), 504 Goodrich Blvd., in Miami.

Individual tickets are \$40 and table sponsorships are \$350. The evening will include a social hour at 5:30 p.m., a cash bar, dinner and the auction at 6:30 p.m., a silent auction, and the

awards.

"KidsGiving is an opportunity for our community partners, donors, and friends to gather and celebrate the accomplishments of the club over the last year," Boys & Girls Club of Ottawa County executive director Mackenzie Garst said. "It's been a challenging year for our community and organization, but one thing hasn't changed and that is the commitment of our community to step up and ask how they can help."

Garst added, "The KidsGiving dinner will be catered by Sodexo and there will be a social

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Miami BOE hears capital improvement update, approves staff changes

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Miami school superintendent Nick Highsmith presented updates on capital improvements and the ESSER III construction project to the board of education members during the regular BOE meeting held on Monday, Nov. 8.

The school plans on using the same architect and construction management firm.

Overall, Highsmith said they've made a lot of progress over the last month.

At the new high school, they paid for some additional concrete work that needed to be done. The new columns are up but unfinished. He showed board members a photo of the highly textured finish chosen to complete the columns. The canopies are also up but not fully finished.

The junior high school and high school signs were equipped with LED lights. Highsmith said they look really good at night now.

However, they still have some drainage issues in the front and at the far north end of the junior high loop. The architects are aware of the



issues and are drawing up plans to take care of them.

Neece Concrete and Construction also has some more concrete work to finish, then some final dirt work, cleanup and additional sod to tie everything together and complete the grounds.

Regarding the ESSER III construction project, which is the Physical Education Facility Addition, Highsmith presented a rendering of the addition for reference.

Initially, the new physical education classroom space was a freestanding building as originally presented by previous Miami school superintendent Jeremy Hogan. After going back through the Uniform Grant Guidance, the school district learned that it had to be tied to a structure.

The new space is now

being added to the backside of the high school building where coaches currently park. It will add on 7,800 square feet of space, including 56 lockers, coaches' offices and a restroom, girl's locker room, boy's locker room, storage room and physical education classroom with additional weight equipment.

The weight equipment will be ADA compliant and the addition will allow the junior high and high school PE classes to spread out.

"We're just maxed on space for physical education," Highsmith said. "This allows us to get some space."

The cost of the project is coming in right at what they'd estimated, which is about \$2.3 million.

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System

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to come and participate in the Great Deer Hunt held annually in Miami, which allows disabled American veterans an opportunity to enjoy a weekend of food, fun and fellowship. Activities include a flag raising, the hunt, and a dinner put on by River Bottom Sportsmen as a grassroots effort in partnership with the Paralyzed Veterans of America.”

Ted Bearden made a presentation to the commissioners requesting COVID-related American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds on behalf of local rural water district 5.

“Our water district is one major link away from not being able to supply adequate clean water to our residents. We are losing millions of gallons of water and Indian Health Services (IHS) is concerned,” Bearden said. “A report done says, ‘The water system does not appear to be able to meet the maximum days’ demands.’ We have lost 67 percent of our water before and we are right on the verge of not having enough water to serve the people that need it. Health depends on an adequate supply of clean water. We have over 400 homes that depend on our water and we are that close to not being able to meet their needs,” Bearden said.

When asked what is causing the massive leaks, Bearden said, “our system was put in in 1976 and 1977 north of the Spring River in very rocky ground and they did it on a shoestring. And the master meter was installed incorrectly, among other things. It was built to serve 110 homes, but now we have almost 440.”

Bearden said over the years the ground shifted and created holes in the lines. There also are several low lying areas where the pressure is too high and the lines won’t hold that excess pressure.

“In 2017, I called the rural water associates and asked for help in figuring this out,” Bearden said. “They looked at our system map and used a machine looking for leaks. But you have to have shutoff valves

and we only have about 10 functioning valves. So we don’t have the valves we need in order to be able to detect leaks and we have to shut off the water to almost the whole district to do so.”

According to Bearden, the first thing the leak detection engineer recommended is putting in more valves, which is much more expensive in the rocky ground.

“We already have a DEQ (Department of Environmental Quality) violation because of not having the appropriate valves, but we haven’t been written up,” he said. “The DEQ also requires backup generators, which we don’t have. We have tried getting grants, but we are one of the smallest water districts. When you are selling water off of 400 meters you don’t generate much income.”

The IHS is willing to pay part of the cost, Bearden said, because many of the customers on the water line are Native American. He noted that the grand total is almost \$4 million and that it should cut their water loss from 70-plus% down to 37.

“If you are losing that much water the system needs to be entirely rebuilt,” chairman and District 3 commissioner Russell Earls said. “These are patch jobs to get you on down the line, but it sounds like it’s in bad shape in every direction. This is in commissioner Chasteen’s district.”

District 2 commissioner Steven Chasteen asked who oversees the water board and Bearden responded that the state water resources board controls how much water they can pump out of the ground or out of the lake, etc., and that the DEQ makes sure they test that water and that the system meets their standards and does not get contaminated.

Chasteen asked how much money the water board is looking for, noting that it is a systemic problem they have had for a long time.

Bearden said, “If we could just get the \$235,000 to buy and install a pressure

relief valve that would be a huge help. We have long range plans, but as far as seeking alternative sources of funding, we met with funding agencies in Oklahoma three years ago. I addressed them and explained all this, but federal loans are too expensive for our little district. We can’t spend \$1 million to get \$600,000.”

Earls said, “This board is here to help water districts and we are glad you came today. Mr. Furnas and Chasteen have expertise and can be a big help on these matters.”

The request was taken into consideration for possible future action.

In addition, a discussion was held regarding the Ottawa County Health Department’s request for ARPA funds to purchase a generator. It was reported by an Oklahoma State Department of Health representative that the local health department has an issue with backup generators and has to keep vaccines safe, multiple types, so they have to have proper refrigeration.

“The best thing would be to get a generator to provide backup power to the whole facility,” he said.

That request was also taken into consideration for possible future action.

During the citizen’s participation or comments portion of the meeting, resident Julie Ford addressed Earls requesting a meeting “sooner than later” about the drainage project underway, saying that homeowners are very concerned.

“Stakes were placed in our yards 50 feet in with no explanation. I want information,” Ford said. “I have lived here for 30 years and have some expertise in floodplain management. We have all watched that water these many years. We want preliminary information even though we know it can change. I suggest you address this problem.”

When Earls asked what she would you like for him to do, Ford said she wanted a

meeting of all concerned homeowners.

Explaining the issue, Earls noted that Coal Creek floods on Highway 10 and the state won’t do anything about that, but traffic detours into his district.

“When that floods, we don’t make it a detour; it just automatically happens and the traffic is tearing up people’s yards and everything in that area,” Earls said.

“I’ve expressed to Julie that they will have 50 questions, but until I know the answers and the federal guidelines, we haven’t reached the point to start talking to property owners. We will have a stakeholders meeting, but call me if you have questions in the meantime,” Earls said.

In other matters, the commissioners approved a request from District 1 to lease/purchase road machinery through the county road machinery and equipment revolving fund for a 2022 International HV507 in the amount of \$199,723.27 from Industrial Truck Equipment.

Furnas said, “It’s a wonderful piece of equipment to keep our roads safe during ice storms. We are buying this to replace a truck that went to District 2.”

And the board approved soliciting competitive bids for 911 call center equipment and radios for anything that is not already on the state bid contract, and approved designating Earls as the contact person for the preparation of prior year summary of findings and a corrective action plan required for all federal audits.

In addition, a long discussion was held and the board ultimately approved a resolution concerning the county commissioner’s district boundaries.

Chasteen said his suggestion was to not change anything, but Furnas said there were some changes that would be required by the state that are “out of their hands.”

District Attorney Kenny Wright said it was his understanding that the county has to make the districting changes because it is outside the perimeters set by the state.

Update

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Highsmith briefly talked about the demo and fill projects at the Will Rogers site. The demo plan includes the two-story structure, library portion and commons, and everything up to Goodrich Blvd., including trees and parking areas. The in-fill would include the basement and any other holes in the ground, so the site is completely ready to be built upon in the future.

He said they’ve accepted bids on the demo and in-fill, but there’s some concern over patching in electrical and gas lines. The school is reaching out to the city on this issue.

The overall plan is to condense the school district from eight buildings to four, which will lower overhead costs. The district would go down to four main campuses, or two super campuses, with upper and lower elementary and the early childhood center all together at the current Will Rogers site. The second super campus is the junior high and high school campuses.

The budget was briefly discussed and the board later approved the district budget for fiscal year 2022.

Currently, Miami Public Schools has an almost \$1 million claim into the state department awaiting reimbursement and the state has been slow in processing these claims.

“The public hears about all this stimulus money that’s available for schools,” Highsmith said, “but as I’ve tried to stress before and what we need to consistently tell our public, that’s not money in our pocket. That’s all reimbursable money. We must spend it then claim it. And we can only have one claim at a time. So, we’re waiting. Sometimes we have several claims to go right after that one gets paid.”

Highsmith announced that enrollment was up 88 students based on official October counts. Although, the district was down in some categories and up in others.

He also reminded everyone that basketball season was gearing up with the first scrimmage on Nov. 10 against Ketchum and the second on Nov. 18 against Welch. The season opener will be on Nov. 30 against Jay.

Plus, school offices will be closed on Nov. 22 through 26 for the holidays.

Following comprehensive reports on Fall 2021 student services from all elementary school principals, Board members got down to business.

It approved general fund accounts payable, general fund payroll, child nutrition payroll and building fund encumbrances.

Board members approved a memorandum of understanding between

Missouri Southern State University and Miami Public Schools for student teacher candidates for the 2021-2022 school year.

The board also approved a memorandum of understanding between Miami Public Schools and the Boys & Girls Club of Ottawa County for the Wilson Early Childhood Center After School Program, affectionately called the WASP.

It also approved a memorandum of understanding for the National Charter for the Wilson Early Childhood Center After School Program Site. This makes the fifth site for the Boys & Girls Club, which allows it to provide after-school programming for all grade levels.

The board approved the schedule for all regular board of education meetings for the 2022 calendar year. All regular meetings begin at 6 p.m. and take place at the MPS Administrative Office at 26 N. Main.

Approved dates were as follows:

- Jan. 10
- Feb. 7
- March 7
- April 11
- May 9
- June 20
- June 27
- July 11
- Aug. 8
- Sept. 12
- Oct. 10
- Nov. 14
- Dec. 12

In staffing matters, the Board approved hiring Melanie Robertson as a certified pre-K teacher for Wilson Elementary; Kalina Guzman as a Title I teacher assistant for Nichols Upper Elementary; and Nancy Launius as a general teacher assistant, Freddy Swafford as a JOM teacher assistant and Beverly Whited as a special education teacher assistant at Wilson Elementary.

It also voted to reassign Tausha Gilmartin from Title I teacher assistant to SPED teacher assistant at Nichols Upper Elementary, employ Mark Malcolm as an adjunct wrestling coach for Miami High School/Miami Junior High School and hire Stephen English as a substitute teacher.

The board voted to accept the resignations of Gabriella Arnold, general teacher assistant at Wilson Elementary and Dylan Brewer, SPED teacher assistant at Washington; the termination of Cheyenne Satterwhite, districtwide child nutrition staff; and the rescinded resignation of Kelli Anderson, districtwide child nutrition staff.

DOC Services menu

- Monday, Nov. 15
Cold cut sandwich (w/cheese and onion), baked beans, applesauce, cookie
- Tuesday, Nov. 16
Baked chicken, mixed vegetable blend, cubed potatoes, roll, pudding
- Wednesday, Nov. 17
Pork roast, au gratin potatoes, carrots, roll, cake
- Thursday, Nov. 18
Meatloaf, mash potato w/gravy, broccoli, sliced bread, fruited Jell-O
- Friday, Nov. 19
Cheesy egg scramble, hash brown

patty, fruit juice, biscuit, mixed fruit
Call before 12 p.m. a day prior for a reservation at the selected nutrition site.

DOC Services Inc. Main Office - 918-542-6671

- Nine Tribes: 918-542-3713
- Commerce: 918-675-5207
- Grove Senior Ctr.: 918-786-6310
- Vinita: 918-961-0273

Suggested donation for seniors 60+ is \$3 and guest rate for individuals under 60 is \$5.

All paid Meals on Wheels is \$4.50 per meal, regardless of age.

Gala

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hour, a silent auction, award presentations, and a speech by our Youth of the Year. We will highlight the accomplishments of our organization over the last year and share exciting news of a new expansion with our supporters.”

Champion for Kids sponsors for the event include Welch State Bank, Family Dental Associates, the Modoc Nation, and the Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma. Change Maker sponsors are Westco, the Cole Organization, Bearskin Healthcare & Wellness Center, the Healing House, and

Service Solutions. Social Hour sponsors include Smiles Family Dental Care, Chapters bookstore and coffee/gift shop, the B.P.O.E., Highwinds Casino, KSN, the Rotary Club of Miami and Vance Ford Lincoln.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Ottawa County is headquartered at 830 D St. SE, Miami.

For more information and tickets, e-mail mgarst@bgcottawacounty.org or call 918-542-6325. You can also log onto <https://www.bgcottawacounty.org> or <https://www.facebook.com/BGCofOttawaCounty/>



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