

By GISEELLE ARREDONDO

• Leader & Times

Mayor Dave Harrison declared Nov. 1, 2013, National Family Literacy Day, and the month of November as National American Indian Heritage Month, at the Liberal City Commission regular meeting Tuesday evening at the chambers.

Kansas Daughters of the American Revolution, American Indian State Chairman Bonnie Raff added, "I would like to thank the mayor, the commission; he did a very fine job of reading so he should thank some teacher some place that helped him learn to read."



Raff continued, "Education starts with the family, and anything the community can do to help that cause will better help the community and its reading members.

"And if any of you ever have any spare time, go to the school of your choice – elementary – and go listen to first-graders read. That's the best thing you can do for them," she said.

Liberal Housing and Community Development Director Karen LaFreniere presented the next item, a grant from Kansas Housing Resources Corporation.

“I’m happy this evening to be here to announce that we did receive a grant from Kansas Housing Resources for the grant application that you had approved on Aug.13 this year. The grant is a little less than what we applied for – \$350,000 and it will be for 48 apartment units in northeast Liberal. There is a grant agreement for the mayor to sign,” she said.

Commissioner Joe Denoyer then asked, “This can be used for infrastructure?”

LaFreniere replied, “Yes, infrastructure, financing, a little bit of everything. I don’t know if it can be used for actual construction. They will also use RHID (Real Housing Incentive District) funds in their application to us later on.”

The motion to accept \$350,000 Kansas Housing Resources Grant was made by Denoyer and second by Vice Mayor Janet Willimon. Motion then agreed to 5-0.

Next on the agenda, KDOT requires all public transit agencies to submit Title VI Plan for their approval. And according to Transit Supervisor Melanie Lunceford, staff received notification that the next course of action should be for board approval.

“A little over a month ago, as required by KDOT, staff presented our Title VI Plan. As you will see in your packets, it does include the notice to the public we posted online, which we have a place for that... and a place to post it, which I would like to put it on City Hall, with our other materials for City Bus.

“It includes a complaint form, a public participation plan, also a plan for limited English proficiency and a table that depicts the membership of committees and councils. I would recommend that it’s approved as written,” Lunceford said.

Motion was made by Willimon, second by Commissioner Dean Aragon and motion agreed to 5-0.

Next, the Mid-America Air Museum made a request.

MAAM director Jim Bert said, "The museum requests authority to spend \$10,200 in a contract with Randy's (Randy's Professional Painting LLC) to sand blast, prime, paint and refinish one of the aircraft that we have.

"The aircraft is in dire need of that restoration. We are very proud of the aircraft. We have a responsibility, both contractually and patriotic to care for those aircraft. They are designed for combat. They are not designed for Kansas wind and weather over, perhaps, 20 years now," Bert said.

"We have to have responsibility. When I was here originally, my original understanding with United States Marine Corps or United States Navy were that those aircraft stay inside," he added.

The motion passed 5-0.

MAAM also requested the approval of the agreement with MAAM Foundation, subject to review and approval of the city attorney, and the approval of the exhibition agreement with the Florida Museum of Natural History, subject to the review and approval of the city attorney.

"It's truly exciting we get a chance to build on the success of the dinosaurs that were here. 20,170 folks visited during that five-week period, and we have a chance to revisit that success and maybe do it better than we did before," Bert continued.

He pointed out numerous entities, including foundation board members, city staff and radio stations bring a lot of work to this opportunity.

“One of the most exciting points is that the foundation is stepping up – \$55,000 to renovate the museum theatre and the museum theatre is going to be done first class.

“And long after the sharks are gone, the city will now have a first class multimedia center, meeting center, banquet space – all those fine things – telecommunications, teleconferencing.

“It’s just a very exciting possibility, and for the city’s part, the city would possibly consider helping us recarpet that space, but all in all, I think it’s a win-win for our citizens within 100 miles,” Bert said.

“We saw 7,200 children last time. We can do better than that. This time, because now we not only have 16 months out to prepare for the sharks, but we have the experience behind us from last time. We are going to do a nice thing and bring a lot of people to Liberal,” he said.

The request of the approval of the agreement with MAAM Foundation and the of the exhibition agreement with the Florida Museum of Natural History was approved.