

LOCAL

Celebration for Cattlemen, Cowbells

See A3



LOCAL

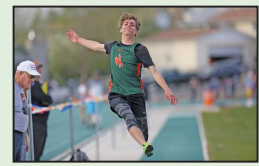
Skye high ambitions

See A6

SPORTS

Champions crowned

See Section B



Pinedale Roundup

Newspaper of the Upper Green River Valley, Est. 1904

MAY 28, 2021

One Dollar

Pinedale town council approves preliminary budget on 2nd reading

By Robert Galbreath

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PINEDALE – Following a two-hour workshop and discussion on the Town of Pinedale's projected revenues and expenses, the town council voted unanimously to adopt a preliminary budget for the 2021-2022 fiscal year on second reading.

The preliminary budget will go before the council for a third and final reading at a public hearing on June 28.

Councilmembers went through the town's five funds, line by line, during the workshop on Monday. The separate funds included the town's general fund, the travel and tourism fund, airport fund, water fund and wastewater fund.

Maureen Rudnick, town clerk-treasurer, explained that the figures presented to the

board are subject to change before the final reading next month. The general budget reflected a downward trend in revenue, principally from interest and due to the loss of Wyoming Department of Transportation funds to maintain Pine Street, Rudnick told the council.

Expenses in the general fund also reflected ongoing funding for major construction projects like the ball fields and the South Tyler Avenue pathway, Rudnick said.

Abram Pearce, director of public works, said that until contracts on several projects are finalized, the figures on construction projects could change slightly.

The town hoped to make up some of the shortfall with CARES Act funding, although the total the town will receive is still undetermined, Rudnick added.

Town employees worked to cut as deeply

as possible on the staff level, examining each line item with a fine-toothed comb, Rudnick explained.

The general fund passed on second reading showed a deficit of approximately \$800,000. This will require the town to use money in the reserve rainy day account for the second year in a row, Rudnick told the Roundup.

The bulk of discussion from councilmembers revolved around the contract for services, town money that goes to agencies not associated with the town like the Pinedale Aquatic Center, Pinedale Fine Arts Council, the Sublette County Sexual Assault and Family Violence Task Force and MESA Therapeutic Riding.

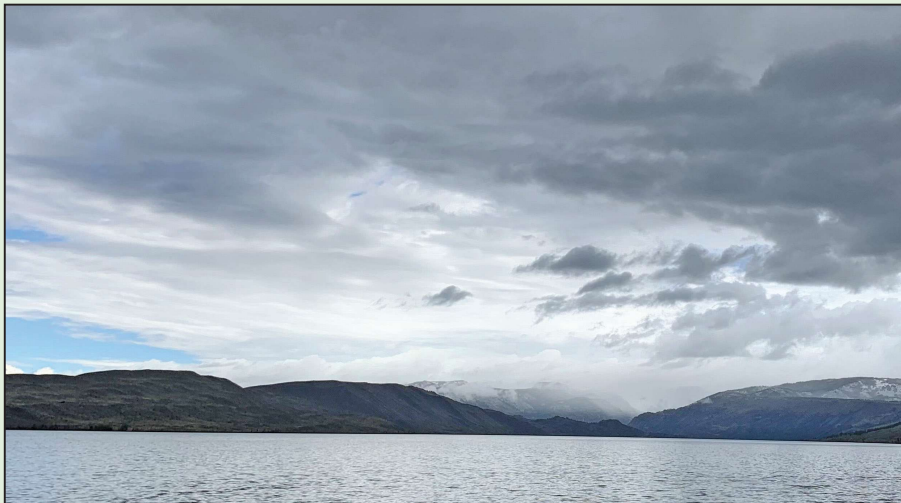
Councilmembers discussed keeping the figure at \$85,000 or setting the number at 4 percent of the general budget, or approximately \$106,000.

Councilman Tyler Swafford argued that every dollar spent on these agencies meant a dollar back to the community in benefits, particularly during a year of greater need due to the pandemic and economic fallout. In the grand scheme of the budget, taking a few thousand dollars from the rainy day fund to adequately fund the agencies was proactive.

Councilwoman Judi Boyce stated that the services draw people to the community and could enhance revenue.

Councilman Isaac Best said that he wanted to see a lower figure in contract for services, reflecting a desire to balance the budget. The council stressed to the agencies that they needed to make cuts this year in anticipation of declining revenue, Best added. While the services were important, they were not essential to the town government's basic

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BRADY OLTMANS PHOTO

Rain clouds and morning fog roll off Fremont Lake and into the Wind River Mountain Range ahead of a busy Memorial Day Weekend.

Jury finds Rammell guilty

Sentences passed in brand-inspection case

By Joy Ufford

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SUBLETTE COUNTY – Almost two years after being pulled over and cited by a deputy for not having proper brand inspections for four horses and a colt, Rock Springs veterinarian Rex F. Rammell was found guilty Wednesday in a one-day Circuit Court trial presided over by 3rd Circuit Court Judge Gregory Corpening.

Later, Rammell said he will appeal to 9th District Court, where months ago he filed a civil petition asking Judge Marv Tyler to rule on the constitutionality of Wyoming Statute 11-21-103(a) that authorizes an officer to stop anyone hauling livestock to check for current brand inspections.

The six-person jury returned the verdicts after about 40 minutes of deliberation, with the trial taking place in the larger 9th District

See 'RAMMELL' on page A16

Hospital District selects new board member

Management contract with Star Valley Health approved

By Robert Galbreath

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PINEDALE – The Sublette County Hospital District board voted unanimously at its May 19 regular meeting to accept Dave Bell to fill a board vacancy left by the resignation of Dr. Brendan Fitzsimmons.

Interviews with potential candidates took place in an executive session on May 18 with the formal vote on the agenda for the public meeting on May 19.

The hospital district board received five applications for the opening, a "refreshing

response" that reflected a willingness to serve the community, board chair Tonia Hoffman said.

Hoffman thanked each candidate for the effort they put into the process and said each individual brought unique talents and skills to the table. She encouraged the other contenders to volunteer on a committee or serve in another capacity to help the hospital district move forward.

Bell told the Roundup that he recognized the demands and challenges that are part of service on a newly established board with broad responsibilities.

"It is a tough assignment," he said. "But it seemed like one that I really had an interest in participating in."

Sublette County is entering an exciting

time with a critical access hospital on the horizon, Bell said, and he wanted to serve the community during the process on a board with "great people."

"I'm proud to have been selected," he said. "This will be a really interesting job and I'm looking forward to it."

Bell has served on numerous boards at the local and state level. He chaired the Wyoming Business Alliance and Wyoming Heritage Foundation, where he served on the committee that created Leadership Wyoming.

On the local level, Bell spent "many years" as a member and chairman on the Sublette County Recreation Board. He participated in developing recreational facilities in the community, notably the bike path system in Pinedale.

Bell's public service career included stints on the Sublette Center board and a chairmanship on the Sublette County Historical Society Board of Trustees.

"I'm used to committees, board structure and the board decision-making process," he said. "I've been doing it my entire life since college."

Bell brings experience in construction and development to the board, having worked on diverse projects in Pinedale including the Super 8 Motel and Shell office facility. He hopes to offer this expertise during the building phase for the critical access hospital.

The five applicants included Bell, Dr. Diana Watkins, Teresa Tomaski, Lori Joyner and Deb Shultz.

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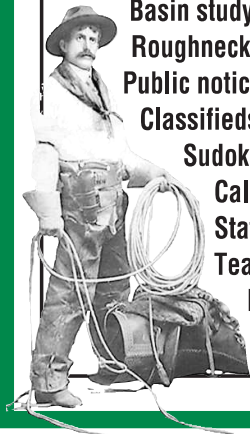


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THE ROUNDUP, ROUNDED UP

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Black sentenced on fentanyl charge

By Joy Ufford
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SUBLETTE COUNTY – An Idaho man charged with bringing fentanyl pills disguised as Oxycodone into Sublette County was sentenced Thursday, May 27, in 9th District Court.

Steven R. Black, of Idaho Falls, was arrested on Jan. 28 after several people noticed his erratic driving. Black told a Wyoming Highway Patrol trooper who stopped him for speeding that he used meth and oxycodone “on a regular basis,” according to court records.

A subsequent search yielded a package of blue pills weighing 9.2 grams that tested positive as fentanyl and other drugs and paraphernalia, court records show.

The plea agreement among Black, public defender Rachel Weksler and Sublette County Attorney Mike Crosson was that Black would plead guilty to the felony fentanyl possession charge, misdemeanor possession of meth and misdemeanor driving under the influence of a controlled substance.

After Black changed his pleas to guilty to the three agreed-upon charges before 9th District Judge Marv Tyler, the judge accepted the agreement. He sentenced Black to two to four years in prison for the felony, one year for the misdemeanor possession and six months for the DUI count, all to be served at the same time. Black received credit for 120 days’ incarceration.

In return, the misdemeanors of possession of Alprazolam and failure to maintain liability insurance were dismissed.

Informant assists with pot arrest

By Joy Ufford
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SUBLETTE COUNTY – A confidential informant allegedly bought marijuana last November from a man arrested and charged this month with the felony, delivery of a controlled substance.

Dale L. Kawa, of Pinedale, faces the single charge after a Nov. 19, 2020, meeting with the confidential informant, who called detectives and said he or she could set up the buy, according to court records.

The informant said Kawa could sell him or her a half-ounce of marijuana for \$250 and set up the meeting while wearing an electronic listening device and carrying \$250 in county “buy” money, court records show.

Kawa was arrested May 6 on a warrant and taken into custody; his bond is set at \$10,000 cash or surety. His preliminary hearing took place in Sublette County Circuit Court on Thursday morning, May 30.

As a felony, Kawa’s case was bound over to 9th District Court. The maximum penalty is 10 years in prison, \$10,000 fine or both.

HOSPITAL

Continued from 1A

Management partnership agreement

Hoffman announced that the management agreement between the hospital district and Star Valley Health was ready to be signed by both parties. The Hospital District’s attorneys spent 30 days going through the fine print in the agreement and representatives from the district met with Star Valley Health’s leadership team several times, Hoffman added.

The document names Star Valley Health CEO Daniel Ordyna as the Sublette County Hospital District’s interim CEO and SVH Chief Operating Office Mike Hunsaker the district’s interim COO, Hoffman said.

The board unanimously passed a motion to accept the management agreement. The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Office of General Counsel must approve the document before it can be signed and become official, Hoffman explained.

UDSA loan update

Dave Doorn, administrative director for the Sublette County Rural Health Care District (SCRHCD), told the hospital board that the USDA loan application was nearly complete.

Eide Bailly, the financial firm working with the SCRHCD, produced a new draft of the financial forecast.

Doorn thanked Ordyna, Hunsaker and Chad Turner, Star Valley Health chief financial officer, for their assistance on the

forecast. Doorn and Star Valley Health’s management team were scheduled to hold one final meeting to look over the forecast on May 21.

Doorn said the report would be ready to submit to the USDA the following week.

The Highland Irrigation District and SCRHCD attorney Rachel Weksler were collaborating to finalize the agreement between the two entities. Weksler stated during the SCRHCD meeting on May 19 that the irrigation district was doing its due diligence and requested additional drawings from Jorgensen Engineering.

Doorn told the SCRHCD and Hospital District trustees that the drawings were expected the following week, along with a final signature from the irrigation district.

Asset transfer update

Kelli Lovell, SCRHCD financial manager, stated during the SCRHCD meeting her team was working to transfer financials and assets from the SCRHCD to the Hospital District by July. Lovell was negotiating with banks to make the process of changing accounts smoother and felt like the process was on the downhill side.

Weksler encouraged the joint planning committee to discuss a dissolution procedure for the SCRHCD to follow before its mandate is up and the board of county commissioners vote to formally dissolve the entity.



Weekly Weather Forecast

Pinedale, Wyoming • May 28 - June 2

Today

Sunrise: 5:46 a.m. **Sunset:** 8:48 p.m.

High: **62°** Low: **28°**

RealFeel® 64° 26°

Day: Mostly cloudy with a shower.

Night: Partly cloudy.



Saturday

High: **62°**

Times of clouds and sun.

Low: **37°**



Sunday

High: **59°**

A couple of showers possible.

Low: **40°**



Monday

High: **62°**

Cloudy with a shower possible.

Low: **38°**



Tuesday

High: **69°**

A couple of showers possible.

Low: **39°**



Wednesday

High: **73°**

Partly sunny.

Low: **41°**



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