

Hugo- Members of the Hugo Municipal Authority unanimously agreed Tuesday evening to deed the Choctaw County Agriplex and property to the Choctaw County Commissioners. In a rare joint meeting between the two governing bodies, Commissioner Roger Vandever convened a meeting of the commissioners to enable them to act on accepting the city's gift of the property.

Commissioner Danny Antwine told HMA members that the commissioners had expended more than \$350,000 for repairs and upkeep of the Agriplex in the past several years.

City officials attempted to lease the facility to the county last year, but according to Antwine, the lease proposal brought legal concerns from the county attorney.

Francine Morris motioned Tuesday to deed the property to the county, subject to the placement of several restrictions on the deed as to the future use of the facility with reversionary clauses should those limitations not be followed.

Morris' motion drew a second from Marty Clinton and passed unanimously with Stan Payne, Bart Tedder and Layton Cox in favor.

The commissioners followed the action by voting their acceptance of the property.

Hugo councilors also discussed the city's situation of not having an audit completed for the past two years.

City Manager David Rawls told the council a proposal had been submitted by D.W.G. Incorporated of Oklahoma City to perform the audits for the years of 2006-2007 and for 2007-2008.

Rawls said CPA David W. Gandall's proposal of \$14,750 was not clear as to whether it was for one year or for both, but advised that his quote was substantially less than the \$20,000 the city had paid for the last annual audit completed.

Stan Payne's motion to accept Gandall's proposal drew a second from Marty Clinton and was unanimously approved.

After the meeting, Rawls explained that the city has up to three years to complete an audit, but the State of Oklahoma would withhold certain tax payments due the city until the audit was received. Rawls said the state was withholding some funds due Hugo, but said they did not amount to more than a few thousand dollars.

Rawls said that when he assumed the management responsibilities of the city, the former city treasurer resigned and left an accounting system that no one at city hall fully understood.

"We had over 30 accounts and it was impossible to understand how all of those accounts were being managed," Rawls said.

In order to get the city's financial system under control, Rawls said the city hired a former auditing firm to assist the city in rebuilding a modern system that would simplify and streamline the city's financial management for future years.

Councilors also approved a request by Rawls to seek bids on a heating and air-conditioning system for the Hugo Nutrition Center. Rawls reported an estimated cost of \$4,900 to replace a five-ton system at that location.

Rawls also reported to the council that progress at Hugo airport was proceeding on schedule to build 10 new aircraft hangars. He said that getting legal work done in a timely manner to satisfy requirements of a bank loan was posing a problem. Rawls asked for and received permission to use city funds from a capital improvements reserve account to cover construction costs and repay the fund from the proceeds of a future loan.

Rawls also received council permission to declare a lot of bicycles and other items as surplus property so they could be discarded. Councilors approved giving numerous old bicycles to the Goodland Boy's Home where they are repaired and given to needy children.

Rawls also told the council that the city was in the process of building a municipal website. He said that the site would give citizens an opportunity to communicate with the city officials and express their comments about city matters. Rawls said the city would be required by law to post its meeting agendas on the site and that it would also provide links to area businesses which were frequently sought by the public or travelers.

Rawls also recommended to the council that it postpone taking any action on seeking long-term bond financing for upcoming Parks and Recreation and city street financing. He explained that bond financing specialists were encouraging the city to delay any action as the bond financing climate is presently under substantial stress, which is believed to be improving in the immediate future which will result in better rates and repayment terms for the city.