By Amber Hanneken
Staff Writer

HUGO — Hugo police detectives Steve Babcock and Jason Thomas were honored during the noon special meeting of the Hugo City Council Tuesday.
Mayor Stan Payne read a statement from Chief of Police Jon Paul Bozeman commending the work the two men did on Robert Strickland's murder case.
"They went above and beyond after hours," City Manager David Rawls said. "Their work led to several arrests and now pending cases in Pushmataha County."
Babcock and Thomas are to receive plaques and commendations for their work.
The meeting was held after a lack of quorum during last Tuesday's regularly scheduled meeting.
Cemetery Supervisor Tommy Pence presented the council a proposed ordinance concerning revised fees for Mt. Olivet Cemetery. The cemetery board made the changes. Pence said the last time the fees were changed was 2000. The biggest change was an increased fee for Saturday funerals from $550 to $1,000. Cox and Tedder each questioned Pence about the high increase. Pence said the fee would be in line with other large cemeteries in the state.
Currently, it takes three cemetery employees about three hours on a Saturday to dig a grave. They are paid overtime for this shift but still lose a large portion of their weekend. Last year, there were 22 Saturday funerals at the cemetery and Pence said that number seems to be increasing every year. The fee is meant to discourage some of these funerals. Rawls said the fees go toward capital improvement efforts at the cemetery and would not have much impact on salaries.
Cox was concerned if there are fewer Saturday funerals that employees would have less time during the week for general maintenance because of weekday funerals. Tedder felt the increase was too high and that it was punishing some families that have to have a weekend funeral.
Councilor Francine Morris motioned to accept the ordinance but the other councilor's apprehension led to a tabling of the agenda item with the suggestion that the cemetery board review the Saturday fee increase.

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