Dues to increase with added grant writing duties

LEXINGTON—When Dawson County commissioners eliminated a paid grant writer from the budget last summer, they transferred those duties to Dawson Area Development.

Since the county pays dues to DAD anyway, commissioners figured they would save some money.

At the time, DAD officials didn't think the additional workload would force an increase in the dues paid by the county.

But after careful number crunching and consideration of the additional paper work, DAD is asking the county for a raise.

Deb Jensen, DAD's community development coordinator, told commissioners during their regular bimonthly meeting on Aug. 1 that DAD logged 125 extra hours in grant preparation, meetings and administration of county awards from June 2011 to June 2012.

DAD secured $269,352 in grant funds for the county during that time, Jensen said.

With the new budget year on the horizon, DAD is asking the county for an increase in dues from $52,500 to $67,000.

"For every dollar of that increase, $18.50 was brought back into Dawson County offices over the

last year," Jensen said.

"I think DAD gets a huge number of requests for help with grants and with the time it takes to complete those, they need a little extra help with paperwork," said board chairman Dean Kugler of Gothenburg.

Since the county joined DAD as a paying member in 2006, more than $8.6 million in grant funds have filtered through Dawson County for various purposes such as housing, community development projects, economic development projects, youth retention and workforce development.

"Without somebody taking the initiative to seek out those grants, that money wouldn't be coming into the county," Kugler said.

The board took no action on the dues request but will consider the increase with the upcoming 2012-13 budget that will be passed in September.

In other business, the county board:

received a roads department update from superintendent Jon Mooberry, who said he plans to proceed seeking federal funding to complete a roads project southwest of Overton. Mooberry has also made plans to repair the approaches on both ends of the Plum Creek bridge, which have buckled in the heat.

approved an agreement to receive $63,203 in federal funding and $31,602 in state funding for operation of the Dawson County Transit system. The county will contribute $31,602 to the annual budget.

Commissioner Dennis Rickertsen also shared with the board that the Kearney RYDE program has shown interest in a partnership with the Dawson County Transit system.

Details of the possible joint venture will be discussed by the transit board of directors.

adopted the Central Platte Natural Resources District's multi-jurisdiction hazard mitigation plan that will allow the county to take advantage of funding assistance in the event of a natural disaster.

learned from commissioner Butch Hagan that the board of directors for the Lexington Area Solid Waste Agency voted to reduce the landfill use fee to $30 beginning Oct. 1.