

PBC created for hospital bonds

(KNZA)--The Hiawatha City Commission Monday evening approved an ordinance creating a public building commission to issue bonds if a sales tax initiative is approved by voters during a special election next month.

On the recommendation of Mayor Bill Collins, the Commission approved the appointment of three individuals to the PBC. They include Dave Middendorf, Don Cashman and Marianne Schmitt.

The PBC is to hold their first meeting next week.

City Administrator Mike Nichols said issuing bonds through a PBC will keep the bonds from affecting the city's statutory debt limit.

Brown County voters will decide May 21 whether to approve a 10-year half-cent countywide retailers sales tax for health care services in the county.

If the sales tax initiative is approved, plans are for the PBC to issue \$2 million in bonds and for the refinancing of the Hiawatha Community Hospital's existing industrial revenue bonds. Proceeds from the sales tax would go to pay off the bonds.

Hospital Interim CEO John Broberg told the Commission the hospital plans to hold twenty-nine town hall meetings across the county to educate residents on the need for the sales tax.

The town hall meetings are to begin next week.

He said seven meetings are planned in Hiawatha and six in Horton along with the other communities throughout the county.

In other business, the Commission approved a resolution finding a house located at 815 Shawnee Street an immediate hazard and ordering its immediate removal.

The house was listed as a total loss following a fire in December. City Attorney Andy Delaney said the fire compromised the structural integrity of the house and left the house without a portion of its exterior walls, allowing children to enter.

Nichols was directed to solicit bids for the structure's removal.

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