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By JESSICA CRAWFORD

- Daily Leader

After damages to one of the Arkalon water wells was discovered, Conestoga agreed to pay \$70,000 to the City of Liberal for either repairs to the well or a complete replacement. The city commission voted to drill an entirely new well at its Tuesday evening special meeting for fear that repair would not be sufficient and the well would experience further problems.

Public Works Director Joe Sealey stated in information submitted to the commission that damage was done to two of the three wells due to modifications made by Conestoga that the City of Liberal was unaware of.

“To summarize things, with the initial design for plant operations, it was to be an open system (overflowing would just cause overflow onto the ground). In addition to this, our automated system had a high pressure shut off,” Sealey’s memo noted. “Conestoga made modifications to the system that would allow the system to run as a closed or pressurized system.”

The modifications caused damage to wells 101 and 103. Both the City of Liberal and Conestoga came to an agreement Tuesday evening that a lack of communication between the two entities, rather than negligence, caused the damage.

Well No. 101 was fixed for a total of \$23,000. Conestoga had promised the City of Liberal they would pay for the damages and made good on their word. Well No. 103, however, would take \$70,000 to repair, but Conestoga was concerned as to the function of the well after repair.

They felt the best way to handle the situation was to drill a new and larger well. As of Tuesday evening, the city agreed.

Former commissioner Don Rash, who has been involved in the Arkalon water project since its beginning in the early to mid '80s addressed the commission and said a new well must be drilled – repairing it would be a mistake.

The commission ultimately approved the re-drilling of a new well. All commissioners approved the project. However, commissioner Bob Carlile abstained due to personally having stock in Conestoga.

In other business, the commission set aside June 9 as Bob Cerv Day.

Cerv has been instrumental in the success of Bee Jays baseball. He will be presented with a proclamation and key to the City of Liberal at the next city commission meeting on June 9. He will also be the guest of honor at the June 9 Bee Jay game, which will be sponsored by the Daily Leader.

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