Holyoke City Council members voted to purchase four tasers for Holyoke Police Department during their regular meeting Tuesday, Sept. 4.

Doug Dirren, Taser International, attended last week's meeting to talk about tasers and field any questions the council had.

Holyoke Police Chief Doug Bergstrom said he looked into all of the departments within the 13th Judicial District, and Holyoke Police Department is one of five that do not currently carry tasers. The others include Phillips County Sheriff's Office, Yuma County Sheriff's Office, Burlington Police Department and Yuma Police Department. All of these other departments have plans to acquire tasers, according to Bergstrom.

Dirren, a retired 29-year sergeant with Scottsdale, Ariz. P.D., now works for Taser International and travels around the world teaching about the taser. He was training his agency's program prior to leaving.

Dirren said tasers are not a cure-all for everything in law enforcement. "They're a great tool," he said. "They're a tool to the tool belt law enforcement worldwide."

There are some limitations, Dirren said. There are two probes that must connect with a suspect for them to work properly. Also, the probes will only reach a certain distance.

Councilman David Churchwell had a few questions regarding the power of tasers.

Churchwell also questioned Bergstrom about the number of times Holyoke P.D. could have used a taser in recent years. Bergstrom recalled some fights they have had with suspects where one could have come in handy. He also noted there is a fear aspect when a taser is pointed at a suspect. Many times a conflict will be avoided by simply pulling it out.

The council approved the $4,828.25 purchase on a 6-1 vote with Scott Murray casting the lone dissenting vote.

**Council votes on revocable encroachment permit from EAGLE-Net**

After little discussion, Holyke City Council approved a revocable encroachment permit filed by EAGLE-Net Alliance.

Churchwell asked City Supt. Mark Brown if there was something in the permit that left EAGLE-Net responsible should pavement start to cave in following the installation of the fiber. Brown noted that is worded into the excavation permit.

As part of the permit, EAGLE-Net will pay $3,000 for the dark fiber aspect of the project.

“With the way their organization is set up, you really don’t have a choice,” Churchwell said.

The council approved the permit application 6-0, with council member JC Peckham abstaining from the vote.

Brown said with the revocable encroachment permit and the excavation permit, the city will have a pretty good thumb on the company. “They’re not going to be able to tear our town up and walk away,” Brown said.

## Reports of city officials

Council members heard reports from City Supt. Brown and Police Chief Bergstrom at last week's meeting.

Brown noted the new pool lift has been installed at the city pool and is working. He also said city crews have removed the awnings from the ball park bleachers and said they will remove the old bleachers and install the new ones.

The city supt. also said the PAPI lights at the end of the runway have been fixed and installed.

Bergstrom said he was able to find a storage unit for well under what he was approved to spend. The new container will be installed near the city building and house evidence and files. With the left over money, Bergstrom put in a request to install shelves and lighting once the unit is in place. Council members approved the request.

## Other business

In other business Sept. 4, council members:

—appointed Erica Ayoub to serve the remainder of Russ Tyndal's term on the Board of Variance Adjustment. The term is up June 2013.

—appointed Brian Akey, Scott Murray and Orville Tonsing to a committee to review junk ordinance.

—approved an ordinance vacating a portion of an alleyway in block 11 near the new Family Dollar store.

—approved travel request for Al Wall to attend the CML conference in Crested Butte.

—held a work session after the meeting to discuss code enforcement and a dog shelter.

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