

Board hears ideas for new patron room

By Melinda Basnett

Cheylin Board of Education talked about English as a second language when they met Monday at an afternoon meeting as is the January custom.

Anita Burton, counselor, and Cathy Domsch, Century II director, reported on their Rexford visit. They had ideas on some of things that the board will need to think about doing in the future to serve non-English speaking patrons with the expected increase in enrollment when the proposed dairy is up and going.

They shared the idea of a "patron room" much like one in Rexford. It is a room with computers, books and magazines and literature created to give patrons a place to go and e-mail, study and socialize. The Golden Plains school district used funds from Staff English Second Language certifications to make this possible.

Mrs. Domsch said she would like to get such a room going here as soon as possible. If the board would allow space, she would assist in writing a grant application to Century II for funding.

Mrs. Burton informed members of some of the changes that will need to be made within the school in every day practices to conform with the laws when non-English speaking students enroll. All documents, notes home and other material will need to be translated to Spanish, as well as Power School, and all website information. A translator will need to be hired. There is no computer program in existence that will translate accurately.

Specialized tests will need to be purchased to test a student's English abilities to tailor their educational needs.

It is also suggested that classes on cultural differences be held for staff members. There are many small things that would be considered very important mannerisms that would help blend members from different cultures smoothly.

Testing Report

Mrs. Burton presented a testing report. Results of the Terra Nova tests showing a national norm were broken down. Cheylin students perform very well.

Mrs. Burton did caution the board that new tests should be purchased in the near future. The current ones are about nine years old. The cost of the tests run between \$1,000 to

\$2,000, and scoring them is about the same amount each year. On-line testing is a new option offered, but pros and cons of this method will need to be researched as well as costs before the board makes any decisions.

State assessment test results were also presented. Math and reading are the two areas tested. Out of 79 students tested in math only eight rated an academic warning, with 16 placing exemplary. In reading there were 84 students tested with only two scoring in the academic warning category and 23 in the exemplary.

Earning a Standard Of Excellence in reading were fourth, seventh, eighth, and eleventh grades, and earning Standard Of Excellence in math were fourth and fifth grades.

School Board Election Filing Deadline

Members were reminded that the deadline for filing for the election will be noon on Jan. 23. There are three positions up for election. Wade Carmichael, Kerby Krien and David Frisbie currently hold these positions.

Other business

In other business:

- The board approved the purchase of a SawStop saw for the woodshop at a cost of \$4,133. The saw is designed with a build-in safety device that will protect users from losing fingers.

- All bids received for the purchase of a new suburban were rejected and will be rebid to account for differences in bids sought for a 2006 model and 2007 models.

- Purchase of replacement doors for the McDonald gym was approved with Colby Glass submitting the winning bid at a cost of \$9,500.

- Legal council Jim Milliken informed the board on the hearing status involving Tonya Gienger. The hearing officer has yet to return a verdict. Statute states that the officer has 30 days from completion to reach a decision and it has been 90 days with no word yet. The case was completed Oct. 12. Mr. Milliken told members a letter has been sent to ask for a decision to be made in a timely manner.

- In a prior meeting, Jim Poore was approved as high school girls assistant basketball coach.

- At the Jan. 5 meeting, the board approved the purchase of a new furnace for the McDonald gym.

Council extends tree cleanup time

By Melinda Basnett

After the public hearing on the waste water treatment facility plans on Monday, Mayor Troy Burr called a regular meeting of the city council to order.

Hal Sager asked for a 20 minute executive session to discuss city maintenance. After reconvening, the council approved to eliminate the date set previously for the cleanup of trees removed for the living snow fence project and turn over the cleanup to Mr. Sager. The cleanup needs to be completed by June 1 unless problems arise and then they will be dealt with as necessary.

Bids will be sought in the replacement of the front door to city hall. The members have discussed the necessity of action for a number of months and feel that it is time to move forward.

A new appointee is needed to fill a spot on the Cheyenne County Advisory Committee. Marcia Hickert has been serving in this position and her term is up. Any interested persons willing to serve on this committee please call Mayor Burr or a council member.

Member Loren White asked the council to consider paying firemen for runs within the city limits, and to attend meetings, also to pay Emergency Service personnel to attend

meetings. The motion to pay firemen \$20 per run and \$10 per meeting as well as \$10 per meeting to emergency workers was made and approved.

A review of the recent storms and the snow removal techniques were discussed. Many council members expressed compliments to city employees and Loren White for their hard work in opening up the streets, and removing the snow in a timely manner. Everyone felt that the new skid loader was a real asset for this work. Comments were expressed that the city streets conditions were as good as any in the area, and better than some.

Ice is still a concern, and salt will be available at cost to residents needing it to treat sidewalks and driveways. Contact the city shop for more information.

Other business

In other business:

- Cereal Malt Beverage Licenses were approved for Heritage Corner Café and Hometown Market. • A 3-percent cost-of-living increase for city employees was approved.

- A building permit for the Thresher Show Grounds was approved.

- The water meters cannot be read this month because of the snow coverage, so usage for January will be estimated based on past usage and adjustments will be made later.



THE HIGHWAY IS CLEAR and dry but snow is piled high in spots along the way. These fertilizer tanks belonging to Frontier Equity in Bird City had the snow cleared around them but large piles were formed in the process. If another large storm comes, these piles could form drifts on the highway.

Times Staff photo by Melinda Basnett



OTHER THAN A HUGE BANK of snow down the middle Main Street in McDonald is dry. City streets have been well cleared and everyone has helped their neighbors to dig out from the holiday storms.

Times Staff photo by Melinda Basnett

New commissioner sworn in for Bird City District position

By Karen Krien

The new commissioner was sworn in at the Jan. 8 meeting of the Cheyenne County Commissioners.

Terry Miller, county clerk, swore in Ernie Ketzner as commissioner of the Bird City District. Jane Brubaker retired after serving 12 years in that seat. At her request, no reception was held.

Andy Beikman was re-elected as chairman.

Commissioners agree to raises

Janelle Bowers, emergency medical service director, asked that the commissioners approve a raise for the emergency medical technicians making local runs. She said they now get \$20 per run and they often end up spending several hours at the hospital. Mrs. Bowers asked that the run be raised to \$30 per run per technician.

Last year, there were 100 runs in St. Francis and 48 in Bird City. Generally there are three technicians on a run and she thought the budget could handle the increase.

The commissioners agreed to the \$10 increase.

The commissioners also agreed to give county employees a 3-percent cost-of-living raise and Danielle Gardner, the county attorney's legal secretary, was raised from Level 2 to Level 3.

Ambulance director's report

Mrs. Bowers asked for 15 minutes to discuss personnel issues. No decision was made when they returned to open session.

Mrs. Bowers then asked that she be allowed to hire part-time help to do filing and other duties until she could get caught up. The commissioners agreed that she could hire someone as contractual help at \$6 per hour for two days a week.

Correction: Mrs. Bowers said the Christmas bonuses for the technicians was taken out of the Emergency Medical Service budget, not out of the Memorial Fund which was stated in the Jan. 1 is-

sue of both *The Saint Francis Herald* and *Bird City Times*.

Other issues Mrs. Bowers reported included:

- Her computer desk had fallen apart. She suggested waiting to purchase a desk until the new emergency building was built. However, the commissioners said that no more than the desk would cost, to look around at purchasing one now.

- There had been 22 runs made in December which was about the same as in year's past. There was \$2,621 in contractual adjustments (write-offs).

New grader

Dave Flemming, road and bridge supervisor, talked about trading in the 1993 140G road grader for a new grader. At the last meeting, he said a Martin Tractor representative said a new grader would cost around \$130,000. The commissioners asked that the figure be lowered and they might be interested in approving the purchase.

Snow removal

The talk then turned to snow removal policies in clearing private drives. Noting that there were individuals in the county who were in the business of snow removal, it was decided that the only time the county would remove the snow from a private drive would be in the case of a medical emergency.

Courthouse steps

Clerk Miller had talked to Greg Kite, former resident, who offered to write a grant to have the courthouse steps replaced with slabs of granite instead of cement.

The commissioners were hesitant because of the cost, even with a grant, could be more than the county could afford. There was also the matter of time — when and if a grant would be received, it could hold up the step replacements for months.

Before a decision was made, the commissioners agreed to have



RETIRING COMMISSIONER Jane Brubaker congratulates Earnie Ketzner after he was sworn in for the Bird City District at Monday's County Commissioners meeting.

Clerk Miller visit with Mr. Kite again and find out more information. In the meantime, someone would also contact Troy Porter, the contractor who had put in the courthouse steps.

Back taxes

Dolores Jenik, county treasurer, told the commissioners that Energy Alliance, formerly Harvest Energy, owed back taxes of \$42,867. The taxes had been accumulating since 1994 and, now the interest and publication fees were adding up to almost as much as the taxes.

In 2001, the county had abated

some taxes for S&S Services, who owned the company at that time. She wondered if the commissioners wanted to forgive the interest if the back taxes were paid.

The commissioners asked that Justin Barrett, county attorney, write a letter asking for the full amount and see what the response is.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the commissioners will be held at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 31, in the commissioners' room in the courthouse.