



COLBY FREE PRESS

Capital outlay discussed at board meeting

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

The Colby School Board found out how much money is in the district's capital outlay fund at its Monday meeting, and what it would take to get another mill levy for the fund.

Board president Tracy Rogers asked district financial officer Jo DeYoung to look into the feasibility of putting more money into the capital outlay fund.

"I think we're just treading water here," Rogers said. "It's an action item we need to take action on somehow."

He explained the district has many projects that need to be done yet they aren't saving money to do so.

The current balance in the district's capital outlay fund is \$253,000.

A capital outlay fund, DeYoung said, can only be used for anything involving capital projects, like buildings, equipment or capital purchases like expansion, new construction, painting or new sidewalks or architectural fees.

Rogers suggested board members list what they consider priorities. DeYoung said in the past the board has done that, and they all had different ideas.

Board member Gerry Fulwider asked if it could be put on the ballot for this year's election.

The possibility exists, DeYoung said, but it would take time. They would have to contact the county clerk's office by June 1 to get it on the August ballot, or

the district could hold a special election.

Rogers said it's something they need to think about. No action was taken.

The district's last capital levy was approved by voters in 1992 and ran until 1997.

Money for the fund comes from transfers from the general fund, interest from idle accounts and reimbursements.

Over the past 10 years, the highest balance was \$1,279,279.49 in 1995, which was before the end of construction on the new high school and before removal of the old high school.

The lowest balance was \$159,335 in 2004.

"We don't have a lot of cash left over the way we run our business," DeYoung said. "We would have to downsize something."

A better idea, she said, would be to levy a fund for capital outlay.

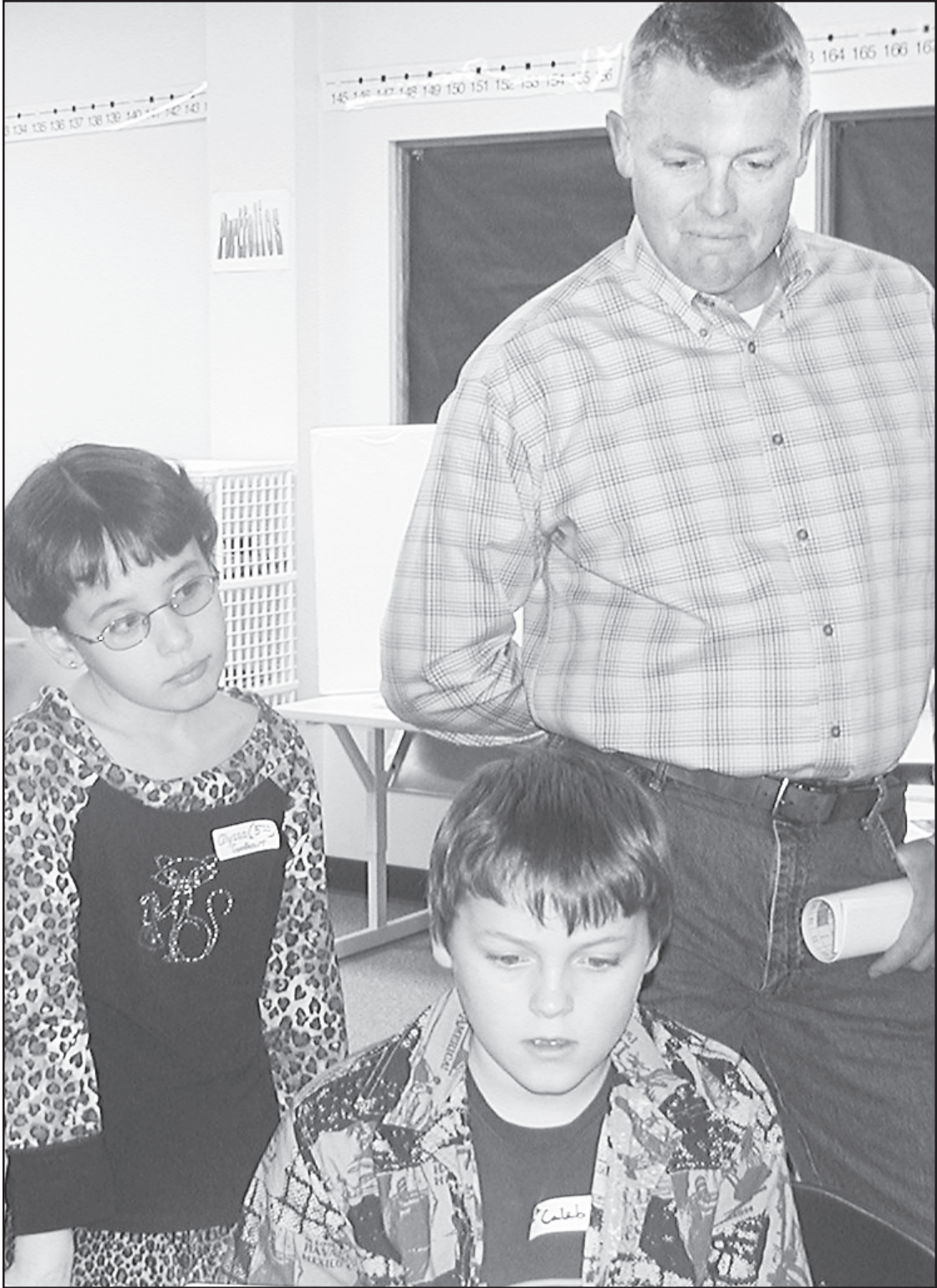
DeYoung said 69 of Kansas' 301 school districts didn't have a capital outlay mill levy in 2004-2005.

If it was done right, DeYoung said the could possibly get support if they defined what would be done with the money.

The board also heard a curriculum presentation on Thomas County Academy, the district's charter school. Lead teacher Kristin Eberle gave an update on first semester progress and the board took a tour of the school's space at Colby Middle School.

Students were on hand to answer questions and showed off some of their projects.

In other business, the board approved:



Alyssa Goodheart (left) and Colby School Board member Stan Molstad watched Caleb Carter during a tour of Thomas County Academy, the district's charter school, during Monday's board meeting.

- The 2004-2005 audit report.
- Coordinating Council course recommendations.
- Drug Free Schools sub-contract.

- Rawlins County Neighborhood Revitalization Plan
- Gave consensus for district technology coordinator Phil DeYoung to pursue phase two of the

district's technology plan. It will be the eventual purchase of switches that will increase the district network's speed and efficiency, he said.

Some support Quenzer

By Tisha Cox
Colby Free Press

Several Colby residents showed their support for Colby High School activities director Jeff Quenzer at the Monday school board meeting.

During December's board meeting, Quenzer's contract was not renewed.

Nancy Rundel spoke for a group of people who support Quenzer. She said Quenzer is a "good, decent man who has been good for the district."

She said the issue of his contract should be revisited.

Brian Luedke also spoke on Quenzer's behalf.

"Education is the number 1 thing, then athletics," he said, and "Quenzer has always understood that."

Luedke said it all boiled down to one thing.

"Did he do his job?" Luedke said.

Assistant basketball coach Tom Bowen said he wished he had known Quenzer's contract was on the agenda last month.

Bowen said he feels for Quenzer, and asked as a taxpayer and employee of the district why the board let two "competent" people go, Quenzer and head football coach Greg Koenig. Koenig's resigned from coaching.

Bowen also commented on the board's strategy of wanting the program to go in a different direction.

"This isn't a college," Bowen said. "We're only talking about one thing," he said.

Koenig's coaching contract was for two years. He coached two seasons. Bowen said the trend has been Colby coaches not getting much of a chance to prove themselves regardless of length of contract.

Bowen asked if that trend was because people give negative comments about the coach to the board.

Bowen said Quenzer has two jobs — as an administrator and activities director.

"He's made mistakes but he's backed his people," Bowen said. "We cannot take good people and let them go."

He said Quenzer and Koenig were treated "poorly."

Board President Tracy Rogers said he's been on the minority end of votes before.

He was one of three board members who voted to renew Quenzer's contract.

"I feel it's wrong," Rogers said. "I'll feel it's wrong as long as I'm here."

He said they could and should address the issue again under personnel, if they wanted, but no one made a motion.

The board discussed parameters for their search for a new head football coach at Colby High School.

Superintendent Kirk Nielsen said they will advertise the position for three or four weeks, and get applications from potential candidates.

He said he will keep the board informed of the search and when they might start interviews.

The question of compensation came up, but Rogers said they make an offer where a coach/teacher would fit on the salary schedule.

Teacher Nancy Rundel, who was in the audience, said a blanket offer can't be made and any offer has to be under the guidelines of the contract the teacher's union negotiates.

Rogers said he's received input on just how far the district should go to get a winning coach.

"I've heard around we need to offer what we can to win," he said.



J. Quenzer



T. Bowen

Commissioners review emergency management

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

Even though it is in the middle of winter, Thomas County is preparing for spring-like weather.

Thomas County Emergency Management Director Jim Engel told Thomas County Commissioners Monday his department will host a National Weather Service instructed weather spotter class 7 p.m. March 13 at the Colby Community Building's basement.

Engel encouraged the commissioners to "recommend or mandate" the class to all Thomas County employees.

"The employees are out and about during the day and there are things that happen during the day and it would be really good if we had them trained," Engel said.

Christiansen said he often saw weather conditions which he was unsure whether they were threatening and asked if he could take the class. Engel said the class is open to the public. No action was taken regarding whether the class will be required of county employees.

Engel also told the board about a terrorism exercise and design course the state will sponsor April 11-13.



JAN KATZ ACKERMAN/Colby Free Press

Thomas County Commissioners Ron Evans (left), Paul Steele (seated) and Ken Christiansen looked at blueprints of the Thomas County Office Complex Monday with Jim Engel (back right) and Rick Dickman, assistant fire chief.

"The class tells you how to start and develop a program and a plan," Engel said. "It's really good because it makes you think about what could happen."

Engel is forming a list of anyone

who would like to attend the class. He can be reached at 460-4516.

In the process of organizing an emergency communications team, Engel said he'll utilize grant money available to his department to up-

date radio equipment.

He said he was in the process of trying to work things out with the city of Colby to access its network which would allow his department better communication with law en-

forcement, fire and emergency medical services.

Steele asked whether the process would cost the county anything and Engel said grant money would pay for it. He said grant money would also be used for the 4-foot by 12-foot concrete pad which will be poured soon to hold a 100,000 watt generator, also paid by grant money.

Commissioners asked Engel to get proposals on updating the sign in front of the county's office complex on Range Avenue. Engel's office is currently not listed on the sign and some of the lettering is deteriorating.

Engel was also asked to get proposals on a locking door system to be installed in the hallway in the building.

Rick Dickman showed the commissioners a blueprint of the building and explained the need to protect staff working late in the building, as well as equipment housed there.

Dickman said sometimes attendees at evening meetings in other parts of the building were noticed in the north wing. Dickman suggested a locking door system which would keep people out of the wing, yet allow those working there to exit safely in the event of an emergency.

Oakley man found guilty by jury trial for driving drunk

By Jan Katz Ackerman
Colby Free Press

A six-person jury Tuesday found an Oakley man guilty of driving drunk in Colby more than a year ago.

Michael Dodd, 54, was arrested Dec. 13, 2004, on Range Avenue and was charged with driving under the influence of alcohol and having an open container in his car. Dodd was found guilty on both counts.

The jury deliberated about 40

minutes after hearing testimony from two Kansas Highway Patrol Troopers.

Trooper James Taylor Jr. testified he arrested Dodd for driving under the influence after stopping him for having a headlight out on his pickup. Taylor said during the stop he smelled alcohol on Dodd's breath and proceeded with a field sobriety test, which Dodd failed.

Trooper Andy Schippers testified having found an open container in Dodd's car. When given a breath

test at the law enforcement center about an hour later, Dodd tested at .161, twice the legal limit of alcohol concentration of .08.

Thomas County Sheriff's Deputy Brian Dierks was the only other witness, testifying to the accuracy of the intoxilizer used at the law enforcement center. Dierks is in charge of maintaining that piece of equipment.

Dodd was represented by Charles Stewart of Oakley. Thomas County Attorney Andrea Wyrick prosecuted the case.

District Judge Glenn Schiffner sentenced Dodd to six months in the custody of Thomas County Sheriff Mike Baughn. After serving 48 consecutive hours in jail, Dodd will be allowed to serve the remainder of the sentence of unsupervised probation for a period of six months.

Schiffner also ordered Dodd to enroll in and complete an alcohol and drug safety action education program, fined him \$500 plus court costs for the driving while under the

influence charge. Dodd was also fined \$100 for the open container charge.

Dodd will again see Schiffner in court. Dodd is appealing a Logan County conviction rendered by District Magistrate Judge Mark Temaat Dec. 6. Temaat found Dodd guilty of driving drunk and having an open container in his car on June 4, 2005.

Schiffner will preside over Dodd's trial in Logan County scheduled to begin at 8:30 a.m. May 10 in Oakley.