District, charter to work it out

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — A crowd of parents of Dallas Community School students gathered in the Dallas School District's board room Monday night worried that the district might consider shutting down the charter school.

Two weeks ago, Oregon School Board Association Board Development Specialist Kristen Miles presented the results of her review of the charter school to the board.

She found the school is out of compliance with required instructional hours, offering a comprehensive educational program, and is below state and Dallas School District averages in academic performance. As the charter sponsor, it is the district's job to assure DCS is meeting requirements.

DCS, in its third year of a five-year charter, is designed to provide resources for home-school families. Though the school has licensed teachers assigned as education guides for students, most instruction is provided by parents. Public schools, including charter schools, are required to offer a minimum amount of instruction by a licensed teacher.

While those issues concern members of the board and district staff, board members took no official action to terminate Dallas Community School's charter. Instead, the board directed Superintendent Michelle Johnstone to work with DCS leaders to find solutions.

"The charter was just approved a few years ago. We knew there was going to be a few issues on startup," said board member Michael Blanchard. "We want to not overlook the seriousness of some of the things that were in there, but … we want to find a way to continue to move forward."

The board gave the school 90 days to report how it will address the compliance issues.

"I would like to thank the board for giving us the opportunity to work with Michelle and work through some of the deficiencies that were outlined in the report," said DCS Director Bill Conlon. "We have taken that very seriously and some of the deficiencies we've already corrected. We'll be happy to work with Michelle and show her what we've been working on."

Parents and students thanked the board for being willing to work with DCS leaders.

"To me it is the best of both worlds," said parent Amber Garrison, who has two daughters enrolled at DCS. "Dallas Community School offers the enrichments my kids wouldn't otherwise take — choir, yoga and sign language."

She said the school measures academic growth and performs entrance and exit evaluations to see if students are on track.

"The guides that oversee our family are teachers," Garrison added. "They know our kids intimately. Our kids share their excitement or fears about certain subjects, and these hardworking teachers find resources that work for our family."

Wendy Sparks, one of the founders of DCS, said she's glad the collaborative relationship the school had with the district in the beginning of the charter still exists.

"I'm extremely pleased to hear that that spirit is going to continue to for next 90 days or so," Sparks said.

Arson

Continued from Page A1

Caso agreed with Walls' point, but deferred the request to the next hearing because the victim wasn't notified.

"The victim has a constitutional right to be here," Caso said.

The judge also denied a request to release Mock on his own recognizance, even with his mother assuring the judge her son would make all court appearances and abide by a curfew.

Caso referred the damage to the property — a total loss — when refusing the request. The house's owner, Walter Hudgins, had been remodeling and preparing the property to sell before the fire.

"With the extent of the damage to the (house), I don't think recognizance release is appropriate today," Caso said.

Both defendants will appear on Thursday at 1:14 p.m. in Court Room No. 4 for a preliminary hearing and release hearing.

The fire occurred on Dec. 29, and was declared an arson by the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office, according to court documents.

Investigators found evidence at the scene, including an empty ham and Swiss sandwich container from Safeway, Milwaukee's Best beer cans, a cellphone, and impressions from Georgia Romeo boots left in white paint that was spilled in the house.

Officers reviewed video from Safeway to identify Delano as the person who purchased the beer and sandwich, and who was wearing boots that were a potential match for the shoe prints in the house. Investigators served a search warrant on the phone, and found it belonged to Elizabeth Underwood, according to court documents. She told police her nephew, Delano, lost the phone.

On Jan. 14, a Dallas officer spotted Delano on Miller Avenue in Dallas and brought him in for an interview.

He admitted to police he was the person on the Safeway video, and that he had broken into the house to drink with a friend, who he identified as Mock.

Delano claimed that Mock wanted to vandalize the house and set the fire.

Mock would say the opposite when interviewed by police a day later.

"He said Delano broke the door and was the one who started the fire in the house," Buchholz reported. "He admitted to later throwing debris on the fire as it was burning."

According to police, after fleeing the house, the pair used Mock's cellphone to make videos about the fire.

"I heard both Delano and Stanley talk about what 'we did' and Stanley made a short selfie video say 'we' burnt the house down as fire trucks were driving behind them," Buchholz wrote.

Whyte takes reins of Dallas planning

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — The Dallas City Council approved the hire of Scott Whyte as the city's new planning director.

Whyte started on Friday, and is the first to fill the newly created management position, created when Jason Locke was laid off. Whyte will oversee the planning department and building division, according to the new department structure the council adopted last month.

Whyte has 27 years planning experience, the last 22 of those were spent working for the cities of Hillsboro and Beaverton. As the senior planner for Beaverton, he was the person who meets with developers early in the application process.

"I've worked in long-range planning and current planning, lots of development applications I've seen through the years," he said at a council work session last week. "I make sure that they understand standards, and I welcome them to the community. I certainly make sure they know the expectations of the council, what the policies are. I'm just delighted I have the opportunity to serve your city."

He had 12 years supervisory experience, which included hiring and training new planners.

"There's rewarding times and there are challenging times," he said. "Those who are in Beaverton right now, they are really good professionals. There's some people who are really devoted to serving the public. I love seeing that. That's the enjoyable part of being a supervisor."

He said moving from Beaverton to a much smaller community will take some getting used to, but he's eager to get started.

"I've seen a lot of growth, and I see that potential here. This is a great time for development of the community," he said. "I know it's a smaller community. I think there's opportunity here to be a part of some things that I've never been, as far as challenges in my career."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Old doctor's clinic donated to City

FALLS CITY — The old medical clinic on North Main St. in Falls City is now the property of the city.

The Falls City City Council accepted the donation of the buildings located at 304 and 306 N. Main St. on Jan. 11. Luckiamute Clinic closed in 2014.

The property was owned by Steele Family, LLC, who agreed to donate the property if the city paid for an appraisal, which the council agreed to do in June 2016, but the deal stalled due to legal concerns. Owners Steele Family, LLC contacted the city in December to say if the city would pay for the title work, the transfer could be completed.

With the property in hand, the council wants to explore options for its use. Acting City Manager Terry Ungricht said the building's condition is a concern and the first order of business is to inspect it.

FC council puts fire levy on ballot

FALLS CITY — The Falls City City Council voted on Jan. 11 to place a five-year local option levy on the May 15 ballot.

The levy will cost $1 per $1,000 assessed value on properties, and raise $220,983 over the five years.

If approved, the levy would help pay for equipment for the Falls City Fire Department, such as new breathing unit that allow firefighters to enter burning buildings; tools for fighting fires and emergency medical services; a tender truck; and an emergency duty vehicle.

Levy proceeds could also supplement the department's operations budget.

Falls City signs contract with PCSO

FALLS CITY — The city of Falls City now can enforce its city codes related to nuisances, public intoxication, public park hours and curfews.

That is thanks to a contract with the Polk County Sheriff's Office that allows deputies to cite people on code violations.

For years Falls City has been unable to enforce some of it city codes because it lacked a police force with jurisdiction and a municipal court to cite violators. Contracts with the city of Independence (court) and now the sheriff's office solved both of those problems.

The Falls City City Council approved the contact Jan. 11.

Arts grant helps Ash Creek Arts Center

SALEM — Small grants were awarded to 79 statewide arts organizations by the Oregon Arts Commission for FY 2018.

Awarded to arts organizations in 29 towns and cities across the state, Small Operating Grants are designed to provide operating support to arts organizations with budgets less than $150,000.

Small operating grants were awarded to Ash Creek Arts Center.

Eligibility is limited to organizations who have operated as an IRS recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit for two years or more. Most organizations received $1,230.

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Solution on Page 8A

					7		4	
1			4	3	5		2	
9					8	5		
	6		5		2			
						8	3	
4		7			3		6	
2					9	4		
				1	6			
		5	2					9

By Ben Arnoldy

Sudoku

Difficulty: ★★★★☆

Row →
Three-by-three square →
Column ↕

4	3	2	8	1	6	7	5	9
5	6	9	3	7	4	8	1	2
1	7	8	9	5	2	4	6	3
3	4	7	2	8	5	6	9	1
2	1	6	7	4	9	3	8	5
9	8	5	1	6	3	2	7	4
7	9	1	4	3	8	5	2	6
8	5	3	6	2	1	9	4	7
6	2	4	5	9	7	1	3	8

How to do Sudoku

Fill in the grid so the numbers 1 through 9 appear just once in every column, row, and three-by-three square. See example above.

The Christian Science Monitor