

Ione School Board hires consultant for possible bond measure

By April Sykes

The Ione School Board, at their regular meeting Monday night, voted to hire the Willamette Education Service District in a service agreement as consultants on a proposed bond measure for improvements to the school.

The Ione Elementary school was built by the

Morrow County School District just prior to the creation of the Ione Charter School, but the high school is in need of renovation. Space is also an issue. The board's goal is to eliminate blended classrooms, however, said board member Anne Morter, if the last blended classroom were to be "unblended" there would be no more classrooms available.

The board agreed to pay Willamette ESD \$95 per hour, with a \$15 thousand cap, to help determine what projects the board had earlier earmarked could qualify for a bond issue, how much the bond might be and the feasibility of floating such a bond.

David McKay, director of facility services for Willamette ESD, Salem, told the board that some of the projects the board wanted to accomplish would probably not qualify for a bond as the projects were maintenance in nature rather than construction projects. He at first said the renovation should be broken down into smaller projects, but later in the meeting said that the board may want to expand the scope of the project to include smaller projects under one umbrella.

McKay also suggested that the board may want to consider a local option tax to fund the renovation, rather than a bond, but Morter cautioned the board against this, saying that the amount that could be levied under a local option tax would be too small to fund the projects. "A local option tax is really expensive and doesn't generate much," she said.

"If we truly want to renovate the high school (the current list) is not enough," said Morter. But, she cautioned that with an extensive list, "We're going to get to the end of our bonding capacity in a big fat hurry."

"What I'm hearing," concluded McKay, "is that the board doesn't think voters would support a new high school." "We just don't want to ask them," replied board member John Rietmann.

The board is considering placing the bond on the May ballot. Morter commented that getting the bond

on the May ballot "looks unrealistic" and said she believed it would be better to place it on the November ballot. "I think we probably could do it (place the bond on the May ballot)," said board Chair Joel Peterson. "But time is short, yes."

McKay said he would consult with Morrow County Assessor Greg Sweek and other experts before returning to the board with more information at their next regular meeting January 22 and plans to bring in a contractor to get a total cost estimate. He also told the board that it is crucial that they prioritize the projects.

McKay said that it will take at least two to two-and-a-half months to gather and review information to present to the board with the goal of coming up with a bond amount to put before the voters.

Superintendent/Principal Bryn Browning and possibly board members plan to attend a bond and ballot workshop set for January.

Also at the meeting the board learned that the district has received \$324,153, the bulk of the property tax collections, and a \$49,787 School Improvement Fund grant. The grant was set aside for schools by the state legislature last June.

In other business, the board:

- learned that the following transfers were made from the general fund-\$20,000 to the capital projects fund; \$10,000 to the food service fund; and \$5,000 to the pool fund.

- learned that the special revenue funds received: \$5,601 from gate receipts and pay-to play receipts; \$2,755 from state Title funds; \$2,274 from lunch receipts; and \$1,300 from a state award.

- learned that the elementary school budget currently has a minus \$31,585 balance.

- accepted the Division 22 Standards report that the district has complied with educational standards required.

- learned that by 2009 the state will require 24 credits for graduation, up from the current 22, how-

ever Ione already requires 24 credits.

- approved a mutual agreement for release of a student from the Ione School District to Arlington.

- approved hiring Diana McElligott as the assistant girls' high school basketball coach.

- learned that the next board meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 22, rather than Monday because of the Martin Luther King holiday.

- heard the following administrative report from Browning:

- enrollment as of December 10 was 162 students-67 in kindergarten through grade five, 40 in grades six through eight and 55 students in grades nine through 12, with four students enrolling since the November board meeting. Browning told the board the district anticipates approximately the same number of students next year, but with a different grade configuration.

- a letter from the school district in support of a highway project in the Horseshoe Bend area of Highway 74 will be included as a public comment and will be shared with the North East Area Commission on Transportation.

- the school website has been updated with the assistance of the Umatilla-Morrow ESD. Teachers can now post information to their individual web pages, such as personal information, instructional resources, pictures, homework, project due dates and videos, for example. The staff met to learn how to use the new website.

- a teacher who plans to have surgery at the end of January will be replaced by a long-term substitute for the second semester. The cost of the substitute will be offset by an adjustment to the teacher's contract.

- elementary teachers and middle and high school math teachers met to identify and review math standards.

- learned that the kindergarten-grade five Christmas program on December 11, directed by elementary teachers, brought in a packed house.

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VOL. 126 NO. 51 10 Pages Wednesday, December 19, 2007 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Volunteers cut, split and deliver firewood

Recently volunteers gathered to help split and deliver 15 cords of wood for eight families, as well as the Neighborhood Center in Heppner.

Once again, Donald Moody, owner of La Grande Firewood, made a donation of a log truck full of firewood to the Neighborhood Center. This is the second year in a row that La Grande Firewood has donated firewood to families in Heppner through the Neighborhood Center.

Each year the Neighborhood Center identifies the names of several families that are in need of wood to assist with the heating of their homes. They then divide the wood donated according to the needs of the families.

Getting the wood to town entailed the volunteer services of a number of people who loaded and transported the logs from the forest to Bloodsworth Farms, who donated the use of their land for the processing of the wood.

Randy Scott from Bates donated his time equipment to load and haul the wood to town. Charlie Grabeel off loaded the logs in Heppner. Hydraulic splitters were supplied by Robert Reid and Tim Rankin.



Labor in cutting, splitting and delivery of the donated firewood was supplied by the Heppner Ranger District employees who, along with some valued assistance from the following members of the Heppner community, processed the wood over the course of a week and delivered all the wood on Saturday. Volunteers included Wayne Seitz, Charlie Grabeel, Robert Reid, Meeka Boyd, Jessie Boyd, Patrick Collins, Maggie Collins, Craig Gutierrez, Justin Gutierrez, Mike Doherty, Deb Mafera, Dick Sargent, Larry Lucher, Brian Spivey, Gary Popek, Dan Michael, Tim Rankin, and Tomas Elguezabal.

Elks Hoop Shoot coming up in January

The Elks Hoop Shoot will be held on January 6 at 1 p.m. at Heppner High School. Trophies will be awarded for the first three places for 8-9 year old boys and girls, 10-11 year old boys and girls, and 12-13 year old boys and girls.

Colt basketball sign-ups will also be held at the same time for third through sixth graders.

HES holds Christmas program



There were elves, reindeer and Santas everywhere you looked at the HES Christmas Elfs program. The program was held on Tuesday, December 11. -Photo by Sandy Matthews

Closed for Christmas
The Heppner Gazette-Times will be closed for the Christmas holidays on Monday and Tuesday, December 24 and 25. Newspaper deadlines will be Friday, December 21, at 5 p.m.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all of us at MCGG

We will be closed starting at 12 noon on Monday, Dec. 24 through Tuesday, Dec. 25 at all MCGG locations

Morrow County Grain Growers
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