

Banks School Board agrees facilities plan should be completed

Banks School Board met September 14 with Richard Bowden chairing the meeting at the request of board Chairman Will Moore. Moore and Vice-chairman Kathy Edison were both unable to attend the meeting. Bowden, Laurie Schlegel and Norie Dimeo-Ediger made a quorum of board members for both the workshop and the business meeting.

High school Principal Jim Smith gave a presentation about the advantages and disadvantages of school size within the OSAA leagues. Interim Superintendent Jim Foster told the board that Jim Smith and Athletic Director Wyman Smith would make a nearly identical presentation to parents at a meeting later in the week for athletes and their parents.

Justin Stranzl, from the district's architecture firm DLR Group, came to discuss completion of a site plan. Last year DLR created an architectural rendering that was used as part of the bond attempt. In January 2009 previous superintendent Marv Ott signed an agreement with DLR to create a site plan for the entire campus, including two or three options for resolving traffic congestion at the elementary school. However, in the face of last year's economic crisis, the board decided to place this project on hold.

Not having a plan has created a sticky community relations problem for the district. The board has delayed granting permission for additional build-

ings that might be in the way of future expansion, possibly having to be torn down. The summer softball association has been trying to replace their storage shed, has the funds to build a small restroom/storage building that would become district property and has been ready to begin work for many months. The same process was used previously to construct the wrestling building with community donations. The softball association has not been able to start construction because of the possibility that the building will interfere with future development. Superintendent Foster said, "People are very sensitive" about donations made to the district.

Simon Levear, district business manager, told the board the Buxton fund could be used to develop a facilities site plan, explaining that, at the time of the sale of the Buxton School, the fund was established by the board "to build new schools". For the last few years the board has 'borrowed' money from this fund for repair and maintenance. Levear told the board that the district was ahead in repayment, has used this fund to cover other related bond expenses and has adequate funds available. Levear apologized for not having the financial report ready because of detailed analysis of the Buxton fund. After learning from Stranzl that the project, including focus group participation, would not take more than two months, the

board reached a consensus to have a facilities plan completed.

Beginning a paean of praise for staff at all levels, that would continue throughout the evening, Foster told the board that he had nothing but positive comments. Teachers completed their inservice training prior to the beginning of the school year, having conceded four additional inservice days that would have been scattered through the school year. No additional inservice days will occur this year.

The board requested last month that Foster consolidate and simplify several documents as a draft for developing district goals. During the workshop, Foster told the board that district planning will always revolve around five basic areas: finance, facilities, curriculum, student achievement, staff development. After briefly discussing all five areas, he summarized that this year, the emphasis is on maintaining current levels of service by whatever means possible.

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Foster recognized John and Carol Shaefer for twenty years of "superb bus service". The family has provided bus

service to the district since 1940, when Jack Benifield, John's grandfather, started the service. John's father Mack (and Lillian) ran the buses beginning in 1953. John and Carol started in 1976 and have owned Shaefer Transportation since 1989, and continued providing bus service through the last school year. Over the summer, Shaefer's reached an agreement with the district and

MidColumbia Bus Company, which is now providing bus service.

Lance Heggem, Sodexo Food Service Manager, presented the board with a trophy commemorating the 25 years that Sodexo has provided school lunches for the district.

The next workshop will be October 12 at 5:30 p.m., followed by the regular board meeting.

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