



**Above:** D-38 Board of Education members are, left to right, President Matthew Clawson, Director Theresa Phillips, Vice President Tiffney Upchurch, Secretary Mark Pfoff, and Treasurer Chris Taylor. *Photo by Harriet Halbig.*

2018-19 district budget. She said that the funding is based on a projected increase of 81 students, a conservative estimate. She said that the student count may increase by as many as 200. The proposed budget includes partial funding for staff at a new middle school such as janitors

and nurses, and also for utilities. When voting to approve the budget, Taylor objected to the fact that the district has about \$50 million in deferred maintenance and yet is only budgeting \$1.26 million for that purpose. He suggested requesting an additional bond or MLO to cover

the expense. Brofft said that 80 percent of the district budget is for personnel, so there is little room for adjustment. Taylor speculated that perhaps D-38 could cooperate with other districts in a shared service center to help with admin-

istrative costs. Brofft responded that larger districts do not wish to collaborate. Pfoff said that when he came on the board, the deferred maintenance figure was \$50 million, so it has not grown over the years. He also pointed out that the number of administrative staff in the district is much lower than it was 10 years ago. Taylor also pointed out that benefits for employees are a large portion of the budget (23 percent according to Wageman) and that they should be reminded that these are part of their compensation. The budget was approved, with Taylor and Vice President Tiffney Upchurch voting no. The board passed a motion to request a bond for \$33 million, including \$29.5 million for a new elementary, \$1 million to convert Bear Creek Elementary into Creekside Middle School, and the remainder to improve security at the other schools. The board passed a motion to request an MLO in November for \$1 million to pay for personnel and equipment for security for all schools in the district. Up-

church voted no. Safety and Security Chief Dennis Coates showed the board a mock-up of a proposed sign indicating that the schools have armed security. In her superintendent comments, Brofft said that the only staff member who is armed is Coates. Schools are still designated as gun-free zones by federal law. Any future armed employees will have no classroom responsibilities, must have law enforcement or military training, and their guns would not be visible. The individuals will be anonymous otherwise. The board passed a motion to declare its intention to participate in the November election. The board went into executive session at 9 p.m. to discuss lease or sell of real property. \*\*\*\*\*

The Board of Education of Lewis-Palmer District 38 meets at 6 p.m. on the third Monday of each month except July at its Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. The next meeting will be on Aug. 20. *Harriet Halbig can be contacted at harriethalbig@ocn.me.*

**Monument Academy School Board, June 21**

**Parents speak on controversial new hire**

*By Jackie Burhans*  
The Monument Academy (MA) School Board met on June 21 to hear parents' concerns about a newly hired teacher, swear in new board members, vote on board policies, and hear a summary of the End-of-Year Parent Survey from the School Accountability Advisory Committee (SAAC). Principal Elizabeth Davis was absent. MA lawyer Brad Miller attended the meeting and subsequent executive session on personnel matters.

**Parents speak on controversial hire**  
Anticipating citizen comments on the hiring of English teacher Chris Jeub, board President Scott Saunders started by reading a statement on behalf of the board indicating that "The board is fully aware of various expressions of concern from our community related to an employment matter. The issue has been comprehensively reviewed by the administration and legal counsel and the board will engage with the findings at an executive session later on at tonight's board meeting. We are confident that our administration has thoughtfully considered the expressions of concern and has done extensive work to distinguish between fact and rumor."

Saunders also read the following statement ahead of comments: "The board welcomes and appreciates comments on school operations and programs. The board will not engage in dialog with speakers but may direct the administration to follow up on items raised during public comment. Speakers are asked to make comments in a respectful and orderly manner. Personal complaints against any individuals connected with the school are prohibited. Please be aware that personnel matters, and especially issues related to statutorily protected classes

and behaviors such as private family issues and religion, may not be a topic of public comment and should be addressed solely through our family conflict resolution process found in policy 1518B." He then called on the first speaker, Kerry Foreman, who was not present but provided a written statement to be read by another parent, Lori Halenkamp. The board did not allow the statement to be read but accepted the written statement. Halenkamp then read her own statement expressing concern, as a mandatory reporter who is required to report on cases of suspected abuse, over the hiring of Jeub. She stated that she had read statements from the Jeubs' daughter about growing up in the family. Miller interjected, "Excuse me, no personal attacks." Halenkamp disputed that it was a personal attack, stating it was what she easily found online and asked to be allowed to continue her statement. After meeting with the Jeubs, she felt it was not her job to decide the truth but felt she needed to pay attention to red flags. She also expressed concern over the already tenuous relationship MA

has with the district and community and believes the decision to hire such a controversial public figure as a teacher would do more harm than good. Parent Laurie Strahan then spoke, saying she fully supported Jeub working at MA as a personal family friend of six years. She stated that she had no reason to believe he had done anything unethical or wrong. Her daughter had him as a substitute teacher at the end of last year and indicated that he gave good instructions and graded in a timely matter, teaching her note taking and writing skills. She felt that Jeub, who is certified to teach and has written Institute of Excellence curriculum, was well qualified. She is excited that he will start a debate team, which she felt was a needed skill. While she acknowledged that he is considered controversial to some, she pointed out that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the civil rights movement, and women's voting were considered controversial and it shouldn't be a criteria to be used when hiring. **New board members sworn in**  
The board unanimously ap-

pointed J.W. Boyles to serve out the remainder of former board member Matt Dunston's term.

Boyles' term began immediately and will continue until June 30, 2019. Boyles, along with



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