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Dean Charlie Richardson attended a school safety and security conference in Las Vegas with Facilities Director Vinnie DeVincenzo.

Richardson highlighted the work of the Counseling Department, noting that in November it handled three suicide threat assessments (down from 12 the previous year), 30 classroom guidance lessons, 80 students enrolled in a guidance group, 431 staff, meetings/consultations and 112 parent meetings/consultations.

Herrera noted that MA received a \$990,000 grant from the Colorado Department of Education for new and/or expanding charter schools. The money will be disbursed over three years in \$330,000 increments and will be used for new programming and high school programs.

Board member Chris Dole reported that the Parent Teacher Organization would like to find a way to track and report on parental involve-

Dole and McWilliams indicated the Dads of Great Students program is a huge success and recommended to every dad.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, Jan. 9 in Lab 312 at 1150 Village Ridge Point. The MA School Board usually meets at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. Information on the MA School Board, including schedule, minutes, committee and finances can be found at http://www.monumentacademy. net/school-board.

> Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education, Dec. 3 and 16

# Newly elected members sworn in, officers appointed, audit approved

By Harriet Halbig

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education, at a special meeting and work session on Dec. 3, administered the oath of office to newly elected and reelected members Ron Schwarz, Matthew Clawson, and Theresa Phillips. Following administration of the oath, new officers were appointed and elected.

The officers for 2020 are Matthew Clawson, president; Theresa Phillips, vice president; Tiffiney Upchurch, secretary; Ron Schwarz, treasurer, and Chris Taylor, director.

Members of the board then signed affidavits of confidentiality concerning executive sessions before the meeting resumed.

In keeping with state law, the board then certified a mill levy of 41.430 mills for the coming year, a reduction from 44.068 mills in the previous year. This reduction was made possible by an increase in the assessed value of property in the district in 2019. Funding of the district is supported by local property taxes, specific property taxes on vehicle purchases, mill levy override funds from 1999, and from the state. This vote was required before Dec. 10 and therefore could not be delayed until the regular board meeting on Dec. 16.

Taylor commented that this change in mills will save each household \$21 per \$100,000 value of their home. He regretted that they were unable to convey this to voters when considering the bond issue on November.

Phillips agreed that it would be good to demonstrate this to the public.

Superintendent K.C. Somers said that many individuals asked him before the election whether the maximum amount of bonds would be issued. In fact, due to low interest rates and the increase in property values, only about \$25 million (of the possible \$28.985 million) would have been issued.

#### Strategic plan

The board then went into a work session to discuss a future strategic plan for the district.

Somers suggested that the first meeting on the subject should involve the board only, with future meetings to include community stakeholders, staff, and students to determine priorities.

A possible goal will be to finalize the plan by August, following meetings with the community at various locations. Somers also stressed that the board explain what they are hoping to achieve in creating the plan and that they are not creating it in order to propose a new bond issue.

Taylor said that it is also important to let the public know where the district is now before discussing the future. We need to communicate such problems as overcrowding foremost, he said.

Schwarz suggested it would be important to determine what success would look like and to determine mileposts to measure progress in the process.



Above: Board President Matthew Clawson, left, administers the oath of office to newly elected member Ron Schwarz. Photo by Harriet Halbig.

Taylor agreed that the board should determine what the big issues are, including transportation, facilities, safety, and mental health.

Somers said the district is working on identifying the most pressing issues and showing the community how resources are being used to address them.

Upchurch said that, at a recent town hall meeting, although the attendance was encouraging, those who did not support the bond generally did not attend. The district needs to determine how to reach them and include them so that they feel they are be-

The regular meeting on Dec. 16 was abbreviated due to snow closures. As a consequence, the scheduled participation of student athletes was postponed until January.

Following a brief discussion, the board approved the 2018-19 district financial audit.

The board then considered and approved carryover of funds into 2020. These did not include site-based funds. Total carryover from the schools totaled \$1.934 million. Carryover from the Capital Fund totaled \$1.162 million, and carryover from General Fund (including expenditures on technology, improvements to Ray Kilmer Elementary and Lewis-Palmer Elementary and for programs at Pikes Peak Community College) totaled \$146,816.

Somers commented that although a board vote on carryovers is not technically required, he wished to be transparent about the budget due to a shortfall in enrollment for the year and the financial impact

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board Education generally meets at 6 p.m. on the third Monday of each month at the district's Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. Due to closures on Jan. 20 in observance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the next meeting will be on Tuesday, Jan. 21.

> Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalbig@ocn.me.



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