

Members are also encouraged to monitor legislative activity and write their legislators or attend hearings when they apply to students with disabilities.

The student count of those receiving special education services is on Dec. 1.

District Gifted/Talented Facilitator Annette Bass reported that there are currently 709 individuals evaluated as gifted in the district, or 10.69 percent of the student population. The department identifies gifted students beginning in third grade, although some are identified earlier. Each student has an Advanced Learning Plan which is reviewed annually. There is a gifted facilitator in each school.

The definition of gifted is determined by the state. Bass also pointed out that students who are identified as gifted do not only excel in academics but could excel in the arts or athletics. In some cases, students take advantage of opportunities outside the school setting.

Priority 2 initiatives

Some of the district initiatives in support of Priority 2 include high quality early education in preschool, strong core literacy programs, and secondary pathways offering students a variety of ways to move toward college or careers. These include traditional high school

curriculum, concurrent registration in high school and college, and Advanced Placement classes which offer college credit, among other initiatives.

Portrait of a D-38 graduate

The district is developing a portrait of a D-38 graduate, enumerating the characteristics which it wants to emphasize. A committee was divided into four groups which suggested ways in which students can become good communicators, problem solvers, community mentors and empowered individuals through district offerings.

Groups rotated between the lists to suggest programs in the district which would aid in developing these skills. For example, communicators would be developed through DECA, speech team, and other classes which require presentations. Problem solving is developed through group and team activities, community mentors are developed through partnerships with Kiwanis through their Key Club program, and empowered individuals benefit from participation in student government.

This segment of the meeting was moderated by the five student assistants.

The lists will be compiled and examined for further suggestions.

The District Accountability Advisory Committee meets five times a year on the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. Locations vary. The next meeting will be on Jan.11 at the east

campus of Monument Academy, 4303 Pinehurst Circle, Colorado Springs.

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

Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, Nov. 4 and 18

Proposed 2022 budget on track for approval

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

The Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT) met twice in November, holding a special public meeting on Nov. 4 and a regular meeting on Nov 18.

The town's proposed budget for 2022 was the focus of the board's efforts at both meetings. The board continued to develop its policies for short term rental (STR) properties and for residential wells. The board also heard reports from Trustee Karen Stuth on the Master Plan Advisory Committee (MPAC) and the Palmer Lake Economic Development Group (PLEDG)

2022 budget "comprehensive and accurate"

At the Nov. 4. meeting Mayor Bill Bass opened the discussion of the proposed budget by applauding the work of

Town Administrator Dawn Collins and Deputy Town Clerk Julia Stambaugh, calling their draft budget "the most comprehensive and accurate budget the town has seen in some time."

Collins gave the board an updated version of the draft budget first presented at the board's Oct. 14 meeting. She pointed out some revenue numbers and medical plan rates were still coming in and added the budget would be a working document until the vote on its final approval scheduled for Dec. 9. She also drew the board's attention to a contingency line-item containing \$200,000 for town hall upgrades and \$120,000 earmarked to fund a consultant to help develop the town's master plan. Collins said the town hall work might be offset by funds from a grant.

Trustees Glant Havenar and Karen Stuth expressed concerns over the proposed funding for the master plan consultant. Havenar proposed having a team from the Land Use Department at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS) work on the master plan in place of the consultant who had applied for the job. Stuth and Havenar said the master plan was "not a governing document" and "has no force in effect," making the proposed consultant's fee excessive. Both trustees said they feared scope creep on the master plan project.

Bass said a master plan was a state requirement, and Trustee Darin Dawson recommended hiring a professional and accepting the costs of taking that approach.

The consensus of the board at the Nov. 4 meeting was to remain open to other options but to proceed with the master plan consultant already at work.

Collins said the staff was working to improve a problematic lease agreement for three vehicles.

At the Nov. 18 meeting, Collins provided an updated proposed budget that showed an increase in total revenue from \$2,837,954 to \$2,882,954 due to increases in court fines and use tax building materials. Collins said the fund reserve line-item still had \$200,000 for town hall upgrades and \$120,000 for the master plan consultant. She said \$30,000 needed to be found to address utility, maintenance, and pest control costs at the Elephant Rock property. She said staff recommended increasing that to \$50,000 for contingencies. Havenar commented that she expected the cost of the master plan consultant to be less than \$120,000 and the difference might cover the costs related to the Elephant Rock property. Havenar said an unbalanced budget could hurt the town's eligibility for grants.

Collins and Dawson responded that the proposed budget was balanced and pointed out the 2022 budget reduced contingency funding from over \$700,000 in the 2021 budget to \$320,000.

Havenar said she was worried the town would lose staff if additional funding for salaries could not be found.

Collins asked if the board was comfortable increasing the contingency funding for the Elephant Rock property and Dawson answered that he was.

Following the board discussion,



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