

government pools and a similar school investment organization now offering 3% returns.

Ridgeway said the proposal was presented to the Staff Collaboration Committee the previous week. Decisions to be made included who were eligible for the bonus and the basis for deciding the amount. Members of the committee requested that Medicare and PERA (public employee retirement association) fees should be included.

The decision was made to invest 1.75% of total base pay to those with a regular working relationship with the district, which would total 796 people. There also would be a flat rate of \$500 to each individual.

There was a discussion about whether to include administrative staff, who would not have benefited from the mill levy override. It was decided that administrative employees who work in the schools (principals and assistant principals) and those who directly interacted with the schools, such as assessments and special education, should be included. As a result, only seven people would be excluded.

Those who received recruitment or retention bonuses would be exempted from the percentage but would receive the flat sum.

Taylor commented that this should help with retention and recruitment but regrets that it was a one-time action.

The board approved the action.

Bus purchase discussion

At its November meeting, the board was requested to purchase four new school buses with excess funds in the transportation fund. It was ultimately decided to purchase two buses with ESSER (elementary and secondary school emergency response) funds and postpone a decision on two more until the December meeting.

Executive Director of Operations Chris Coulter reported that 47% of the district's route buses currently have over 200,000 miles on them and the cost of fuel and maintenance is

high as a result of their age. The average age of the fleet is 9.4 years with an average mileage of 134,000. Warranties on buses run for five years and the fuel efficiency of new buses is twice that of the older buses.

Taylor asked whether Coulter had considered leasing buses rather than buying them. Coulter responded that they have gone with the lowest bid.

Somers commented that they did not wish to incur a large debt when the funds to pay for the buses are available in the transportation fund.

Taylor clarified that there is currently \$648,000 available in the transportation fund and that the two buses would cost \$270,000.

Director Matthew Clawson commented that there is a predicted recession or depression on the horizon and the district currently has a backlog of \$50 million in deferred maintenance and other projects. He expressed concern that an emergency such as a boiler replacement should be prioritized over new buses. He wished to delay the decision until D38 has done all it can for the teachers.

Schwarz said that the buses would be paid out of capital funds, not operating funds.

Clawson suggested deferring the decision until next fall.

Following further discussion, it was decided to develop a list of district priorities. Schwarz said that once the list has been developed, let's begin. Taylor requested an inventory of district facilities and their condition.

Coulter commented that the district is seeing great benefit from the Schreiber electric project to reduce utility costs and resulted in a \$5 million bite out of the \$50 million in deferred maintenance.

As no motion was put forward, the subject was tabled.

Mill levy certification

Ridgeway explained how property taxes are structured and how the district determines its proposed mill levy taking into consideration its

bond responsibilities and the 1999 mill levy override which provides \$4 million annually. He said that this year the county does not assess residential buildings, but on the grounds of new commercial development, the district will assess 40.5 mills.

The proposal was passed.

When discussing the consent agenda, board Secretary Tiffiney Upchurch suggested that the board's meeting dates and agendas should be made available to the public more readily than just on the web-

site. Communications Director Mark Belcher said he could include them in his newsletter and on social media.

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education usually meets on the third Monday of the month at its learning center, 146 Jefferson St. in Monument. Due to a conflict with Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the January meeting will be held at 6 p.m. on Jan. 23.

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Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, Dec. 8 and 15

New leadership takes the helm

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans
December saw a newly elected mayor and three newly elected trustees seated in Palmer Lake. Following an election in November that legalized the sale of adult use cannabis, the board addressed some of the details of how to proceed with those sales. The board adopted a budget for 2023, certified the town's mill levy, and voted to continue to use Green & Associates LLC as the town's auditor. Spokespeople for Tri-Lakes Cares told the board about its services, with a focus on how they serve the residents of Palmer Lake. The board also considered a program to use banners to publicize the town's artists.

The Dec. 15 board meeting ended in an executive session.

Previous mayor and trustees celebrated

Outgoing Mayor Bill Bass called the Dec. 8 meeting to order. In his last comments as mayor, Bass thanked outgoing Trustees Nichole Currier and Darin Dawson for their service to the town, saying: "I have a lot of appreciation and thanks that I want to share with all of you, first to the outgoing board for all their hard work this past two years. At times it was really demanding. You all met the challenge, and we accomplished a lot of good work for this town. ... This board has set the bar pretty high." Bass added that the outgoing board had worked hard, attending a total of 35 workshops, retreats, and special meetings in addition to 50 regularly scheduled board meetings.

Bass thanked Town Administrator Dawn Collins, Town Attorney Matt Krob, and the town staff for their efforts: "Y'all are just an outstanding bunch." Bass said he hoped the town would benefit from the increased revenue resulting from changes during his administration. He also thanked the residents and commended them for their involvement. He ended by congratulating Mayor-elect Glant Havenar and newly elected trustees Shana Ball, Kevin Dreher, and Dennis Stern.

Following Bass's remarks, Collins presented a certificate of appreciation to Bass. Bass then presented certificates to Currier and Dawson. In his last act as mayor, Bass recessed the meeting for 45 minutes of socializing, including a toast to the town.

Mayor and three trustees sworn in

Following the toast, Collins administered the oath of office to Havenar. Havenar reconvened the meeting, and Collins and Havenar swore in Ball, Dreher, and Stern, who were then seated for the remainder of the Dec. 8 meeting along with Trustees

Jessica Farr, Samantha Padgett, and Karen Stuth.

Later in the meeting, Stern was elected unanimously to serve as mayor pro tem.

Adult use cannabis regulations established

At the Dec. 8 meeting, the outgoing mayor and board considered an emergency ordinance, which would take effect upon passage, to establish the rules and regulations that would govern the sale of adult use cannabis in the town. Bass and Havenar commented that they wanted the leadership team that had worked on the issue for months to have a chance to vote on the terms on which cannabis would be sold, as stated by Ordinance 17-2022.

Havenar pointed out that the town's two cannabis businesses could not proceed with their licensing requirements until the town had an ordinance in place.

The ordinance amends Title 5 of the Palmer Lake Town Code by adding Chapter 5.21, which adds detailed regulations for the retail sale of cannabis. The regulations include:

- The Board of Trustees, acting as the Local Licensing Authority, can require businesses to provide necessary information, and can approve or deny licenses required to sell cannabis. Licenses are valid for one year, and can be suspended, revoked, or not renewed in the case of violations. Licenses are non-transferable.
- Any applicant must submit a range of information including name, address, fingerprints and legal status and history of the owner.
- Applicants must provide a physical plan of the business, with a deed or lease, and an area map covering a radius of a quarter mile around the proposed business site.
- An operation plan including security, description of products, and exterior signage.
- A limit of two retail stores within town boundaries.
- Inspections to verify compliance with all town codes.

Following a motion to approve Ordinance 17-2022, the ordinance was passed, with Bass, Dawson, Farr, Havenar, Padgett, and Stuth voting in favor. Currier voted no.

Meeting in its role as the Local Licensing Authority at the Dec. 15 meeting, the board approved a change of ownership for Alpine Essentials, the cannabis business owned by the Woodward family that added Tyler Woodward and Melissa Woodward as owners. The board also



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