

Resident Roger Moseley criticized the board for allowing the project to drag on for 22 months and said the public did not have enough input into the work.

The board did not vote but approved Collin's plan to complete the project.

**Executive sessions**

Both board meetings included executive sessions during which the board received legal advice concerning amendments to the property lease agree-

ment for the Eco Spa at the Elephant Rock property and the possible annexation agreement for the proposed Buc-ee's travel center.

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The next regular board meetings are scheduled for May 8 and 22. See the town's website at www.townofpalmerlake.com to confirm times and dates of board meetings and workshops. Meetings are typically held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at the Town Hall. Information: 719-

481-2953.

James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me. Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

**D38 (Cont. from 1)**

She said the questions should be submitted directly to Human Resources Director Alicia Welch.

The same questions will be asked of both candidates.

The final decision will be made at the board's regular meeting on May 19, at which time a contract will be signed.

**Relocation of Home School Enrichment Academy**

Following the board's decision to demolish Grace Best Elementary School, the district's HSEA and Transitions program will need to be relocated.

It was decided that the Transitions program can be housed in available space in the new Career and Innovation Center.

Representatives of the HSEA have requested the use of seven classrooms, an art room, a science room, access to a cafeteria, space for gym classes, and office space.

Chief Business Officer Brett Ridgway and Director of Planning, Facilities, and Grounds Melissa Andrews explained the process of analyzing space in existing buildings and determining the most cost-effective new construction options.

Ridgway explained that all existing school facilities were analyzed to determine whether the academy could be located in one of them.

The two most likely locations would be Ray Kilmer Elementary and Lewis-Palmer Elementary School.

In both cases, classrooms would be reallocated from their current use to offer access to contiguous rooms. At Kilmer, analysis revealed that five classrooms could be made available. In addition to this being fewer rooms than requested, population fluctuations in that part of the district made it unlikely to be a permanent solution.

The fact that the academy does not meet every day also could pose scheduling problems.

At Lewis-Palmer Elementary, four rooms looked possible. Palmer Lake Elementary was not considered as it will soon house a preschool.

Ridgway showed a slide detailing the comparative costs of various solutions, including purchase of an existing building, building a stick-built structure or a steel structure, or building a prefabricated pod structure.

Of these alternatives, the pod is by far the most affordable. The pod would consist of seven classrooms, a dedicated art room, a dedicated science room, and a multi-purpose room which could be used as a gym. Office space would also be included.

In addition to the lower expense, Andrews and Ridgway pointed out that some of the spaces could be made available to the community for rent when not in use by the academy.

Two possible locations on district property were considered for the structure.

The first would be immediately south of the district administration building. Access to utilities exists as there had been a previous modular in the space. The existing playground would be replaced as it has reached end of life. Ample parking is available.

The alternate location would be on the grounds of Bear Creek Elementary School, where provision was originally made for construction of a second school. Again access to utilities is provided and the structure could be expanded if needed.

This site would require construction of parking and road access.

In answering questions, Andrews said the project lifespan of a pod building is 40 to 50 years if it is well maintained and not moved. When asked what the resale value might be in 10 years, she said it would be about \$1 million of the original \$2.5 million. She said that the district often receives calls asking if we have modulares available for purchase.

Andrews also pointed out that at additional cost

there are various surface options and that the pod could be at ground level rather than requiring stairs or ramps.

The board voted to construct a pod structure at the location near the administration building. To view the presentation on this subject, go to boarddocs under the board of education tab on www.lewispalmer.org.

**Budget discussion**

Ridgway reported on the current state of the district's budget, saying that it is spending 98.5% of the budgeted revenue.

Reminding the board that 72% of the district's revenue comes from the School Finance Act, he said there will be a projected 2.5% increase in revenue for the 2025-26 year. In addition, by reducing district budgeting for capital improvements from \$3 million to \$2.5 million, this should allow for a potential salary increase of 2.8%. Those in the lower-paid categories would receive a higher percentage increase than those in administration.

The cost of the health benefit plan is projected to rise by 13.5%. Historically, the district paid 70% of the cost and employees 30%. Ridgway said that this year there would be a choice of three health insurance plans rather than the previous four. The district is considering shifting to a self-funded plan

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