

0 percent for those two years as far as the COLA process was concerned.

Jack spoke about the few pay raises that did occur but were below inflation levels. He said, "What this does is puts money back in the pockets of our people." He continued, "We know we can't do anything financially for our employees ... we know we haven't kept up their wages with inflation ... this is a direct benefit to them." He did not mention that adjusting schedules can be considered as an administrative way of affecting pay schedules.

Keogh talked about some of the proposed changes that were detailed in packets given to board members. The press was not provided with the information in the board packets until several days later.

Keogh said three policies required board attention. One was "Working Conditions." He noted that Policies 2.1 Working Conditions and 2.2 Pay Periods would have to be revised. In 2.1 in part, the number of shifts would be reduced and in 2.2, the pay cycle would be paid twice in a 24-day work cycle as opposed to the present 27-day work cycle.

**Financial report**

Treasurer John Hildebrandt began the financial report by correcting an error in the amount received through September from county property taxes. The correct figure of \$2,883,688 represented 98.41 percent of the annual expected revenue. The district had received \$208,219 or 83.5 percent of the budgeted specific ownership taxes revenues.

Hildebrandt said ambulance revenues were \$371,295 or 67.51 percent of the budgeted revenue. He noted that receipts were 7.49 percent under budget. Office Manager Jennifer Martin said Medicare ambulance payments had not been received since June 1. She noted that the Medicare system was in the process of changing procedures. There was no mention of when the Medicare system would resume payments for ambulance services.

Hildebrandt added that overall expenses were at 74.71 percent of the budget or 0.29 percent under budget through September.

Hildebrandt also said the administrative legal fees of the district, which were over 200 percent of the budgeted amount, were the result of the investigation that was done earlier this year. Board President Bill Ingram said that there were "... additional legal fees coming in, shortly." He did not mention the reason for the additional legal expenses. Hildebrandt stated that the administrative costs always will be higher than budgeted estimates because insurance costs are paid in a lump sum early in the year and "normalize" as the year proceeds.

Martin mentioned that there was a \$10,000 to \$12,000 election payment included in the "general expenses." Hildebrandt concluded that the excess of budgeted administrative expenses was due to the election and the investigation.

Jack stated that the next two meetings are open to the public to attend and express their comments concerning the budget. The budget will be voted on at the December regular district board meeting.

Ingram complimented the union on the signs and amount of money being spent to advocate passage of measure 5C, which would increase the mill levy to 11.5 mills per taxable residence, if passed. Keogh stated that the union effort included the distribution of 4,000 flyers, 300 yard signs, and 200 man-hours talking to residents.

**Payroll limit increase proposed**

Hildebrandt discussed Martin's suggestion that the limit for transferring funds between accounts for payroll purposes be increased to \$90,000 from the present \$75,000. The district's bookkeeper, Linda Ousnamer of The Pencil Pusher Inc., corrected Hildebrandt by stating that the problem was not transferring funds between accounts. She stated that the problem was with the district imposed statutory limit for payrolls per pay period, which is \$75,000. The recent payroll exceeded the limit at \$88,000. Ways had to be found around that limit to pay the employees, Ousnamer said.

Martin added that because the payroll rose to \$88,000 and required approval, there could be a delay in paying the employees. She added that she did not like delaying employees' payments and essentially that was why she recommended the increased limit. Ousnamer recommended that the payroll be split next time. This would lower the payroll amount and bypass the statutory limit.

Hildebrandt also suggested that besides himself, Jack be given authority to approve the over-limit amount so that his absence would not hold up the payroll. Jack said that if the tax-increase initiative passes, increasing the number of SAFER employees, the payroll would be much higher. Hildebrandt then suggested that the board delay changing the statutory payroll limitation. No mention was made of addressing the apparent loophole in the statutory limit rule that was mentioned by Ousnamer.

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