

Facility will be completed when the weather improves and there is no ice on the metal roof.

Petersen noted that he 2013 audit will be conducted by Hoelting & Co. in March. The board unanimously approved a minor update to the district's investment policy to correct typographical errors. The district received one tap fee payment of \$1,500 from Triview Metropolitan District. This reduced Triview's outstanding balance to \$746,542 under the agreement in which Donala financed a portion of Triview's share of the cost of expanding the Upper Monument Creek facility.

There was a brief discussion of the Jan. 15 Tri-Lakes Tribune article "Donala raises water rates 20 percent." Board members noted that the January district newsletter to customers showed that this rate increase was merely part of a multiyear plan to raise rates over several years until revenues are high enough to cover water operation expenses. This long-term plan has been discussed numerous times in newsletters to Donala constituents and in OCN articles on Donala board meetings. George noted that despite the front page Tribune photo of a wooden water pipe, Donala does not have any wooden pipes in its

distribution system.

The meeting went into executive session at 3:22 p.m. to discuss personnel issues.

The next meeting will be held at 1:30 p.m. on Feb. 20 in the district conference room at 15850 Holbein Drive. Meetings are normally held on the third Thursday of the month. Information: 488-3603.

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Lewis-Palmer D-38 Board of Education, Jan. 16

Superintendent search progresses

By Harriet Halbig

The Board of Education of Lewis-Palmer School District 38 continued to discuss the search for a new superintendent, the new teacher evaluation process, and financial planning for the future on Jan. 16.

Superintendent application deadline nears

Bob Cito of the Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB) reported on progress in the search for a new permanent superintendent. He said he was here before Christmas to hold meetings among various focus groups regarding qualities they looked for in a superintendent. The qualities sought are experience in education, instructional leadership, and business skills. Cito said the individual should possess a management style that could incorporate state and federal mandates in the operation and success of the district. Innovative problem solving is critical. The superintendent must be willing to be visible in the schools and the community and possess communications skills with the staff and the community. Integrity is essential.

Cito said that four questions on the application would require research into the district before answering. The application form may be seen on CASB.org.

The position was advertised beginning in late December, with an application deadline of Feb. 11. At that time the board will review the applications and select a

number of them for further exploration.

CASB will do background checks on this group of candidates. Finalists will be announced 14 days ahead of the interviews, which will be held on March 7 and 8.

By the date of this meeting, three completed applications had been received, two from out of state. Cito said that his experience has shown that most applications will be received late in the application period.

Board President Mark Pfoff said that the average term of recent superintendents has been 2 1/2 years. He was concerned about how to address this.

Cito said it is important to look at the resumes of applicants to see the longevity of their previous positions. It is also essential that candidates understand the strengths and challenges of the district when considering accepting the position.

Cito said that CASB would like to see a candidate who would stay for five to seven years. He also said that there are ways to structure a contract to encourage a candidate to stay.

Fund balance/liability planning

Board Vice President John Mann explained charts that he and Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Wangeman prepared regarding the district's assets and liabilities.

He said that when the board refinanced the lease on the administration building, there were relatively few funds available in relation to the district's debt. Low interest rates at that time allowed the district to have the use of an additional \$75,000 per year for the purchase of technology and other uses.

Due to a partial rebound of the economy and increase in real estate values and resulting tax income, the district now has more revenue in relation to its debt.

Mann said the decision to be made now is whether to retire the debt from the administration building's lease, which would yield \$250,000 to \$500,000 annually in savings, or continue to stay the present course.

The board's financial advisor, David Bell of Stifel, Nicolaus and Co., gave the board a few alternatives of action. He said that, were the district to retire the debt, it still has a very good credit rating should it need to borrow again. There is no guarantee about the direction of the economy in the years to come.

He said that in 2008-09 the state allowed districts to borrow for working capital purposes, not just for construction. The board decided to borrow and extend repayment in case of emergencies. The district could borrow from the fund in the short term and still use the funds for long-term capital projects such as infrastructure or bus purchases.

Mann said that the decision is how much liquid funds the district needs.

Pfoff commented that any decision should take into account the next three to five years.

Board Secretary Robb Pike said that the board has long worked under the condition that any financial decision would not jeopardize the completion of the current school year.

Mann said that he would like Interim Superintendent Ted Bauman to return to the board a list of capital projects that would benefit the district, in order of priority.

Teacher evaluations

Director of Personnel Bob Foster explained changes in the teacher evaluation process as a result of the Teacher Effectiveness Act, which evaluates teachers 50 percent on the basis of their professional practices and 50 percent on the academic growth of their students.

Under the new law, all teachers will be evaluated on an annual basis. After three years of effective teaching, individuals will achieve non-probationary status. After two years of ineffective teaching, individuals will be returned to probationary status.

Foster said that the complex evaluation process, involving a 15-page document for each individual about his or her professional practices, several classroom observations, and documentation of student progress, is causing a considerable workload for principals. Teachers are also required to complete self-evaluations.

All evaluations are conveyed electronically to the Colorado Department of Education.

One of the greatest challenges is that 70 percent of teachers do not teach subjects that are easily quantified because they are not part of the testing process. These include such subjects as the arts and physical education. Also, employees such as psychologists and occupational therapists will be hard to evaluate.

These difficulties are yet to be solved. Mann commented that he is concerned about the time involved in the process.

When asked what good would result from the process in such a high achieving district, Foster said that sometimes the conversations between the teachers and principals may yield new best practices.

2013-14 budget adjustments

Wangeman reported an increase of about \$400,000 in income for the district due to increased state funding because of a larger student count and increased specific ownership tax revenue.

The board approved the school calendars for the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years. The calendars may be found on the district website, lewispalmer.org.

Students of the Lewis-Palmer Home School Enrichment Academy performed for the board. Teacher Melissa Carpenter reported that the academy now has 81 students through the eighth grade.

The Board of Education of the Lewis-Palmer School District meets at 6 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month in the district's Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. The next meeting will be on Feb. 20.

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

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Thursday, February 13th, 6 pm
Social Life in Western Mining Camps

Exhibit Opening & Heritage Lecture with Fawn Amber Montoya

The settlement of this region involved more than just the lone prospector and his donkey or the silver magnet and his opera houses. Women, children, and all sorts of people made their homes here and built the state and region as we know it today. Learn about the living and working conditions of life in the 19th century West.

Saturday, February 22nd
PUBLISH! Writing Class with Steven Veatch!

This informative workshop will include topics like basic research, writing techniques and tips, using illustrations, science photography and publication issues. A certificate will be awarded upon completion. \$20 for adults, \$10 for students (under 22). WMMI Members \$5 OFF adult admission, \$2 OFF student admission. Limit 30 people. Register: rsvp@wmmi.org, (719) 488-0880.

225 North Gate Blvd. www.wmmi.org (719) 488-0880



Students of the Lewis-Palmer Home School Enrichment Academy performed for the board. **Above:** Teacher Rose Dunphey accompanied Hannah Kelly and Leah Dunphey as they sang. **Below:** Trace, Brock, and Austin Rouser, left to right, performed a comedy skit. *Photos by Harriet Halbig.*

