

revenue has prevented hitting the target. Truty said it was important for citizens to see that this was a way for the district to save money by not having debt. President Jake Shirk suggested that the district at least adopt this as a goal.

They discussed the need for enhanced dispatch services, since the quality of the communications center of the current dispatch services provided for free by the El Paso County Sheriff's Office (EPSO) is "slowing down the progress of a lot of fire departments," Truty said.

Infrastructure that needs maintenance and possible modernization includes all the fire stations where the firefighters spend so much time. Possible new buildings in the future could include a fire station on Jackson Creek Parkway that includes the new administration headquarters.

Vice President Roger Lance said the challenge will be to get the community to know that their "money would be spent smartly." The board consensus was that it would be

better to wait longer to discuss relocating any existing fire stations or deciding to build new permanent facilities and deal first with services provided to the district residents.

At upcoming board meetings, Truty and the board plan to discuss these topics in anticipation of receiving revenue projections from the county in August:

- April – associated expenses and funding
- May – projected revenues
- June – expense/revenue comparison (shortfall/overage determination)
- July – option identifications

Surplus 2014 money prioritized

The district finished with about \$350,000 in surplus at the end of 2014, Truty said. He presented a list of options to the board in January, and they reached a consensus on how to utilize the money on March 16:

- \$60,000 to restore the third firefighter position at Station 2 starting Oct. 1.
- \$67,000 to pay off the outstanding vacation bank

balance that employees have accrued and are owed.

- \$175,000 to move the anticipated 2018 ambulance replacement date to 2015 and purchase (or re-chassis) two ambulances rather than one.

Other items that were considered but not selected at this time included updated defibrillators, personnel management software system, battalion chief, switching to a full-time accountant, or putting money into reserves for a new radio system.

Any grants received for these suggested purposes would cause the funds to be available and reconsidered for other uses, Truty said, adding that the district has \$500,000 to \$750,000 in grant requests pending. Whatever changes are adopted would be handled through an amended budget process later this year.

Board/staff communication subcommittee

Truty told the board that Lt. Janaka Branden and Lt. Franz Hankins, president of Local

4319 of International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) union, have volunteered to be the two union representatives on the new board/staff communication subcommittee created to provide a method for dialogue between staff and the board. Office Manager Jennifer Martin has agreed to be the non-union member of this subcommittee, an addition added by the conversion from the existing personnel manual to the Lexipol system discussed at the Jan. 28 meeting. See www.ocn.me/v15n2.htm#tlmfpd0128.

On March 25, Shirk and Director Larry Smith volunteered to be the two board members on the subcommittee and were approved unanimously. The subcommittee will need to make a report to the full board subsequent to any meeting, and any matters to be discussed must go through the chain-of-command through the fire chief prior to any subcommittee meeting, Truty said.

Chief's report

Truty said that in the next few weeks, TLMFPD and Donald

Wescott FPD plan to meet to think about working together in an operational consolidation before any discussion of an organizational merger is begun.

Financial report

Treasurer Hildebrandt presented the financial report that had been prepared by accountant Frances Esty. As of Feb. 28, overall expenses were 1 percent below budget. The total cash balance in five accounts was \$1.8 million. The directors unanimously approved the financial report.

The board went into executive session at 8:55 p.m. to discuss personnel matters. Shirk said they did not plan to make any announcements after the executive session.

The next meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 22 in the Monument Town Hall at 645 Beacon Lite Road. Meetings are usually held the fourth Wednesday of each month. For information, contact Jennifer Martin at 719-484-0911.

Lisa Hatfield can be reached at lisahatfield@ocn.me.

Lewis-Palmer D-38 Board of Education, March 19

Board discusses strategic plan, new appointments, preliminary budget

By Harriet Halbig

On March 19, the Lewis-Palmer D-38 Board of Education discussed the continuing development of its strategic plan, new appointments to administrative positions, and budget matters leading up to passage of the 2015-16 budget in June.

Strategic plan

Beginning with a board retreat early in the school year and followed by numerous work sessions and meetings with administrative, school, district, and community groups, the board received a first look at the district's strategic plan.

The statement upon which the plan is based is that the reason why we educate is to encourage "local, national, and global stewardship to create strong citizens who will secure a better world."

District Superintendent Karen Brofft said that the former vision for the district was based on academic achievement, community engagement, and development of the whole child. The new emphasis is on healthy, safe, and engaged students. She said that the plan will be reviewed and priorities reexamined on an annual basis.

Director of Curriculum and Professional Development Sheila Beving said that the emphasis this year will be on communications and technology.

Communication with staff and the board were early priorities, followed by communication with community stakeholders.

Community partnerships are being formed that could result in opportunities for internships for students and sponsors for various district activities. Partnerships between families and schools are also being forged.

District communication systems are being improved with the development of a new website and improved availability of board documents to the public. District employees will also be trained to improve their ability to communicate district priorities. District calendars are being simplified. The district is also communicating with local developers to learn of plans for new housing to be able to anticipate the need for new schools.

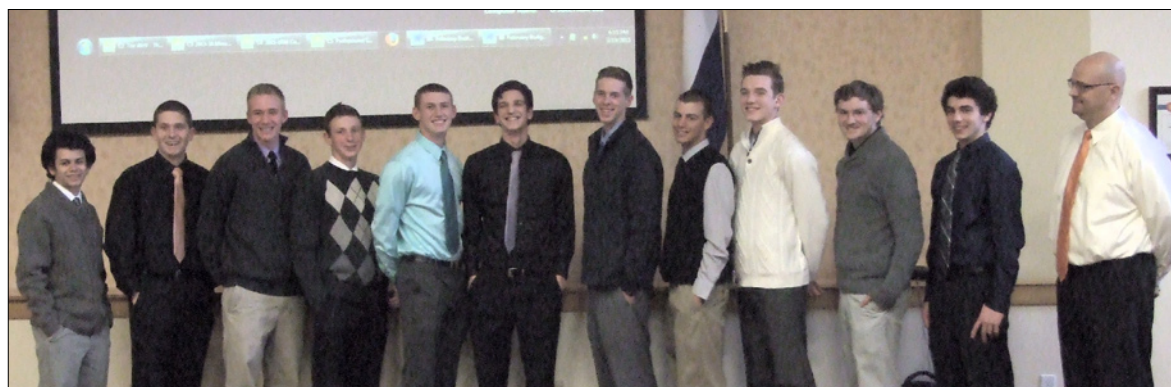
Beving also explained the concept of 21st century learning, which emphasizes critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, character, and citizenship incorporated in lesson plans. Curriculum can be digitized and customized to the individual, offering personalized learning opportunities.

District decisions will be data driven so that they can be evaluated for their effectiveness.

Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Wangeman explained that long-range planning for the district will include examination of capital purchases, facility planning, focal planning, and governance methods. The model of the former Citizens Advisory Committee will be used to prioritize improvements.



Above: DECA national finalists are, from left, Courtney Bushnell (Palmer Ridge High School business teacher and sponsor), Alexis Faeh (PR), Brooke Sveska (PR), Zac Alwais (PR), Ben Kirby (PR), Sam Nesmith (Lewis-Palmer), Cody Leeper (LP), Cheyenne Phillips (LP), Courtney Morris (LP), Chris McGann (PR student participating on LP team), and Mike Diamond (LP business teacher and sponsor). *Photo by Harriet Halbig.*



Above: Members of the Lewis-Palmer basketball team are, from left, Trevor Grooms, Andrew Blomberg, Sam Strasburger, Billy Cook, Charlie Hovasse, Kyle Owens, JT Shepherd, Colin Cicere, Thomas MacNabb, Michael Johnston, Sam Todd, and Coach Bill Benton. *Photo by Harriet Halbig.*

Fiscal planning will be based on a balanced budget and a strong audit committee and stress ongoing dialogue with state legislators to advocate for local control of spending and outcomes that align with the district's vision.

Brofft stressed that this is a

draft document. Timelines and responsibilities have yet to be added.

Board Secretary Robb Pike commented that he is proud of the document and its usefulness as a framework for dialogue between many constituencies. He

said that engagement in the process by parents is encouraged.

New appointments

Brofft announced the appointments of two new high school assistant principals. Kimberly Sandoval, the new assistant principal