Salary decision has to wait

Written by Deb Egenberger
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STILL STRAIGHT
District 20 school board members wanted to make it a little easier for motorists to get into and out of parking spaces in the school's east lot by painting angled lines this summer rather than the perpendicular ones.

But after school superintendent Mike Teahon took his tape measure to parking lots around the area, the board changed its mind.

The curb distance of current spaces is 9 feet. Teahon said by painting angled lines, the spaces would have to be narrowed to 7 feet, 10 inches and six parking stalls would be lost.

"That's just like parking in the Kentucky Fried Chicken lot in North Platte," Teahon said. "It's tight."

To maintain the width of the spaces, the curb distance would have to be extended to 10 feet and that would mean losing 27 to 29 stalls.

"I'm afraid we'd be solving one problem and creating another," said board president Scott France.

Parking spaces in the east lot will remain the same, at least for this school year.

School board will take another month to set pay.

District 20 teachers, administrators and staff will have to wait another month to know how much their paychecks will change, if at all, for the coming school year.

Despite a tentative agreement reached through the negotiations process with the Gothenburg Education Association, school board members voted Monday afternoon to table action on the agreement which would set salaries and benefits for certified staff members.

The board also tabled action on salaries for administrative and non-certified staff after a 51-minute closed session to discuss both salary items.

The first payroll of the new school year will be written Sept. 20. As long as the board accepts the agreement before that date, the new pay scale can be implemented without a hitch.

The next District 20 board meeting is scheduled for Sept. 13.

Last year the base pay for teachers increased 4.3% from $28,100 to $29,300.

Administrators saw a 4.8% hike last budget year and non-certified staff received a 5.8% raise.

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In other business, the board conducted a public hearing before voting to amend the budget for the 2009-10 school year to accommodate changes in the bond fund.

District 20 refinanced the 2005-series construction bonds in February allowing for approximately $600,000 in payment savings due to lower interest rates.

In doing that, superintendent Mike Teahon said the budget must be amended to meet the government's clerical requirements.

In other action, the board:

    -   transferred $300,000 from the general fund to the bond fund to retire long-term debt and $200,000 into the depreciation fund to be used for the purchase of vehicles, roofs or instructional equipment. Board members also approved putting $15,000 from the general fund into the activities fund to cover the cost of uniforms and equipment. Teahon said these are annual transfers planned for at the beginning of the school year but not made until just prior to the next budget year.
    -   re-affirmed the district's policies on student fees and parental involvement following separate public hearings in which no one spoke. The student fees policy outlines the maximum fees that may be charged to students and the kinds of supplies and materials they are expected to provide. The parental involvement policy defines the process parents must follow when reviewing textbooks and curriculum, visiting classrooms, issuing complaints, etc.
    -   designated superintendent Teahon as the district representative for federal and state programs in 2010-11.
    -   voted to continue offering stipends to participants and instructors in the Swede Teacher Academy, a 10-session program designed for staff development of teachers in the district three years or less. Participants receive $57.50 per session with a $230 bonus for successful completion. Instructors get $115 per session. Total cost for the program is approximately $20,000.
    -   approved the purchase of 20 laptop computers with a mobile cart for the high school media center, 10 laptops for the elementary media cart, one laptop for the elementary technology assistant, 10 replacement machines and miscellaneous repairs and upgrades at a approximate total cost of $56,000.
    -   adopted two new board policies. The first allows new staff members to request half of their first paycheck in September at the first of the month and the other half on the normal 20th delivery. The other policy covers student restraint and seclusion and is in response to a federal bill passed in March. It sets guidelines for when restraint may be used on a student and when

isolation is an appropriate response to student behavior.

- approved requests for the following students to option out of the district—seventh grader Madison Gilg and 10th grader Hannah Gilg into Cozad.