

## Salaries settled; School faculty to get 4% increase

Written by Elizabeth Barrett  
Thursday, 16 September 2010 16:33 -

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**DIST. 20 BUDGET UP 5.5%**

District 20 board members approved a spending plan for Gothenburg Public Schools Monday night that increases 5.5% over last year.

Superintendent Mike Teahon said salaries and benefits totaling an estimated \$70,000 make up the bulk of the \$8,883,000 general fund budget.

The tax request rises 8.8% to \$5,121,000 but the levy drops from 1.16 to 1.15. That means tax bills for homeowners won't increase if their property valuation remains the same.

The board had a hearing for both the school budget and tax request before its regular meeting but no one from the public spoke.

To maintain the levy, the building fund—used for the purchase of or improvement to school facilities—was lowered by \$264,510.

Valuation in the district increased by about \$0 million to \$444,882,514 which reduces the amount of state aid the school will receive.

That and about \$500,000 in stimulus money presented challenges in creating the budget, Teahon said, since stimulus funds will be eliminated in a couple of years.

District 20 teachers will not be in limbo this fall when it comes to a pay and benefit package.

During their meeting Monday night, District 20 school board members approved a settlement with the Gothenburg Education Association that boosts teachers's salaries and insurance 4%.

Base pay for new teachers will increase 4.8% or \$1,400, from \$29,300 to \$30,700.

During last year's negotiations, the salary package for teachers was unresolved until Oct. 28. Because yearly contracts begin Sept. 1, faculty members were paid the difference through a special payroll for September and October.

Teachers employed for more than a year in the district are compensated according to their position on the pay scale based on years in the district and education beyond a bachelor's degree.

Nate Wyatt, head negotiator for the board, described the settlement as a compensation package that allows the district to attract quality applicants.

"That's one of the goals of the district," Wyatt said.

Superintendent Mike Teahon said the package is based on comparability studies of schools of similar size which are located within a similar geographic area to Gothenburg.

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GEA president Heather Franzen said she was pleased with the package.

Last year's increase for teachers was 5.9%.

In other action, the board approved a salary/benefit increase of 4.9% for administrative staff and a 4.8% hike for non-certified staff or employees who don't teach students.

Teahon said the non-certified package is based on

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