

Lewis-Palmer D-38 Board of Education special meeting and work session, Feb. 4

Board discusses use of Grace Best, potential bond issue

By Harriet Halbig

The Board of Education of Lewis-Palmer D-38 dis-

cussed options for the use or demolition of Grace Best Education Center and showed support for a potential ballot initiative for a bond in 2019 at its special meeting and work session on Feb. 4.

Grace Best

Board Vice President Tiffney Upchurch said consideration of safety and program use were foremost in deciding how to proceed concerning Grace Best. She said that the community wants to see a tangible result of the discussion.

Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Wangeman said the newer part of the building is used for the Homeschool Enrichment Academy, the Transitions program, and the district's robotics program. The old home economics classroom is used for the Transitions program and the gym is rented out frequently. The older part of the building houses the science distribution center, storage, and excess furniture and technology.

Wangeman pointed out that the district offered detailed information on the facility in the local newspapers the previous month. Upchurch wondered how

much longer the decision could be delayed.

Superintendent Karen Brofft said the building is inspected by the state regularly, and Wangeman said that there is an asbestos review every six months.

Treasurer Chris Taylor said all architects who were consulted said the building could not be used to increase the district's capacity and that Monument Academy, after touring the building and consulting with architects, declined to use it.

Board Secretary Mark Pfoff commented that using part of the new section as a magnet school would require relocating the current programs. Brofft agreed, saying that the district would need to rent space elsewhere for the current programs.

When asked whether some classrooms in the old section could be used for online education, Brofft said that the community would expect further mitigation of asbestos.

During the following discussion, the board considered tearing down the old part of the building or selling it. Upchurch said that these were the alternatives favored by the community during a D-38 deliberates session.

Brofft said that, were the board to vote to sell the property, it would have to do so at a reduced price due to the asbestos. Board President Matthew Clawson said that, should the board sell the property, it would lose control over the use of it.

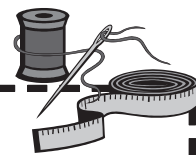
Upchurch said the board should have the estimated cost of demolition at their fingertips. The most recent estimate was \$1.3 million. She wants the community to know that the board carefully considered whether to make this investment.

Pfoff commented that the building currently serves a purpose. As a member of the board when Grace Best was moved to the Bear Creek location, he said that there was no intention to make it back into a school. The intention was always to have two middle schools. He said that many parents also were in favor of closing Grace Best at the time.

No vote was taken on action regarding this issue. The consensus was that the property is serving a useful purpose and it would be unwise to invest in its demolition.

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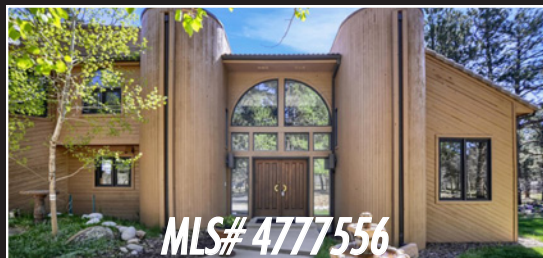
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