

Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education, June 14

# Board approves energy plan, Grace Best plan, annual budget

By Harriet Halbig

The Board of Education of Lewis-Palmer D38 passed a number of resolutions at its June 14 meeting.

The first of these authorized the beginning of implementing a plan from Schneider Electric Buildings America Inc. to implement several improvements in district properties, including adding security vestibules at three schools, improving lighting by replacing all incandescent lighting with LED lighting, replacing the boiler at Lewis-Palmer Middle School and the chiller at Lewis-Palmer High School, and various other projects.

This plan has been under discussion since last December when Schneider did an extensive survey of district employees and community members to learn of their concerns. In their detailed proposal, Schneider representatives explained that the district could see sufficient energy savings to pay for the project over the term of its financing. If this does not occur, Schneider will pay the difference.

Initially the district will pay \$1.8 million to construct security vestibules at Lewis-Palmer Elementary School, Prairie Winds Elementary School, and Lewis-Palmer Middle School. This work will begin soon and be completed before the beginning of the new school year.

Financing will be through Sterling National Bank at a rate not to exceed 2.497%. The district can prepay if they wish to do so.

## Grace Best resolution

Following several months of meetings and discussions and the formation of a 40-member steering committee, the board voted to approve the beginning of Phase 2 of the Grace Best Plan. Phase 1 developed a series of alternate approaches to the use of the building, ranging from doing nothing to renovating the entire facility to demolishing the oldest section and remodeling the rest.

The resolution authorizes Superintendent KC Somers to explore design possibilities for the facility after the oldest section, facing Jefferson Street, is demolished, with the understanding that all programs currently using the site (Homeschool Enrichment Academy, Bearbotics robotics team, Transitions program) will stay in place while seeking flexibility in future uses. This phase of the plan will involve consulting with architects, contractors, and/or con-

sultants.

Anser Advisory and Cooperative Strategies, the consultants on Phase 1, will remain involved. There was no proposed date for beginning the construction.

## Budget confirmed

Before the meeting, there was an opportunity for public comment on the proposed budget for 2021-22. Two teachers, expressed dissatisfaction with the proposed salary increases. The budget includes a \$500 step increase plus 1.5% for teachers. The individuals said that teachers in surrounding districts are receiving a 6% increase and as a result a number of teachers are choosing to go elsewhere. If the district wants to maintain its quality of education, they said, it must do better.

A few comments regarding the budget were made by outgoing Chief Financial Officer Shanna Seelye. Participating by phone, Seelye said the Per Pupil Operating Revenue expected for the coming

year has increased from last month's estimate and that the proposed funding transfer to the food services department may prove to be unnecessary. Food services had been self-supporting for several years due to the ability to sell a la carte items in the cafete-

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