

and there was a board coffee earlier in the month in the morning. The next board coffee will be held in the afternoon to allow a different demographic to attend.

Upchurch said the discussion of steps to react to growth continues. She told the board that the DAAC had recommended a bond on this year's ballot, but with a new superintendent and three potential new board members it was decided it would be difficult to give the campaign enough attention. (See *article on the board special meeting on page 14.*) One problem addressed is getting the community to see the urgency of the need for a new school.

The Strong D38 group continues to meet and is viewed as a resource by the board. The group was to meet later in the week and was keeping the community informed of its activities on Facebook and in *OCN*.

In answer to a question about whether choice-in students could stay, Assistant Superintendent Cheryl Wangeman said yes, but that no out-of-district preschoolers would be admitted.

Upchurch briefed the committee on the superintendent search. The intention is to have a finalist by March 18, at which time negotiations on a con-

tract will begin.

Executive Director of Personnel and Student Services Bob Foster said that the flyer advertising the position would be on the district website within 24 hours, and the district would begin to enlist community members for the focus groups and interview teams.

Upchurch said that the 2019 state legislative session began a few days earlier and that over 100 bills involve education including mental health, income tax credits, BEST (Building Excellent Schools Today) grants for technology, and free full-day kindergarten.

The committee approved the school calendar for the 2019-20 school year.

In response to a question from a committee, Foster said that there are always problems regarding student athletes' ability to attend graduation as the baseball season continues into that time frame.

Alternative education opportunities for secondary students

Lewis-Palmer High School Principal Tony Karr and Palmer Ridge High School Vice Principal Kim Sandoval enumerated various alternative opportunities for secondary students in the

district.

They said that such opportunities make it possible for students in Advanced Placement (AP) classes and sports to adjust their schedules to meet graduation requirements. Among the alternatives are:

- Advanced Placement classes taught by certified teachers in D-38 schools may earn college as well as high school credit.
- Career Start and Work-based training earn credit toward post-secondary and workforce readiness. Work-based training equates a certain number of hours on the job with high school credit. Students in the career-start program can earn credits toward associate degrees in such areas as zookeeping, firefighting, welding, and construction trades.
- Online classes make it possible for students to take classes that fit into their individual schedules. Students can still be on campus part time and online part time.
- Students can take classes at district schools part time and at local colleges part time.
- Project Lead the Way is a problem-oriented program. Lewis-Palmer High School offers biomedical

training, and Palmer Ridge offers engineering training.

DAAC Co-chair Deb Goth asked whether the district pays the tuition for programs involving college attendance. The answer was yes.

Karr and Sandoval said to consult with guidance counselors for further information on these programs.

Nominating committee

Goth said a nominating committee for a new co-chair needs to be formed. She offered a sign-up sheet for anyone interested in serving.

The committee should create a slate for co-chair, Goth said. Law requires that a DAAC co-chair may not be on a Building Advisory Committee and may not be an employee of the district.

One of the co-chairs must be a parent.

Goth cautioned that this is a two-year commitment as one of the co-chairs cycles out each year.

The next meeting of the District Accountability Advisory Committee will be at 7 p.m. Feb. 12 at Lewis-Palmer Elementary School, 1315 Lake Woodmoor Drive, Monument.

Harriet Halbig may be reached at harriethalb@ocn.me.

El Paso Board of County Commissioners, Jan. 8, 10, 15, 17, and 22

New commissioners sworn in; I-25 gap funding progresses



Above: The new Board of County Commissioners are, from left, Commissioner Stan VanderWerf, Commissioner Cami Bremer, Chair Mark Waller, Vice Chair Longinos Gonzalez, and Commissioner Holly Williams. *Courtesy of the El Paso County Public Information Office.*

By Helen Walklett

January saw the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) welcome two new commissioners and vote for its new leadership. The commissioners also voted to formally accept the federal government grant that will partially fund the expansion of I-25 between Monument and Castle Rock.

New commissioners take office

Ahead of the first BOCC meeting on Jan. 8, newly-elected Commissioners Cami Bremer and Holly Williams took the oath of office at a ceremony in Centennial Hall. Commissioner Williams represents District 1, which encompasses much of the northern part of El Paso County, including Black Forest and much of Monument. This area has been represented for the last eight years by outgoing Commissioner Darryl Glenn.

Later that day, the commissioners voted unanimously to change the

title of the president and president pro tempore of the board to chair and vice chair and to appoint Commissioner Mark Waller as chair and Commissioner Longinos Gonzalez as vice chair. Waller said, "I appreciate the trust my colleagues have placed in me to lead this board....This board, with ongoing help from our partners, both public and private, will continue to grow the community in a positive direction."

I-25 gap project funding

At their Jan. 22 meeting, the commissioners voted 4-1 to formally accept the \$65 million federal Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant that will partially fund the I-25 gap project between Monument and Castle Rock. The grant application was approved in 2018 and construction on the project has already begun. The commissioners' decision finalizes the legal agreement between county and the U.S. Department of Transportation and allows the county to accept the funds.

Commissioner Stan VanderWerf voted no, voicing concerns that the county is the only local public agency to sign the agreement when other public agencies are also to contribute to the \$35 million in local match funding for the project. He said he would have preferred to have seen something in writing from the other agencies acknowledging that they are fiscal partners in the project ahead of the vote. Lori Seago, senior assistant county attorney, said it was her interpretation that the county was under no obligation to make up any shortfall if funding was not forthcoming from other entities.

The county will now work with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to develop an intergovernmental agreement between the two to set out their responsibilities regarding county funding and project management.

The Jan. 22 vote followed an executive session on Jan. 15 where the commissioners received legal advice regarding the award of the INFRA grant award and intergovernmental

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