

noted the district is one of the best in the state but said that at his community meetings, residents have noted the dis-

trict faces a few challenges, including:

- Meeting the needs of the diverse student population.

- Dealing with increasing class sizes based on population growth.
- Fiscal responsibility.
- Staff retention and morale.
- Civil conversations and respect with one another.

Somers said that at the Aug. 26 meeting, the school board will be voting to put a single-purpose bond of \$28.985 million onto the November election ballot to build a new elementary school next to Bear Creek Elementary. Then, Bear Creek would revert back to a middle school for sixth through eighth grades, which will free up more space in every elementary school. See related D-38 article on page 1.

During public comments, resident Amy Shertzer encouraged the BOT to create a town resolution in support of the school's bond request. D38 Board Treasurer Chris Taylor also asked for more partnership from the town to show how they value education.

Somers pointed to an 11% growth rate over the last five years and cited a Metrostudy report that determined the district will add 1,539 students over the next 10 years as reasons for the bond. Taylor spoke briefly, telling the BOT that last year's failed attempt to pass a bond was due to "a lack of a pro statement in the (Ballot Analysis) blue book."

Bornstein thanked Somers and asked him to explain his statement that the bond would be cost neutral to the average homeowner. Somers didn't provide official numbers at the meeting but intended to send a more detailed spreadsheet to the board showing the actual expected tax changes.

Mayor Don Wilson clarified that the bond would just be used to build the new elementary school but won-

dered if the district already has the operating funds for the new school. Somers said that's something the district is looking at very closely and will be dependent on funding they receive from the state.

When Bornstein asked about reverting Grace Best Education Center back to a school, Somers said it's a complex issue that would not be sustainable as a long-term solution to overcrowding and would be an extremely costly conversion.

Town manager's report

Foreman reported the following in his August report to the board:

- The Economic Development Committee Strategic Plan with Triview is exploring potential new businesses.
- The Finance Department created new budget spreadsheets in preparation for 2020 department budget discussions.
- Four new officers are going through the Police Department's field training program.
- Planning staff is working to fund the widening of Jackson Creek Parkway from Higby Road to Highway 105 for 2020.
- Human resources and the Police Department are working together to hire a code enforcement officer, a records technician and an evidence technician.
- Police overtime has decreased by 80 hours this pay period.

During public comments, resident Ken Kimple, who is also on the Planning Commission, asked questions about measurable short- and long-term goals and about the town's strategic plan. His specific concerns included whether the town had its own transportation plan to



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