

line. This would cover the small number of families who preferred online work and be available in case any quarantines were required. The board unanimously approved the proposal.

- The board discussed and unanimously approved MA bylaws as well as the following board policies: 1519 Advertising in School Publications; 1521 Student Fees; 1522 Donating to MA; 1523 Class Size; and 1528 Homebound Instruction. Policy 1520

Public Comment to the Board was postponed until the June meeting. MA board policies can be found at <http://bit.ly/ma-bd-policies>.

- The board agreed to wait until August to resume in-person meetings and discussed having their annual board retreat in June and moving the June board meeting due to scheduling conflicts.

The next meeting has been moved to Monday, June 14 at

6 p.m. The MA School Board usually meets at 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month. Meetings may be held in-person and/or via Zoom, which will be streamed to the MA YouTube channel. For more information on how to join the meeting in person or virtually or to submit a public comment, see <https://bit.ly/ma-boe>.

Jackie Burhans can be reached at jackieburhans@ocn.me.

Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education, April 6 and 26, May 4 and 17

Progress on energy audit and Grace Best Facility Master Plan

By Harriet Halbig

Please note that the regular April meeting of the Board of Education was held after the copy deadline for the May issue of OCN. Reports on the energy audit and the Grace Best Master Plan were delivered at all meetings and therefore will be combined in this article.

Schneider Electric energy audit

The board contracted with Schneider Electric early this year to prepare an independent grade audit of the district's energy use. This audit complies with the district's strategic plan by providing a safe environment for students, exhibiting fiscal responsibility, and fostering communication with the stakeholders.

Schneider proposes to improve health and safety by upgrading air circulation systems, replacing lighting with LEDs, and adding security vestibules at Prairie Winds Elementary, Lewis-Palmer Elementary, and Lewis-Palmer Middle School.

Some funding may come from federal emergency funds and from state Build Excellent Schools Today (BEST) grants.

Schneider estimates that the work performed will pay for itself through energy savings over the 20-year span of financing. The company guarantees that this will be the case or the district will be reimbursed for the difference.

The district must provide \$1.8 million before work begins and will decide on financing later. It is hoped the security vestibules can be constructed during this summer.

Board President Chris Taylor commented that the addition of security features will not result in savings, but that the energy savings will help to fund the security upgrades.

For further information about the energy audit, please see the district website, lewispalmer.org.

Grace Best Facility Master Plan

Work on the Grace Best Facility Master Plan has been ongoing since December 2020. A steering committee of 42 members, including district staff and community members, has met several times. Over 550 community members responded to a survey on the subject, and the contractors involved, Anser Advisory and Cooperative Strategies, presented five alternatives as the next steps in the process. Phase One of the process will be completed when the board approves which alternative to pursue.

This project was undertaken to maximize use of district facilities. Looking at demographic figures provided by Western Demographics, it was determined that the enrollment in the district is not growing at the pace forecast when the last mill levy override was offered. It is now believed that all district schools will not exceed 100 per cent capacity until at least 2025. The only school approaching full capacity at this time is Palmer Ridge High School.

In response to this, it is proposed that the district will remove the modular classrooms installed in 2018. These classrooms are at Bear Creek Elementary, Kilmer Elementary, and Lewis-Palmer Middle School. Remov-

ing them would result in increased safety for the students and cost savings in rent. If the modulars are needed in the future, the infrastructure will be maintained to reduce the cost of reinstallation.

Meetings of the steering committee for the Grace Best Facility Master Plan began with the stipulation that those programs currently housed in the building (Home School Enrichment Academy, Transitions, Bearbotics) would continue to be housed there.

Grace Best was built in three sections. The first was completed in 1959, the second in 1979, the third in 1988. The oldest portion is on the west side of the property and constitutes about half of the total square footage of the facility.

At its May 5 meeting, the members of the steering committee were asked to vote for their first and second choice preference for the next steps in the process:

The five options offered were:

- 1 Demolish the entire building for \$1.475 million
- 2 Upgrade to code compliance the entire building for \$12.1-\$12.7 million
- 3 Full remodel (new systems, new finishes) for \$17.1-\$17.7 million
- 4 Demolish 32,000 square feet and fully remodel remaining 30,000 square feet for \$9.1-\$9.33 million
- 5 Full building replacement for \$26.4-\$28.4 million

All estimates include \$750,000 for removal of asbestos-containing materials.

Estimates were sought from several local general contractors.

The steering committee voted a strong preference for option 4, to demolish the oldest part of the building and remodel the rest.

Regarding proposed use of the space, it was agreed that the facility remain an educational facility, offering career and technical training as well as housing the current users. Flexible spaces will be included to offer classroom use or community use.

During the May 17 meeting, the board had a lengthy discussion about the project. Treasurer Ron Schwarz asked whether the district had considered selling the building as is.

Secretary Tiffiney Upchurch said that the community considers Grace Best to be an asset which should be used. The district's property along Jefferson Street continues from the corner of Second Street south past the bus barn. Grace Best is in the center.

Director Matthew Clawson said that the district does not need the extra capacity at this time and does not have the funds to complete the project. He recommended approaching the project in a series of steps.

Regarding cost estimates, Superintendent KC Somers said he hoped an estimate could be obtained by the end of summer. He commented that a bond is not the only option for financing.

A resolution will be drafted for the board's June 1 special meeting, and the issue would come to a vote on June 14.

For detailed information on the project, please see

lewispalmer.org/gracebestplan.

Preliminary budget discussions

Chief Financial Officer Shana Seelye reported to the board at each of the past meetings regarding the budget for the 2021-22 school year.

Following a process that allows the board to adjust the budget throughout the year, Seelye said she began by compiling budgets based on a per pupil operating revenue (PPOR) of \$7,500, \$8,000, and \$8,500.

The budget proposed at the May 17 meeting is based on PPOR of \$8,429 and projected enrollment of 6,378, a decline of 139 from this year.

Some notable proposed expenditures include replacement of the chiller at Lewis-Palmer High School, continued work on the geothermal system at Palmer Ridge High School, \$1.1 million for security vestibules mentioned above as part of the energy audit, and a new boiler for Lewis-Palmer Middle School (hopefully offset by a BEST grant, now in progress).

The funding of the geothermal project is offset in part by a settlement with the manufacturer, and \$63,000 from Woodmoor Water and Sanitation for purchase of an easement.

Taylor said that cash in lieu of property from local developers should not be used for this purpose but should be retained in the building fund for future use.

In response to a public comment earlier in the meeting, Upchurch commented that funds should be dedicated to improving drainage of the Palmer Ridge baseball field and increased compensation for staff.

Somers responded that the proposed increase in compensation is as much as the district can afford. Compensation is a recurring expense. The issue will be revisited after the October count determines the district's revenue.

Upchurch requested a delay in voting on salary schedules in the consent agenda until the public could comment. Somers responded that contracts could not be signed without a salary schedule and reminded her that the district works on a flexible schedule in budgeting.

During public comments, a number of individuals spoke of what they said was the physical and psychological harm caused by requiring masks for children. Some also protested the district's recommendation to vaccinate children, saying they don't think the COVID vaccine is properly approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

The Lewis-Palmer D38 Board of Education's next meeting is at 6 p.m. June 14 in the district's Learning Center, 146 Jefferson St., Monument. Seating is limited due to COVID 19 regulations. All meetings are livestreamed and accessible through the district website, lewispalmer.org, Board of Education, Meetings.

Harriet Halbig can be contacted at harriethalbig@ocn.me.

Woodmoor Improvement Association, April 28 and May 26

Board discusses Furrow Road traffic, trash service

By Jackie Burhans

The Woodmoor Improvement Association (WIA) met on April 28 and May 26. The April meeting occurred after the OCN deadline and is being covered in this article.

The board addressed an inquiry about providing trash service, expressed support for traffic calming on Furrow Road, and appointed a new board member to fill a vacancy.

Traffic calming on Furrow Road extension

Board member Rick DePaiva reported that WIA has been participating with other homeowners associations (HOAs) south of Furrow Road to support traffic-calming measures for the proposed extension of Furrow Road south to Higby Road. WIA signed on to a letter created by the HOAs that are primarily affected to express its support for measures such as striping, stop signs, traffic circles, offset roads, and crosswalks. WIA doesn't support speed bumps because they cause problems for snow plowing.

The goal is to prevent Furrow Road from becoming a speedway. They noted there was a public hearing on May

6 and that there was a petition with about 270 signatures sponsored by El Paso Safe Streets Alliance (EPSSA). The website by EPSSA with information about the extension and its impacts, which is part of the recently approved Grandwood Ranch project, can be found at <https://ceds.org/epssa>.

Trash service

An owner who attended the meeting asked if WIA had ever considered offering trash service, saying that it might be able to negotiate a good deal and cut down on the number of companies coming in the neighborhood. The board noted that they had looked into this several years back but found that the companies want the HOA to bill residents and pay whether or not the residents pay their dues. President Brian Bush also noted that the current dues are \$267 per year and that if dues go above \$600 to \$650 per year, the HOA would be subject to Sequoia regulations, which are costly and take a lot of time and energy. He also noted that not all of the 3,070 owners pay their dues and that sometimes companies get sold and customers may not be happy

with the new owners.

Board turnover

Bush announced that Bert Jean, director of Common Areas, had stepped down because he has taken a new job in Denver and will be moving there. The board appointed Steve Cutler to serve out the remaining term. Cutler and his wife have lived in Woodmoor for 18 years, and he retired three years ago as sales manager for a snack company in Denver.

Board highlights

- Residents are encouraged to sign up for emails and Woodmoor Public Safety (WPS) emails by scrolling to the bottom of <http://woodmoor.org> and entering their email address.
- Open fires and fireworks are not allowed in Woodmoor, and residents can be fined \$5,000.
- WIA is looking for tenants interested in renting office space in The Barn now that the pandemic is easing up.
- Bush wrote a letter to state Rep. Terri Carver and