

School District 20 budget passes without a public peep

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

Friday, 18 September 2009 19:12 - Last Updated Friday, 18 September 2009 19:21

TAX REQUESTS	
District 20's tax asking is \$27,488 higher than six years ago.	
YEAR	AMOUNT
2009-10	\$4,665,829
2008-09	\$4,450,430
2007-08	\$4,463,254
2006-07	\$4,393,279
2005-06	\$4,397,742
2004-05	\$4,391,254

Board approves 2009-10 budget.

As usual, no one from the public showed up to speak about District 20's budget or tax request Monday night.

After separate hearings on the school district's 2009-10 budget and tax request, board members passed a \$8,431,700 budget.

Taxpayers will be expected to pay \$4,665,829 collectively to support the budget—4.8% more than last year's request.

That is despite a .7% drop in the mill levy—from 1.204 to 1.195 because of increased valuation.

The new budget grows to \$8,431,700 for a 5.6% increase over 2008-09 expenditures.

In a letter in the budget document, superintendent Mike Teahon described the document as a public relations instrument in explaining to the public why certain expenditures are necessary and why specified amounts are requested.

"It may represent a compromise between what the staff requests for instructional materials and what principals think they can really use," Teahon wrote, "between what administrators want to spend and what the community thinks it should spend and between what a fiscally dependent board thinks it needs and what community financial officers declare it should accept."

Teahon: Budget reasonable

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Teahon told the board it was a conservative budget in a low-spending district.

New this year and last is stimulus money from the federal government.

Teahon noted that the district received \$341,471 in stabilization funds which were part of the \$2.8 million federal portion of state aid the district received.

“There are no guarantees that the state will replace the stabilization money with state money in two years when the federal money goes away,” he said.

The district also received \$306,158 in federal stimulus money for Title I and special education.

Some of the special education funds will be spent on the recent renovation of Dudley Elementary while other stimulus funds will be used to pay for equipment, supplies and the special education program.

Fund holders approved

In other action, the board designated Gothenburg State Bank, First State Bank and Tier One Bank as official depositories of district funds.

During the superintendent’s report, Teahon said the district’s application in the “Cash for Clunkers” program was approved Friday.

The board in August voted to buy a 2009 Chevrolet Impala from Pony Express Chevrolet by trading in a 15-passenger van under the program in which new vehicle buyers receive money to

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trade in older “clunkers” for newer, fuel-efficient ones.

With approval, the district will receive a \$2,500 rebate and \$4,500 for the van trade-in which brings the cost of the car to \$17,381 instead of \$21,881.

More district business

In other business, the board:

- approved students optioning into the district who include senior Stormie Bonifas from Lexington and the following Cozad students—Caleb Geiger, ninth grade; Cameron Geiger, sixth grade; and Connor Geiger, third grade. Students allowed to option out of the district include Bailey Malcom, sixth grade and Blake Malcom, first grade, both to Cozad, and Nathanyal Silos, third grade, to Brady.

- declared several school items surplus so they can be disposed of by Teahon. Bid will be solicited for items determined to have value. The public can view and bid on the items Wednesday (today) through Friday in the Dudley Elementary gym. They include television stands, computer carts, tables, shelving, VCRs, chalkboards, basketball backboards, overhead projectors, desks and a podium.

- found out about the district’s technology plan from technology director Jo Wiggins and technology coordinator Lori Long who brought along recently purchased iPod Touches for school board members and others to follow during a presentation. The equipment works as a portable media player, personal digital assistant and more for students to use.

- learned that the move into newly renovated classrooms and media center went well on Sept. 4 and that data and telephone lines in the new areas still need work. Officials are still waiting on new shelving in the media center.

- were informed that Kressy Ristine will help Dan Yilk coach eighth grade girls basketball and that new teacher Tara Weaver will assist Melissa Buss with seventh-grade girls basketball.

- were told that 73 kindergartners started all-day classes Sept. 8—the largest grade in the elementary which has 492 students.

- heard that teachers are gearing up for a new statewide test in reading followed by a similar one in math. Administrators and some teachers will attend a conference about it.

- listened to a report about access time in the junior-senior high school which has received favorable comments from some teachers. Students are expected at school at 8:15 a.m. this year instead of 8 a.m. so those struggling with classes and others can meet with teachers before school starts.

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- were made aware that the first Teacher's Academy—a new program for new teachers who are mentored by veteran staff and others—was a success. Teachers meet once a month in the evening for the academy

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