

School board may have to bid window project a third time

Written by Deb Egenberger
Friday, 17 August 2012 13:49 -

The support staff is hired, the lunch prices have been set and iPad tablet computers are ready for teachers and 12th graders.

Brady school board members checked off the final to-do items for the 2012-13 school year during their regular monthly meeting Monday night.

Classes begin at 8 a.m. on Thursday.

Action items included approval of activity and faculty handbooks, adoption of activity pass costs, setting meal prices and authorizing payment of \$22,000 to Educational Service Unit 16 for distance learning services.

The board also transferred \$30,000 into the depreciation fund to cover anticipated bus upgrades, added \$2,500 to the employee benefit fund and voted to pay CG Architects of North Platte \$6,000 for work on the window replacement project.

The window project has stalled again, said superintendent Bill Porter, because specifications have changed enough to bid the project again.

Separating the window replacement into essentially two projects—upper level and lower level—has attracted the interest of additional contractors.

“They might come in lower yet,” Porter said.

An original bid of \$249,800 by Steele’s Roofing and Construction was submitted in April with another bid from Steele’s at \$160,175 presented for a portion of the project in May.

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Porter said the district will have to wait for further direction from the architectural firm.

In other action, the board approved work agreements and wages for support staff.

Board member Mary Ellen Mann questioned whether the board was offering enough salary for non-certified staff.

“Are we paying enough for what we get?” she questioned.

Porter agreed support staff salaries lag behind comparable positions at neighboring schools but said the district could not afford to increase pay.

In a related issue, board members chose to add a brief special meeting to their budget workshop on Aug. 30 to specifically address the hiring of paraprofessional Veronica Porter, the superintendent’s wife.

She was selected after an interview by school principal Bruce Hird to serve as a teacher’s aide.

The process abided by the board’s policy on nepotism since paraprofessionals are not supervised by the superintendent but it did not necessarily fulfill the state’s statute, according to board member Matt Hatch.

To prevent possible conflict and to cover all state requirements, the board will vote on Veronica Porter’s work agreement prior to the budget workshop set for 6:30 p.m., Aug. 30.

Concerning the budget, the superintendent told the board that preliminary figures show the district will have what it needs financially for the coming school year.

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He said if valuation is certified higher than previous estimates, the district might be able to lower its tax asking.

A public hearing for the 2012-13 budget will be conducted prior to the Sept. 10 board meeting.

In other business, the board:

learned the district has purchased SchoolReach, a parent notification system that works through PowerSchool to communicate school cancellations, schedule changes, emergency alerts and meeting reminders. The system has not yet been activated.

set the non-refundable laptop and tablet computer user fee at \$50 for all 9-12 students.

voted to pay a \$700 annual membership in the Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association and authorized a semi-annual payment of \$5,845 to Kansas State Bank for a bus contract.