



COLBY FREE PRESS

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Brewster board meeting gets off to a fiery start

By JAY KELLEY

Colby Free Press

BREWSTER — The Brewster school board meeting on Monday night started with a small fireworks show when district patron Roy Dixon addressed the board during a public forum.

Dixon asked the board if they had done anything about a suggestion on Dec. 11 by board member John Horney to have the board visit with students.

When board member Neal Rush told Dixon they could not comment during public forum, he replied, "That's ok, I'm on for an executive session. We'll talk about it then."

Board President Greg Mills said Dixon was not on for an executive session, to which Dixon replied, "I called Daryl Ann (Jorgensen, board clerk) two weeks ago and I better be!"

After Mills told Dixon he wasn't on the agenda, Dixon left, saying, "I guess that's what lawyers are for."

Dixon called the *Free Press* this morning and claimed the reason he was left off the agenda was that the board didn't want to discuss problems with morale in the schools.

Dixon has been a vocal critic of the board, Superintendent James Garner and Principal Matt Pounds in the past.

Garner said Dixon was not allowed to speak in an executive session because he had not followed the procedure laid out in board policy.

"We sent a letter to all the parents in the district outlining the procedure, and he also got a copy at the last meeting," said Garner.

Garner added, "The district's policy is to handle any problem at the lowest possible administrative level."

This means that the individuals with the problem need to try to work things out, Garner said.

If that fails, the principal is next, followed by a visit with the superintendent.

Garner said options, if the superintendent can't solve the problem, include writing a letter to the board, being placed on the agenda or speaking to the board in executive session.

As for Dixon, Garner said, "He never followed through on the procedure." Dixon contacted Jorgensen, but never told Pounds, Garner or Mills why he wanted to speak to the board.

"We don't even know whether he wanted to complain or complement," said Garner.

When asked if Dixon would be allowed to speak to the board if he followed channels, Garner said, "Absolutely!"

The board heard from music teacher Denise Schoff that the new drum set approved at the last meeting had arrived and "morale had improved" in the band room.

Schoff also presented the board with bids for new instruments to replace a baritone, single French horn, concert tuba, marching snare drum, marching tri-toms and marching bass drum and tenor sax to replace aging equipment.

The board heard a request from senior Justin Jamison, representing the senior class, for an extension of the current policy of allowing seven days for the senior trip and requiring at least one same sex sponsor for every three students.

Jamison told the board that a trip to Florida and the Caribbean being discussed would take about 10 days. Senior class sponsor Jeanie Johnson also told the board that two couples were available as sponsors for nine boys and four girls.

The board decided to waive the sponsorship requirements, provided that at least four sponsors, two men and two women went on the trip.

The board also decided not to waive the seven day requirement, telling the seniors to look into alternative plans that would not require as much time.

The board also conducted four executive sessions.

The only decision to come out of executive session was to accept the resignation of vocational agriculture teacher Gerald Bernhardt for "personal reasons."

Other executive sessions dealt with student concerns and negotiations. Due to the length of the executive sessions, the board decided to table discussion of inventory and disposal of old athletic uniforms, discussion of the In-School-Suspension policy, a sandwich plan update, the board facility tour update and discussion of the board retreat.

The board agreed to hold a special meeting to finish the agenda on Jan. 15 at 7:30 p.m. in the school library.



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Members of a newly-formed group, "Youth On Board," held their first meeting Monday night for the purpose of bringing together youth and adults in decision making ideas that will benefit everyone. Pictured (left to right) are team members Collin Bielser, Courtney Albers and Jamie Quenzer, along with D'Ette Scholtz, Thomas County Extension Agent, who was one of 30 people attending the presentation.

Bridging the gap

Teen center among needs, meeting told

By PATTY DECKER

Free Press Editor

In an effort to bridge the gap between young people and their adult counterparts, an organizational meeting was held Monday night in Colby. The purpose was to look at ways to involve youth in deciding what types of activities and projects they would like to see happen in their town. One major outcome of the "Youth On Board" meeting was to work toward the development of a teen center in Colby.

"We think the community would benefit from a stronger youth voice and more meaningful youth involvement in decision-making," said Janet Worthy, one of the Colby

Youth On Board team members.

Worthy, along with other team members, spoke to a group of about 30 people, each representing different segments of the community.

Among those groups and organizations were representatives from the city and county government, law enforcement, school district, Community Awareness Team, county extension, tourism and student council members.

Further explaining the idea of why young people should be decision makers, Courtney Albers, a Colby High School student and team member, discussed 14 points. Highlighting some of those ideas, she said young people can offer intelligence and creative thinking, help in the democracy process,

provide insight into what other youth want, play a role in new generation leadership, bring energy and enthusiasm to brainstorming, expand outreach and promote integrity.

Other team members presenting information included Collin Bielser, introductions; Jamie Quenzer, defining adulthood; Heather Morgan, the vision; Doug Finley, things to remember when working with young people; and Valerie Donelan, forming committees, developing objectives.

It was decided by the group to form committees that revolved around the teen center concept, which would require government entities helping in the process.

During the next several weeks, stu-

dents and school officials will look at developing surveys in order to find out what young people want and continue defining specifics.

Additionally, those present were asked what other groups or organizations should be contacted in order to enhance the objectives.

When asked by the adult participants what students needed from this first meeting, the response came back, "adult approval," was all that was necessary for now. As the group explores ideas, members of the community are encouraged to help, said Worthy.

For information or questions, call 462-8152, or any other member of the team.

At commission meeting

Oath administered to Thomas County officers; roads discussed

By MAXINE NELSON

Colby Free Press

Monday's meeting of the Thomas County Commission was highlighted by the ceremony in which officials elected Nov. 7 took the oath of office.

County Clerk Tracey Perkins was sworn in by commission chairman Ron Evans.

Perkins then administered the oath to Donita Applebury, county treasurer; Richard Ress, district magistrate judge; Tom Jones, sheriff; Denny Burke, register of deeds; Glenn Schiffler, district judge; Duane Dawes, county commissioner; and Glen Kersenbrock, county commissioner. County Attorney Allan Taylor was out of town and will be sworn in later.

Evans, who was elected board chair at the last meeting, provided a red, white and blue cake with "Thomas

County 2001" for refreshments.

In other business:

- The commissioners opened bids for 13,000 tons of asphalt to be used on county roads.

- The county accepted the bid of J-Corp. of Hays (formerly Hays Asphalt) for \$4.35 per ton. Other bids were: APAC (formerly Allied) of Hays for \$6.15 per ton; Heft and Sons, Greensburg, \$6 per ton; Venture Corp., Great Bend, \$6.69 a ton; and High Plains Sand of Kanopolis for \$4.85 a ton.

- The commissioners signed a resolution approving a cooperation agreement with Ransom Housing Compliance, LLC of Wichita for a program to assist first time homebuyers with closing costs and down payment assistance for the acquisition of their home. The program will save points on mortgages.

Those interested may contact Tami

Novotny, executive vice-president, Ransom Housing Compliance, 120 S. Market, Suite 200, Wichita, Thomas County Clerk Tracey Perkins, or the Thomas County Economic Development office for detailed information.

- The commissioners read an invitation from Kathi Hapke of Rexford, for a grant check presentation from the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks for the Rexford playground improvement project at 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 13, in the Rexford Community Building. An open house and tea will follow.

- They reviewed tipping fees for the Thomas County Landfill and noted tonnage at the landfill was down some, because people are recycling, and Goodland is no longer bringing any solid waste. Daily average ranged from 13.19 tons in February, to 17.91 in June, with an average of 15.94 tons per

day. The landfill must average less than 20 tons per day to qualify for the arid landfill exemption. Total tipping fee paid in 2000 was \$5,863.81.

- They received the resignation of Kevin Wark from the fair board.

- The board met with Bettie Hamill, custodian, and went into a 15-minute closed session to discuss personnel. No action was taken when the commissioners returned to open session.

- They also went into closed session with Larry Jumper, landfill supervisor, and Chris Bieker, road department supervisor, to discuss salaries. The road department has asked that their salaries be comparable to the salaries of landfill employees.

The commissioners had made some adjustments in salaries at the beginning of the year. No action was taken when the commissioners returned to open session.

- The commissioners opened bids for county auditor from Bill Adams of Colby, and Adams, Brown, Beran and Ball of Hays. At a 9 a.m. meeting today, (Jan. 9) the two bids were reviewed and the commissioners decided to accept the bid from the Hays firm for \$15,600. The Colby bid was for \$23,280.

- The Thomas County Highway Department submitted the following December work report: Work resumed at Fulwider Pit with another 5,390 cubic yards of mix sand produced. The plant was then changed to produce 1,045 yards of sealing sand.

Work in East Hale Township consisted of blading roads. In North Randall, roads were bladed and the township motor grader was serviced and worked on.

Other work consisted of taking tires to Denver for the landfill loader; hand-

patched on County Road 407 south of Levant and County Road 391 south of Brewster; hauled and scattered 72 cubic yards of gravel on County Road 465 south of Rexford; painted in the north and south shops; inventoried shops, yard, vehicles, and equipment; conducted annual vehicle inspections; hauled 242 cubic yards of fine sand to the City of Colby; bladed roads; plowed snow; checked and put up traffic signs; checked and put up 911 signs; and serviced and repaired vehicles and equipment.

The next meeting will be at 9 a.m. Monday.

Leilani Thomas is on the agenda at 10 a.m. to discuss the Community Foundation, an offset from the Chamber of Commerce, which is interested in space in the Thomas County Office Complex. The meeting is open to the public.

Briefly

Weather: Dry, mild

Precipitation doesn't figure into the Colby area weather picture through Friday, says the National Weather Service, but they do caution that precipitation, in the form of either rain or perhaps snow, could occur Saturday and Sunday. Tonight, partly cloudy, lows in the middle 20s and southwest winds 10-20 mph. Wednesday, mostly cloudy, highs 50-55 and southwest winds 5-15 mph. Wednesday night, cloudy, lows in the mid-20s, and Thursday and Friday, continued dry, with lows in the middle 20s and highs in the middle 40s. Monday's high in Colby was 51 and the over-

night low this morning was 13. The soil temperature at the four-inch depth is averaging 32 degrees. There has only been a trace of precipitation so far this month. The records for Jan. 9: 70 in 1916 and -13 in 1973. (The temperature and precipitation are provided by the Northwest Kansas Research-Extension Center, Colby.)

Fair board meeting Thursday

The Thomas County Free Fair Board will meet at 8 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 11, at the 4-H Building, to make plans for the 2001 fair. The county commissioners are expected to

be in attendance, and election of new fair board officers will take place. The meeting is open to the public.

College to take tour today

The Colby Community College Board of Trustees will meet at 5 p.m. today in the board room of the Thomas Hall Administration Building. The board will be taking a tour of campus facilities.

The contract with Ken Mitchell for the mural at the Bedker Memorial Complex is expected to be approved. The Faculty Alliance request for unit redefinition will be dis-

cuss. The request was made at the last meeting, and the board had asked for more information.

The meeting is being held on Tuesday because the college is closed Monday for Martin Luther King's birthday, a federal holiday.

Square dance lessons offered

The Golden Buckle Square Dance Club of Colby is offering beginning square dance lessons if there is an interest in the community, sources said. For information, call (785) 462-2958 or (785) 462-7996.

