

School board says good-bye to members

By Tom Betz
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Two outgoing school board members said their goodbyes and received awards for their service at their last official meeting, saying they had enjoyed being on the board.

Members Marty Melia and Fritz Doke received special awards for their four years of service from Board President Jane Philbrick at a board meeting last Monday.

"It has been an honor and privilege to serve on the board," Doke said, "and great working with everyone."

"It has been a great four years," Melia said, "and good to work with great people. I think you have great people coming in."



Melia

The board planned to meet Monday, the first Monday in July, to reorganize and to swear in the new members elected in April. Philbrick was re-elected along with Andrew House. Replacing Doke and Melia are Chuck Wilkens and John Hendrich.

Later, Superintendent Shelly Angelos said a gas smell had been detected at the high school and the gas had been shut off to search for a leak.

She said a strange smell has been detected at West Elementary, and architect Glenn Strait had come by and suggested it might be good to have Servicemaster, a cleaning firm, take a look.

Angelos said West Principal Verna Milnes said she did not smell

anything, but maintenance supervisor Kenny Studer said he thought there was something. Angelos said Servicemaster would bring in a water sniffer and a smell detector and check the ducts with a camera.

The board agreed it was better to check the building for the safety of the students and staff.

Angelos said a new security system for the technology building, hit by burglars earlier this year, is almost complete. It will cost \$24 a month, she said.

"We were able to replace the stolen computer equipment through our insurance," she said, "but it is worth a lot to have the building security done."

She reported the district had purchased 147 laptop computers on a lease return from another district, and the one the district accepted were in great shape.

Angelos said the new wood came in for the Topside Territory play area, but it was the wrong color, too blond. She said she had looked at it, and felt it was not a good idea to have three different shades of wood.

"We are not going to get to replace the parts at this time," she said. "We will try to see if they can match it better."

"I think we need to look at doing a better plan next year. We would have had the same color material if we had ordered it two years ago."

Melia asked how long the special playground had been in use. Angelos said the information she had it that it was built about 17 years ago.

"It was supposed to last 40 years," Melia said.

Principal Milnes said the playground is not really in bad shape, but isn't really safe. She said there

are lots of splinters and pieces are falling off and being carried into her office.

She said the major problem she sees is in trying to supervise the play area.

"There are lots of places for kids to hide," she said.

"We have made lots of good improvements over the past two years," Angelos said, "but have not changed the base."

"I know the public sentiment is the play area is a real showpiece. We need to find a better plan."

Angelos said Lisa Tomsic had called to say the Crimestoppers was willing to give \$12,000 for a security project, and planned to use the money to help pay for new locks for the schools.

Melia said the district had sought bids for locks on all the buildings, and only had one bid of \$31,947

from Access Control Systems.

Melia said the company sent out representatives who went through all the buildings. He said the firm has done the security locks for the city and the power plant.

Melia said the work would include a master key chart to keep track of who has what key for each building.

"This does not include security cameras?" Philbrick asked.

"No," Angelos said. "This is sort of phase 1 to re-key all the buildings."

House said it was small step but board member Amy Sederstrom said it is needed. House asked noted that keys would be tough to duplicate.

Angelos said having a chart of who has what key will be helpful. She said they do not know how many copies of keys are out now.

Brewster school to face problems

By Jan Katz Ackerman
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Brewster school officials, projects an enrollment drop of eight students this fall, have warned parents the district may have to close some day, and scheduled a planning session for next month to talk about the problem.

"I don't think it's something that will happen this year or next, but it's in the future," said superintendent Sherri Edmundson.

The schools would be better off if every child in the area enrolled at Brewster, they said, but as many as 50 who live in the district or who's parents work there choose to enroll elsewhere, in public or private schools. That costs the district \$350,000 to \$500,000 a year.

Edmundson and board members Carrie Starns, Leisha Carpenter, Donard Allen, Willard Crumrine, Lonnie Selby, Bonnie Holm and Rod Gilley sent a letter to patrons June 20 saying the district is in a "grave" situation.

"I truly don't think people in the community understand how much one child can impact the whole community," Edmundson said, adding that the board has not set an enrollment level or budget amount where it will have to close.

"There is no magic number yet," she said, "not yet, but there might be after that July meeting."

Brewster schools face a loss of eight full-time students for the coming school year, Edmundson said. Enrollment is expected to hover around 97, down from 105 last year. Since the 2000-2001 year, Brewster's enrollment has lost 55 students.

Edmundson said this year the district operated on a budget of \$1.2 million, and losing eight students would have a significant impact.

"Based off this year's state aid and 97 kids, the 2007-2008 budget looks to be down about \$75,000 dollars," she said, "and I went ahead and projected the 2008-2009 budget with 85 kids, and we are down another \$135,000."

Edmundson said over the next two years, the district faces trying to work on a budget of \$210,000 less than the current year and risks closing if things don't turn around.

For each student who attends school in Brewster next fall, she said, the district will receive an estimated \$6,998 in state aid. If a stu-

dent lives more than 2.5 miles from the school, the district will get about \$1,312 in transportation aid.

If a student qualifies for free lunches, the district expects to receive an additional \$1,750 per year, she said, so as enrollment slips away, the district loses \$6,998 to \$10,060 per student.

"That adds up quickly," Edmundson said.

The superintendent said she sees several reasons the district is losing students. She said families are smaller than when the school had 160 students.

"We just don't have as many kids as we had siblings," she said. "For instance, I have four siblings, but only two kids."

Edmundson said she knows seven Brewster students plan to transfer to Heartland Christian School in Colby. She said while she has no problem with parents wanting their children educated in a private school, the decrease hurts Brewster's public school.

Edmundson said around 34 students and six preschoolers who live in the Brewster district do not attend school there cost the district between \$258,926 to \$342,020.

Another nine students and one preschool student are children of staff and coaches who do not attend school in Brewster, creating a potential loss of revenue of between \$62,982 and \$90,540, she said.

Twenty-one students who do not live in the district attend Brewster. Edmundson said should they go away in the future, that would cost the district between \$146,958 and \$211,260 a year.

Brewster's school employs about 40 people, 21 full time. Edmundson said if the school closes, the town's economy would lose \$1.2 million.

"That will have a tremendous impact on this town," she added.

Edmundson said the first step board members will take is to develop a strategy for keeping the school open. The board will set a planning session after the board reorganizes on Monday, and will plan to hold a public forum later in the summer.

"We are going to have a planning meeting in July and set some goals and see where to go for the future," she said. "Then, after that meeting, we'll have a community meeting. Hopefully we can hang on as long as we can."

Quilt to benefit cancer fight



Elwyn Vatcher looked at a quilt which will be auctioned off at the Sherman County Relay for Life on Friday, Aug. 10, at the Goodland High School Track. The quilt, made by Nancy Kear from the front of T-shirts from relays from 2000-2007, is part of

an exhibit on display at the Carnegie Arts Center about the event until Tuesday, July 31.

Photo by Pat Schiefen/The Goodland Star-News

corrections

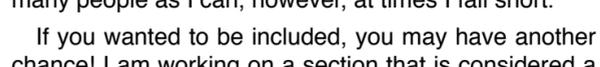
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I wish to thank the businesses that chose to participate in the Progress Edition with either an article submission or an ad or both! Thanks to all of you for making the section what it is... simply put... awesome! I also want to apologize to the businesses that I didn't reach that may have liked to have been included. In being the only advertising representative currently, I strive to include as many people as I can, however, at times I fall short.

If you wanted to be included, you may have another chance! I am working on a section that is considered a paper-wide edition. In other words, each and every one of the NorWest Newspapers will be contributing ads to this section. It is scheduled to be printed in July 20th paper and it will be distributed throughout the northwest Kansas.

Contact me, Jordie Mann, at (785) 899-2338 and we can chat about it a little more.



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