

School board discusses changing grant writers

By Kathryn Burke
The Goodland Star-News
The Goodland School District is looking for grants and at a meeting last Monday members of the school board discussed the grant writer program.

The community grant writer position was created three years ago to give the school district, the City of Goodland, Sherman County and Goodland Regional Medical Center a professional who could research and write grants.

Each agency helps to pay a \$36,000 salary per year to keep the program going, but so far, the schools have seen no results.

The school board decided late last year to keep grant writer Penny Nemechek on the budget at \$750 per month. School Marvin Selby said board members hadn't wanted to make a quick decision this year and gave him instructions to bring the issue back to them in January.

Selby said the school has not won any grants since the position has been created, but Nemechek has written several applications.

"We wrote a big one for the after-school program," he said, adding the school never heard anything after they sent in that application.

Board member Ron Schilling said Nemechek has made some progress and she recently wrote a grant application for the hospital.

"I think overall Penny's doing a good job," he said. "I just thought the schools would be able to get some kind of education grant in two

years."

The city won a \$260,000 grant Nemechek applied for to rebuild downtown intersections, he said.

Selby said he had been approached by a grant writer who promised results. He said the writer asked for \$5,000 up front and then would continue to write applications until one was awarded. The writer mentioned a grant from Federal Emergency Management Agency, he said, that would build a storm shelter for schools without one.

"That would be good for North School," Selby said.

The grant writer, he said, specializes in education grants, has a staff of five and guarantees results.

Board members agreed having a grant writer benefits the community, but said they haven't seen much from their investment.

Schilling said Nemechek rotates through different meetings and is due to attend a school board meeting soon.

"It might be a good time to ask her questions," he said. "She's got some stuff going on."

"Bringing this up early gives us some time," said board President Jane Philbrick.

The board discussed adding a class at Goodland High School to teach students about financial responsibility.

Schilling said he read an article recently about new programs to help students learn how to figure interest on credit cards and keep

track of a checkbook. The article, he said, brought up alarming statistics on the number of high school graduates and college students who don't understand finance.

"I think there's a real need out there with these kids," he said. "I'd love to see it."

The board agreed that although some of the current classes teach some finance including applied math and some business classes, a course dedicated to insurance, financing houses, market investment and personal finance would be good for students.

"I think a class like this would be great," Schilling said.

In other business, school board members:

- Looked at success rates of students they have allowed to graduate early.

"It's just for your information," Selby said.

Although board members agreed not all of the students went on to success, they said some do and they plan to continue granting early graduations.

- Were given certificates of appreciation from Selby for National School Board Appreciation.

"Thank you for all the work you do for us," he said as he passed out the framed certificates and shook the hand of each board member. "Thank you for giving us your time."

- Accepted the resignation of Geri Rose, an aide at West Elementary. Rose's position has been filled by

Chamber sets banquet for Feb. 17

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to come together and mingle, but also a chance to make their voices heard in the Chamber.

Clouse said board members should convince their employers or businesses to buy tables for the event.

"We as board members," he said, "need to step up and set an example."

Tickets to the event will be \$17.50 for Chamber members and \$20 for non-members. A table of eight will be discounted to \$120 total, or \$15 a head.

For entertainment, the Chamber is planning a performance from the High School jazz band and the X-Pressos show choir.

The program will feature a Chamber update, with Warden giving guests a review of events over the past year, from the rained-out fireworks at Freedom Fest to the

successful Flatlander Fall Festival. She will pass out membership plaques.

Swager said she is putting together a presentation of Chamber events over the past year.

The banquet will feature installa-

tion of new board members and officers, including the reinstallation of Swager as board president. Brian Linin won the job of vice-president, Rasure will be the new treasurer and the newest board member, Karen Ginther, will be secretary.

Goodland girl dies in accident

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and injuring two other teens. He suspects the kids use the road because they think it is not patrolled as often as U.S. 24.

Butts said the accident was about two-tenths of a mile west of County Road 23, roughly the same distance as the October accident but on the opposite side of the north-south road.

Butts said Brazle went to a nearby house to call for help. He said she told dispatch they wrecked the van

because they were running from a man with a gun. Butts said she described the man as 6 foot tall, with read hair.

That description, he said, launched a manhunt as the sheriff's department calling out for help with tracking dogs from Colby.

Butts said he was on the scene with his deputies, searching houses for the suspect, and dispatch called people in the area to warn them.

The search was called off, he said, when a deputy at the hospital told Butts the story had been made up.

How much does it cost to educate Goodland students?

By Kathryn Burke

The Goodland Star-News

How much does it cost to educate students in Goodland?

The state, faced with a court order to "equalize" its school funding formula, wants to know.

School Superintendent Marvin Selby has been asked to put together a report for Dale Dennis, assistant commissioner of the state Department of Education.

Selby told the Goodland School Board last Monday that Dennis rang his office on a conference call with 20 other superintendents from across the state, asking them to find out what a public education costs.

"He wants to know what it costs for a suitable education," Selby said. "It's not going to be an easy chore."

Board member Ron Schilling said under the definition of a suitable education, Selby will need to figure the costs for access to extracurricular activities.

Selby said he will add an art program, elementary counselors and additional salaries into the costs. "It's what we'd like to have," he said.

Right now, Selby said, if he took the \$3,200,000 payroll and divided it by 900 students, he gets roughly \$3,500 per student. The payroll alone almost uses up all of the \$3,683 base allotted by the state per student.

Selby said he plans to include utilities and extras that cost the schools, add it all up and then give Dennis a cost.

"We'll try to give a realistic number," he said adding that he will turn in the details of how he came up with the figures, too.

He said the numbers should make a difference on the state level, but if nothing they will at least matter to him.

"I think it's going to make a difference to Marvin Selby at least," he said.

After determining the cost of educating an average student, Selby said, they will figure the cost of a bilingual student and an at-risk student.

The request from Dennis, he said, came with an order to exclude transportation and special education costs.

Selby told board members that he will be working with his staff to compile the information for the next couple of weeks.

Jeanette White, an aide at the Goodland High School library, leaving that position open.

- Approved \$259,273.13 in bills. Pat Juhl, board clerk, said the bills were so high this month because of a loan payment on a remodel two years ago of the science rooms at the

high school.

She said they paid Bankwest of Kansas and First National Bank \$56,904.53 each for a total of \$113,809.06.

Selby said the school only owes one more identical payment for the remodel next year to be nearly free

of debt.

- Agreed to meet one extra Monday per month to get extra work done by the end of the year. The board agreed they have more work than time to complete everything. The next meeting will be at 5:30 p.m. Monday.

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