

School buys mower

By Kathryn Burke
The Goodland Star-News

The green lawns of the Goodland School District schools will be cut by a new John Deere 1546 model mower approved by the board last Monday.

Kenny Studer, head of maintenance for the district, said it was time to replace the old 11-year-old Hustler XL mower they were using. "It's starting to wear out," he said. "We use it every day."

The \$17,200 John Deere is a 17-bushel mower with a bagger, he said. The deck stands up to allow access to work on the blades.

"The John Deeres we really like," Studer added.

The search for a new mower was difficult, he said, because the manufacturers are going toward mid-mount models instead of the front mount.

He brought three mowers before the board to look at, including a smaller John Deere, a 1445 model, and another Hustler XL.

The Hustler, he said, is a discontinued show model with only a 10-bushel bag. He said the mower had been used for only 50 hours for demonstration. The bag on the Hustler, he said, stands up behind the mower at 72 inches tall to collect clippings. "It'd be hard to go around trees," he said.

The difference between the 1445 and the 1545 is speed and size, Studer said. The 1545 is a two-speed mower with larger front and rear wheels.

The 1545 is a heavy duty machine while the 1445 falls into the mid-level, he said. For winter use, he said, the bigger model can be fitted with a soft cab to pick up leaves or blow snow.

Board members Ron Schilling and Danny Whalen both said they liked the bigger model, and Studer agreed.

"We really like the way they're built," Studer said.

The Hustler XL, cost \$13,900, the 1445 Deere \$16,200 and the 1545 \$17,200. He said they looked briefly at a bigger Hustler that would cost about \$30,000.

He said the mowers normally take a specific route to mow the schools and a smaller mower might become inconvenient because they would need to dump the bag more often. He said they use the mower to trim the football field, too.



Churches come together for Palm Sunday

The Rev. Janet Hernandez of the First United Methodist Church (above) handed out palms to the kids and crowd at a joint Palm Sunday service at Chambers Park. Father Hal Lycett (right) of St. Paul's Episcopal Church blessed the palms with incense as crucifer Nathan Brady watched. Kids from the Methodist Sunday school class sang a song. The service also included Father Norbert Dlabal of the Our Lady of

Perpetual Help Catholic Church. Sunday school classes from the First Christian Church came, escorted by Judi Vignery, Christian education director, and teachers Jeanette Ruddell, Joy Hayden and Tina Gleason. About 200 gathered in a chilly wind to watch the blessing of the palms, which were handed out at the end, and then everyone went to their own church for services. Photos by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

Laptop plan looks too costly for district

By Kathryn Burke
The Goodland Star-News

A grand plan to give a laptop computer to each high school student ran smack into a tight budget at the Goodland School Board meeting last Monday.

The "One-to-One Initiative," one computer for one student, was deemed too expensive by board members and Superintendent Marvin Selby. The board didn't exactly kill the idea, but members realized that the coast was high.

Selby said he feared even talking about the idea was creating false hope for a district that simply can't afford the technology.

A task force to investigate the initiative has been assembled by technology coordinator Karla Murray. The group has met once and has another meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 30.

"Before this group gets a lot of time and money into this," Selby said, "we should just table it for a

period of time and bring it back when the economy is better."

He said the projected \$500,000 to \$700,000 cost would amount to about 10 mills on the school levy. Although the task force has been charged with looking for money, Selby said he worried it might not be possible with the current economy.

"There isn't a way in the world we could do that in this county," he said, adding that the board has been careful in the past to keep tax increases down.

Board member Mike Campbell agreed the initiative is out of the district's reach. He suggested the board look into extending hours into the evening on existing labs for students who don't have computer access at home.

"I think they have the opportunity to work after school," said Murray, adding the lab opens around 7 a.m. for students.

Selby said people have expressed

some frustration and worry about higher taxes to fund the project.

"We've created a lot of friction," he said.

Board member Dick Short said people have been wondering about increased taxes.

"We want to be aggressive," said Short, "and we want to be there for kids, but I think at this point we need to be realistic."

"I think Goodland has done a really good job staying on top of technology in this area," said board member Ron Schilling. "I hope we never get behind."

He argued that although the district can't afford the computers right now, looking toward a goal is essential. The price tag for the initiative is shocking, Schilling agreed, and money could be better spent elsewhere, but keeping the initiative as a goal is a good idea.

"As long as we have a target," he said, "we can find a way to fund it." "We're not putting it away for-

ever," said board President Jane Philbrick.

The board asked Selby at the last meeting to find out what the district currently has for technology and computers.

He reported that in the science room alone, five of 28 computers are not working. He said one was damaged by a student, the other four are broken and two are usable, but not working properly.

The science computers are to be replaced next school year, Selby said, and upgraded from Windows '98.

He said computers in other classrooms are fairly new, with some machines purchased only three or four years ago.

He suggested putting \$25,000 or \$30,000 into the existing computer program to enhance what they already have.

Board members added the task force to the board's agenda for the first meeting in April to discuss the initiative.

So far the task force, involving students and teachers from all the schools, has put together a survey to gauge student computer use, said Central Elementary Principal Sharon Gregory. She said the survey will determine how many students have Internet access, who does school projects on computer and what else they use computers for.

"It'd be an interesting subject for the board to look at," Schilling said.

He said the group can brainstorm on ways to spend some extra money on technology to improve access even if the One-to-One initiative is no longer in play.

Gregory said although they planned to look into options, the task force hasn't had a chance to look for money yet.

"I do understand the economic issues," she added.

The board agreed to wait to table the issue until after speaking with the task force members.

Board votes for local decals on new Cowgirls, Cowboys bus

By Kathryn Burke
The Goodland Star-News

A plain white 1999 Van Hool bus will make the trip to Goodland from ABC Bus Co. in Grand Prairie, Texas, early next month as the Goodland School District board makes up its mind about markings for the new activities bus.

A meeting last Monday, the board agreed on a white bus with decals done by Mike Boyson, a Bird City artist who owns the sign firm Hot Brush.

Superintendent Marvin Selby said the decals done by Boyson will cost the same as having the work done in Texas, about \$2,500.

The board agreed it was better to spend the money in northwest Kansas instead of with the bus company. Originally, the board was inter-

ested in a black bus, and Selby asked Boyson about the job. He was referred to Advanced Auto Body Paint in Goodland, and they would charge \$4,000 to paint the entire bus. Selby said the company would leave the top of the bus white to reflect heat.

Bob Harkins, school transportation supervisor, said people at ABC said a black bus is hard to maintain.

The board agreed that the cleaning issues with a black bus outweigh the looks, so they decided to go with white.

Board members reviewed ideas on decals for the bus, but since the art will be completed in Bird City, they decided to wait to make any final decisions.

Selby said the bus will come equipped with a rear camera and

aluminum wheel covers.

Harkins will head to Texas for a class on Saturday, April 2, and Sunday, April 3. He will learn how to take care of the bus and will drive it back.

In other business, the board:

- Accepted the resignation of Shelly Angelos, new principal at West Elementary, as high school cheerleader sponsor at the end of the school year.

"I just want to say Shelly's done a heck of a job as cheerleader sponsor," said high school Principal Harvey Swager.

The board agreed to hire Amy Sederstrom as Grant Junior High assistant track coach for this year.

- Approved the financial reports and bills.

"We're doing really pretty well right now," Selby said.

Because of the steep climb in fuel

prices, he said, the bills included a \$15,000 gas bill for the district last month. "I hope that's about over with," he said.

The bills also had a \$6,357.48 bill for elevator repairs. Selby said the elevator at Max Jones Fieldhouse has been acting up.

"They may not be back for six months," he said.

He said the district has two \$459.58 maintenance agreements for both elevators, one at the high school and one in the fieldhouse, with Kone Inc., based in Moline, Ill. with an office in Hays.

Board member Mike Campbell asked Grant Junior High Principal Jim Mull if the elevator there has any problems.

"It's been relatively trouble free," he said, adding they did have a student stuck this year, but got her out in about 30 minutes.

• Heard an update on the Chevrolet Suburban that was damaged on the way to the state wrestling tournament earlier this month. Selby said the vehicle is back home and working well.

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