

School Bells

AT-LARGE

Incumbent cites experience

Incumbent Jeannie Martin seeks another four years on the Oberlin School Board in the at-large position with a goal of continuing to offer high-quality education.

With four years of experience, she said she would like to continue working on the board. There is a lot on the table now with teacher negotiations, the possibility of updating the buildings and enrollment continuing to drop, she said.

The facilities committee was formed to study the buildings and they are doing a great job, she said. The group should be back with a recommendation this spring and the board will have to decide what the next step is.

Declining enrollment is not new, she said, but something the board has been working with for the last few years. Fewer students and the state budget crisis will be the biggest concern in the next few years.

The Oberlin School District is in better shape than most, she said. Programs have been maintained and the local property tax hasn't been raised to the max. Mrs. Martin said she isn't in favor of raising the property tax to the limit, from 13 percent to 25 percent.

"The state doesn't want to increase taxes," she said, "so they let local taxes fund the school."

Students who attend school in Oberlin get good, sound basics, she said. That should continue no mat-

ter how small enrollment gets.

"If we expect to equip our students with the knowledge and skills for a successful living, so they can go on to college if they choose," said Mrs. Martin, "we have to make sure they have our commitment that they have that opportunity."

Mrs. Martin and her husband Lee live on the south edge of Oberlin. They have three children, Lindsay, 23, who lives in Lawrence and works in Kansas City; Erica, 21, a junior at Kansas State University; and Drew, 15, a freshman in high school here.

Mrs. Martin graduated from Kansas State with a degree in medical technology. For the last 20 years, she has worked at the Oberlin Clinic and she now is the lab supervisor.

She is vice president of the board and has received her first-level award in boardmanship training for attending workshops.

"I enjoy learning and would really like the opportunity to continue serving on the board of USD 294," she said.

Mrs. Martin will face Dave Stapp in the general election on Tuesday, April 1.



Jean Martin

AT-LARGE

Booster wants to join board

Because he's interested in keeping a school in the county for years to come, Dave Stapp said he decided to run for the at-large position on the Oberlin School Board.

Mr. Stapp is interested in education and wants students in Decatur County to be able to get an education here.

Although he has never served on the board, he has been active in the community and is a former member of the Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce board and the Cardinal Cafe board. He currently serves on the Lincoln Township board.

Through those jobs, he said, he has learned how to listen, how to work on a team and about budgets. Mr. Stapp said he thinks he would be of some help to the school board with his experience and that's why he decided to run for office.

Mr. Stapp said he has read about the school budget and how it works. With his experience as the township treasurer, he said, he understands how budgets, transfers and taxes work.

The district has had declining enrollment for the last few years, and with the state budget shortfall, it may need to tighten up its spending. That could mean some tough decisions for the school board. In the end, he said, it is about the students and making sure there is a school here where they can get the education they deserve and

need to pursue their goals.

There are some things that shouldn't be cut, he said.

Mr. Stapp describes himself as a listener. He said he wants to hear all sides before making any kind of decision.

He works closely with younger kids in the area through sports programs. He has worked with both the basketball and football programs for the last six years. In that time, he has gotten to know a lot of kids in the county.

Mr. Stapp said his goal is to make sure that those kids have a place to go to school and get a great education so they can pursue what they want to in the future.

Mr. Stapp, an avid sports supporter, helped start the Oberlin Booster Club for high school sports programs.

He is married to Patty, who is a school bus driver and works at The Bank in Norcatour. They have three children, Kortney, a senior at Decatur Community High School; Kaitlyn, a freshman; and Sam, who is in the sixth grade.

The family owns a farm two miles west and two miles north of Norcatour. Mr. Stapp grew up at Norcatour and graduated from Decatur Community High School in 1980.

He will face incumbent Jeannie Martin in the general election on Tuesday, April 1.



Dave Stapp

DISTRICT 2

Farmer seeking re-election

With 10 years of experience, Dan Wasson is seeking re-election to the District 2 seat on the Oberlin School Board.

He said the board could use his experience with new administrators on board and the budget situation as tight as it is now.

Mr. Wasson said the board's role should be to hire and evaluate administrators, monitor the budget and develop budgets to keep the school district strong and running.

With the state budget crisis, he said, he doesn't want to start cutting education. The board will probably have to look at activities.

When teachers quit or retire, he said, the board will have to decide if the jobs need to be filled or if the current staff needs to be realigned.

Mr. Wasson said 85 percent of the school budget goes to salaries. The teachers work hard, he said; he wouldn't like to see salaries cut.

The district has been able to maintain two sections of elementary classes and the parents have had good comments about that. Mr. Wasson said he would like to see the two sections stay.

The school board will be getting a report from the community facilities committee in the near future, he said. The committee has done a good job and worked hard on getting information. Then the board will have to look at what people want, since they will be the ones paying for it.

Mr. Wasson said he isn't happy with the current architects and what they have done for the committee, although he understands that they can't do anything unless they are told what the committee or board wants done.

The board had a good plan in the first bond issue, said Mr. Wasson, but it was expensive.

"We told the community what we wanted and it failed," he said. "This time the community will say what they want."

Depending on what the committee comes up with and the economy in the area, he said, the plan could go to a bond election next fall, but that is tentative. This is an agricultural area, he said, and the board will have to wait and see what happens.

"We have a really good school district," said Mr. Wasson. "I'm proud of it and I think

we are providing a good education for the kids. I want to maintain and keep it going."

Mr. Wasson was born here and graduated from Decatur Community High School in 1970.

He and his wife Carol, who teaches third grade at Oberlin Elementary School, have three kids, Tom, 27; AnneMarie, a freshman in high school, and Nolan, a fifth grader.

Tom is married to Tammy and they have two children, Jordan and Braden. Mr. Wasson said he farms in the southwest part of the county with his father, brother and son. He is a member of the Lund Covenant Church.

He said he has enjoyed being a member of the school board.

"It has challenged me," he said, adding that he would like to continue the learning process if he serves on the board for another term. Mr. Wasson said he is proud of the community and the district and enjoys promoting it. He will face Monte Moore in the general election on Tuesday, April 1.



Dan Wasson

DISTRICT 2

Challenger was bond opponent

Starting with an interest in the building plans and student activities, Monte Moore is seeking the District 2 seat on the Oberlin School Board.

Mr. Moore said he was asked to run for the seat and after giving it some thought, he decided it was a good idea.

Mr. Moore has served on the school district's community facilities committee since it was formed. Though he opposed the district's last bond issue, he says he is interested in seeing the new project through to the end.

Mr. Moore said he sees the next four years as challenging, not only because of the drought, but the economy here and nationwide is bad. He said his primary goal is to maintain the district's high standard of excellence and education while maintaining as many activities as the district can. He said he would like to go forward with what the community deems necessary with remodeling and to keep the schools up to standards, but still be fiscally responsible.

As a board member, he said, he will bring ideas and issues from the community and faculty members to the meetings to be discussed. Mr. Moore said he will work with the board to initiate policies and get things done.

Although he hasn't worked with the school budget, he said he does know how budgets work and how they are set.

With the state budget shortfalls, he said, there may be some tightening up or cuts made by the board. Mr. Moore said until he is elected and can review the budget, he doesn't have any suggestions on how the district can save money.

The goal should be not to start cutting programs, he

said, but to figure out how to run programs in a more conservative way.

As far as the building renovation plan goes, he said the committee is very close to presenting some possible steps and projects to the community. He hopes all the pieces will fall into place and the district can start some of the work that needs to be done to keep the schools up. The committee's leadership has come up with some viable alternatives to the initial bond issue that got voted down, he said.

Mr. Moore and his wife Kelly, a nurse at the hospital, have two children, Allie, a junior at Decatur Community High School, and Gabe, a freshman.

The family owns farmland all over the county, said Mr. Moore, a native of Decatur County.

He is a member at the Oberlin United Methodist Church, served on the Teens for Christ Board and has served on the extension council board.

Mr. Moore said he doesn't look at the election like he is running against someone, but that he is running for the community and to get a chance to sit on the board.

He will face incumbent Dan Wasson in the general election on Tuesday, April 1.



Monte Moore



DISTRICT 3

After two terms, she'll do more

Barb Olson said when she ran for the Oberlin School Board eight years ago, she was told it was a two term job, but she has served her two terms and is running for a third one.

Mrs. Olson said she waited to file until just about the last moment to see if anyone in the district wanted to run. No one came forward, she said, and she didn't want to leave her area without representation.

The job of the school board, she said, is to gather information from a variety of sources, compile it and make decisions that are best for the school district. The board is in charge of the budget, she said, and of hiring and evaluating administrators.

The board meets monthly, said Mrs. Olson, but it takes a lot more time than that. There is a lot of reading and it is important to work with legislators, which she said she would like to try to do more. That is why she asked to be on the Government Relations Board, to be more active with legislators. By being a part of the board she will receive emails about what is going on in state government on schools.

Mrs. Olson said she certainly doesn't have a hidden agenda. She is proud that the district has somehow been able to avoid cutting any programs, hire certified teachers to work in their fields, offer band, vocal and physical education every day and keep all its extracurricular programs in place.

With the budget problems, she said she would hate to cut any programs, but she would cut activities be-

fore any education. She said the board will have to look at programs with the smallest enrollment first.

Mrs. Olson said she appreciates the way the community facilities committee is working on a plan for building improvements. The buildings need to be fixed, she said. The first bond proposal didn't pass, but the needs in the buildings won't go away. They have to be looked at.

She said she wants to do what the community wants and what is best for kids, but the sooner something is done, the better.

So far, she said she has been pleased with the new administration the board hired this last year. The board wanted to find people who were honest and had integrity. She said the new superintendent and principal have both.

Superintendent Kelly Glodt does an excellent job getting information out, she said, and she is pleased with the changes and the way the three administrators work together.

Mrs. Olson grew up on a farm in rural Rawlins County and graduated from Atwood High school. She graduated from college at Kansas State University.

Mrs. Olson is married to Dr. Mark Olson and they own and operate Countryside Veterinary Clinic in Oberlin and Norton.

The family has lived here since 1986. They have three children, Sarah, a senior in high school; Kurt, an eighth grader here; and Mary Rachel, who is in the fifth grade.



B. Olson

DISTRICT 1

Druggist available to public

With four years under his belt, Kurt Vollertsen is seeking a second term on the Oberlin School Board.

Mr. Vollertsen, who fills the District 1 seat, said he now understands the budget and ins and outs of the board and would like to continue serving. He said the new administration has influenced him to make the decision to run for office again. It always makes the board's job easier, he said, when there are good administrators.

With having a business downtown, Ward Drug Store, he said he has leadership skills. Mr. Vollertsen said he is accessible to district patrons and feels it is important to be visible and available to people. Being on Main Street, he said people always know where to find him.

The administration has an open door policy so people can come in and talk about school issues, and he said he does too.

Financially, he said, running a school district isn't a lot different than running a business.

If re-elected, the most important problem will be dealing with the state budget crisis and maintaining the district's programs and staff. The district has to try to operate under the budget limits while conforming to the state requirements, he said.

Basically, the district is trying to survive the budget crisis while keeping its kids on the front line.

There has been progress with the budget, he said, and the staff has come up with some cost-saving ideas. Some are minimal and some will add up to a good sav-

ings if the board decides to take action.

Mr. Vollertsen said he thinks the staff understands that some tightening up will have to be done to maintain the district and the programs in the schools.

The idea of a bond issue to repair or replace the school buildings, he said, is not a dead issue. The community facilities committee is working on it.

"Initially," said Mr. Vollertsen, "I think we all realize it will be shoved back a few years, but it is really impossible to say when it might go to an election. The board does plan to follow through with the bond issue once the committee presents what they have found."

No matter what, he said, his first objective on the board is to take care of the students.

Mr. Vollertsen said he has lived here for 23 years. He and his wife, Becky, who is the director of the dental hygiene program at Colby Community College, have two children, Grant, who is in his first year of dental school at Creighton University, and Halley, a freshman at Fort Hays State University.

He is a member of the Oberlin United Methodist Church, the Oberlin Rotary Club, Oberlin Business Alliance, Oberlin Country Club and Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Vollertsen is unopposed for his seat in the school board election.



K. Vollertsen

Commissioners study ambulance bids

Decatur County commissioners received bids for a new ambulance at their meeting last Tuesday morning but made no decisions on which one to buy.

Ambulance Director Patrick Pomeroy said he will look over the bids and get back to the commissioners by the next meeting to make sure each bid has everything that was requested.

The county received bids from

three companies. Rocky Mountain Emergency Vehicles in Denver had a Ford two-wheel drive for \$92,786 or four-wheel drive for \$97,186, a Chevy two-wheel drive for \$93,786 or four-wheel for \$96,664, and a Traumahawk special Ford two-wheel for \$88,576 or four-wheel for \$91,927.

Midwest Vehicle Professionals in Wichita had a Med Tech Pro for a Ford F-350 Super Duty XLT Series

with a two-wheel drive for \$88,917 or four wheel drive for \$93,573, Ford F-450 for a two-wheel for \$95,760 or four-wheel for \$97,154 and a Chevy 2002 4x4 for \$90,077.

Wheeled Coach of Hutchinson had a Ford F-450 two-wheel drive for \$97,050 or four-wheel for \$104,050, Chevy two-wheel chassis for \$96,550 or a four-wheel for \$103,305.

Mr. Pomeroy said all of the bids,

unless otherwise listed, are for 2003 trucks. The 2003 models can be delivered within 45 to 90 days and the 2002 model immediately.



Norcatour write-ins give town a race for council

With three write-in candidates, the Norcatour City Council will have a race in the general election on Tuesday, April 1.

Incumbent Mike Helm filed for the election and his will be the only name that appears on the ballot. There are three positions on

the council to fill in this year's election.

Those who are running write-in campaigns are Bill Craig, Tami Cook and Teresa Reves. In order to vote for a write-in candidate, the voter must write the person's name on the ballot.