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Waiver approval could net a new students for HA schools

A waiver that, if approved by the state, would allow Hoopeston Area to offer free tuition to children of full time staff who live outside the district, could result in a handful of new students in the near term and perhaps more in the long term.

At a public hearing before Thursday's board meeting, the school board discussed applying for the waiver which would allow full time employees who live out of the district to forego Hoopeston Area's \$8,560.80 tuition.

The district would receive state aid for students who attend Hoopeston Area schools under the plan, which is \$6,125 per pupil, said business manager Mark Eighner.

Supt. Suzzette Hesser said the move is a good one for the schools and the community. For the schools, it would be a tool to entice new teachers to teach at Hoopeston. For current teachers, having their children in the same district would provide peace of mind. Also, with their youngsters close, teachers would not feel the need to rush off after school, she said.

As far as the community, employees and children who interact in Hoopeston more - through school, sporting events, community activities and thing like shopping - may decide to become Hoopeston residents.

Three people spoke at a public hearing dedicated to the waiver. District librarian Jacki Gregory, who last year told the board that some districts waive tuition for their employees' children, read a statement echoing Hesser's reasoning, adding that teachers who have their children in district would be more dedicated and spend more time at work.

Former board member Dave McFadden read a letter he wrote to Hesser, saying as a business owner, he knows the benefit of a stable school system and that applying for the waiver would improve that stability. The measure "appears to be positive cash flow for the district," he added.

Glenn Brewer, Hoopeston Education Association president, said people he talked to were positive about the idea.

While none in attendance had negative comments during the waiver hearing, the subject came up during the tax levy hearing which preceded the waiver hearing.

Hoopeston resident Stan Steiner said, concerning recent articles about school finance, "I personally got mixed signals from reading the paper."

On one hand, he said, officials want a 7.5 percent increase in the levy, which would raise tax dollars if the district's equalized assessed valuation goes up, and also want a referendum for a one percent county wide facilities sales tax on the March 20 general primary ballot, both of which indicate a lack of money.

On the other hand, the board wants to give free tuition to out-of-district students, recently installed an all-weather track costing hundreds of thousands of dollars and gives six percent pay increases for the final three years of a teacher's tenure, which, for higher-paid teachers, "is a \$15,000 raise," he said. "We have plenty of money for that. That shows we're flush."

Eighner explained that the 7.5 percent tax levy does not mean taxes will go up and said the track was paid with donations, not tax dollars.

Part of funding for the track is coming from the City of Hoopeston's tax increment financing program, prompting Steiner to as "Where do you think TIF money came from?"

Eighner clarified and said no school tax dollars were used for the track.

After the meeting, Hesser said six to eight current full time employees could take advantage of the free tuition if the waiver is approved.

The board will meet in special session at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday to discuss approving the waiver. If approved, it will be sent to the Illinois State Board of Education, then presented to the Illinois legislature for approval.

Hesser said as she has no knowledge of legislators denying a waiver request.

In other business, the board:

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From the Blotter

A **St. Joseph man** was treated for injuries received in an accident at 3:04 p.m. Thursday in the 800 block of East Orange.

Police said Darrell Sindors, 77, was taken to Carle Hoopeston after his westbound 2013 Ford CMAX was struck by a 2007 Chevrolet sedan driven by Elizabeth Samet, 16, of Rankin, who was trying to enter the west-bound lane.

Sindors' vehicle was towed from the scene.

Something new coming to Fast Lanes Tuesday afternoon

Coming Tuesday, Hoopeston Area Lady Cornjeker Bowling starts its very first home match.

Coming off their fine second place finish last week in Bloomington, the Lady Jerkers will take on Bloomington High School's Lady Raiders in the first-ever home bowling match.

Everyone is invited to Fast Lanes, starting at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, to see if Emma Glotzbach, Alyssa Yaden, Kayla Goble and Jaylyn and Mercy Linder can remain unbeaten in match play.

Stacy Watson, 35, of Hoopeston, turned herself in to police at 6:52 p.m. Thursday. Wanted on a Vermilion County traffic warrant for failure to appear, she was released on \$300 cash bond and \$75 FTA fee with a new court date.

Lunch Menus

Hoopeston Area grade schools

MONDAY: Corndogs, baked beans, cucumber slices, applesauce, milk

TUESDAY: Chicken pot pie, biscuit, baby carrots peaches, milk

WEDNESDAY: Han & cheese sandwich, Sunchips, celery sticks, fruit cup, milk

THURSDAY: No school

FRIDAY: No school

Hoopeston Area Middle/High School

MONDAY: Cook's choice

TUESDAY: Cook's choice

WEDNESDAY: Cook's choice

THURSDAY: No school

FRIDAY: No school

Colton J. Simon, 22, of Hoopeston was arrested after police were called at 7:28 p.m. Thursday to the 400 block of South Third St. for a dispute. Simon was charged with trespassing and assault on a complaint from a 66-year-old Hoopeston man and was released on notices to appear in Hoopeston City Court.

Jessica Carpenter, 38, of Hoopeston, was arrested at 12:42 a.m. Saturday in the 300 block of West Washington. Wanted on a Vermilion County warrant, she was taken to the Public Safety Building in Danville.

A **Roadmaster Granite Peak** mountain bike was found at 6:30 a.m. Saturday at Hoopeston Coin Laundry. The owner may identify and claim it at the police station.

Waiver continued from other side

- Approved the 2017 audit and tax levy
- High school Principal Marc Campbell announced four students were named Illinois State Scholars: Ryan Drayer, Logan Walder, Maya Cornelius and Heather Simpson.
- Anne Burton announced that Teen REACH had officially started in the middle school on December 11 and that due to requests, the school will offer a six-week cooking class taught by U of I Extension personnel. Parents attending will learn to cook dishes, then eat the meal as a group.
- Heard from Campbell that an Indiana wind farm company is partnering with schools to encourage graduates to go into the field, learning to repair, maintain and erect the wind turbines.
- Approved Samantha Pugh as eighth grade volleyball coach effective December 14.
- Approved resignations of Emily Espinoza, John Greer personal aide and Kristin Hummel, middle school language arts teacher.
- Approved Pam Goble's retirement as high school cafeteria employee.
- Approved a discipline agreement dated December 11 between the district and a student.
- Approved volunteer mentors Dave McFadden, Dawn Layden, April Jones, Emily Brown, Carolyn Daniel, Lori Eells, Whitley Klaber, Suzi Hesser, Amy Linares and Nita Lockhart.

Weather

Patchy drizzle/fog then mostly cloudy today. High 47. tonight, partly cloudy. Low 37. Tomorrow, mostly sunny. High 51, low 27.

Briefly

At the library

Upcoming activities at Hoopeston Public Library include:

Tiny Tots story program, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Friday. For youngsters ages 0-4 who are accompanied by an adult.

Monday Maniacs, 3:30-4:30 p.m. Monday. Wild and wacky fun for grades 3-6.

PEP Potluck

Everyone is cordially invited to the People Enjoying People Potluck, sponsored by Hoopeston United Methodist Church. The event will begin at 5 p.m. Monday at the church, 403 E. Main St. Main dish, drinks and table service will be provided. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share.

Birthday card shower

Francis Troxel will celebrate his 80th birthday December 24 and would enjoy hearing from friends. Cards and notes of well wishes may be sent to him at 1107 S. Second Ave., Hoopeston IL 60942.

Breast cancer support group

Hoopeston Breast Cancer Support Group meets the third Thursday of each month at The Pit Stop at Fast Lanes. The group is open to all past and present breast cancer survivors. The next meeting will be at 6 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 21.

For more information, call Pat Foster, (815) 984-4040.

Holiday closings

● Hoopeston City offices, except the police department, will be closed December 25-26 for the Christmas holiday.

● Just the Facts will not be printed December 25-26. Publication will resume December 27.

Obituaries

JOHNSON - Fern Louise (McElwain) Johnson, 82, of Hoopeston, formerly of Danville, died at 9:06 a.m. Friday, Dec. 15, 2017 at Heritage Health, Hoopeston. Private services will be held. Memorials are suggested to Heritage Health Therapy and Senior Living, 423 N. Dixie Hwy., Hoopeston IL 60942.

RUSH - Beverly Maxine (Wells) Rush, 87, of Bismarck, died at 2:45 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 16, 2017 at DeCATUR Memorial Hospital. Graveside service will be at 11:30 a.m. Wednesday at Gundy Cemetery, Bismarck. Memorials are suggested to Alzheimer's Association. Blurton Funeral Home is handling arrangements.

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