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Monday, November 19, 2018
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HA board seeks bonds to fund boiler fix, tech purchases

In a 6-1 vote Thursday evening, Hoopeston Area School Board approved an intent to issue \$900,000 in working cash bonds to fund two major needs in the district.

Board member Chris Small voted against the question while member Craig Lee was absent.

After the meeting, Supt. Suzzette Hesser said the money will be used for facility issues, such as Maple's boiler, which is only operating at 50 percent. A recent HVAC assessment by The Upchurch Group estimated replacing Maple's current heating system at \$1,100,000.

Some of the money will also be used to update technology. At Thursday's meeting, the board approved spending \$171,000 on 500 new Chromebooks, which is more than one third the total Chromebooks in the district, Hesser said. Older Chromebooks are out of warranty and no longer receive company support for security and other issues, she said, which makes them vulnerable to malicious web sites and software.

This is the second time in nearly three years that the district has considered a \$900,000 bond issue. The first, approved in February 2016, created debt for the district, which, under a measure then being considered by the legislature, gave Hoopeston Area and other districts the ability to go into more debt without taxpayer approval.

In discussing the issue in 2016, then-Supt. Hank Hornbeck used the Maple boiler as an example, saying if the board did not put the district in debt, the district would have had to put the \$450,000 estimated boiler cost to voters in a referendum. By going into debt, the board would then have had the authority to fund the boiler expense without a nod from taxpayers.

Hoopeston Area self-funded the 2016 bond issue, buying its own bonds and receiving the resulting interest, all with taxpayer money.

Asked if this bond issue would also be self-funded, board President Mark Schaumburg said it would.

If the board moves ahead, a public hearing on the bond issue will probably be held in January, Hesser said.

In related discussion, Russ Leigh reviewed the district audit, saying it was a clean audit with no areas out of compliance.

Leigh also updated the board on its financial health. Saying he was a "negative nanny" last year, this year's numbers "look pretty good."

The district's education fund showed an increase, based on the state's new evidence-based funding model for state aid, which Leigh said was "a little bit of a windfall" for Hoopeston Area. The district also received some income from the windmills.

Expenses were also down over the previous year, with \$11,200,000 in total expenses, down from \$11,450,000.

At the end of June, the education fund had a balance of \$5,925,000, Leigh said.

As for evidence-based funding, "we don't know what that means," Leigh said. Also unknown is whether it will continue.

The district's transportation fund may experience a shortage this year, as Leigh said he's hearing districts may only get three payments from the state.

Teacher pensions continue to be a concern. The state was supposed to pay \$5.1 million into the pension system for Hoopeston Area but was \$2.2 million short.

As he said last year, Leigh again said at some point, some pension costs "get kicked back to the local district (to make up)." Districts which have a "nice balance are the ones who will be able to survive this," he said. "That's one of the ways I think Illinois is trying to force consolidation."

Leigh suggested the district keep its tax levy high until they know what's coming as far as cost shifting and property tax caps, and also what Gov.-elect JB Pritzker will do "Nobody knows what Pritzker's about," he said.

In other business, the board:

Approved the estimated tax levy based on an equalized assessed valuation of around \$79 million, up 7.12 percent from last year's \$73 million. A public hearing on the levy

See BOARD on other side

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Briefly

Library seeks pictures for celebration

Hoopeston Public Library is seeking photos of long-time Children's Librarian Carol Arnold for a special retirement celebration display.

Anyone with photos from Mrs. Arnold's days at HPL is invited to drop them off at the library, 110 N. Fourth St., Hoopeston; or digital images can be emailed to jo-ann@hooplib.org no later than Wednesday, Nov. 21.

Military addresses sought

Hoopeston American Legion Auxiliary is planning to send Christmas cards to active duty service members. Anyone with the address of a service member is asked to send it to Hoopeston American Legion, Attn: Linda, P.O.

Board continued from other side

will be held at 6 p.m. December 18 in the high school library.

- Heard requests from band director Steven Kurk for a band trip to Washington, D.C., at a cost of nearly \$20,000 and art teacher Natalie Rayfield, for an Art Club field trip to the art museum in Indianapolis.

- Approved a memorandum of understanding with Hoopeston Education Association regarding adding positions for assistant directors for marching band and high and middle school show choirs.

- Tabled action on Jared Moraska's resignation as high school science teacher at the end of the year and a resolution notice to remedy of professional educator licensed teacher.

From the Blotter

Brandon P. Grills, 18, of Hoopeston, was arrested after police were called at 2:55 p.m. Saturday for a disturbance in the 500 block of North Ninth Ave. He was charged with domestic battery on a complaint from a 37-year-old Hoopeston woman and was taken to the Public Safety Building in Danville to await arraignment.

Keaton Longest, 21, of Milford, was arrested after a stop for a traffic violation at 8:30 p.m. Saturday at Penn and Ninth Ave. He was charged with driving while license suspended license and was released on bond with a notice to appear in Vermilion County traffic court.

Box 423, Hoopeston IL 60942. Deadline is December 8.

At the library

Upcoming activities at Hoopeston Public Library are:

Teen Design Squad, 3:30-4:30 p.m. Monday, for grades 5-8. Kellie Blanden from Illinois Public Media will explore engineering and other technology with fun, high energy, hands-on programs. The program builds on a basic introduction to problem solving, students do not need to attend all sessions to participate.

Hoopeston Public Library will be closed Thursday for Thanksgiving and will reopen with regular hours Friday. Tiny Tots will not be held Friday.

Obituaries

JACKSON - Mildred Jackson, 94, of Hoopeston, died at 9:20 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 15, 2018 at Heritage Health, Hoopeston. Arrangements are pending at Blurton Funeral Home.

Lunch Menus

Hoopeston Area grade schools

MONDAY: Mini corndogs, baked beans, cucumber slices, applesauce, milk

TUESDAY: Pepperoni pizza, baby carrots, salad, peaches, milk

WEDNESDAY: Hamburger/bun, fries, celery sticks, mixed fruit, milk

THURSDAY: No school

FRIDAY: No school

Hoopeston Area Middle School

MONDAY: Chicken nuggets, green beans, salad bar, applesauce, milk

TUESDAY: Cook's choice

WEDNESDAY: Cook's choice

THURSDAY: No school

FRIDAY: No school

Hoopeston Area High School

MONDAY: Chicken nuggets or ham & cheese, green beans, salad bar, applesauce, milk, juice

TUESDAY: Cook's choice

WEDNESDAY: Cook's choice

THURSDAY: No school

FRIDAY: No school


Weather

Mostly cloudy today, tonight. High 37, low 25. Tomorrow, mostly sunny. High 35, low 25.

Black Friday Book Sale, 10 a.m. Fri-3 p.m. Saturday. An assortment of adult and children's fiction and non-fiction books. \$2 per bag or 3 bags for \$5. Bags provided or bring your own.

Best Sellers Book Club, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Monday. For men and women. This month is "A Simple Favor" by Darcy Bell.

For more information on any program, call the library, 283-6711.



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HELP WANTED

Full time office receptionist. Must be able to multi-task, work great with public and MUST have great follow-up skills. Send resume to Box A, c/o Just the Facts, P. O. Box 441, Hoopeston IL 60942.

Openings available for construction workers. Concrete experience would be helpful. Apply in person at Silver Brothers Construction Co., 105 E. Washington St., Hoopeston.

VFW is looking for a experienced bartender for weekend shift Saturdays 10-5 and Sundays 11-5, every weekend. Serious applicants only apply

Part-time CNA, 2nd & 3rd Shift, every other weekend off, please no phone inquiries, apply in person at Autumn Fields Adult Community, 325 E Orange St, Hoopeston IL 60942

Email publish@justthefacts.net
or call (217) 283-9348 to place your ad!



Hail to the Chief!

Friday, November 23 7-10 p.m.
Hosted By Hoopeston American Legion
Entertainment by El Guapo
50/50 drawing
Raffle Drawing for Smoker and Gift Basket valued at \$600
Recommended minimum \$5 donation at the door.

Come join in the 2nd memorial celebration of Chief Drollinger and raise money for one of his favorite organizations, United Community Fund of Grant Township.
100% of proceeds benefit nonprofit organizations in our community.

For more information:
Beth Totheroh (217) 283-8247, x 222 Tricia Freeland, (217) 283-6711