

Trail may hold payment on charter school bills

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Published: October 7, 2015

Business Manager Keith Glynn recommended that the Lackawanna Trail School District request permission to not pay charter school bills until after the state budget impasse is over, during a school board work session Monday night.

He also recommended that Plan Con K materials for the recently completed building projects be approved for submission to the Pennsylvania Department of Education at the school board meeting next Monday.

Glynn also proposed that the school district solicit bids for short term financing, not to exceed one year, to provide cash flow during the State budget impasse. He said that a tax or revenue anticipation note could see the district through the end of November, when hopefully the state budget will have passed, and will offset a \$1-3 million temporary shortfall.

"We'd be working toward a one to two percent finance rate, with DCED approval," he said.

Glynn added that the school district's taxes are approximately 75 percent collected, so there is not a large amount of tax monies expected to come in before the budget is approved.

Board president David Thorne asked, "What will be happening if we have to shut our doors? What is the state's answer?"

Superintendent Matthew Rakauskas said that at the September board meeting, there was an urgency that he believes has lessened now.

He said that he isn't sure what will happen if the impasse continues, and the school cannot afford to run its utilities as winter sets in.

"We've had an excellent start to the school year, with four days of teacher inservice prior to the start of student school days, and I would hate to lose this momentum," Rakauskas said.

A list of substitute teachers were recommended for addition to district sub lists. These included: Annetta Schwartztrauber, music; Shelby Madden, biology; Lindsay Kulenich, elementary/special education; Catherine Gerrity and Darlene Meadows, Burns/Driver; Joseph White and Virgil Root, Nichols/Driver.

The policy #808.1 entitled Student Meal Charging was recommended to be approved for a second reading.

Two positions were listed on the work session agenda, to be recommended for approval at the next meeting. The first was for a yearbook adviser whose name would be filled in before the next meeting.

The second position, for a long-term substitute teacher of chemistry and physics, also was left with the name blank: Rakauskas said that they are still actively seeking an applicant for that position. The position is for three months, beginning in mid-December.

Glynn also spoke to a recommendation to use vending commission funds for a yearbook shortfall from previous years. He said that proceeds from Pepsi machines are already earmarked for that purpose. He explained that the current contract with Jostens ends up with a yearly shortfall, and that the district is hopefully moving away from the contract, which seems to also end up with a surplus of copies of the yearbook every year. Last year's are still available for sale at \$25.

There were three field trip requests being recommended for approval: Dina Berrio's request to take cheerleaders to perform at a Philadelphia 76ers game on Mar. 16; Mary Belle Gilroy's request to take 50 art students to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Guggenheim Museum of Modern Art in New York City on Nov. 4; Anthony Dalasio's request to take 88 seventh and eighth grade students to Washington, D.C., on May 5-7; and Tom Lengel's request to take 30 ski club students to Stowe, Vt., on Jan. 28-30. These were all recommended for approval at no cost to the district.

It was recommended that Lori Swanchak be approved as a volunteer girls' basketball coach, all clearances on file.

A consent agenda will be prepared for the next meeting for the field trips and faculty/staff positions. It was also recommended that the agenda for the next meeting recommend that bills be paid, withholding all charter school bills until the state budget is adopted.

It was also suggested that other school districts be consulted for templates for possible resolutions to be adopted regarding charter school bills.