

School audit shows higher than expected beginning fund balance

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

It was good news to Holyoke School District Re-1J Board of Education Tuesday, Dec. 4 when auditor Scott Szabo of Lauer, Szabo & Associates reported the 2012-13 year began with a beginning fund balance that was \$160,000 higher than expected.

The 2011-12 budget projected a \$319,826 deficit to reduce the reserve fund balance to \$1.448 million. However, the projection was cut in half when the reserve was only reduced by \$159,685, leaving the fund balance at \$1.608 million.

Using these figures for a final budget report, Supt. Bret Miles walked the board through a comparison of the 2012-13 preliminary budget which was prepared in May and what he proposes as the December budget to be adopted at the Dec. 18 board meeting.

Miles explained that in most years if the student count was relatively flat, no adjustment would be made. This year's pupil count was up 1.6 from what was used for the preliminary budget.

However, with the tight financial situation in the state, Miles said he is proposing some changes.

As part of the final budget, Miles recommended using some money for a one-time salary payment.

Several options for this payment were reviewed, with board members voicing support for the expenditure. Lengthy discussion followed on the procedure for distributing the one-time payment. Emphasis was addressed for the payment to go only to staff members who are actually on the district payroll.

Miles was directed to add roughly \$90,000 of an additional one-time payment to employees in the same fashion that the 2011 bonus was distributed.

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Szabo reported the district had an unqualified audit, which is the highest rating and meant there were no problems to present.

The board was reminded by Szabo to monitor the handling of the activity fund to be sure deposits are made regularly and that clubs are not overspending.

Board members will accept the audit at the Dec. 18 meeting.

Mill levy certified

The school district's 2012 mill levy was certified at 38.796 mills at last week's meeting.

That includes 27 mills in the general fund, 7.5 mills in the voter-approved override, .046 mills in abatement and 4.25 mills in the bond redemption fund.

Miles noted the only change from 2011 is with the abatement, which is not in the control of the district.

Anti-bullying assembly praised

Board member Michelle Van Overbeke complimented the elementary staff for a successful anti-bullying assembly on Nov. 29. She said it's a good example of what the district has been

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doing to prevent bullying and to teach students how they can have a positive impact.

Principal Kyle Stumpf said the elementary school will be using its Title I night for a focus on bullying, as well.

Board members Dennis Herman and Jon King added that they heard from a nationally-recognized speaker and researcher at an anti-bullying workshop at the recent Colorado Association of School Boards convention.

Other business

In other business at the Dec. 4 meeting, the Re-1J board:

—included HHS juniors Meg Strauss and Brenda Hernandez in discussion about the recent CASB convention. The girls, along with Brittney Prottzman, attended the student strand of the convention.

Board member Linda Jelden suggested that a student leadership committee discussion be added to the board retreat agenda.

—approved second reading of changes to student use of the internet and electronic communication policies.

—scheduled a board retreat for Thursday, Jan. 10 from 5-10 p.m. in the board room. Potential topics include student leadership committee, bus routes and pickup times, digital learning and paperless meetings.

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