

SBOA disallows money from highway department to general fund

Council to wait for tax rates before making further budget cuts

By Debbie Lowe
Staff writer

Carroll County Council learned at Tuesday morning's meeting the Indiana State Board of Accounts would not allow a transfer of \$150,000 from the highway department into the general fund. The measure, initiated by the council and approved by commissioners, was designed to demonstrate additional 2008 income that would aid the county to achieve a \$5 million budget, suggested by the Indiana Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF).

It was also learned the county tax rate, issued by DLGF, would be received in a matter of days. The tax information will determine how much in property tax is expected in 2008.

That in turn will give the council the bottom-line number of how much there will be to spend in the county general fund for the year.

"We've been trying to hit a moving target," council member Jerry Hendress commented when discussion turned to waiting for the information before proceeding.

"If we waited to learn the tax rate, we'd know exactly what we'd have to work with," council president Nancy S. Cripe said.

Council agreed by consensus to delay further budget decisions until tax rates are received. A meeting will be scheduled when the rates arrive to make the final decisions before submitting the formal 2008 revised budget to DLGF.

Other business

Department heads were invited to appear and address budget reduction questions and concerns. Although many departments were represented, only a few spoke, including Carroll Superior Court Judge Jeffrey Smith and Circuit Court Judge Donald Currie.

Smith explained, with a comparison chart visual aid, how his court could not continue to function with the latest proposed budget reductions. He said superior court would lose a court reporter.

"The council is engaged in mystical thinking," he said as he explained the workload of court staff.

"We aren't dreaming this up," council member Steve Ashby said. "We are struggling as you are. If we don't cut it to \$5 million, we're dead

in the water."

Council member Rob Baker confronted Smith about the allegation that joint courts would be losing \$50,000. He said the salaries for probation office staff would be paid out of user fees instead of from the general fund.

"You still have the money," he said. "It's just been moved."

"I'm amazed at the offices who have tried to work with us," Baker continued. "We're doing this because we have to."

Currie reminded council members the courts have tried to work in conjunction with them as he described what hardships the current round of budget decreases would cause circuit court. He advised his court employs three staff, as it has since 1980.

"I cannot operate the court with two

employees," he said. "You're asking me to operate at a level that no other court in the state operates at."

Currie reviewed 2006 cases handled by circuit court, case-type by case-type. After each example, he paused and asked council members if they were willing to forego addressing that type of case in his court.

"Oh come on," Baker exclaimed. "You guys are grand-standing pretty good."

"What services are you asking us to cut?" Cripe asked.

"I'm not asking you to cut any services," Currie retorted before sitting down.

Treasurer Jane Brewington said she needed more money appropriated to the part-time budget to pay extra help

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CCSC library receives book from former student

Speaker's message – everyone is an unlikely hero

By Kevin Schnepf
Staff writer

Author Bob Morrison said he was a firefighter in Indiana when terrorists attacked the World Trade Center in 2001. When he heard news of the tragic event, he immediately got in his car and headed to New York City to see how he could help.

What he experienced there, along with other events in his life, made him realize he was an "unlikely hero," and so is everyone else.

Morrison, a 1979 graduate of Carroll High School, shared that message with middle and high school students at his alma mater last week. His speech accompanied the presentation of "Ashes to Ashes: 9/11" to the school library.

The book, published in January by Infinity Publishing, states on its cover it is "a story of one man's journey and struggle back from the nightmares and his ultimate discovery of salvation and peace of mind." Morrison said the book was "a firefighter's look back at the days of 9/11 and time spent at Ground Zero."

Within its pages are excerpts from his journal, kept during search and recovery, interviews of other rescuers, family members of victims, survivors and eye witnesses, and photos from the scene and of those affected by Sept. 11, 2001.

During his speech Morrison said those and other personal experiences, such as losing his father at a young age, transformed his way of thinking and lifestyle choices.

He said his parents owned and operated the Burlington Dog-N-Suds drive-in restaurant until shortly after his father died of a heart attack at the age of 43. The unexpected



Sharing a message of hope

Bob Morrison presents a copy of a book he authored, "Ashes to Ashes: 9/11," to Carroll High School Librarian Becky Lain. Morrison, a 1979 Carroll graduate, said he wrote the book based on experiences with rescue and recovery efforts after the World Trade Center was attacked in 2001 along with other defining moments in his life. The book contains journal entries he wrote along with photographs, interviews and stories from victims, their families and other volunteers. Morrison spoke to junior and senior high students before the book presentation to share his message that they were all "unlikely heroes" and had the ability to change the world for the better. Lain thanked Morrison and told him students were eager to read the book. "There's already a waiting list," Lain said.

Comet photo by Kevin Schnepf

loss of his childhood hero made a lasting impression. He explained his father showed him many times, by way of his actions, how to care for others, especially during emergencies.

"Everybody has to have a hero," he said. "My hero was my dad."

Morrison told students not only could they benefit from having a positive role model, but they were heroes themselves. He explained his intent was for the young listeners to understand choices they made now would affect their entire lives and that each of them held great potential to change

the world.

"Each one of you is an unlikely hero," he told students. "Do the right thing, and it will come back to bless you. You have to align yourself. We gotta change the world and you guys are it."

He said there was nothing

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DCSC questions sportsfield sprawl

By Kevin Schnepf
Staff writer

A question raised by a member of the Delphi Community School Corporation Board of Trustees during its regular meeting Monday night also raised some board members' concerns their authority may have been usurped. Who was responsible for going against a previous board decision and what should be done about it remain unknown.

During public comments DCSC board member Jim Garrison asked high school Agriculture Department head Ross Striebeck whose decision it was to take over most of six acres of farm ground adjacent to the track and field facility to house discus and shot-put areas when the board had authorized only a portion be used. He also questioned who directed him to sow the remaining .66 acres with grass seed instead of leaving it as tillable ground.

Striebeck responded additional track and field equipment installed in the area took up more room than they anticipated due to the amount of distance required by the Indiana High School Athletic Association for throwing events. He added the remainder was sown in grass perhaps because the local farmer who cash-rented the land would not consider it worth his while to till such a small remaining plot.

Board member Jerry Sparks told Striebeck that the decision to grass the entire field was contrary to an earlier decision of the board to use only a part of the field for athletics. He asked Striebeck if he chose to sow the grass or if he was told to do so.

Striebeck replied he did not recall how the decision came about because it had been some time since it was discussed. He said he would take full responsibility for the mistake.

Sparks questioned whether

high school principal Barry Stone or athletic director Vince Burpo might have been involved in the decision. The matter was left unresolved. Board members requested more information regarding the issue be brought before them.

Capital projects funds

The board approved a new cell phone plan that will cost approximately \$3,000 more per year than the current contract. The corporation will no longer own cell phones and instead will reimburse staff who use personal phones for official school business. Of the eight staff who will carry phones under the new plan, six who will use data-ready phones will be reimbursed \$80 per month and two with text-able devices will receive \$65 monthly. Users will be paid a one-time reimbursement to purchase new phones.

It was also noted the current cell phone plan, due to expire in June, was illegal according to state statute. Board president Robert Resler explained that according to Indiana Code school corporations cannot enter into yearly agreements with cell phone providers. Month-to-month plans are called for instead, a rule to which the new plan will adhere.

Electric bleachers were purchased for the middle school gymnasium for \$38,680. Of the three bids received, Intekal was awarded the contract though its bid was second-lowest. Resler said the board was authorized to accept a bid other than the lowest if it felt there was adequate justification. He said there were questionable aspects to the low bid, submitted by Educational Furniture, specifically concerning electrical work.

Garrison questioned whether electrically-operated bleachers were necessary, let alone the

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Mailing label goes here

Carroll board accepts donation to art program

By Jennifer Archibald
Staff writer

Art teacher Wyndham Traxler-Carter brought show-and-tell items to the Carroll School Board meeting April 8.

She wanted the board to see some of the art supplies she was able to purchase with the \$2,051 given to the Art Department by Flora Psi Iota Xi. She said this amount is in addition to the money the sorority gives to support the Artist-in-Residence program.

Among the art supplies purchased were six sets of 36-color high-grade markers, 15 dies of various sizes for cutting uniform shapes, and sublimation dye ink to transfer images to hard finishes such as wood, glass, and ceramic.

"It's really neat to expand on what the school can give us," Traxler-Carter said. "A lot of our budget has to be spent on consumable products."

She said the students will be able to do all kinds of projects with the new supplies.

"Psi Otes' mission is to support art, music, and literature," Traxler-Carter said. "As a teacher and as a parent, I am profoundly grateful for that. And I just wanted you to see the 'toys' we got."

The board acknowledged the gift from Psi Iota Xi. It also acknowledged receiving a grant to offer a course in Biomedical Sciences (biotechnology) next school year as part of Project Lead the Way. The vote to proceed with the biomedical course was 4-1, with board president Sam Zook opposing. Zook said later that he thinks Project Lead the Way is a great program, but he believes offering the biomedical science course at this time ('08-'09) would not be in the best interest of the students.

Superintendent John Sayers announced that two teacher po-

sitions are recommended for Reduction in Force (RIF). The board voted unanimously to RIF one position at the elementary school and one at the junior-senior high school.

Sayers said there are currently four first grade sections and three kindergarten sections, so the first grade teachers for next year will be reduced by one.

Also eliminated will be one position in the family and consumer science staff. Sayers said this is due to low enrollment in the classes.

Sayers also announced a change in the student handbooks pertaining to use of medications. He said the handbooks now say that student medication can only be kept at school for five days. He said the new wording removes the five-day limit.

The board must vote on all purchases over \$5,000. In keeping with that policy, the

board approved the elementary school's purchase of eight LCD projectors, with lamps and cables, at a cost of \$6,216.75.

The board declared various computer switches as surplus equipment because they are no longer useful to the system and have been replaced.

Rob Appleton, dba Rob's Lawn Care, was given the contract for summer lawn maintenance.

A fund-raising request was approved for the FFA Dairy Team to sell concessions on opening day of Little League. The vote was four in favor, one abstention, with Zook abstaining.

A facility use request was approved for the Carroll County YMCA to use the high school track for a field day on May 3.

Sayers announced that the summer piping project at the high school has been advertised, and bids will be opened at 2 p.m. April 22 at the Ad-

ministration Building.

Sayers commented that there are currently so many unknowns in financing schools, and there will probably still be unknowns when it is time to plan the corporation's budget. He expects the spring tax draw to be late.

Elementary principal Carolyn O'Connell reported that five high school role models came to the elementary school as part of the DARE program. She said the elementary students asked good questions about drug resistance, and the high school students gave good answers.

"I was very impressed with the maturity level and thoughtfulness of the high school students' responses," she said.

The next school board meeting has been changed from its regular date to April 22 at 7:30 p.m. at the Administration Building.