

Council spends with caution, eyeing bottom line

By Debbie Lowe
Staff writer

When Carroll County Council members hear requests for spending not planned for in 2010, they examine revenue projections for the future and no longer look at the short-term effect of their actions before making spending decisions. Members who were on the council when it was necessary to significantly reduce the general fund budget in 2008, as well as new council members, did not take immediate

action when presented with the news that four dump trucks, a pick-up truck and a chipper need to be replaced in the highway department in 2010.

Highway engineer Paul Coutts presented a proposed equipment replacement plan for 2010 to 2012 that will cost \$429,000, \$400,000 and \$420,000 respectively for those years if new equipment is purchased. The cost estimate dropped to \$150,000 each year if good used equipment is procured.

"This is the best projection of what

our needs are for the next three years," Coutts told the council at the Wednesday morning meeting.

"There is still a great need for single axle trucks," he continued. "And the county cannot afford to go to all tandems."

Council member Ron Slavens suggested the use of Rainy Day Funds for the 2010 equipment replacement. Auditor Beth Myers reported that she deposited \$475,733 from the 2009 budget into the fund as of Dec. 31, which brings the balance to \$1,162,597.82.

Other council members disagreed that it was a wise decision to use that fund for replacement of highway equipment.

"I don't think this is a Rainy Day Fund situation," Scott Ayres said. "These things need to be worked into the budget."

Carl Abbott concurred. He said he would not vote to spend money from the fund for non-emergency needs.

Coutts said there were reserve funds

in the maintenance equipment line item of the budget, but explained that he might need that money in case there are under-budgeted expenses, such as unemployment compensation and insurance premiums.

Council members noted they had the same concerns about using Rainy Day Funds to replace equipment.

"I'm just really concerned about using Rainy Day," Ann Brown said. "To do that would put us back into crisis management and I don't want to go there again."

Brown urged the other council members to "do some homework" and work to find other funding options to use to implement the highway equipment plan. Council member consensus was to discuss the matter in joint session with the commissioners March 15 at 1 p.m.

Burnett's Creek Arch

Highway funds approved to be encumbered from the 2009 budget include: \$121,559 for the Lake Freeman Canal project near the Landings;

\$32,271 for bridge inspections; and \$106,090.27 for a bridge over Paint Creek.

A request to encumber \$107,343.70 for the Burnett's Creek Arch was tabled after Slavens asked about the scope of work to be done on the project.

Coutts said the county will have access to the arch on both sides of the road. He recommended the work be done because the structure appears on the National Register of Historic Places. He explained the project is in the engineering phase and that the project's scope has been reduced to restrict access "as much as possible."

Slavens said his concern is that funding for the project at this point is 100 percent from the cumulative bridge fund. In a follow-up interview he explained that he would rather those funds be spent to repair more heavily traveled county bridges and culverts.

"This bridge should get simple re-

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Carroll to borrow \$800,000 for AC

By Jennifer Archibald
Staff writer

Carroll School Corporation will advertise for a general obligation bond to pay for the chiller installation project at Carroll Jr.-Sr. High School.

Bids for this latest phase of the air conditioning project are due back Feb. 9, and the board will award the contract at its second meeting of the month, Feb. 23.

Superintendent John Sayers asked for permission to advertise for the loan at last week's board meeting, Jan. 26. He said the loan amount will be \$800,000, to be repaid through the corporation's debt service fund.

The school has had two piping phases leading up to the chiller project. Work on the project is expected to start over spring break. Target date for completion is the first week in August, just in time for the beginning of school.

Sayers reported that committees from both schools have met

and discussed cost cutting measures. The cut in state funding for 2010 was first expected to be around 3 percent, which would have been \$195,000 for Carroll. Sayers said Carroll's shortage turned out to be \$300,000, which is closer to 5 percent.

The board will have a work session prior to the next meeting to talk about the financial situation and how to deal with it. Board president Sam Zook said a cost cutting plan will be in place soon.

"It's not going to be easy," Sayers said, "but we have some grass roots effort and have some ideas already."

1-on-1 reading assessment

Carroll Elementary reading specialist Kathy Shuler told the board about a new testing program called Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). It's a one-on-one standardized test where Shuler, or another trained teacher, listens to a child read aloud from a set of DRA books. The assessment includes a

checklist of things to look for - fluency, phonics, reading mistakes, etc. Children in the older grades also answer written questions on the book, to test for comprehension.

Shuler said they had a trial run of the test at the beginning of the school year, and the test will be given again in April or May. She added that the DRA test can be given at any time for new students or referrals.

The test determines an independent reading level. Shuler said students who are reading at similar levels are grouped together for instruction.

Sayers said this is an added assessment for the purpose of improving reading ability.

"Our goal is for all students to read at grade level," he said.

Principal Carolyn O'Connell added that if students are not reading at grade level, the small group intervention targets instruction to those students.

The board approved having an

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Collection for Haiti



Camden Early Childhood Center has collected over \$1,000 to help with relief efforts in Haiti. The school is helping the children of a particular orphanage, devastated by the earthquake. Pictured with some of the money collected are, l-r, Sarah Howard, Rebecca Daugherty, and Micah Lawless. All the students at CECC are in kindergarten and pre-K. Comet photo by Jennifer Archibald

Children reach out to children

By Jennifer Archibald
Staff writer

The last two weeks of January the Camden Early Childhood Center collected money for children in Haiti. The collection was in conjunction with the school's celebration of the 100th Day of School.

For two weeks, the children brought in Pennies for Haiti. The collection was so successful that it turned into Hundreds for Haiti. At final count, the total surpassed \$1,000.

The school is donating to the children of a particular orphanage, Maison des Enfants de Dieu. The connection was made through teacher Emily Daugherty, who has an adop-

tive child from China. Prior to the earthquake, the Chinese adoption agency, Chinese Children Adoption International, also was handling adoptions from Haiti, in cooperation with the above-named orphanage. According to the agency, no children from that orphanage were physically injured in the earthquake, but they are in need of emergency shelter, food, water, and medicine.

Because of its connection, the adoption agency is organizing relief efforts there. A private plane has been making deliveries of needed supplies. The money from CECC will go toward that effort.

Teacher Carrie Geheb said the collection was not a usual

way to celebrate the 100th Day of School. Each day of the collection, students were encouraged to bring in 100 pennies (a dollar) or any amount of their choosing. The children's pennies were augmented by dollars and checks from teachers, staff, parents, grandparents, and others wanting to help.

The CECC staff had sent a letter home to parents with the following explanation of the project: "This act of kindness will teach the students about a current event as well as teach about helping others. Let's see how much money we can raise!"

Teachers said the amount raised was far more than their expectations.

Delphi to see two new annual events

By Debbie Lowe
Staff writer

Two local groups have made plans to spur activity in the downtown Delphi area this summer. Both received approval from the Delphi City Council and one received financial support at the Monday night meeting.

A newly-formed group, the Carroll County Arts Council, will sponsor an invitational fine arts fair around the courthouse square in May. Representative Julia Leahy explained the event is an effort to raise money for grants to be given to further art interest throughout the county. Artists will pay \$50 for a booth space.

City council members agreed to close Washington St. between Main and Franklin May 8 from 7

a.m. to 5 p.m. Leahy said it is desirable to close Washington St. rather than another street so that the group can utilize the Delphi Opera House Gallery.

Delphi Preservation Society will host a 5K run, called the "Delphi Diamond Dash" through the city in September. Representative Karyl Traeger explained various streets might need to be closed and the route would have to be marked.

City council members voted unanimously to support the event financially with a \$500 donation. Together with another \$500 pledged from Delphi Main Street the city will be recognized on banners and materials that promote the run. Participants will pay a \$25 registration fee.

Funds generated from the

event will be used for a new roof for the Delphi Opera House. Traeger said the group expects 500 participants and plans to make it an annual event.

Veteran council member Pearson was nominated by Germond for 2010 president of the council. The vote to seat Pearson was unanimous.

Other business

City council members made progress toward a proposed purchase of a portion of the Globe Valve property on N. Washington St. in order to house the street department, which will then make room in the city building for the fire department to expand.

Mayor Randy Strasser announced that the developers of the Globe Valve property are

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Courthouse implements emergency procedures manual

By Debbie Lowe
Staff writer

Potential emergencies in the courthouse moved one step closer to being responded to in a uniform manner when Carroll County Commissioners adopted a courthouse employees emergency procedures manual at Monday morning's meeting.

Developed by the sheriff's department and presented by Sgt. Dennis Randle, the manual is a response to a cost-free 2007 U.S. Marshal's review of courthouse

security.

Randle said department heads are ultimately responsible for the safety of their workers during an emergency. An explanatory meeting for all department heads and their deputies will be held Friday at 10 a.m. in the commissioners meeting room.

Topics addressed in the manual are evacuations, elevator use in emergencies, power outages, tornado warnings, biochemical, bomb and telephone threats, and catastrophic events. How employees should respond and how

to survive catastrophic events are also included in the manual.

Randle said although there are other areas in the courthouse that should be addressed for security issues, he advised there are security cameras, which record constantly, stationed throughout the building.

Health Department

Commissioners unanimously approved the recommendation from the county board of health to re-appoint Angie Brown and Dr. Marilyn Wagoner to four-year terms on the board and to re-ap-

point Dr. Jordan Dutter to another four-year term as county health officer.

Commissioner Bill Brown abstained from the action to re-appoint his wife to the board. Council president Ann Brown recommended that both Brown and his wife sign conflict of interest forms in the county clerk's office as a public acknowledgement of possible conflict. Brown agreed and said he "had no problem" signing the form.

Brown then questioned Dutter about the need to employ full-

time workers in the health department when, based on the 2009 department statistics, there did not seem to be enough work for them to do. Dutter said although there are no other duties that can be assigned to a worker whose workload has decreased over the past several years, it is desirable to have someone to do the work when needed.

The other commissioners shared Brown's sentiment.

"We've always done it this way, but who's to say there isn't

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