

School safety is a priority

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

School safety is a clear priority in Holyoke School District Re-1J and has come to the discussion forefront following the recent school tragedy in Connecticut.

At the Dec. 18 School Board meeting, board members reviewed the Crisis Response Plan standard response protocols. The original plan was put in place in January 2011 and revisions are being printed in preparation for presentation to staff on Friday, Jan. 4.

Supt. Bret Miles noted the crisis response plan work was influenced by the I Love You Guys Foundation in response to the Platte Canyon tragedy in 2006.

Protocols have been adopted in many school districts throughout the state and outline specific steps for evacuations, shelter, lockout and lockdown.

Additional steps address bomb threat, child abuse, injury/illness, missing person, sexual assault and suicide.

In addition to the Crisis Response Plan revisions, Miles reminded the board of security upgrades completed this past summer using mill levy override money.

A new security camera system was installed at the elementary school, and cameras were added to the high school security system. A new computerized door lock system was added to both schools, and the district had the intercom system and phone system tied together to improve emergency announcements.

The Connecticut tragedy has led to local discussion about the idea of keeping school doors locked and requiring all visitors to buzz into the buildings with the new security system.

Miles said he and the principals are reviewing procedures and will have a plan in place prior to

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school starting after the holiday break.

Board authorizes use of \$200,000 from beginning fund balance

After a review of budget changes that had been reviewed at the Dec. 4 meeting, board members adopted the 2012-13 budget and approved total appropriations of \$8,840,286.

The 2011-12 audit report that had been presented Dec. 4 was also approved at last week's meeting.

The board authorized the use of \$200,000 from the beginning fund balance for general instructional costs for educational purposes.

The projected ending balance in 2012-13 is \$1,408,464, which is still above the \$1.2 million threshold established by the board.

Budget appropriations for 2012-13 were adopted as follows:

General Fund \$5,444,341

Bond Redemption 514,325

Construction 1,933,072

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Food Service 258,000

Trust and Agency 375,588

Pupil Activity Fund 314,960

Total Approp \$8,840,286

Two certificates of completion were approved for construction projects at last week's board meeting. Miles pointed out that while these are complete, some issues (such as clock change-outs) are still being addressed through the warranty process.

The first certificate of completion covered the boiler, electrical and fire alarm project. The second encompassed other improvements including upgrades to lighting, bathrooms, intercoms and master clock system.

Miles said there is \$210,793 remaining in the construction fund, and the district budget and facilities committee has been reviewing needs and prioritizing them to determine the best use of this money.

Other business

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In other business Dec. 18, the Re-1J board:

—approved several extra-duty assignments: John Zilla, HS boys' head baseball coach; Nic Balog, HS boys' volunteer basketball coach; and Jeremy Dirks, volunteer JR/SR High wrestling coach for 2012-13.

—acknowledged substantial gifts to the district. Pioneer Seed gave Holyoke FFA a donation which was used to purchase a large piece of equipment in the shop.

Several donations were used to purchase new pieces of weight room equipment. Donors were Holyoke Wrestling Club/Jeremy Dirks, Ag Power Equipment/CASE/Curt Parker, Vieselmeyer Seed, Grainland Co-op, Dragon Water/Shawn Dalton, First Pioneer National Bank, Bank of Colorado, Holyoke Community Federal Credit Union, Computers Etc., Jeff Tharp/Shawn Dalton, Rick Cumming and RJ's Simple Spending.

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