

Board's facilities committee prioritizes building needs

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

Board members on Chase County Schools' facilities committee presented a list of maintenance and building priorities for the future.

Discussion took place at the school board's Nov. 10 meeting.

Topping the list was the school's nearly 20-year-old roof that is in need of repair and leaking in some spots. No. 2 on the list was resurfacing the outdoor track, with the Shorthorn gym's west wall/possible expansion at No. 3.

Members of the board's facilities committee include Charley Colton, Dirk Haarberg and Tom Gaschler. The committee met with Supt. Matt Fisher following last month's meeting to discuss the facility needs.

The board discussed how the projects, especially the roof, would be funded and work timelines.

As the discussion progressed, school board member Gregg Smith questioned whether the gym's wall shouldn't be more at the top of the priority list. He believes there could be safety concerns.

The gym's west wall was built as a "temporary wall" when the building was constructed, noted Supt. Fisher, leading to some concern about possible instability.

"That is one place in the building that was built (with the idea) to be added onto," Fisher said.

He said that they've been keeping an eye on the wall for awhile.

After some discussion, the board was in agreement that a professional should be brought in to look at the wall.

"We felt that it should be inspected for safety sake," Fisher said.

While the board discussed the wall's condition, Fisher also reported the committee felt study was needed for possible expansion west of the gym in the future, whether for more gym seating, classrooms or storage.

"It's an opportunity to look to the future" and determine what is the best thing there, Fisher said.

Other facility priorities

A section of the school roof over the commons area was replaced early this fall after being damaged by hail this summer.

While insurance funds paid for replacing all of that section, replacing the rest of the roof could cost up to \$1 million, Supt. Fisher told board members last week.

As was done on the section this fall, plans are to replace the rest of it, too, with a single-ply roofing system, rather than the rock and asphalt surface which the original roof has.

Supt. Fisher recommended that the board consider starting to add money into the General Fund each year to do sections of the roof over a four to five-year period. By doing that, the board wouldn't have to levy for a capital improvement bond for the entire project, he said.

Board member Todd Burpo questioned why the recommendation was to increase the General Fund for the roof, rather than use building fund dollars as they had discussed during budget planning.

The school's building fund stands at about \$500,000.

Supt. Fisher said, depending on what action the legislature takes, they may not have the authority in the future to add to the building fund.

If the General Fund levy drops below the 95-cent mark, the schools will lose some of its state aid, Fisher said.

In the 2009-10 budget, the board approved just over a 95-cent General Fund levy, added to the building fund and increased cash reserves.

Board member Smith agreed that the roof work needs to start, but also noted the size of the building fund at present.

Concerning the track, Supt. Fisher said resurfacing is needed. The track on East 9th St. was finished in 2001, and was first used in the 2002 track season.

Board members need to determine whether to resurface it again with latex or use a polyurethane surface, the latter running about \$20,000 to \$25,000 more, but should last longer.

To do it right, Supt. Fisher said the track base needs to be built up several inches from where it is now. With cost of the resurfacing added, the project could run between \$150,000 and \$200,000.

If the board would give that direction, Supt. Fisher said he'd like to see the track resurfaced next summer.

Other facility needs discussed included lighting in front of the building, straightening the flagpole in front of the school and issues with the parking lot lights across the street in the new lot.

Other school board business

- A second salaried assistant coach will be added for the boy's' basketball team this season, joining Head Coach Carl Zuege and Asst. Coach Matt Hanna. Zuege made the request at last week's meeting, noting there is a potential of 25 to 28 players on this year's team. That would also allow a split practice in which two groups practice separately for 45 minutes each, then are all on the floor together for about an hour, Zuege said. There is interest in the additional coaching position, Zuege added.

- A 2009 Mercury Grand Marquis will be purchased from Imperial Country Ford for use by small groups on school business or to attend activities. Cost was \$14,400 which includes a \$2,500 trade-in allowance on the school's 1991 Chevy van. The school had advertised for a 5-7 passenger vehicle and received three bids. Others were from Harchelroad Motors for a 2008 Uplander van, \$15,900, which includes \$2,000 for the trade-in, and another bid from Country Ford on a 2009 Ford Taurus, \$16,200, including \$2,500 trade-in on the van.

- Linda Frost, a National Institute For Direct Instruction (NIFDI) implementation manager, was at the meeting with a report on the school's new Reading Mastery Program. She and Reading Coach Angie Dickey were meeting last week to review data and determine if some students need to move to different reading groups. She called Reading Mastery "a work in progress" and predicted after the regrouping is done, "a spurt of growth" will be seen. Students

will be charted for progress at the end of each quarter. Elementary Principal Nathan Vitosh encouraged a special day be set up for board members to observe the program in progress, possibly combining it with a tour of the school for a closer look at facility needs. Frost said the CCS staff has been very professional during implementation of the program.