

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

A suggestion that Chase County Schools begin charging for junior high sporting events didn't garner much interest from board of education members.

That was one topic at the board's Oct. 13 meeting, most of which involved transportation and maintenance-related issues. An aide was also hired, and the board had some input from its student board member.

School Supt. Matt Fisher put the junior high admission topic on the agenda on a patron request. The patron suggested that funds raised from those admissions could be used as fund-raisers for classes at the school.

As it was discussed, board member Dirk Haarberg noted Chase County is one of the few area schools that does not charge admission for junior high games.

Supt. Fisher agreed, but added it wouldn't generate a lot of funds and they'd have to deal with finding more ticket-takers, too.

He also said since there are costs the school incurs in hosting a home sporting event (referees, clock operators, etc.), the funds raised from admissions probably should go back into the junior high athletic fund, instead of to classes or organizations.

Board member Todd Burpo said, as a junior high wrestling coach, he would like to see the practice of not charging continue. Normally, the games draw mainly families of the players, and it would be another expense for families that likely have additional children with them, he said.

In the end, there didn't appear to be much interest in starting to charge for junior high events. No action was taken.

In other related discussion, the board talked about trying to get more "fifth quarter" play for its junior high football team, as well as providing public address announcers for home games.

Dropping enrollments in the other schools on the Shorthorn schedule cause problems in scheduling "fifth quarters," said Supt. Fisher, but indicated they would continue to make that attempt.

On a question relating to location of the Shorthorn home football games, Supt. Fisher said the coaches prefer having them at the Wellington field since their equipment is kept in the Wellington school lockerrooms.

"And, it makes it special for them when they do move to the new field (on East 9th St.)" when playing high school football, Fisher said.

Other school board business

- Bids will be sought by CCS on a five to eight passenger vehicle to replace a 1995 Chevrolet 12-passenger van, the oldest in the school's fleet. Another van in the fleet was totaled from hail this summer, which the school plans to keep in operation under a salvage title. The \$6,900 insurance payment on that van will be used to help purchase the vehicle now being advertised. Supt. Fisher said they'd like a mini-van but Ford and Chevy no longer make them. They will consider both new and used vans, and may even consider a car or SUV, according to

the discussion. After the 2010-11 school year, schools will not be able to transport students in 15-passenger busses. Also in the 2010-11 school year, it's expected the school will be seeking bids to replace the 1996 white Longhorn bus, which now has 430,000 miles on the odometer.

- A small area in the board meeting room will be tested for a change in the overhead lighting, as the school begins phasing in T8 light fixtures. The original T12 fixtures are still in use throughout the building. Those will eventually be completely phased out in favor of the more efficient T8s, Supt. Fisher said. The board continues to discuss whether it's necessary to replace them with all new fixtures versus just the ballasts, a cost difference of \$80,000.

- High school art teacher Chelsea Zuege presented to the board ways her art classes use the new Mac laptops. She played a "podcast" produced by one of her students, which incorporated voice, music and sound effects put together via the laptop. She told board members the Macs are "incredible" to work with in her classes, and students will benefit from the graphic design education they are receiving.

- Student board member Chevy Smith visited with the board on four issues. He said people from the community haven't responded in big numbers to the offer of playing with the pep band at events, but they'll keep working on it. He appreciated the work in the parking lot, but more potholes need filled. Supt. Fisher said more rock is coming to do so. Still asking for consideration that students have "administrative" rights with use of the laptops, students were encouraged by Supt. Fisher to visit with on-site technician Jerel Fortkamp for individual requests. Finally, Smith expressed concern with having the Homecoming dance on Friday after the game instead of Saturday, when it was originally scheduled, noting the dance lasted an hour and a half. Supt. Fisher was to check into the reasons for the date change to Friday.

- Valerie Werner of Imperial was hired as an aide in the school's special education department, replacing Jamie Jussel, who had resigned.

- Supt. Fisher told board members he will be out of the office a couple of weeks following his hip replacement surgery Oct. 26. He hopes to be back for the board's Nov. 9 meeting.