By Jan Schultz
The Imperial Republican

School Supt. Brad Schoeppey expressed some frustration at this week's school board meeting as he discussed issues with the building's new heating/AC installation, as well as leaks into the building over the weekend after the snow.

"We are working to get these issues resolved," he told board members at their regular monthly meeting Tuesday.

"It's been one thing after another," he said.

The $2.661 million project was approved earlier this year by the board for revamping the heating, air conditioning and ventilation systems in the 20-year-old Chase County Schools building. Work started on the project the end of May.

Schoeppey told board members he's been assured by TRANE of Omaha, the general contractor for the project, that things will be taken care of.

Workers installing the rooftop air conditioning units which required cutting into the roof apparently "didn't seal around them very well," Schoeppey said at the meeting.

With Imperial's five to six inches of snow this week, water leaked into the commons area outside of Schoeppey's office causing damage to the ceiling, paint and sheet rock.

Work is underway on finishing the heating portion of the project. Schoeppey said it's been frustrating because it's been too cool in the mornings in the building.

There have been issues, he said, with installation of the valves, apparently installed incorrectly on the geothermal heating/cooling unit located in the old boiler room.

The building can't get any heat until the valves are corrected, Schoeppey said.

"It's been pretty chilly in the building, especially in the mornings," he said.

"If we get another shot of cold weather like this weekend anytime soon...it's been very uncomfortable," he said.

In another area, Board President Charley Colton asked about broken cement in the east parking lot, near the handicap parking area, done by trucks working on the pro-ject this summer. It has caused the walkway to cave in.

It has not been fixed as of this week. Colton suggested that the work get done locally and have it charged back to the contractor.

"We need to get that fixed. It affects our handicapped parking; they can't get across it," Colton said.

Chase County Schools has not yet issued TRANE its final $226,000 payment on the project's contract.

School district taxpayers will be paying for the project through Quality Capital Purpose Undertaking bonds approved as part of the budget for 2012-13 and beyond.

One aspect of the project includes new unit ventilators installed in the rooms that will have the capability to bring in fresh air for cooling on those days when the water lines are full of hot water for heating.

In addition, the classrooms will now have carbon dioxide sensors to measure air quality. If the carbon dioxide in a room rises too high, the ventilator will automatically open a flue to bring in fresh air into the room.

Other school board business

- A new computer program that will handle general ledger, payroll, purchasing, inventory and more received high marks from Supt. Schoeppey, who brought it before the board Tuesday. The AptaFund program has a key facet the school has been lacking—inventory control, said Schoeppey. Currently, the school has no consistent way of tracking inventory. A webinar on the program was viewed by the superintendent and the secretaries in his office. He said it will be more efficient for the office staff, and particularly, when an item goes through to be purchased, it automatically inventories it, as well. Board member Tom Gaschler noted the current system being used at the school is likely 30 years old. Schoeppey noted it will be expensive the first year, at a $15,000 cost for initial set-up, training and transfer of data. After that, the program will cost $6,000 each year. The board gave approval to proceed.
- Resignations from Rhonda Hickman, secretary/payroll; Lori Lane, library aide; and Maggie Dill, special needs aide, were approved. In addition, the board approved the termination of custodian Kenneth Johnston Jr., and hired Lana Vlasin as a special needs aide. The board also approved Pamela Ostermiller of Grant as a local substitute teacher. Supt. Schoeppey noted some school districts give its superintendent the authority to okay such substitutes, rather than go through board approval, since the superintendent is often the one who interviews the person. The board seemed to favor that suggestion and is expected to vote on it next month.
- The meeting Tuesday served as the first one concerning negotiations with the Imperial Education Association (IEA) for the next salary/benefit contract. The board and IEA set a tentative date of Nov. 17 for a negotiations session.
- The school's new website is up and running, reported board member Sheila Stromberger. The new address is: chasecountyschools.org. Eventually the site will link to school organizations as they have items to put up. Stromberger, also a school secretary, is coordinating the website.
- The board approved findings of the Americanism committee, which had submitted its report also to Supt. Schoeppey.