



By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

Location of a new fire hall for the Imperial Volunteer Fire Department is still up in the air.

No action was taken after a closed session between the CCS board of education and city council at the Aug. 13 school board meeting when land negotiations were discussed.

All four city council members, Mayor Dwight Coleman and several Imperial Volunteer Fire Department (IVFD) members and other city officials attended the meeting.

A month ago the groups met to initially hash out the possibilities of the city purchasing part of the Wellington football field (north end) for a possible fire hall location.

While a city-owned lot on Broadway, north of the library, had been the original planned site for a new, larger fire hall, other locations are being considered now, mainly due to expansion limits on Broadway.

At last week's meeting, Fire Chief Nick Schultz encouraged those who have not seen the inside of the fire hall "and how crowded it is," to come and look "because it really is becoming a safety issue."

Trucks are stacked three deep, he said, and with the arrival of a new rural truck recently, the department's dive/rescue equipment will be moved out to a different site.

While the building will be built in the city, Schultz noted that the major reason expansion is necessary is because of the addition of more rural trucks the past few years.

All trucks are getting bigger, and additional equipment such as the dive/rescue unit, have been added over the years, cramping space there.

"The rural trucks are paid for by the people that are pretty much the same constituents that you (school board) have, so there is some overlap there with taxpayers," he said.

Dirk Haarberg said, as a school board member, their responsibility is not whether a fire department building will be built but whether to do something with the property owned by the district.

"In my opinion, if we are going to do something with that property, we need to do something with the whole property," Haarberg said, "not just 150 feet."

He said he could not stand behind donating 150 feet of the field to the IVFD.

Several other board members said they'd like to see all of the school's facilities moved to the East 9th site eventually, which will cost money.

Board President Jeff Olsen said he also does not support selling the Wellington property "piecemeal" or giving it away.

An idea tossed out by council member Chad Yaw on an interlocal agreement between the two groups might get some consideration from the school board.

Yaw's suggestion would have the city provide help with some of the maintenance for the Wellington property, including the buildings, in exchange for part of the football field for the fire hall.

While the junior high football team still practices at the Wellington field, their games will be moved to the East 9th field this fall.

According to discussion last week, practices could still be possible on Wellington if the field was turned to an east/west direction, should a building be built on the north.

In the end, no action resulted last week.

Supt. Brad Schoeppey and board members have recently discussed building issues at Wellington that include roof and boiler replacement.

The building's boilers alone could run an estimated \$220,000, Schoeppey said later in the meeting. Another \$200,000 could be required for the roof, making purchase of the building an expensive one.

Budget planning starts; big valuation hikes in district

Supt. Brad Schoeppey reviewed preliminary budget figures with the board last week, noting much of his time recently has been spent on the 2013-14 school budget.

Schoeppey said he expects the General Fund budget to increase by about two percent for 2013-14.

Schoeppey received some good news this week when valuation figures arrived from one of two county assessors. It appears valuation in the CCS district will be up about 21 percent, he said, so expects CCS district taxpayers to see a lower levy next year.

Other school board business

- Unbeknownst to the school, it owns two acres of land, one south of Imperial and another southwest, for which others have been paying the property taxes, assuming they were the owners. The true ownership was discovered by TM Land Service, LLC, which is contacting owners of property in the area for gas and oil leases, and have leases with several landowners in the area. Michael Hodges of the company said in their title searches, it was discovered the two acres were deeded to the school in 1890 and 1892, likely for locating school houses. The land taxes on those two acres, however, have been paid for by the adjoining landowners. A motion was passed, pending legal opinion, to give Supt. Schoeppey the authority to sign documents transferring the two acres to those landowners who had been paying the taxes. Several board members said it was the right thing to do to deed over the property to the families who believed the acres were theirs in the first place, and were paying the taxes on them.

- New locks have been installed on all classroom doors at a cost of \$24,900 that now allow teachers inside the room to lock them by flipping a switch. Previously, teachers had to go outside the room and lock the door from the outside, which raised safety concerns among the administration and board. The locks were purchased from Johnson Hardware Co., and installed by the CCS custodians. Further security measures are planned, he said, including installation of more cameras. Supt. Schoeppey noted during the budget discussion later in the meeting that the 2013-14 budget for security was increased from \$10,000 to \$25,000 for the added safety measures. He said he would also like to look into options for computer monitoring all exterior doors.

- Three hirings and two resignations were approved regarding classified employees at the school. Resigning were Jill Mays, a seven-hour ELL teacher assistant, and Fabiola Castillo, a special education teacher assistant and interpreter. Hired to replace Mays was Lindsey Johnson. Also hired were Rhonda Huicochea as a bus driver and four-hour ELL teacher assistant, and Esthela Mireles, as interpreter and special ed. teacher assistant.

- The POM POMs organization will again lease the school concession stand during 2013-14 for \$750, the same as last year. There were no other changes to the lease agreement.

- A transfer of \$9,000 from the student fee fund to the General Fund was approved. Supt. Schoeppey explained that transfer happens each summer after the conclusion of driver's education classes. The tuition students pay to take driver's ed. goes initially into the student fee fund, then is later transferred. This year's \$9,000 transfer is up from last year's \$6,000 transfer, Schoeppey noted, because there were two class sessions this summer.

- Policies on student fees and parent involvement in schools were approved. Both policies must be adopted by the school board annually even though there were no changes to either one. Public hearings were held at last week's meeting prior to the 8-0 votes to approve both policies.