

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

Members of the Chase County Schools board of education and the city of Imperial continue to negotiate on a possible sale of school property for a potential new fire hall.

At last week's school board meeting, after a closed session, the board's facilities committee was given the authority to negotiate with city representatives on the sale of the Wellington site.

Likewise, the city has an agenda item for its Oct. 21 meeting that anticipates a closed session on the possible land purchase negotiations.

School Supt. Brad Schoeppey said their facilities committee was given the go-ahead to negotiate, then bring back a recommendation or proposal for a full board vote.

No timeline was set or parameters given to their committee on how much of the Wellington property would be on the table, he added.

Some board members have said at recent meetings they do not favor selling just a piece of the property, but rather all of the Wellington site, buildings included.

Members of the school board's facilities committee include Tom Gaschler, Dirk Haarberg and Willy O'Neil.

The Imperial Volunteer Fire Department (IVFD) had been planning to build a new fire hall on the city-owned empty lot on Broadway, north of the library. Some plans had already been drawn for that site with hopes for a foundation to be in by this winter.

However, the IVFD began looking at other locations at the suggestion of council member John Arterburn, who wanted to reserve the Broadway property for future retail development. Also discussed were the limited expansion possibilities at that location.

The city then approached the school about the Wellington site, preferring a north section of the football field that borders East 12th St. Football games are no longer held at that site; all have been moved to the new field on East 9th St.

Negotiations and discussions have been underway for several months.

Other school board business

- -An update on security measures at the school was given by Supt. Schoeppey. He said 32 cameras are now operational inside and outside the school building. The cameras provide video of more areas including the bike racks, parking lots and all entrances. Only a few door lock changes were left to be done, and Schoeppey is acquiring cost estimates on an alert system that will send texts when school building doors are opened or unlocked. Members of a K-6 staff committee have also completed a lockdown protocol that has been or will be reviewed with each classroom teacher, said Principal Susie Stewart.

- The board approved the hiring of Samie Johnson as a library teacher assistant, to replace Tawnya Jensen, who resigned. Approval was also given on adding Jodie Liess as a one-act play assistant coach who will work with head coach Jill Bauerle. The one-act play competition this fall anticipates a cast of close to 50 students.

- A groundskeeper position is being added to the school staff. Supt. Schoeppey told board members he's had about eight applicants, and hoped to start interviews this week. He said the new person hired will report to maintenance head Andres Huicochea, with someone taking the indoor maintenance and the other one concentrating on the outdoors. Schoeppey said, as the

buildings age, they take more maintenance, which is among the reasons for adding the classified staff position.

- The high school's community service graduation requirement, new this year, has received good response, reported 7-12 Principal Mike Sorensen. He reminded patrons that forms for community service verification are available on the school's website at: chasecountyschools.org