

## Amended WP budget approved to cover school lunch program increases

Written by Wauneta Breeze

Friday, 12 August 2011 19:36 - Last Updated Friday, 12 August 2011 19:37

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By Tina Kitt

The Wauneta Breeze

This year the cost of providing healthy and tasty meals to students at Wauneta-Palisade Schools has outpaced the \$155,000 budgeted last fall, leaving school officials and board members no choice but to amend the 2010-2011 budget to cover the increased costs.

After discussing the matter during a public hearing Monday night, held prior to their regular monthly board meeting, school board members voted unanimously to transfer \$15,000 from the general fund budget to the school lunch fund budget to offset the higher costs.

“As we all know fuel prices have risen dramatically this past year and like all school districts we are fuel-reliant for our weekly food deliveries,” explained WP Superintendent Dr. Stan Sibley. “When fuel prices go up our food delivery costs go up.”

Cindy Brunkhorst, lunch program manager, noted that her staff has worked to create healthier lunches utilizing more fresh produce as requested by parents and district patrons and this has impacted costs. She explained that the costs of fresh fruits and vegetables in particular have risen and expects additional increases this year on top of growing fuel surcharges.

“Parents have called and thanked us for the bigger lunches with higher quality ingredients and we are happy to do it, but those foods do carry a higher cost,” she added.

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### Combined football squad proposal explored

Dwindling enrollment numbers at both Wauneta-Palisade and Hayes Center have school officials looking for ways for both schools to safely field eight-man football teams in the coming years.

One possibility being explored is a cooperative agreement to allow combining high school football teams from WP and Hayes Center for the 2012 and 2013 seasons.

A community-wide meeting was scheduled to be held in Hayes Center Monday night at the same time as the WP School Board was meeting, with a discussion between the Hayes Center players and their parents to follow.

“This is an internal community conversation they are having tonight,” said Sibley.

Members of the Hayes Center School Board expect to ascertain a direction to take from patrons, players and parents when they meet in regular session next week.

“The main interest in pursuing this option is to do what’s best for our kids and for their kids,” noted Sibley. “If they choose to go down this path they find a willing partner in doing what’s best for kids.”

If both school districts determine this is the best route to take they must notify the Nebraska Schools Activities Association of their intent prior to a Nov. 7 deadline, explained Sibley.

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### Long-term substitute pay

Acting on recommendation from Sibley, the board approved \$100-per-day pay for long-term substitute teachers, with \$90 per day offered to substitute teachers filling a position for five days or less. After six days a substitute is no longer following teaching plans prepared in advance for them, but is tackling that work themselves explained Sibley in suggesting the two-tiers of pay.

### Other action

In further action the board:

- Authorized Sibley and Principal Troy Holmberg to develop and distribute a faculty and staff handbook based on previous handbooks and consistent with board policy, current practice and state law. They plan to have the handbook completed in time to pass out to teachers at the start of the school year and available to board members for review at their September meeting.
- Approved a coaches and sponsors handbook as recommended, with changes to the handbook more clearly defining practices, stipulating that lockers containing WP gear must be kept locked, and offering guidelines for evaluating head injuries and possible concussions.
- Approved a three-year contract agreement for auditing services with Bentley and Kisker at a rate of \$4,500 per year, replacing McDermott and Miller of Kearney, the district's former auditing firm. But a sense of continuity is likely to remain.

Linnette Kisker was formerly employed with McDermott and Miller and handled the Wauneta-Palisade audit. She has recently moved to Trenton and joined with Sandi Bentley to create the new firm.

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- Voted to allow school officials to put up for sale or otherwise dispose of surplus property in storage which is taking up valuable space including old computers, monitors, keyboards, speaker sets, lockers, milk cooler, drill press, table saw and work bench.
- Approved on second reading board policies pertaining to nondiscrimination, service animals, Title I, admission requirements, attendance/excessive absenteeism, assessments security, science assessments and special education. They will further research policy matters on concussions before approving that board policy.
- Approved implementing the originally negotiated salary of \$122,438 for Sibley and increased vacation days by five, making the salary package retroactive to July 1, 2011.
- Approved a 3 percent salary increase for Holmberg from \$72,000 to \$74,160, changing his contract period from 11 months to 12 months and stipulating 20 days of vacation in addition to vacation days in the school year calendar.
- Offered updates on paraprofessional staffing and custodial candidate discussions.