

LOCALNEWS

FALLS SCHOOL BOARD

Turban hired as maintenance/transportation director

Board adopts strategic planning goals

BY EMILY GEDDE  
Staff Writer

After 25 years, there will be a new maintenance/transportation director for Independent School District No. 361 next school year.

The Falls School Board agreed Monday to hire Calvin Turban to replace Jeff Veeder who has held the position for the past 25 years and has been with the district for 32 years.

However, an April 14 letter to school board members and Superintendent Kevin Grover from Turban said he would accept the job with some conditions.

Turban, who is currently the fireman at Falls High School, requested one year of extended personal leave from his present position because of "uncertainty pertaining to two aspects of (maintenance/transportation director) position that I am concerned with."

The first condition, the letter said, deals with the relationship between the position and dispatching snow plowing duties.

"Of which I believe are union duties and are in the best interest of the district to make so," the letter read. Grover told board mem-

bers custodians could do more of the calling to make sure plowing doesn't turn into a "12-hours per day job."

In addition, Turban said the transportation coordinator position should be given responsibility of daily operations of the bus garage.

"Without doing so, I believe the maintenance/transportation director position will not have an effective role in the district's future," the letter continued. "Therefore, if within my first year under the position the district sees otherwise and cannot make this a reality; I may exert my right to return to my present position under the extended personal leave provision."

Board member Gordy Dault asked if the person in that position would not be doing any plowing.

"I don't think it's any plowing," Grover said. "It's just negotiable."

The superintendent said he supports Turban's requests and hopefully, he will find it's the right fit for him and continues his future with the district in the position.

"I want him as an employ-



Calvin Turban

ee," Grover said. "We can work together as a group to make it a workable position."

The board hired Turban with a start date of June 1 on an annual salary of \$66,113. Veeder's last day will be in August, Grover said.

In other business Monday, the board adopted strategic planning goals for the district that were formed by a Minnesota School Board Association representative, the Blue Ribbon Panel and other members of the district.

The goals, some short-term, others long-term, are not yet set in stone, Grover said, but with Monday's formal adoption, "things can get going."

Some areas highlighted in the plan include involving community volunteers in increasing academic achievement, increasing test scores, designing staff development programs to identify opportunities for growth, increasing concurrent enrollment opportunities, improving the social climate for students and staff in all buildings, promoting marketing and more.

"There's a lot on here and we're going to do our best," Grover said of the goal sheet.

The board asked Grover to report back to them every six months regarding goals being met and progress being made to follow the strategic plan.

Sewer board discussion heads to committee

BY LAUREL BEAGER  
Editor

A lengthy discussion Monday by the North Koochiching Area Sanitary District Board about wage, benefits and disciplinary actions with its executive director will be continued at a human resources committee meeting.

The board appointed members Steve Blair, Mike Rud and Doug Dault to meet with Tim "Chopper" McBride, executive director of the district, to further discuss what was termed as unauthorized spending by some board members as well as other issues.

Concerns raised included a \$10,000 payment to the city of International Falls involving the city's animal shelter on district property; wage increases for district staff included in the budget approved by the board, but not clearly identified for some board members; replacement of garage doors that some board members believed had been approved by the board while others did not, as well as other issues.

Board Chairman John Bruggeman said it was a "chaotic meeting of sorts" near its conclusion, and acknowledged it was "useful, though a little contentious. People appreciate the depth of other's opinions."

This portion of the regular monthly meeting had been scheduled to be closed

to the public, as is allowed by law when discussing wage, benefits and disciplinary actions of an employee.

However, McBride declared in writing the meeting to be open, as allowed by law.

Bruggeman said during the meeting he "knows there is unhappiness on the board over some things." McBride responded the board has the right to vote to dismiss him.

Dault pushed board members to be clear about their concerns Monday. He said some board members had raised concerns and faulted McBride, while he said some of the fault lies with the board.

"To me, it sounds like a witch hunt," he said.

Blair pointed to a 1.5 percent wage increase effective in January for district staff. He said the 2015 budget did not include a line item for the increase.

But board member Don Billig said the board approved the budget, which included the wage increase. He said the increase was recommended to the board, which considered it and voted for its approval with the budget.

Board member David Farmer said the budget was approved because it had trust in McBride, and other board members who developed the budget, to tell them what the budget included.

"It's just a piece of paper with a bunch of numbers on it we approve or disapprove," he said. He said if something was in the budget the board should know about, it should have been said.

Blair said staff didn't deserve a wage increase and instead a five-year wage freeze should be implemented to allow the wages to catch up with the rest of the community. Bruggeman also said



Tim "Chopper" McBride

he would have voted against the increase because of "the situation in the community," referring to layoffs in 2013 at the local paper mill.

Dault said McBride could have reminded the board of the increase, but it was in the budget and may have been overlooked by some board members.

"What other issues?" Dault asked Bruggeman. "Lay it on the line."

Farmer questioned who authorized involving a local attorney in pushing the International Falls City Council to make an appointment according to a timeline in the enabling legislation that created the district.

McBride said he has the right, under the legislation, to protect the district.

Farmer also said McBride should not be involved in political things, but Farmer and Bruggeman said it should not be a political position, and instead an administrative position.

Prior to the discussion, county Commissioner Wade Pavleck discussed the \$10,000 and said the county board should have met with the NKSSD Board about the animal shelter that sat in the middle of the treatment plant reconstruction.


The NKSSD has asked the money be returned, however the International Falls City Council has taken no action on the request.

Blair noted past minutes show McBride was authorized to spend from "\$5 to \$10,000" to help facilitate the move of the shelter.

"There are things that could have been done different," Blair said. "It's water under the bridge now."

Dault said the board approved the money and saw ending use of the building for the shelter as a safety issue. "We were putting the public in harm's way," he said.

Bruggeman said communication with the city council mischaracterized the board's stance and the communication seemed like insubordination.



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*Chapter Board of Directors*

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Koochiching County  
Maintenance Contract for County Roads and Bridges in Northome Mizpah Gemmell area.  
BIDS CLOSE: **Wednesday May 20, 2015 at 2:00 pm, local time**

NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS: Sealed proposals will be received by the Board of County Commissioners of Koochiching County, Int'l. Falls, Minnesota until **Wednesday May 20, 2015 at 2:00 pm, local time** at the office of the County Auditor/Treasurer in the Koochiching County Courthouse 715 4<sup>th</sup> Street Int'l. Falls, Minnesota 56649 at which time they will be opened and read publicly for the following:

Project Designation: **Northome Mizpah Gemmell area Maintenance Contract**  
Scheduled contract period: October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2019

Project Location: County Roads and Bridges in the Northome Mizpah Gemmell area. Coverage area map is provided in the Request for Proposals Document.

**Request for Proposals and related documents are available at:**  
Koochiching County Highway Department  
715 4<sup>th</sup> Street;  
Int'l. Falls, MN 56449  
Phone 218 283 1184  
  
Koochiching County website: [www.co.koochiching.mn.us](http://www.co.koochiching.mn.us).  
Go to "News" Tab or "Departments/Engineer" Tab

Cost for Request for Proposal Document: No charge.  
  
Bidder's Bond: Bids must be accompanied by a certified check or bidder's bond made payable to the Koochiching County Treasurer in the amount of \$5,000.00.

Bid shall be plainly marked on the exterior of the containing envelope: "Northome Mizpah Gemmell Area Maintenance Contract, Letting Date Wednesday May 20, 2015 at 2:00 pm

The County Board reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive irregularities and informalities therein, and to award the contract in the best interests of Koochiching County.

Dated at International Falls, Minnesota: April 13, 2015  
Joe Sutherland, Koochiching County Highway Engineer  
Phone: 218-283-1186; Email: [joe.sutherland@co.koochiching.mn.us](mailto:joe.sutherland@co.koochiching.mn.us)

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