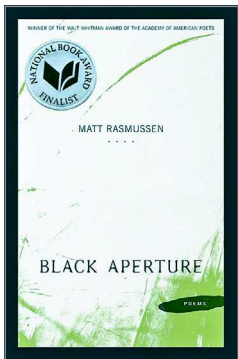


**Another
award**
Falls native recognized
for poetry book



B9

**You better
recognize**
Local entrepreneurs
nominated for business awards



A9



The Journal



Wednesday,
April 9, 2014

International Falls, Minnesota

www.ifallsjournal.com

\$1

INTERNATIONAL FALLS SCHOOL BOARD

Falls School Board continues its search

**Interviews for a
superintendent
scheduled for the
end of the month**

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

The timeline to find a leader for Independent School District No. 361 is dwindling.

With a little more than two months until Falls Superintendent Nurdy Nelson's contract expires June 30, the Falls School

Board has only just begun the process of finding his replacement.

While the board has narrowed its search to three candidates – two local and one from Grand Marais – interviews have repeatedly been slid to the back burner. They are now tentatively scheduled for April 22 or 23 to “allow for full board attendance.”

The reason for the delay? According to board Chairman Gordy Dault, the absence of board member Darrell “Boxer” Wagner since the Jan. 27 special meeting has stood as a roadblock in the process.

While Dault declined any fur-

ther comment, Wagner told The Journal he's missed the last five meetings, including special meetings, because he's been on vacation.

“I wanted to resign before I left before vacation,” he admitted, adding after discussing the option with the superintendent, Nelson advised Wagner to continue his term that expires this year.

Community members have expressed concern to The Journal that in the midst of finding a new superintendent and the board making cuts, it is critical Wagner be present during meetings.

Later this month, the board

will face decisions on what areas cuts will need to be made to help the district offset the loss of about \$500,000 from a declining enrollment. It has been an ongoing process since last November with a series of monthly special meetings to help determine a decision for the board.

When asked if Wagner has stayed up-to-date on what the board has been faced with, he said he makes daily calls to Nelson and “talks to Gordy all the time.”

“I'll be back in plenty of time to make final decisions on cuts,” he said. “And, I'm always available for people to call if they have

concerns.”

Wagner, who has served as a board member for 15 years, defended himself and said he is allowed to miss meetings – and he is correct.

Greg Abbott, communications director for the Minnesota School Board Association, said according to state law, board members are allowed 90 days of consecutive absence. After that, a board can declare a position vacant and replace the member. As of today, Wagner has only been absent 56 days.

School Board to A7 >

Program focuses on student success

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

Sometimes, there just aren't enough hours in the day.

According to a Falls Elementary teacher, that holds true for some students struggling academically.

Lisa West, who teaches third grade at the elementary school, also coordinates a program, Targeted Services, a state-funded, after school and summer program that offers additional learning opportunities to qualifying students in kindergarten through sixth grade.

“Students are invited if they would benefit from the program and are able to be independent, safe, and successful within the program,” West said. “Targeted Services programs are purposefully designed to build academic skills, as well as to help students develop better organizational, social, and emotional skills.”

After the final bell rings during the school day, three days

per week, Targeted Services students take a break, enjoy a snack and jump into another hour of learning and skill building.

In the summer, West said the program runs three mornings per week for two weeks out of each month.

“Our summer program is designed to help students keep up with skills already learned and avoid the summer plunge,” she said. “We also incorporate science and enjoy the outdoors more in the summer, while creatively incorporating reading and math activities.”

How it works

The free-of-charge program began in January 2011 and has grown from 25 to 65 students. The program employs three master's level elementary teachers and three experienced paraprofessionals. Additional staff is added as needed to keep groups small, West said.

“The goal in starting the

Students to A7 >

INTERNATIONAL FALLS CITY COUNCIL

Donahue property, district utilities move forward

Two issues draw public comments Monday

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

Despite opposition voiced and questions posed by several people attending the International Falls City Council Monday, the council on 3-1 votes awarded a bid for utility installment to the multimodal district and agreed to move forward with minimal development of the Donahue property.

Mayor Bob Anderson voted against both motions. Councilor Pete Kalar was absent from Monday's council meeting.

The council awarded a contract to Wagner Construction Inc. of International Falls, the low bidder at \$410,254, for installation of utilities to the multimodal district on County Highway 155 and conducted the first reading of the contract ordinance.

Anderson asked whether a client had been secured to locate

and develop a parcel within the district. He said he hoped a client would come along soon should the council expend more than \$400,000 of taxpayer money at the site.

Councilor Gail Rognerud said she and Falls Economic Development Authority Director Shawn Mason had met recently with a potential client who stated he is still very interested in locating in the district and is “getting his plans together.”

Should those plans fail, she said officials would work hard to get another client.

Regardless, she said it's important to bring utilities to the site to make it more inviting for development. She said a site locator for a large retailer who met recently with the Koochiching Economic Development Authority advised that a property be readied for development to

Council to A7 >



STAFF PHOTOS BY EMILY GEDDE

PERFECT PROM

Students at Littlefork-Big Falls School dressed their best Saturday for the 2014 prom themed “The Sweet Escape.” Thirty-four couples dazzled a crowded gymnasium during grand march Saturday where DyAna Imhof and Garrett Nuthak were crowned the prom queen and king before dancing the night away.

To view more photos or to purchase photos, visit www.ifallsjournal.smugmug.com.



Top: Seniors DyAna Imhof and Garrett Nuthak pose for family and friends moments after being crowned the 2014 Littlefork-Big Falls prom queen and king.

Bottom: Hope Fairchild, left, and Madelyn Nuthak appear to enjoy themselves during Saturday's grand march. L-BF's prom theme this year was “The Sweet Escape.”

**INSIDE
TO REACH US**

OBITUARIES/A6
PHONE: (218) 285-7411

OPINION/A8
FAX: (218) 285-7206

BUSINESS/A9

SPORTS/B1
ONLINE: IFALLSJOURNAL.COM OR FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

CLASSIFIEDS/B3

COMICS/B6

VOLUME 5
NUMBER 29