

LOCALNEWS

Falls district again in good financial shape

Board certifies district levy at \$2.26 million

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

Independent School District No. 361 is sitting in good financial shape, but has some areas in need of improvement. According to an audit report from Chris Gruber of Miller McDonald Inc., the district dipped slightly with its overspending, but is still “well within its policy.” “You have approximately 3.31 months of expenditures in your fund balance and last year, you were at about 3.71,” he said, adding the general fund has about \$3.4

million in it. “You dropped a little with the overspending, but the policy is to shoot for two to three months of expenditures, so you’re well within your policy.” Gruber said when considering the district’s enrollment trend, it is still “right where it wants to be.” Gruber also highlighted the community service fund, noting the district overspent by about \$11,000; last year there was a surplus of about \$9,000 or \$10,000. The district had deficit spending of about \$415,000, but Gruber said audit results showed an improvement of about \$161,000 compared to the final budget. “Your revenues were approximately \$50,000 more than your final budget and your expenditures were ap-

proximately \$112,000 less than your final budget,” he said. Gruber said there weren’t many changes between last year and this year’s percentages, but noted the biggest change was salaries and benefits which saw about 5-percent increase. “A chunk of that would be the accrual of Q-comp,” he said. “We had to accrue an additional expenditure this year.” He also said non-athletic student activities are lacking activity purpose forms. “The manual requires for each activity that there be a separate activity purpose form for each one,” he said. “It’s a simple fix...just needs to be updated every year.” Superintendent Kevin Grover told board members

areas in need of improvement have been brought to his attention and will be acted upon. “Most issues are in the works to remedy,” he said. In other business, the board certified the district’s 2014-2015 levy at \$2.26 million, a slight dip from last year’s amount of \$2.29 million. The board also agreed to adopt a new policy for school meal accounts that will prevent high school students from being able to purchase food if their account has a negative balance of \$20 or more. Board Chairman Gordy Dault wondered how big the problem was. “It’s getting bigger,” said Sue Karsnia, food service director. “People are getting more lax (in paying).

People always know we’ll feed them, so there’s no incentive to pay up.” Karsnia said she makes personal phone calls and sends the school’s social worker out with free and reduced lunch forms. “With the new policy, we will actually cut people off from them charging any further,” she said. “Again, elementary we will not... we will work them and get family services involved if we need to.” Other meeting notes: ■ The board accepted the resignation of Chelsea Nagle as an educational support professional. ■ The board accepted the resignation of Jenny Olsen as an educational support professional. ■ The board acknowledged the early retirement incen-

tive for Onida Kocinski. ■ The board acknowledged the early retirement incentive for MaryKay Hardwig. ■ Grover presented plaques to outgoing board members Darrell “Boxer” Wagner, Dena Wenberg and Willki Kostiuk. ■ Falls High School’s enrollment, which includes grades 6-12, is at 627 — the same as last month. ■ Falls Elementary School’s enrollment is up three students from last month and totals 587 students. ■ Surveys available to the public to give input on the schools are available on the school’s website. As of Monday, 136 perception surveys have been completed and 181 planning surveys have been completed.

Indus School presents annual Christmas program

INDUS SCHOOL REPORT

The Indus Music Department presented its annual program, “An Old-Fashioned Christmas,” Dec. 11 in the Indus School commons. The commons was festively decorated with Christmas trees, lights, and snowflakes by Indus students and staff. Preschool, kindergarten and first grade began the program with inspiring renditions of “O Christmas Tree,” “Silver and Gold” and “All I Want for Christmas Is

My Two Front Teeth.” This group was followed by the second, third, and fourth grades singing, “A Marshmallow World,” “I’ll Be Home for Christmas” and “When Santa Claus Gets Your Letter.” The fifth and sixth grades delighted the audience with “(There’s No Place Like) Home for the Holidays,” “The Most Wonderful Day of the Year” and “The Night Before Christmas Song.” The high school choir sang tunes by Andy Beck,

including: “Showbiz Snowman,” “Light a Candle” and “Clap Your Hands, Rejoice!” During the intermission between choir and band performances, piano students taught by Lisa Dehaven gave a short recital. The high school band played at the conclusion of the program, performing “Vandivere Fanfare,” “The Little Drummer Boy” and “Jingle Bell Rock.” For the second year in a row, the “Chaos Choir,” of Indus staff members, pro-

vided the finale, led by principal Michael Underwood. They performed a “Bruce Springsteen version” of “Santa Claus is Coming to Town,” accompanied by Stephannie Schiro on piano, Nathan Lewis on drums, Soren Olesen on guitar, and Holger Olesen, Kyle Schiro, and music director Stacy Ottemann on saxophone. As the staff sang, Santa Claus appeared and greeted everyone, providing apples and goodies for all.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Indus music director Stacy Ottemann directs the high school band.

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