

LOCALNEWS

Board to discuss hiring a consultant Monday

Fees could cost district more than \$36,000

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

In the midst of Independent School District No. 361's declining enrollment resulting in a loss of about \$480,000 in state funding, the Falls School Board is expected to discuss spending about \$36,500 on consulting services when it meets Monday.

The meeting is scheduled to take place at 6 p.m. in the cafeteria at the Falls High School; a public hearing on the proposed 2014 levy for the district will be held during the meeting.

A proposal to hire a consultant to help develop district goals comes from Big River Group LCC, based in St. Cloud, with a price tag of \$12,025. On top of that, the district could pay the firm \$24,500 for superintendent search services to replace Superintendent Nurdy Nelson, who will not renew his contract that expires June 30.

Nelson told The Journal that as superintendent, he has started the process of long-term planning for the district, setting goals and meeting with the public. If whoever takes his seat doesn't continue a similar process, however, he said the effort could stop.

"And that is what a consultant would do," he said of continuing the process.

In August, Jenn Windels suggested that a professional consultant be hired to discuss what kinds of goals need to be set for the district and how to communicate those goals with community members. The suggestion came from a Blue Ribbon Panel, of which Windels is a member along with 21 other community members who meet to brainstorm ideas to better the Falls school district.

In response to Windels' suggestion, board member Michelle Hebner said long-range planning has been on the board's radar for several years. She said with changes in administration, bringing in an outside source to create a plan that could be maintained, despite staffing changes, would be a benefit to the district.

The regular meeting will be recessed shortly after its start to convene a hearing on the proposed 2014 levy, set at \$2.29 million – a 16.9 percent increase over last year's levy of \$1.96 million.

Nelson said the increase comes from the number of levies the district works with, several of which he said, "jumped" this year. In addition, he said there are new levies the district is allowed to utilize that add to the increase.

"New levies increases

the local effort, but decreases the state's budget," he said.

After the regular meeting resumes, the board is expected to discuss a request to enter into a high-school level wrestling cooperative with Independent School District No. 2142 in Cook.

Pete Benedix, who coaches the local youth Mighty Mustangs wrestling team, told the board last month offering the sport for high school students will not only keep kids in his program, it may put more students in desks at Falls High School with the possibility of attracting wrestlers from Fort Frances.

He added a growing concern among the local wrestling athletes and their parents is that the children are competing from 4 years old into eighth grade and, without continuation of a wrestling program must stop their involvement in the sport.

In other business Monday, the board is expected to consider a change in the district's prom policy. The school's policy allows prom attendees from schools who are juniors or seniors in high school.

Cory Netland, who serves as the board's student representative, last month proposed the board allow students who are out of high school to attend prom if they are up to age 19.

As winter sets in, Sen. Amy Klobuchar targets carbon monoxide poisoning

Bill is supported by local fire chief

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

U.S. senators representing states that experience cold weather have banded together to introduce legislation to help prevent deaths from carbon monoxide poisoning.

As winter set in across the nation, U.S. Sens. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn.; Charles Schumer, D-N.Y.; and Bob Casey, D-Pa., this week offered a bill named for two young brothers from Kimball, Minn., who died from carbon monoxide poisoning. Called the Nicholas and Zachary Burt Memorial Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention Act, the bill would allow the Consumer Product Safety Commission to provide support for public safety education and to encourage installment of safe and reliable carbon monoxide detectors.

"Preventing instances of accidental carbon monoxide poisoning requires the proper safeguards," Klobuchar said in a statement. "This bill will help educate the public on how to avoid danger as well as ensure the installation of critical detectors, helping families in Minnesota and across the country prevent tragedy before it strikes."

International Falls Fire Chief Jerry Jensen ap-

plauded the effort.

"Anything to do with CO alarms and smoke alarms, I think is a great thing," he said.



Jerry Jensen

Jensen said locally, paramedics carry carbon monoxide monitors with them on ambulance runs as well as devices to detect CO levels in a person's body.

Carbon monoxide is a gas that can build up to dangerous concentrations indoors when fuel-burning devices are not properly vented, operated, or maintained. Because it has no odor, color or taste, carbon monoxide cannot be detected by our senses, according to the Minnesota Department of Health. It is estimated that unintentional carbon monoxide exposure accounts for an estimated 500 deaths in the United States each year. Poisoning contributes annually to more than 2,000 deaths in the United States. In addition, about 8,000 to 15,000 people each year are examined or treated in hospitals for non-fire related carbon monoxide poisoning.

"People get sick and don't know what's going on," Jensen said of people suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning. "We really push people to get monitors in their homes...It is just as important to have CO moni-

tors as it is to have smoke alarms. Carbon monoxide can be very deadly."

Schumer said carbon monoxide poisoning is an indiscriminant and stealthy killer, and legislators cannot remain silent about the danger it poses, especially when winter rolls in and oil and gas heaters are more heavily in use.

"That's why our legislation steps up federal support for both public education and carbon monoxide detection, which will give American families the tools they need to detect carbon monoxide before it can cause harm," he said.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, there are more than 400 deaths and 20,000 emergency room visits as a result of carbon monoxide poisoning each year and the highest percentage of carbon monoxide exposures occurs during the winter months of December, January, and February.

"We get CO calls all year round," Jensen said. "I'd say we go on a couple calls a month...We get a lot of low battery calls."

Jensen said carbon monoxide related calls are becoming more common because more people have alarms in their homes.

Especially dangerous in Minnesota is the risk of poisoning associated with running an automobile engine in an attached garage or burning charcoal in the house.

catch up online . . . www.ifallsjournal.com

“Fast Internet is my present for everyone...but I could use help with the wrapping.”






**Frontier
High-Speed Internet**

19⁹⁹
per month with qualifying phone service

**2-Year Price Guarantee
FREE from contracts
FREE from rate hikes**

The holidays are here. Act now!
Call **1.888.770.6869** or visit
Frontier.com/HighSpeedInternet.



WESTERN


PLOW

LIKE YOU MEAN IT

WESTERN® CONTRACTOR GRADE®
Snowplows define toughness, performance and reliability. Rugged straight-blades, heavy duty V-plows and the versatile expandable-wing **WIDE-OUT**. They're all built **WESTERN-TOUGH**.


PRO PLUS MVP WIDEOUT

PUSH THE LIMITS
westernplows.com





PRE-OWNED IMPALAS

STARTING AT \$10,990



CERTIFIED PRE-OWNED
CHEVROLET BUICK GMC
No Worries.™
STARTING AT \$17,990


2013 CAPTIVAS



2013 TAHOE & SUBURBAN

SAVE AS MUCH AS \$10,000 OFF MSRP

Showroom Hours:
Mon. - Fri. 8-6 • Sat. 8-1
Parts & Service Hours:
Mon. - Fri. 8-5

**Waschke**
FAMILY DRIVEN

2300 Highway 53
Int'l Falls, MN 56649
218-283-3471
www.waschkegm.com