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## Eldora moving ahead with sewer project

BY MATTHEW REZAB | mreza@iafalls.com

The Eldora City Council has unanimously approved a resolution to enter into a \$1.8 million General Obligation Corporate Loan Agreement to pay for a street and sewer project.

The proposed project would take place on 11th Street roughly from St. Paul Lutheran Church to the entrance to the Hardin County Fairgrounds. It would include wastewater, storm sewer, and curb and gutter projects.

The project is one that has been considered necessary for at least 15 years, City Administrator Aaron Budweg said. In addition to the \$1.8 million, money from the water and sewer reserves could be used if needed. If bids come in lower than expected, Budweg said the extra money could be used for other projects, or it could be put in the General Fund or used to repay the loan.

Last month, Budweg said the project would not increase the tax levy.

“Actually the tax levy goes down about a fourth of a percent. Our debt level is only about 68 percent (of what’s allowed by law),” he said at the time. “I can’t imagine if we didn’t use the entire \$1.8 million there (are not) multiple projects within the community that could easily be added – pertaining to the streets.”

The council agreed to set a special meeting for 5:30 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 22, on the advice of Chip Schultz, managing director of Northland Securities, who is handling the financing. Between now and then Schultz will offer banks the opportunity to buy the bonds. He will offer local banks the opportunity first and cast a wider net if needed. Schultz told the council interest rates are very low right now so it’s important to move quickly.

“In consideration of trying to really close the financing in a more expedited manner to take advantage of the favorable interest rate environment I’ve laid out two dates for special council meetings that would allow interest rates to be locked in,” Schultz said.

The council will need to approve the sale of the bonds at that Nov. 22 meeting before holding another special meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 30, to approve a resolution authorizing the issuance of the bonds. ■



PHOTOS BY JUSTIN ITES / TIMES CITIZEN

Veterans past and present were honored during a brief ceremony at the Iowa Falls Veterans Memorial on Thursday morning. Members of Iowa Falls American Legion Post #188 assembled for the annual Veterans Day event, which included a prayer, TAPS and remarks about the history of the holiday, which began as a way to commemorate the end of World War I. Today, it honors everyone who has served – living and dead. Across Hardin County, residents took time to honor and thank the men and women who have served and are serving in America’s armed forces. ■

# IF heads for Second Vote

Revised plans could be on a ballot in March

BY SARA KONRAD BARANOWSKI  
skonrad@iafalls.com

The stage is set for the Iowa Falls School District to take a second run at a multi-million-dollar bond referendum. But this time around, things will be a little different.

On Monday, the district’s facilities study committee – a group of parents, teachers, business leaders and residents – presented its proposal for a new elementary school. The plan is similar to the one that was narrowly rejected by voters earlier this year, but it includes a few key tweaks.

The \$28.5 million bond came very close to passing in March. Both questions on the ballot needed 60 percent plus one vote to pass. The first question failed by 37 votes, and the second question was 52 votes short. After the referendum, the facilities committee and the school board gathered to discuss why it had failed and what could be done to get it passed. The input gathered from people who’d voted against the issue identified five reasons for their opposition:

- The absence of clear plans for the future of the two existing elementary schools
- Concerns about increased traffic at the high school
- Some people felt the issue was rushed
- Concerns about the placement of the new elementary school at the high school
- The belief that \$28.5 million was too much money



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**“No one wants to pay more taxes. I hate paying taxes. But what’s better is being in a place where over time what you own is worth more because we live in a community that champions growth and champions progress.”**

CHRIS WEAVER

“We really kind of took that to heart and said ‘Let’s look at them all again,’” Iowa Falls Superintendent Tony Neumann said. The group began meeting to review each point, going back over plans, looking at pros and cons and debating new ideas.

“Some of those meetings were pretty ugly,” Jim Stotser, a school district resident and facilities committee member said at Monday’s meeting. Stotser was a vocal opponent of the first bond proposal and ultimately voted against it in March. But after the referendum, he joined the facilities committee to help with the planning. “We mused through and took a look at the different options. We revised some of the planning, taking a look at how we might

be able to save some money. I think we now have a plan that I believe makes a lot of sense.”

The new plan looks very similar to the original plan, with some key changes. The new elementary school would still be built off the southwest corner of Iowa Falls-Alden High School, but it would be a one-story building for students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Preschool, which originally was going to join the other grades at the high school, would instead stay at Pineview Elementary. The plan also calls for renovations at the high school, including a second gym, new band and art rooms, an expanded shop and improved locker rooms, and the parking lots at the high school to be redesigned to accommodate additional traffic. The new elementary school would have 1,000-square-foot classrooms arranged in pods to promote collaborative learning.

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SARA KONRAD BARANOWSKI / TIMES CITIZEN

Iowa Falls School Board President Todd Bicknese speaks during a meeting of the board and the district’s facilities study committee at Rock Run Elementary on Monday.