

School board passes "Recallable Nickel"

Continued from page 1

Saylor said yes, if the election failed, then it would kick in for this school year. He added that they wouldn't know what that tax rate would be until sometime in July or August but the four percent would remain in place until next year when the board could vote to take the compensating rate. He said that there was a statute in place pertaining to this.

"This doesn't come without a lot of thought and we have all talked about this. We've sat through the classes about it, and I am absolutely all for it. I'd like to make a motion to move forward with the "Recallable Nickel", stated Board member Jenny Jo Niece.

Board member Donna Isfort seconded the motion that was made by Niece and it passed with a vote of three to two. Board members Jon Bicknell and L.W. Beckley were opposed.

District Staffing

The board moved on to discuss the districting staffing policy which had been tabled from the meeting in April. The changes that were made to the policy would be an additional cost to the district of approximately \$14,000. Saylor said that he felt like the changes were necessary and that no one cared more about the budget than he did and that he would not ask for something that he didn't feel like was an absolute necessity.

"I feel like that we need to have faith in our leader. We asked Jeff to do a job and we have to have trust in him to put people where they need to be and I certainly want people who are doing the work to get paid for it," stated Beckley.

Isfort said that she had a couple of comments to make as well. She said that she had a lot of people who had voiced their concerns about raises at Central Office. She said that she didn't take this decision lightly and that during the last meeting she felt like they needed to take some time to think about

things and come up with the best solution.

Isfort added that the decision to table the discussion until this meeting was nothing personal towards anyone. It was just about taking the extra time to make a good decision.

A request was submitted to the board by principals of the high school and middle school to add teachers to their staffs. The high school requested a Health teacher, a foreign language teacher, a RTI position that was funded by a grant last year, and a Family and Consumer Science teacher. According to Saylor that means the high school will have a net loss of only one teacher this year.

Chris Winkler, principal at the Estill County High School, said he felt like the RTI position was necessary because the data showed that the students who needed intervention showed progression throughout the entire year. Thirty-one students were not meeting the required benchmarks, and by the end of the year half of those students had met their goals by getting the individual and small group intervention that they needed.

Winkler added that this position that had been funded by Gear-Up had them set up to where they could only work with juniors and seniors, but if it is funded by the board they will also be able to work with freshmen and sophomore who need intervention.

The Estill County Middle School made a few changes to their schedule which would require 3.6 teachers to make their curriculum work. This would not be an increase or a decrease in the amount of teachers at the middle school. According to Saylor everything would stay the same.

Employee Raises

The 2017-2018 salary schedule was approved by the board. Saylor said one of the very first things that the board asked of him when he started working was that he clean up the salary schedule.

He said the first thing that the board needed to look at was the fact that they no longer paid employees a stipend based on an index, they are paid strictly on days.

The assistant principal at West Irvine had been paid a stipend for extra days that she worked but wasn't compensated for extra activities that were done after school. He went on to say that the assistant principal at the middle school was not paid the same as the assistant at the high school and he could never understand why.

He added the middle school has just as many extra-curricular activities as the high school and he thought that it was only fair that the change in the salary be comparable. The band director was also given an increase in pay.

"We know the success of our band program and I think if you win two state championships, that is something that needs to be recognized and that is a \$1,500 increase," state Saylor.

Some employees in the transportation department were also given an increase in salary. The diesel mechanic that was hired last year has saved the district money due to the fact that they are not having to send buses out to be worked on. Almost everything is done at the bus garage. Saylor said that he thought the mechanic was saving the district somewhere between \$40,000 and \$50,000 each year. A \$2 an hour raise was approved for the mechanic and Saylor said that he appreciated everything that he was doing.

Bus drivers were also given a raise to make their salaries comparable with surrounding areas. Saylor said adjustments were made last year to bus routes by Arthur Ballard.

"We had people that were being paid 6 hours for a 5 hour route, we had people being paid 4 1/2 hours for a 4 hour route and there was no consistency in the amount of what people were being paid. Those final revisions

are being made this year and this fall when those buses hit the road you can be rest assured that every driver is being paid fairly for what they are driving," stated Saylor.

The net increase in all of the raises that were given was somewhere between \$15,000 and \$20,000. Saylor said he wouldn't know the exact amount until he had time to sit down and put pen to paper but he felt like it would be closer to the \$15,000 side.

2018 Fiscal Year Budget

The 2018 fiscal year budget was discussed by Saylor. He said since his arrival they have eliminated 25 positions throughout the district last year alone. He said that 75 percent of the budget is for salaries alone and that when you don't have enough students to justify those positions, then cuts have to be made. \$50,000 in extended days were also trimmed from the budget last year and that next year he expects little to no changes to the salary schedule because it is fair and equal across the board for everyone.

He added that last year alone \$156,000 had been added to the contingency and in working closely with Citizen's Guaranty Bank they have been able to get some of their loans at a lower interest rate. In the new budget presented to the board an approximate savings of \$450,000 is expected for the next fiscal year.

Nurses for Schools?

Mr. Saylor presented the board with a contract proposal from Family Health Care Associates from Barbourville. Under the contract agreement the district would be able to employ the same nurses as they do now plus hire extra nurses for the middle and high schools. The company would bill for services that the nurses provide at the schools and would reimburse the school district 100 percent of the cost. This would be a savings to the district of \$70,000 for the salaries of those nurses who are currently employed and also

allow to hire another nurse. They would also provide all supplies that were needed.

Board chairperson Rhonda Hardy said that the idea sounded wonderful and that anything they can do to help the kids is always a good thing. Her only reservation with the contract is that it would be taking money away from the community providers. She said to her understanding they would be providing physicals, immunizations, and anything else that a primary care physician does.

Saylor said that was correct. They would be able to do all of those things right there at school and would not only be providing services to the students but to the staff as well.

Isfort said that FHCA is going to want to see sick teachers and sick kids because that's the way they are going to get their money back. Otherwise that money would be spent at other providers here in the community.

She said that she has discussed this with Susie Starling, hospital administrator, and Starling had stated that we as a community want partnerships and to be able to reach out to providers to come up with something that can meet the needs for our students.

"You're potentially talking about a lot of money that will go out of our community to Gina Goode's practice in Barbourville," stated Isfort.

Saylor said that if the community wanted to step up and provide this service then that was fine but he didn't feel like it was the responsibility of the board to provide 70 to 100 thousand dollars worth of salaries when it could be reimbursed. He said he has been hit with a stone wall because he had already discussed this with several different organizations and in the end it would still end up costing the board money.

"I would like to say this. I agree that I would love to keep the money local but it comes to the point where

business is business. If we can provide extra services and save us a hundred thousand dollars a year sometimes I just have to take my personal views out of it and do what's best for the kids," stated L.W. Beckley.

"You're right, they are going to make money billing for these services. When the health department had it they were wanting to charge us money and were collecting almost \$500,000 in Medicaid benefits and telling us they were going broke. They weren't going broke," added Saylor.

Isfort said this was a totally different scope than what had been offered in the past. She said that this could potentially put someone like Dr. Ong out of business and that she felt like they needed to be very cautious with this as a proposal. She said she would like to see a task force formed and discuss this situation with some local people and see what they can come up with.

"I own a clinic and I don't want people to think it's self-serving but it is. Keeping health-care dollars here is not only very important to me but it's also very important for the hospital. It's also very important for the other health-care providers here in town," stated Isfort.

She went on to say that she was passionate about making this work right here in the community because a loss of health-care dollars to this community would be huge.

Isfort made a motion to form a committee and that they review other options for providing nursing services and primary care services within the school district. Isfort and Hardy will serve on the committee.

Mr. Saylor said that he would get a committee together and they would meet in a couple of weeks and discuss this further. He said he felt like this might be the leverage that they need to get someone to step up to the plate and provide services to the students.

KASA honors Campbell

The Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA) named Estill County Schools staff member, Felicia Campbell as the recipient of the prestigious, statewide Wanda Luttrell Office Professional Award.

The award is presented annually to a school or district office professional who contributes significantly to the efforts of the leadership team; who is the pulse of the office; and exhibits resourcefulness, commitment, professionalism, and a positive attitude. Named in honor of Wanda Luttrell, KASA's longtime office manager who served school administrators for 28 years, this award is highly prized among school staff statewide.

Deana Caldwell, a school psychologist for Estill County Schools, nominated Campbell for the award. She has held her post for 23+ years under three interim superintendents and five superintendents. Caldwell makes note of Campbell's consistency and her willingness to evolve and stay on top of new trends in the world of education.

"Mrs. Campbell works diligently to stay informed about the constant changes within education," Caldwell said. "She can often be found at her desk after hours watching webinars and reviewing the latest materials to ensure that she can stay ahead of new laws,

mandates and any changes that may occur. She works daily with employees across the district to resolve issues dealing with certification, licensures, payroll, benefits and many other items. She has been described as dedicated, trustworthy, accurate, loyal and a friendly employee."

Campbell also serves on the district leadership team and plays a vital role in maintaining employee satisfaction. She is responsible for assisting in the development, distribution and data desegregation of employee satisfaction surveys. This information ensures that all employees are being heard and recognized and that the district can identify areas of improvement and target ways it can work to improve satisfaction of employees.

"Mrs. Campbell is great at what she does because she loves her job," Caldwell added. "Her responses and treatment of others are always courteous and professional with a sincere interest in helping as much as she can. She has a rare and true servant mentality that places the lives and needs of others above her own."

"Superintendents have come and gone in Estill County," former superintendent Bert Hensley said. "But the pulse of the district still works in the superintendent's office. Mrs. Campbell's official title may be assistant to the superinten-

dent, but in reality, she is assistant to the district."

"Working with Felicia was an absolute joy," former Estill County Schools Superintendent Kim Shaw said. "She is a team player in the truest sense and always finds positives in every situation. She leads by example and motivates those around her to be the best they can be."

"I am thankful and blessed to have someone of her caliber working beside me, and the stakeholders of this school district feel the

same way," Estill County Schools Superintendent Jeff Saylor said. "She is and always will be an Estill County Engineer."

KASA is the largest school administrator group in Kentucky, representing more than 3,000 education leaders from across the commonwealth. Formed in 1969, KASA connects education leaders to policymakers, legislators, and other interest groups, and provides numerous benefits and services to Kentucky's school administrators.



Felicia Campbell, assistant to the school superintendent, received the statewide Wanda Luttrell Office Professional Award.



Mary Raider was selected by her peers as the April Mountain Mover among classified employees during April.



Leah Brown was selected by her peers as the certified employee as the April Mountain Mover.

The Johnson Family



Special Thanks to all the Friends and Neighbors that helped prepare the Gravesite, sent food, and helped with Parking while we mourned the passing of our Father Henry Tracy Johnson. Carol Rogers, Daniel Johnson, Julie Appleby, and Cheryl Puckett