

Menomonie school cuts considered

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MENOMONIE - Facing budget cuts that could be \$476,000 to \$960,000, depending on state aid levels, the Menomonie school board Monday discussed where those potential cuts would be made.

If the district receives an additional \$150 per student in state aid, about \$476,000 will have to be cut from the budget. If no increase is received the district will have to look at about \$976,000 in cuts.

A full-time clerical and elementary position could be cut and a part-time physical education position may be eliminated through attrition. Other potential cuts would be part-time positions in art, German, guidance and science, based on low student class registration.

If the district receives no increases in state aid there would be an additional six to eight positions cut. Three middle school positions would be transferred to the elementary schools and not replaced. At the high school two full-time teachers would have to be cut. Another clerical position and one to three para-educator positions may have to be cut as well.

"It is not what we want to do," said Superintendent Chris Stratton of the potential cuts. "Nobody wants to do it."

"If this continues there is nothing left to cut," said President Colleen Davis. "I implore all of you to write or call your legislators. The second piece of this will truly affect our children's education."

Board member Tammy Schneider said the only step would be to cut programs.

Final nonrenewals of potential staff cuts will be made May 13.

Stratton said the board will have to make up a budget before the state budget is accepted, which could be in June.

In another matter, school board members looked at a tentative schedule for construction projects planned after the passage of a \$36 million two-question referendum earlier this month.

A committee will meet in mid-May to start looking at spaces needed. The goal is to have final plans and approved project bids in February of 2014.

Additions on the high school would start next April, with remodeling projects in the district starting in June. The goal is for projects to be done over the two summers and completed by August 2015.

"Bidding is still very competitive," said SDS Architects architect Tom Twohig. "I think things are starting to pick up a little bit."

The first referendum question sought \$25 million to address district-wide maintenance needs in all buildings as well as adding security entrances at River Heights Elementary School and Menomonie High School. The second question sought an additional \$11 million to more fully renovate the high school.

The committee will meet regularly to take project designs from concepts to final plans. The school board will approve the final plans.

In other action, the school board:

n Discussed no longer having a contract with a driver's education company; instead leaving it open to a free market. The contract has been with Accountable Auto and did allow them free use of a classroom. Other driver's education businesses could use a classroom for \$10 an hour.

n Elected the following officers: Davis, president; Jay Fahl, vice president; Jessica Bryan, treasurer; and Schneider, clerk.

n Set the district annual meeting for Aug. 26 in the high school auditorium. The budget hearing is planned for 6 p.m. and the annual meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m.

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