

BURLINGTON USD 244

Board hears update on bathroom facility, OK's mask policy

Katie McMurray
Reporter

BURLINGTON — The Burlington USD 244 Board of Education, in its regular monthly meeting Dec. 14, received an update on the new bathroom facility being built at the baseball and softball field complex and approved a mask policy that will be in effect for all district buildings until the end of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Projects
Superintendent Craig Marshall gave the update on the bathroom facility, noting the project has gone well and there have been no change orders so far. There have been some delays with materials due to COVID-19. The sewer will be trenced around the football field and connected between the middle and high schools. There will be a lift pump installed to push toward the main sewer. Overall, the bathroom facility project is about 75 percent completed. Marshall said it will be fully completed in time for the start of spring sports.

The district has received a Jones Trust grant for \$325,000 for the community daycare project. Planning has started for a design and floor plan to be approved by the state and fire marshal. Architect Clark Simpson, who has worked with the district on other projects, will again be working with the district on this project, and his fees will be focused on design, ADA compliance, fire marshal approval addition/removal of walls and any other details needed. To cut down on architect fees, Marshall will organize the floor covering and installation painting of the facility.

A few additional donations from the community will be approved for this project, including \$25,000 from Wolf Creek, \$10,000 from Coffey County Economic Development, \$1,000 from Trust Point Real Estate/Insurance and \$100 from Burlington Rotary Club.

A full board was present for the meeting, including James Higgins, Stacy Augustyn, Shane Fejfar, Mike Thorp, Selena King and, via StarLeaf, Monique Hart and Lucas Allen. Also present were Marshall, Board Clerk Tracey Moerer, Special Education Director Lindsey Graf, Assistant Technology Director Craig Kuhlmann, BHS Principal Stacy Reed, BHS Assistant Principal/Activities Director Dave Watkins, BMS Principal Matt Spring, BES Principal Darla Long and a few patrons.

Mask Policy

The board discussed putting in place a policy requiring masks be worn in all district buildings and at all events. The policy was recommended by the Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB). The policy can be rescinded when the pandemic is over, and KASB has indicated they will remove it from their recommended policies when the pandemic ends.

Fejfar asked if there had been any problems with kids or staff not wearing masks. No administrators indicated any such problem. If there is an issue, there are courses of action, such as detention for students and, for adults and visitors, being politely asked to leave if they won't wear a mask. It was indicated that if the individual doesn't leave, the district can call the police.

"We should all understand that if we start making policies of something that truly is not effective - mask wearing is not - so, making it a policy and then saying now I have to punish the kid," Fejfar said. "I think our kids and kids in almost every district are doing a great job. All the teachers are doing a great job. Nobody's coming out and saying nobody's doing this for whatever reason. The people who decide not to wear a mask - one, we can either avoid them if we believe they have COVID. Anybody who doesn't have COVID can't give it to you. So I don't care how many people wear masks, if you don't have it, you can't give it to me. So our assumption is everybody has COVID and that's why everybody wants to wear a mask. But look at the science, all the particles, all the spray, there is no preventative mask on the planet unless you have a viral filter and there are none unless you have a full face shield with a self-breathing apparatus that has an intact viral filter."

Marshall said this is highly controversial and very polarizing but everything the district is doing is limiting odds. "We're trying to mitigate the scenarios," Marshall said.

Thorp, who wasn't wearing a mask, explained his position.

"One of my reasons for not wearing a mask is not necessarily that I am defying your policy or your guideline," Thorp said. "It goes much deeper for me. We're in a country where we have choices, and I really bow when being told what to do from bureaucrats that have underlying agendas. I feel like this is where this is going."

If they can do this to us with masks, what can they do next? So, I'm pushing back. I don't like this. I respect what the administrators are doing, but I'm still pushing back. And I think more people need to push back because this has gone too far. It just has. Look at the states like California where people are... they can't go to church, they can't go to their restaurants, they're going broke. They don't know what to do. Well, that could just as easily be Kansas next week if people don't wake up and start pushing back."

Thorp also pointed to the fact there is information indicating masks can be detrimental, including by lowering a person's oxygen level, raising a person's carbon dioxide level or making a person more immunocompromised.

"So I don't wear a mask because it's my choice and because I want people to know how I feel about it," Thorp said. "And I think there's more people out there that don't like where this is going, but they're afraid to speak up. I'm not afraid... I'm concerned about the virus but I'm not concerned enough to do some of the things that have been done."

Allen discussed the issue in

terms of courtesy.

"I'm sitting at home in my basement as a courtesy to my colleagues on the board because I don't want to infect them with what I have," Allen said. "I see this as more of a courtesy to the people around me. I decided to stay home and that's my choice and that choice is also available to everybody else on the board - to stay at home, not wear a mask and still be part of the board meeting. And I

think that that's something we could exercise. I don't want to wear this mask but I still want to give people the courtesy of trying to remove the possibility of me getting them sick. So what I'm doing sitting here in my basement is trying to give courtesy to the people around me. And I feel like masks help and if you don't have a problem wearing them, wear it. If you have a

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East Central Kansas Area Agency on Aging program congregate meals are available on a grab and go basis at the center Monday through Friday at the Burlington Senior Center (620) 364-2730, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at the Lebo Senior Center (620) 245-6166, and Monday, Wednesday and Friday at the Waverly Senior Center (785) 733-2603. Meal deliveries will continue as usual. A volunteer and the site manager will be available to oversee the meal distribution. Reservation or cancellation for a meal must be made with your site by 1 p.m. the day before.

Monday: Parmesan chicken, scalloped potatoes, Harvard beets, pudding, French roll and milk.
Tuesday: Chicken cordon bleu, macaroni and cheese, winter mixed vegetables, pineapple, dinner roll and milk.
Wednesday: Ham and beans, carrots, peach crisp, cornbread and milk.
Thursday: Swiss steak, black-eyed peas, creamed peas with potatoes, strawberry cup, wheat bread and milk.
Friday: Happy New Year - closed for the holiday.

Lyon County
Lyon County Congregate Friendship meals can be picked up Mon. through Fri. at Olpe and Mon., Wed. and Fri. at Neosho Rapids. Call one

day in advance for Olpe meals, (620) 475-3384 and Neosho Rapids meals, (620) 342-8232. Home delivered meals will continue as usual. Please call before 9:30 a.m. to reserve/cancel a meal at (620) 340-8001.
Monday: Grilled chicken, mashed sweet potatoes, green beans, fruit cocktail, bread and milk.
Tuesday: Beef stew, calico coleslaw, applesauce, sugar cookies, biscuit and milk.
Wednesday: Country fried steak, mashed potatoes, creamy gravy, green beans, apples, bread and milk.
Thursday: Chicken strips, french fries, corn, pears, bread and milk.
Friday: Closed - Happy New Year!

This Week in History

Compiled by the Coffey County Museum, 1101 Neosho Street, Burlington. The museum is open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. See their YouTube channel, Coffey Museum, for videos about the history of Coffey County.

Dec. 20-Dec. 26

25 years ago (1995)
* Governor Bill Graves has announced that 11 Kansas cities and one organization will receive \$1,391,526 in HOME Investment Partnership Program home rehabilitation funding. The City of Waverly is among these recipients, receiving \$120,000.

50 years ago (1970)
* Lebo Wolves defeat Waverly Bulldogs, 49-36. The loss was the second of the season for the Bulldogs overall and the Wolves now stand at a 4-1 mark.

* Lean Ground Beef is on sale 59¢/lb. at Bob's IGA.
* Parents should be concerned about the danger of youngsters swiping Christmas tree bulbs from the decorations over Burlington.

75 years ago (1945)
* The Waverly Gun Club is making plans for a series of turkey shoots to be held on the John Bump farm just north of Waverly.
* Tire rationing is to end at midnight Dec. 31, according to OPA, leaving only sugar on the 1946 ration list.

100 years ago (1920)
* A fire, which started from thawing out a frozen pipe under the bathroom of a home, caused a little excitement, but did very little damage. The owner succeeded in extinguishing the blaze with his garden hose. The fire truck made the run, but the fire was

out when he got there.
125 years ago (1895)
* Lebo—J W Brown and son have been assisting in the rebuilding of Waverly, which has been going on since the destructive fire took place some months ago.

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