

Newspapers In Education

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Academics, class size are key

By KELLY GERLACH

Andrew Community School District residents found themselves in a unique position of power – listening to pitches from two area school districts interested in serving their high school students.

When the presentations were over, academics and small class sizes proved to be the two key elements in deciding where their children should attend classes in the future should Andrew decide to whole grade share its high school students. After all, “We don’t know what’s best for your students. Only you know what’s best,” said Mike Healy, Bellevue Community School District superintendent.

“These economic times force all of us to be better partners with each other,” said Mark Vervaecke, principal of Maquoketa Community High School.

More than 100 people sat in the school bleachers for one hour and 45 minutes as district representatives from Maquoketa and Bellevue described the highlights of their schools.

The purpose of the meeting was to teach Andrew residents more about the two neighboring districts as Andrew ponders the inevitable – whole grade sharing. Andrew’s enrollment this year slipped below



Contributed Photo

Representatives from the Maquoketa Community School District shared an overview of their district during a meeting for Andrew Community School District residents Monday, April 19. Shown are, from left, Athletic Director Tracy Wilkins, guidance counselor Julie Kinrade, high school Principal Mark Vervaecke, and district Superintendent Kim Huckstadt. Each person gave a brief presentation in their area of expertise, complemented with a 14-minute video with scenes from the high school.

the critical 300 mark, a number the Iowa Department of Education says is necessary to maintain a viable school district.

Bellevue representatives made the first pitch of the evening, which included handouts and testimonies

from two high school students. Healy, school board President Gary Griebel, high school Principal Tom Meyer, and students Dylan Meek and Lindsay Boyer talked about the school’s forward-thinking approach to education and the ways the dis-

trict continues to prepare students for the future.

Meyer discussed the 1:1 computer initiative that will put laptop

■ **DISTRICTS,**
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Engineers report shows design flaws at YMCA

By DOUGLAS MELVOLD

The Maquoketa City Council has asked City Attorney Ken Wright to review an engineering report on the Maquoketa Area Family YMCA building that pointed out design flaws in the building and some equipment.

The action came after the council reviewed results of an energy audit of the 2 1/2-year-old building done by the Davenport office of KPE Consulting Engineers.

Douglas O’Reilly of the firm presented the report to the council Monday night, April 19.

In his report, O’Reilly said engineers found “a few design flaws,” mostly in the mechanical room that houses such equipment as the swimming pool filter and pump and the pool heater.

O’Reilly noted heightened carbon monoxide levels in the mechanical room and much rusting of the ductwork that brings air into the building.

The report also makes several recommendations for making the building more energy efficient. In some cases, he noted that equipment was installed that was unsuited for an environment with an indoor swimming pool.

The council directed that a recording of O’Reilly’s presentation be given to Wright and that he contact the engineering firm if needed.

In the mechanical room, he study noted that a high level of carbon monoxide was detected. He noted that a pipe that vents exhaust gases from the pool heater outside through the roof is only about six feet away from an air intake.

As a result, the exhaust gases that are being vented out of the building are being brought back in through the nearby intake, O’Reilly noted. He noted that a temporary fix to the problem was done by installing a fan on the exhaust pipe to blow the gases out at a higher velocity to prevent them from re-entering the building.

The study recommends moving the pipes at least 10 feet and preferably 15 feet from each other.

He also noted that the pool heater is corroding and that the YMCA has had problems keeping it running. The original pool heater already has been replaced at no cost to the city or YMCA, as it was under warranty.

O’Reilly said the heat exchanger in the heater was constructed of copper, a metal that allows it to corrode. An alloy, such as copper and nickel, should have been used instead.

He also noted that much of the ductwork in the mechanical room is rusting quickly because it is not rated for use in an environment with air that has a high chlorine content.

The ductwork “is supposed to last 20 to 30 years, but it won’t last that long with all that rust in there,” O’Reilly said.

He also noted that the bulbs in the ceiling-mounted lights in the pool area are burning out at a too-frequent rate.

The sockets in the 38 overhead light fixtures are starting to corrode and the bulbs also are not meant for an environment with high chlorine content, with 85-degree temperatures and high humidity.

The recommended replacements will cost about \$1,000 each to purchase and install, for a total of \$38,000.

In other recommendations, the study suggests that the city consider installing a cogeneration plant that would produce both electricity and steam that could be used to help heat the pool water.

The plant would take some of the power load off the building and would save the city an estimated \$22,000 a year. With an estimated cost of \$300,000, it would pay for itself within 15 years,

the study said.

The savings could be greater if the city could work out a reduce rate for natural gas with Black Hills Energy, O’Reilly said.

The cogeneration unit, however, would not be eligible for a state grant, he added.

Items that would be eligible for a state grant include an occupancy sensor, which would automatically turn lights off when no one is in the area and switch them on when the area is occupied.

The study estimates the cost at \$8,300, with savings of \$750 to \$775 a year, resulting in a payback of 11 to 12 years.

A grant is available that would pay half the cost.

Another recommendation is for a carbon dioxide sensor, which would operate a rooftop ventilation system only when needed. Currently, the ventilation system runs constantly regardless of the amount of the amount of use in the gym and the upstairs workout areas.

With a carbon dioxide sensor, the system would operate only when needed. The system would save about \$1,600 a year after an initial cost of \$4,000, rendering a payback in about 2 1/2 years.

O’Reilly declined to point fingers or fault anyone regarding the flaws and deteriorated equipment.

“I don’t want to hang any designer out to dry or any contractor out to dry,” he said. He said his role is only to recommend changes and provide cost estimates.

He noted that the problems will continue or worsen unless they are corrected.

The council agreed to provide the information to the city attorney and to apply for grants for the items that are eligible.

Wagner noted that the council had to make a decision on the grants on Monday because the application was due on Thursday, April 22.