

School board approves dance group's spring recital

By Sarah Wetzel
For the Plain Talk

This past Monday at the Vermillion School District school board meeting, Stephanie Rissler requested the use of the theater for the Vermillion Area Dance Group for their spring recital.

They have done it in years before and were hoping for same arrangement this year.

The board unanimously approved their use for a technical rehearsal for Apr 8, a dress rehearsal for May 9 and the performance May 10.

"That's what I would ask the board if we could continue our relationship," Rissler said.

Board members had no qualms about allowing the use.

"I don't think we've had any problems in the past," said Dave Stammer, board Vice President.

Rissler was also thanked by other board members for their excellent treatment of the facility in the past.

The board also voted unanimously to waive the

fee for using the theater due to the fact that most members of the dance group are students.

EDUCATIONAL HIGHLIGHT

For the educational highlight, students participating in the robotics program presented their finished robots and demonstrated their abilities.

The middle school and high school robotics teams recently participated in a competition and did quite well.

The high school team, all freshmen, placed first and the middle school team placed third.

As part of the marketing assignment, two high school members of the robotics program were required to present their in a public setting.

They effectively presented their robot, the process of building it, challenges and successes.

The members of the school board expressed high praise for the effort of all the students.

"You guys put a lot of work into it in a very

short amount of time," Stammer said. "I'm very impressed."

The robots were designed and built over a period of just six weeks.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Superintendent Fronk reported on the Grant Award for keyless entry systems on three buildings.

"The district received a grant from the Homeland Security Department in the amount of \$39715.82 to put a keyless entry system at Austin Jolley Middle School," said Fronk.

Fronk said they hope to get it done over Christmas.

"As soon as we get that signature we move forward," he said. "The addition of this keyless entry system is truly a security measure because there are keys out there in the cars and when they're lost they can be disengaged through a computer. That gives us a record of who's coming in and out of the buildings."

The Superintendent also reported on the

progress of the CTE building. The heat is now functional and a \$1200 discount on the project was received.

According to Fronk instructors and students have been working on the tool rooms and the Builder's Choice program will be bringing in two hoists.

"It will be quite an addition to the facility," he said.

Plans are already being made for the building's use.

"The first project will be what's called a Jack and Jill portable restroom on wheels that they can move around from site to site," Fronk said.

BOARD REPORT

An upcoming board retreat was planned for Dec. 12 and the past retreat was reported on.

"It's nice to hear more in depth from each department and each school and that's what we did," Stammer said. "The administration came in and gave us reports on their buildings and it was nice to sit there and listen to that to find out their

needs and wants so we can have a better plan later."

"Doug and I did a walk through with Johnson Controls at the high school for the HVAC Renovation Project," said board President Chris Esping. "It's a big project. The high school needs a lot of work."

Esping said their goal is to make the plumbing and electric system as serviceable as the building itself along with drastically improving the quality of the hallways, classrooms, locker rooms and bathrooms.

"Doug and I will keep working with them," said Esping. "They'll bring in their contractors in the next two months and get some final numbers. Hopefully we'll get some final approval in February. As soon as they can turn the heat off, they could get started."

FUNDS AND BUSINESS REPORT

"I see that the general fund went down a lot," said Stammer. "In previous years it's stayed relatively the same."

"Part of it is we dipped into the reserves last year, that's about \$130,000 of it," said business manager Beerman. We did an analysis of our revenues and expenditures. Are revenues are quite limited

and our expenditures are a little high."

This is no cause for alarm according to Stammer.

"Over the years it will go up slowly and then drop off real fast," Stammer said.

Beerman also pointed out that tuition will now be paid monthly which will be better for the schools.

The claims unanimously approved.

The official 2014-15 Fall Enrollment was set forth, the number being 1227.88 students, up roughly 14 from last year counted for budget purposes.

Dougherty Company was unanimously approved as the Dissemination Agent for Debt Disclosure.

There was a unanimous approval of a supplement to the 2014-15 budget for additional grants.

This is in regards to the security system and also the CGI grant which allows two teachers to get iPads with some software.

Lenni Billberg's resignation as volleyball coach was passed with one opposed.

The next school board meeting is scheduled for Monday, Dec. 8 at 7 p.m. at the Vermillion High School library.

Meet Clay County' choices: Jane Olson, re-elected County Register of Deeds

By Katie Clausen
For the Plain Talk

Jane Olson has a vested interest in the community and as the new Register of Deeds, her experience both in the office and in the community has helped launch her into this new position.

"I was appointed Register of Deeds in June," Olson said. "In 1986, I was a part-time deputy. I became full time deputy in 1995."

Olson is a lifelong resident of Clay County, with the exception of some time spent in Sioux Falls receiving her degree at the Business School.

Raised outside of rural Gayville, Olson has three grown sons, all of whom are Vermillion High School graduates. Two of her sons went on to Business School as well, at USD, with the third attending tech school in Mankato, MN.

"Vermillion has a good family type of atmosphere," Olson said "You get to know your neighbors."

When Olson started working at the Register's office, she developed an understanding for record keeping and community service.

"I felt it was something interesting," Olson said. "I've learned a lot over the years."

There have been challenges associated with working with deeds, mortgages, liens, and birth and death certificates.

"Sometimes people ask us to do things that we cannot do," Olson said. "We record. We cannot give legal advice."

Overall, the positive aspects of the position outweigh the negative. The deeds office can be a place of celebration.

"The two things I like best are marriage certificates and birth certificates," Olson said. "We've been known to hold a new baby or two." Exciting life events and

changes are part of the Register's day-to-day operations. In order to streamline those operations and make them friendlier to Clay County residents, Olson plans on making some modifications.



"I want to start doing some electronic indexing of records," Olson said. "I will try to start that at the first of the year."

Electronic record keeping will benefit residents by allowing them to see more of the documents which are being recorded at the court house.

"It will make it easier for the public to look up records," Olson said. "We will still keep books, but have the electronic records as well."

This is no small feat; however, there is a rich history in Clay County and lots to document.

"It will take a while because everything has to be scanned," Olson said.

Olson takes pride in helping residents and understanding that quality record keeping important to their welfare.

"There are certain records that are private," Olson said. "Especially after 9/11, we cannot just give out information without someone being the next of kin."

The historical aspect of the Register's office is also something Olson finds interesting. Clay County went from budding villages to full blown functional communities in the 1860's, and that's when the record keeping of deeds began.

"People are more than welcome to come in and learn, people who are interested in old farmsteads and things like that," Olson said. "We have 150 years of information in our vault."

The Register of Deeds office is open from 8am to 12:30pm, and 1:30pm to 5pm Monday through Friday.

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benefits," she said. "A lot of time we get companies such as AFLAC, Colonial Life, some of those come in and they would like to have the opportunity to sign employees up for their insurance so then it kind of falls on me to make the decision if that's going to be a good fit for the county and generally we always give them a chance and we let the employees decide if they want to sign up or not."

Though county auditor is mostly a clerical position, Crum said there is a good reason it remains an elective office.

"What would make it an elective office is the fact that the auditor is in charge of elections and we're in charge of computing the tax levies and handling the disbursements and the budget and things like that," she said. "It's checks and balancing to control any type of corruption."

According to Crum, the pros outweigh the cons when it comes to placing her job security in the public's hands.

"I think running for election is always a little

difficult when your job depends on it but on the other hand I like the idea of knowing that the people are choosing who is in the office," she said. "Our county does a really good job of informing themselves of who the candidates are and I gained a new respect for that as I ran for re-election I think I realized how much people do pay attention to what's going on."

The system seems to be working according to Crum.

"I think we've definitely seen improvement over the past several years," she said. "We had some really tight years there and I think things are looking up. I think our commissioners have been really good at balancing what the county needs and making sure they're not spending too much money. They've been really conservative but yet they've also been able to balance that with supporting some outside organizations like the food pantry, the senior citizen center, the library things like that that do need the funding. They've been able to help them out while also balancing repairs and other county needs."

And what is the best part of the job?

"What I really look

forward to is working with the public," Crum said. "That's my favorite part of the job I think is getting to meet new people and knowing that I'm helping and serving in some way. On the off years when we don't have elections we don't see as many people but there is still a volume of people that come into the office."

Helping people seems to be a family affair.

"My husband and I have both chosen public service-oriented careers and it's a fit for us," Crum said. "We really enjoy it."

Crum and her husband have three children ages seven, six and three.

"It's like any other

mother with a full time job," Crum said. "I get the kids off to school in the morning and I come to work then I pick them up from after-school care and we do our evening activities and stay busy in the evenings and weekends."

There is plenty of fun to be had in the Crum household.

"We do a lot of camping during the summer," Crum said. "We enjoy doing other family activities like the Sioux Falls zook, going to the park, things like that. I like to do photography, I like to read."

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