

The following are highlights from the Comal ISD regular school board meeting on September 23. The next board meeting will be held Oct. 29 at 6 p.m. in the Comal ISD Support Services board room located at 1404 N IH 35 in New Braunfels.

2009-10 tax rate approved

The Comal ISD Board of Trustees approved the 2009-10 tax rate to remain the same at \$1.31, which includes an unchanged maintenance and operations rate of \$1.04 and an unchanged debt service rate of 27 cents. Leaving the debt service rate at 27 cents requires the use of \$7.2 million of the debt service fund balance.

The unchanged \$1.31 tax rate will raise more taxes than last year's tax rate due to property value increases. School taxes on a \$100,000 home will go up by approximately \$20.07 for the year.

Although there was a 2.4 percent increase in Comal ISD property values (there are CISD property owners in the counties of Kendall, Hays, Guadalupe, Comal and Bexar), that percentage is a dramatic drop from last year's 19 percent. And furthermore, even though CISD property values have seen an increase since HB! Was enacted in 2005-06 by the Texas legislature, CISD has only seen a two percent increase in local revenues since that time. All school taxes collected as a result of increasing property values have gone to the state.

Board approves issuance of remaining authorized, unsold bonds approved by voters in 2008

The board authorized the district administration, financial advisor and bond counsel to proceed with the issuance of the remaining authorized but unsold bonds from the bond election held May 10, 2008.

The remaining bonds, totaling more than \$55 million, are needed for the renovations and additions to Church Hill, Smithson Valley and Spring Branch middle schools. Market conditions are favorable and tax exempt interest rates are reflecting demand that is greater than supply. The district's strong financial position and bond rating should also help keep the interest rate down.

With the sale of these bonds in 2009-10 and the generation of more than \$2 million in appropriated interest from the sale, the district would need \$7 million in funds from either additional growth in the tax base and/or fund balance to keep the tax rate at 27 cents in 2010-11.

Board approves submission of Class-Size Waiver for four CISD campuses

The board approved the submission of a class-size waiver for Timberwood Park, Johnson Ranch, Goodwin Frazier and Oak Creek elementary schools.

A districtwide class size enrollment survey of kindergarten through fourth grade conducted on Sept. 11 revealed that these four schools have experienced unanticipated growth, which resulted in their exceeding the class size ratio of 22:1 in several K-4 classrooms.

Districts are required to report any K-4 classrooms that exceed the 22:1 ratio even if only by one student. Each of the aforementioned schools are over the maximum student-teacher ratio by one student in one or more classrooms. This is allowable by the state through the class-size waiver because there are not enough additional students to make another class.

Board declares old Goodwin Primary school as a surplus

The board declared the property at 1297 Church Hill Drive in New Braunfels (the old Goodwin Primary School) as surplus for sale or trade, which allows the district to begin accepting bids for the property.

Once Memorial High School is completed, the former Goodwin Primary will no longer be used to educate Comal ISD students or house district operations. With board approval, the district may dispose of the property for fair market value.

For the last couple of years, CISD has rented half of the building out to the city and county to house college courses. At this point, district officials have stated there is no need for CISD to continue using the building. Changes to 2009-10 student/parent handbooks, grading guidelines approved

Construction report

Construction projects are moving along in Comal ISD.

Bond 2005

The Bond 2005 projects including Freiheit, Startzville, Goodwin Frazier, Timberwood Park, Morningside, Arlon Seay, Johnson Ranch and Oak Creek elementary schools, Mt. Valley and Smithson Valley middle schools, and the conversion of CIS to Church Hill Middle School are all completed.

Ceiling grid installation and exterior work are still in progress at Rahe Bulverde Elementary School, but finishes have started in several areas of the school. Students are expected to be in the new RBES in January.

Foundations are poured and sitework continues at Clear Spring Elementary in New Braunfels.

Bond 2008

At Canyon High School, the press box, detention pond, CATE building, bleacher expansion, field house expansion and spring field house are complete. Masonry work continues on the two-story classroom wing and foundation work is ongoing in front of the school. The pool is scheduled to be finished soon.

The pool at Smithson Valley High School along with the pool building, animal barn, student parking lots, new public water line, renovation of existing ag building, the press box, the new ag building and the bleacher expansion are all complete. Drilling the foundation piers for the new wing is ongoing and so is fencing and drainage work. The pad for the field house addition is also complete.

The Canyon Lake High School field house expansion is up for bids as of Sept. 24, and the sitework and site utilities are ongoing for the ag barn.

Excavation and building pad construction are ongoing along with site utilities at Garden Ridge Elementary School.

Drawings are in progress for Church Hill Middle School and the project is scheduled to bid out in January 2010. At Canyon Middle School, interior remodeling is ongoing. The foundation has been poured on the addition and the contractor is waiting on structural steel.

Construction on the new wing of Spring Branch Middle School is underway.

The foundation has been poured, steel erected and masonry walls are under construction for the kitchen expansion at Goodwin Frazier Elementary.

Board approves purchase of elementary school site

The board approved the resolution to consummate the purchase of a little more than 25 acres of land in the Vintage Oaks subdivision on Hwy 46. The site is located about 300 feet west of the Vintage Oaks amenity center and is being purchased for approximately \$7,500 per acre.

