

## School Watch

### *A look at what is happening in Cleveland and Bradley County Schools*

by Ashley Murphy

The Bradley County Board of Education held their regular meeting on Thursday, October 8, 2009 at 5:30 p.m. The following are the highlights from that meeting.

Updates on the current school projects were given by Angie Lyons of Kaatz, Binkley, Jones and Morris Architects and Derek Martin and Russ Warden of American Construction. Valley View Elementary School renovations are nearing completion.

Painting is being done and several of the bigger projects took place while students were on Fall Break. The goal is to have a Certificate-of-Occupancy from the State of Tennessee by Thanksgiving.

Park View Elementary School has seen some set backs, but hopefully will be getting back on track. There was an issue with the Storm Water Prevention Plan (SWPP) and getting approval from the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC).

This was the last permit that was needed before construction could begin.

Board member Terry McGuire inquired about the original goal date of July 1, 2010 and if the school would still be completed by then, or even possible for it to be finished by that date. Martin stated that it would be possible, if everything went accordingly and they had a good "tailwind" behind them.

Also on the agenda was the termination of Casey Brock. Brock is a former Lake Forest Middle School teacher who was indicted on two counts of sexual battery of a minor and two counts of solicitation of minor. Brock withdrew her request for a trial and Bradley County Director of Schools Johnny McDaniel is moving forward with Brock's termination as a tenured teacher.

McDaniel stated no action was needed from the Board at this time, he just wanted to make them aware of this action.

After a motion by Board member Terry McGuire and a second by Christy Critchfield, the Board voted unanimously to accept the three Driver's Education cars that were donated by the Bradley County Sheriff's Office. The cars will be used in the Driver's Education courses offered at Bradley Central High School and Walker Valley High School.

Rick Smith brought a Budget Amendment before the Board that reflects the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), often referred to as the federal stimulus program.

The adjustments will allow budgeting for the Pre-Kindergarten grant from the State of Tennessee, the Co-ordinated School Health Program, Statewide Student Management System, state and federal funds for Safe Schools initiatives, and after school programs for students.

The budget amendment passed unanimously and will now be presented to the

County Finance Committee, then to the County Commission if it passes through Finance.

Board member Charlie Rose presented the School Board with a list of the final three construction managers chosen for the Fine Arts Facility at Bradley Central High School. There were 11 submitted proposals before the final three were narrowed down to American Construction Management, Merit Construction, and TriCon USA.

Dr. Sharon Harper gave a presentation on the projected population growth for Bradley County over the course of the next 5 years. The presentation was designed to show the impact on enrollment for Bradley County Schools as population grows within the County.

The current district enrollment stands at 10,184. Harper stated that the projections were based on a 1.2 percent increase, but does not consider industries, such

as Wacker and Volkswagen, moving into the area.

Based on the minimal percentage, it would make enrollment an estimated 10,805 by the 2014-2015 school year.

Harper also included a 20 year projection, estimating that population in 2030 could reach 140,000 in the Bradley County area.

This could mean an enrollment of about 14,700 students 20 years from now.

Board member Troy Weathers commented that he doesn't think that the County Commission has the money to build a new school, not even in the next 2-3 years, but questioned the possibility of bringing the new Park View Elementary School to 600 capacity versus the 450 it is currently being built for. Board Chairman David Kelley stated that the reason the school was not built for 600 to begin with was due to lack of funding.

Before the meeting was adjourned, Weathers tried to raise a discussion, but was

asked by chairman Kelley to properly file a request for an agenda item to go on next months agenda and then the meeting was adjourned.

Weathers decided to keep the discussion open, which led to him accusing Kelley of removing Board member Christy Critchfield from the Negotiations Committee. Weathers stated that Kelley removed Critchfield because of her lack of support of the Chairman at recent meetings.

Kelley stated that he removed Critchfield from the committee due to her not attending meetings and the constant request to reschedule meetings to accommodate her schedule. Board member Charlie Rose has now been placed on the Negotiations Committee.

The Bradley County School Board meets on the second Thursday of the month at 5:30 p.m. at the administrative office on South Lee Highway on the Bradley Central High School campus.

All meetings are open to the public.

## School Watch - Cleveland City Schools

by Tonya Brantley

The Cleveland City Board of Education held their regular monthly meeting on October 5, 2009. The following are highlights from that meeting.

Grace Dyrek, Cleveland Middle School librarian, gave a power point presentation of the school's new web blog and media center. The web blog is a new computer program that provides students the opportunity to write about the books they have read and enjoyed. Dyrek stated the media center is an integral extension of the classroom.

Director of Schools, Dr. Rick Denning recommended that the board allow him to contact Upland Design Group in order to get an estimate for refurbishing the Betsy Vines Auditorium at Cleveland High School. Board member Tom Cloud made a motion allowing Denning to move forward with the assessment. Board member Steve Morgan disagreed with putting the project before other items on the long range plan. Options were discussed that can be done now with little expense. The motion passed unanimously.

Director of Maintenance and Transportation for city schools, Tommy Green, discussed the new school bus replacement schedule to extend the use of buses from 12 years to 17 years and the new schedule for purchasing new ones. Green stated the board would be spending more in upkeep than in years past because the buses will be older and in need of more repairs. Board member Bill Brown suggested the board set up a designated fund for bus repair and purchases in the the future.

Tommy Green also gave the board an update on an overview of city schools and sites. The city school system now has 936,584 sq. ft. under roof and about 140 acres. Green reported an increase in work orders with 350 in the month of September, however despite the large amount, he has a 70 percent turnover per day in work orders.

Paul Ramsey, Energy Manager for Cleveland City Schools, updated the board on the energy management plan. By conserving energy systemwide, the cost avoidance summary Ramsey presented

from the months of July - August showed a savings of \$41,467 or 16.24 percent. Overall savings through September were approximately 25 percent since the beginning of the current school year.

Denning made a recommendation to the board that a concrete handicap ramp be built for the cost of \$4,500 at Arnold Elementary School by the Cleveland City School Maintenance Department. The vote to build the ramp was unanimous.

After 15 years serving on the board, Bill Brown announced he will not be running for re-election next August and encouraged highly qualified people to run for school board.

Denning updated the board on his meeting with Cleveland City Traffic Engineer, Megan Wilson. Wilson has agreed to the architect's original design for the bus turnaround at Cleveland High School. Wilson will be present at this months City School Board meeting to discuss the traffic flow concerns on the east side of the school. Signage can be used to cor-

rect and clarify the problems.

Fundraisers were submitted to the board for approval. They were presented after the board packet was prepared. Denning stated that his office would no longer be taking fundraiser requests later than five days before a board meeting. A committee has been formed by Denning, chaired by Jeff Elliot, to prepare a new fundraising form to be used systemwide. No fundraiser for less than fifty percent profit will be submitted for approval. Board member Dawn Robinson made a motion which was passed, to approve the fundraisers proposed.

Board member and Chairman of the Site Committee, Murl Dirksen, gave an update to the board saying the Site Committee appreciates all the work the RFP (Request For Proposals) Committee did regarding the pre-bid selection process of contractors for the Max Carroll Science Wing at Cleveland High School. The RFP Committee members were Dr. Rick Denning, Steve Morgan, Gene Bishop, Tommy Green and Melinda Carroll. The com-

mittee took eight days to read booklets submitted by 17 contractors, of which 2 were disqualified leaving 15 in which four of those did not make a score of 80 or better required by the scoring process to determine the most qualified company. The committee chose to accept the top five proposers which was an arbitrary number used on other projects according to the architect for the science wing, Brian Templeton. He said they did not expect to have 17 submitted.

Out of the top five, there was a range within three points. The contractors who scored lower did not fill out paperwork correctly. The middle three scores were used as a mean score to prevent favoritism by any committee member to one particular contractor. Once the three middle scores were established, each contractor was scored. The Board had previously approved this selection process. Dirksen wanted to make it clear that he feels the way the board went about choosing a contractor by utilizing the best value procurement, option 1, was the correct way to go

about it. Recently the Cleveland City Council voted to suspend all bidding processes and funding for the science wing until questions they had were answered. At the Site Committee meeting held on September 30, there was discussion regarding the city council's dissatisfaction with the process used in choosing a contractor. Dawn Robinson stated that she thought the board had a good relationship with the city council and she did not have a hint that they were unhappy with the process. On October 9th, the board held a special called meeting after a meeting with the city council the day before to answer their list of questions. The city council asked the board to consider broadening the contractors list for the project. The board unanimously voted to allow full bids from all construction companies making 80 or better of which the original short-list of the top 5 became 12 contractors who are now allowed to bid on the science wing project.

Meetings are on the 1st Monday of the month at 5:30pm and open to the public.