

# USD 362 board okays improvements

## Approvals are for replacements, slab

**BY TONY FURSE**  
LINN COUNTY NEWS  
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All on unanimous votes, Prairie View Unified School District 362's board of education approved replacement and improvement items at their Aug. 26 monthly meeting, delayed a week to coincide with statutory revenue neutral exceedance and 2025-26 budget hearings.

The board okayed \$35,480 to G.K. Smith and Sons Inc., Paola, to replace a heating/ventilation/air-conditioning (HVAC) unit above the high school's small gymnasium. The cost includes \$950 for a larger crane that can avoid a tree.

Chris Johnson, Ph.D., district superintendent, said the current HVAC unit "can't be fixed" and estimated a 6-7 week waiting period prior to installation.

From four bidders, the board chose Comm Link Inc., Wichita, and its \$341,735 bid to replace the intercom and clock systems at the Prairie View rural secondary-level campus. Darrel Kohlman, business development consultant for district bid partner DCS Services, Wichita, said that Comm Link offers a five-year service agreement and could possibly start work by the end of this month.

Jeff McCright, district information technology director, said the new digital system has a life expectancy of 12-15 years.

During the earlier revenue neutral exceedance hearing, Johnson had pointed out a need to revamp the current intercom/clocks, saying their older analog system is not in sync between the

middle and high school buildings and are "a safety issue," particularly during emergencies such as a building intruder.

The board also agreed to send out requests for proposals (RFPs) to replace the roof over the high school gymnasium, estimated at \$756,273 and the first phase of four scheduled roof replacements at the secondary-level campus.

Kohlman said that he would be "shocked if you receive less than four bids." He said the early RFP will help "prepare yourself to be on a summer (2026) replacement schedule."

**ANOTHER APPROVAL IS** for \$6,300 to Dave Rockers Concrete, Greeley, to lay a cement slab beyond the middle school's southeast corner as a base for an outside classroom area.

Andrea Richardson, middle school principal, said her proposal would then include grant-seeking for tables and related accessories through groups such as the Prairie View Educational Foundation and Heartland Rural Electric Cooperative, Girard.

Following an inquiry by Russell Pope, board president, board members seemed satisfied that the proposed slab location would pose no problems for underground drain and fiber lines. McCright said an underground fiber line near there runs from the high school to the stadium press box.

As well as expenditure/RFP items, the board approved several human resources moves after a nine-minute executive session for non-elected personnel.

Peggy McKoon was hired as a bus driver, Riley LawRance as a bus aide, Carolanne Sylva as a cook, and Charla Holt as a day-care aide.

The remainder involved supplemental assignments, with Joe Cullor hired as an assistant high school football coach after his approved resignation

as a middle school football assistant, Brock Huber's approval as a middle school assistant football coach after his resignation as a high school boys' basketball assistant coach, and Jason Spradling's okay as an assistant high school boys' golf coach after resigning as an assistant high school track coach.

Other supplemental hirings are Blake Boedicker, assistant high school boys' basketball coach; Erin Deter, assistant high school volleyball coach; and Cade Fischer to assist at the high school level for football, basketball and track.

The board accepted Angela Wilcox's resignation as assistant high school volleyball coach.

In other business before the board:

–Noting that six beef bids from local producers under the Farm-to-Plate initiative had been received for district meals, including one from high school junior Matthew Stolle as an FFA project, Brian Uphoff, board member, asked if those would be enough for the school year. Todd Wollard, district food service director, said the district purchased nine last year and might increase that number by one.

–Wade Teagarden, board member, noted a reported government reimbursement rate increase this year for school meals. Wollard said the district is seeing a 10-15 percent increase in free lunch applications from last year. Johnson said the income eligibility limit has been increased—"some that qualified before won't this year."

–Uphoff expressed pleasure with the number of parents (85 percent) attending the middle school's "Welcome Back" night. Richardson said sixth-grade parents generally have "full attendance."

–The board okayed placing outdated textbooks on a surplus list.

# GUNS: TOO MANY NOT THE PROBLEM

**FROM PAGE 4**

ident, there was at least one gun in about 50 percent of all American homes, according to a 1959 Gallup poll. Today, despite all the anti-gun propaganda you hear, that number has dropped to one gun in 37 percent of homes.

Sure, there are more than twice as many Americans today and hundreds of millions more guns. But even personal gun ownership has fallen to about 32 percent, according to Pew.

None of these interesting gun-ownership facts matter to liberals. Guns are inherently evil. Period. They believe, as a matter of faith, that guns automatically create crime and murder, not the people who misuse them.

But if too many guns cause mass school shootings, why didn't they occur 75 years ago, when more American households had

## Trial date set in attempted murder case

**BY BARBARA PROFFITT**  
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During an Aug. 5 preliminary hearing, Linn County District Court Judge Rhonda Cole bound over defendant David Rice, Jr., on charges of attempted murder in the second

degree and aggravated battery for the purposes of an arraignment hearing. The arraignment hearing was set for Aug. 15.

During the arraignment hearing on Aug. 15, a pretrial conference in the case was set for 9 a.m. on Nov. 13 in front of Judge Andrea Purvis and a jury trial was set for Jan. 7-9, 2026.

Rice was originally charged in Linn County District Court with three counts in March, 2025.

## Indecent liberties case set for status hearing

**Defendant released on OR Bond**

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Jacob Beck was arrested on a charge of indecent liberties with a child over the age of 14 but under the age of 16 in late May of this year. The complaint filed in the case has only one count.

In a status hearing held on Aug. 5, Judge Rhonda Cole agreed to allow Beck's attorney, Craig Cole, more time to review discovery and set the matter over for a status hearing at 10 a.m. on Sept. 23.

Additionally, with no objection from the state, the defendant was released on a \$5,000 OR (own recognition) bond.

## McDaniel set for preliminary hearing in drug-related case

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Tyree McDaniel, who was charged in Linn County District Court on July 25 will appear in court at 1:30 p.m. on Sept 9 for a preliminary hearing as ordered following a status hearing on Aug. 5.

McDaniel is currently charged with five counts ranging from domestic battery, possession of opioids, to distribution of the same.

The defendant appeared in person, with counsel on Aug. 5 and requested the preliminary hearing be set. Judge Rhonda Cole subsequently set the hearing for Sept. 9.

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