

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

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CUSTER COUNTY, ARNOLD, NEBRASKA 69120

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Courtesy photo

School purchases new plasma cutter with reVISION grant money

This summer Arnold Public Schools was selected for a reVISION Action Grant award of \$42,084.00 for the 2019-2020 academic year based on the school's application this spring. Within the application APS requested funds to purchase a plasma cutter and an Epilog Fusion Pro Laser in an effort to continue to expand the school's ability to provide hands-on opportunities and skill development for its students with a focus on Career and Technical Education. "Part of the funds were available right away so we were able to purchase the plasma cutter. The rest of the funds will be available next month to purchase the Epilog Laser. We are currently in year two of a three year reVISION process," said Principal Joel Morgan. Students pictured with the plasma cutter are: (l-r) Clay Witthuhn, Silas Cool, Landry Smith, Jake Halstead, Brett Halstead, Tanner Brown, Hunter Weinman and Dawson Hanna.

Board of Education Passes Budget/Tax Levy, Discusses Transition of Superintendent

By Janet Larreau

Arnold Board of Education voted 6-0 to approve both the proposed budget and combined school tax levy for the 2019-2020 fiscal year at their regular meeting held on September 10.

The proposed budget is \$4,634,174.00, which is up by about 4 percent. The combined school tax levy will be 74.0323 cents per every \$100.00 of assessed property value. This is up from 72.0406 from last year.

Interim Superintendent Mark Sievering said the budget increase is due to increased costs and a decrease in property valuations. Property valuations are down by about 3 percent from \$456,247,502.00 last year to \$442,378,646.00 this year.

The District is requesting a total of \$3,286,793.92 in taxes.

"We are about \$100,000.00 more this year than last year and that is to cover salaries and increased costs," said Mr. Sievering.

"This is a very good

board. They are here to educate our students, and they are also very aware of the needs of the taxpayers. They are watching out and not spending unnecessarily. It's been my observation that this is a good board and they're doing the right thing."

The tax rate for the Special Building Fund went down 7 percent in order to build up more cash reserve. The necessary cash reserve is currently \$600,000.00, and when looking over the budget, Mr. Sievering recommended that the amount be moved closer to a million dollars so there will be about three months worth of revenue at any given time.

"It hadn't been adjusted for quite some time," he said. "Rather than moving that all at once, we want to do that incrementally in order not to increase taxes unnecessarily. Instead of requesting more taxes, we dropped the request for the Special Building Fund by \$50,000.00. We know that we are going to need some special building fund money, and

the Board has very wisely been preparing for that. They are looking down the road at facilities and recognize that we have a building that is approximately 100 years old. The facility needs will need to be addressed at some point, and that is where the Special Building Fund comes in and why that money is being set aside."

Currently, the school is looking into accessibility to the 2nd floor and is looking into a vertical lift.

At the meeting, board members heard the interim superintendent's timeline for the superintendent transition for the 2020-2021 school year. For several years Arnold has shared a superintendent with another school, and has discussed hiring one person to fill both roles to save money now that Callaway no longer wants to share. Looking at the accreditation requirements, the determination was made the school will need two administrators based on the number of faculty and students.

"From the stand-point of the state, we know it can't be done to only have one administrator. We're a large enough system," said Mr. Sievering. "We recommend that (current principal) Mr. Morgan will be moving into the superintendent role, and we will be looking into what will be the best configuration of what his role and the other administrator's will be. We're basically looking at how the school can best be served."

In other business, the board:

- Approved recognition of Arnold Education Association as Exclusive Bargaining Unit for Teachers for 2020-2021 negotiations.

- Approved revisions to Standing Committees Policy.

- Approved declaration of surplus property.

- Approved renewal of South Loup Cooperative for 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years.

- Set a date of October 1, 2019, at 5:00 p.m. to discuss facilities.

- Set a date of October 8, 2019, at 8:00 p.m., for the next regular meeting.

Village's Operating Budget Will Increase
Board votes to increase water & sewer rates, construction rubble fees

By Janet Larreau

Property taxes and other rates set by the Village of Arnold will be going up for fiscal year 2019-2020 due to infrastructure needs and other operating expenses. At their regular board meeting held September 9, Board members adopted a budget of \$2,846,930.00. The operating budget is 12% higher than last fiscal year. This is due to \$606,000 budgeted for Flood Repair Improvements. The property tax request of \$103,420.00 was approved. The property tax request increased by 8%. Before the Board adopted the budget, a public hearing was held and a Special Hearing to set final tax request was held, with no comments from the floor.

Water & Sewer Rate Increase

The Board voted to increase water and sewer rates. Currently water rates are \$14.00 per month customer charge plus \$0.75 per 1000 gallon of water. The rates will be increased to \$15.00 per month customer charge plus \$0.85 per 1000 gallons of water. Currently sewer rates are \$11.00 per month plus \$1.00 per 1,000 gallons based on an average water consumption billed in December, January and February. The customer charge on the sewer will be raised from \$11.00 per month to \$12.00 per month.

Construction Rubble Rate Increase

Construction rubble rates were also discussed. Village Clerk Patricia Lamberty presented the board with revenue and expenses for the construction demolition site. Revenue for fiscal years 2014-2018 was \$27,272.87, and expenses, including engineering fees, crawler/loader with operator, annual permit fees and annual transfers to the closure/post closure care account for the same time period were \$48,326.20. The permit for the site has to be renewed every five years, and the last time it was renewed, the cost was \$8,122.70 in engineering fees. Annual Transfers to the Closure/Post Closure Care Accounts are required by law so that an amount equal to the current closure and post closure maintenance cost estimate for the Arnold Construction & Demolition Landfill is available at the time of closure. Board members voted to increase the construction rubble fees to 0.25 per pound (\$50.00 per ton), and for a complete removal of a building to 0.01 cents per pound (\$20.00 per ton).

In other business, the board:

- Upon the recommendation of the AEDC, approved a loan for \$12,000.00 to Same 24 Fitness and a \$2,000.00 grant to accompany the loan from the Economic Development Fund.

- Discussed Flood Improvement Project with Village Engineer Tom Werblow.

- Considered hail damage sustained on May 27. Decided against repairing the cook shack and crow's nest at Old Mill Park, and discussed putting the money received from insurance towards a storage container for Old Mill Park.

- Accepted Weathercraft's

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Kenner Is Saddle Bronc Champion

Rural Arnold resident Derek Kenner (pictured left in photo) receives the Saddle Bronc year-end champion buckle and a certificate for a custom built trophy saddle at the Nebraska State Rodeo Finals in Valentine.

He went on to compete at the Mid-States Finals in Broken Bow last weekend. Results follow:

NSRA Finals Results: Round 1 - 2nd - 73pts. - \$343.08; Average - Split 3rd - 73pts. - \$171.54.

NSRA Year End Results: Saddle Bronc - 1st - \$16,985.02 - Champion buckle and saddle; All Around (Men) - 1st - \$16,761.40 - Champion buckle and saddle.

MFR Results: Round 1 - 1st - 74pts - \$440.70;

Round 2 - 1st - 83pts. - \$881.40; Round 3 - 2nd - 75pts. - \$264.42; Average - 1st - 231pts. -

\$528.84 - Finals Champion Buckle.

MSRA Year End Results: Saddle Bronc - 1st - \$23,431.45 - Champion Buckle and Saddle;

All Around (Men) - 1st - \$23,722.45 - Champion Buckle and Saddle.

Courtesy photo

