

The Arnold Sentinel

“Serving the South Loup River Valley”

THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 2025

CUSTER COUNTY, ARNOLD, NEBRASKA 69120 (USPS 032480) SINGLE COPY: 75 CENTS VOLUME 108, NUMBER 33

School Looking at Major Improvements to Facility

Board, administration meets with architect on design options

A facility assessment of Arnold Public Schools that was done in the summer of 2024, and its findings that were given in the fall of that year, has led the Arnold School Board to meet with an architect to look at the district's options. The assessment found that the 1925 building needs fire sprinklers installed throughout, which involves tear down of ceilings and some walls, a complete electrical and HVAC upgrade, and more, resulting in an entire, costly renovation, with no square footage added.

A special session was held on January 16 to discuss facility designs with Wilkins Architecture Design & Planning. Presenting designs were Jacob Sertich, managing principal/architect, and Ben Van Brocklin, architectural designer. Also present were Austin Larson, construction operations director/estimator, and Mark Lewis, business

development, for BD Construction, Inc./Kearney, and Tobin Buchanan, managing director of public finance for Northland Securities, a First National of Nebraska Company. All board members and administrators looked at various floor plans presented to them. Of these plans, some included a complete tear down of the 1925 building and construction to the north of the 1963 grade school, and one that included a full renovation of the 1925 building plus an addition. Sertich suggested narrowing down to three options to present to the community at upcoming town halls. At these community meetings, the community will have the opportunity to give their input and vote on the final floor plan. It was also suggested that each board member should rank their five priorities.

“You want to get it right the first time,” said Sertich.

Board member Duane Bowers suggested getting a floor plan and estimate of just renovating the 1925 building as to what all it needs to be up to code.

“I know that will be one of the first questions asked at an upcoming meeting,” said Bowers.

Next on the agenda was reviewing construction costs and estimates with BD Construction. The estimates include 3% inflation, as it would be around a two-year process after a bond has passed, and a 5% contingency. BD has worked with a number of schools in the state and discussed with the board some of the issues they have ran into and things that have worked well.

Tobin Buchanan went over LB2 that went into effect in 2022. LB2 was a bill in the Nebraska Legislature that changed the valuation of agriculture land for some school district taxes – a shift off of 75% to 50%. He discussed some options of 20, 25,

and 30 year bonds. Since Covid, most have shifted to the 30-year bond.

“We all know why,” said Buchanan.

Discussion followed on community input meetings and a time-line. Sertich said at least two town halls should be held for community engagement. He said as of now a special election could be held during any month of the year since it is a non-election year. The special election would be held on the first Tuesday after the second Monday. Voters could cast their votes either by mail-in or going to polls, whichever is decided.

In conclusion to the meeting, board member Jen Dalrymple said, “Let’s keep the ball rolling.”

A special meeting has been scheduled for Monday, January 27, at 7:00 p.m., to go over board members’ top priorities and edits for the floor plans. The meeting is open to the public.

Village Board Votes to Increase Water/ Sewer Rates

Village board members voted to increase customer charges for water and sewer services at their regular meeting held on January 13. Before discussion began, the village clerk reported that at the end of December 2024, there was \$27,240.50 in the water fund and \$45,524.49 in the sewer fund. In October 2024, \$70,000.00 was transferred from the electric fund to the water fund, and in fiscal year 2022, \$30,000.00 was transferred to the sewer fund from the electric fund. The current rate for water is \$16.50 customer charge plus \$1.00 per 1,000 gallon usage. The current rate for sewer is \$14.30 per month plus \$1.20 per 1,000 gallons based on winter water usage. New monthly rates voted on at the meeting will be \$19.00 water and \$17.00 for sewer.

Revised Agreement for Impounding Dogs

A revised agreement with Sal Hilderbrant, to utilize Pawsome Hotel to impound dogs running at large, abandoned and stray dogs, was approved. The revised agreement adds a \$50.00 rehoming fee.

Pickleball Court Named

After looking over several suggestions for names for the pickleball/basketball courts, board members decided on Carroll Street Courts. During discussion of a sign, Shavonne Schacher suggested that the public submit ideas for the sign's design. Members liked the idea, and set a deadline of March 1 for submissions.

Equipment Logos

Board members looked at different options for equipment logos that incorporate the water tower. A black and white logo

that Cheryl Carson submitted was chosen. The village clerk will contact School House Graphics, asking them to print the design on two different sizes of vinyl for consideration at the next board meeting.

Advertising Begins for Swimming Pool Personnel

The board voted to begin advertising for pool personnel, and to authorize Donnell DeLosh and Jason Jenkins to hire the managers and lifeguards.

The following wages were set: 1st year life-guard, \$14.00; 1st year manager, \$16.50; and 1st year assistant manager, \$15.25.

Comments from Village Clerk

The clerk reported that Scott McDowell and Eric Holmberg removed 20 dead trees from the ARA. At the November 11 meeting, the board approved contracting with McDowell for tree removal up to \$3,000.00, with \$880.00 coming from the tree board account and the balance from the parks account. The cost was \$1,650.00. Board member Donnell DeLosh said that since the tree removal did not cost \$3,000.00, the remaining \$1,400.00 could be used to plant trees.

In other business, the board held separate public hearings on the One & Six Year Street Improvement Plans and discussion of the six-month review of Arnold's Economic Development Program. No comments were heard at either hearing before closing. Members went on to adopt Resolution 2025-1, approving and adopting the One & Six Year Street Plan for the current year.

Arnold Passport Program - Holiday Edition Draws Winners

Arnold Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) director Cheryl Carson and board member Karen Horst stopped in at five local businesses last Friday to ask owners or their employees to draw a name in the first ever AEDC-sponsored shop-at-home promotion. Called the Arnold Passport Holiday 2024 Edition, the Chamber Bucks winners were drawn from six passport stamp levels.

The program, which ran from December 2nd to January 3rd, allowed passport holders to receive a stamp at the following participating businesses: Reed's Food Center, Mills Hardware, Pinnacle Bank, BrewBakers, First State Insurance, Nails for Starz, The Exchange, Arnold Sentinel, Echo Financial, Kreative Edge, Grazers Bar & Grill, Four County Boutique, A-1 Auto Repair, Touch of Grace Massage Therapy & Spa and Oakbrook Physical Therapy. Each business had a requirement



AEDC board member Karen Horst and AEDC director Cheryl Carson hold a bag filled with completed passports, as business owner Echo Pelster draws a winner last Friday. All level winners were drawn that day at six participating businesses. - Debbie Connelly photo

to receive a stamp. The final qualified number of stamps collected on one passport, including bonus stamps, determined which level a single passport qualified for.

Once a participant re-

ceived as many stamps as they could by shopping or donating locally, they turned it in for the drawing. One entry card was drawn from each level. Following are the drawing levels and the lucky

winners:

0 stamps.....\$10
No Entries
1-4 stamps.....\$75
Eli Rogers – drawn at

See Passport Program, page 2

Letters Sought for Alumni News

Letters are now being welcomed for the 2025 edition of the *A.H.S. Alumni News* that will be mailed out in the spring. Honored class members are especially encouraged to submit a letter, giving a short or long account of what all has happened since graduating from

high school. Letters can be e-mailed to: arnoldsentinel@gpcom.net with the subject line Alumni Letter, or mailed to *The Arnold Sentinel* at PO Box 136, or to the A.H.S. Alumni Association, PO Box 121.

The deadline to submit is March 1.

National Honor Society Induction



Ten new members were inducted into the Arnold chapter of the National Honor Society at a ceremony held on January 13 at the school. Members pictured with long stoles are new; all others are current members. Pictured, front, l-r: Dolores Duponcheel, Danah Baldwin, Ella Cool (secretary), Anna Tullis (vice-president), Riata Remund (president), Taylor Hanna-Miles (treasurer), Ivy Tullis; back, l-r: Piper Strasburg, Jade Bierman, Elijah Cool, Malachi Neth, Eli Rogers, Ethan Furne, AJ Starr, Crew Witthuhn, Hayden Myers, Madelyn Logsdon, Brook Bierman, and Josie Christensen. Not pictured: Realta Leach. - APS Photo