

Claremore Progress

Funding a future for fine arts

By Troy Buchanan - Date: 2003-11-11 15:40:23

A speaker at Monday night's Claremore School Board meeting received a standing ovation, by not only the audience attending the meeting, but by the school board members, as well.

Frank Robson, Claremore native and Claremore graduate, received the standing ovation after asking school board members to consider approving an \$8 million plan to build a performing arts center on school property.

Robson said he will pay for the construction of the planned 40,000 square-foot facility and set up an endowed trust fund to employ a director and maintenance personnel for the building.

Robson said a board of five trustees — made up of the school superintendent, a school board member, Robson and his wife, Lu, and another member to be named by the four other trustees — will be set up to oversee the trust.



"The plan calls for a building with a ground floor seating capacity of 750 people and a balcony seating capacity of 350," Robson said. "The building also will include separate practice areas for the band and choir and storage space for instruments."

Once construction of the facility is complete, Robson said, the title will revert to the school. The building will be located between the high school and junior high school sites along Florence Avenue.

"I think this is a marvelous gift," said Don Crutchfield, school board president, just before the school board unanimously approved a licensing agreement for construction of the facility.

Bidding for construction of the new performing arts center is expected to begin in March or April of 2004 and construction is expected to be completed sometime in the summer of 2005.

"Claremore really needs a facility to showcase our students' performances," Robson said. "Music is really a world wide language. I want this to be a real nice facility."

Good news was followed by more good news as Sherrie Hicks, director of finance and business, told the board the district's operating account was almost \$600,000 ahead of where it was the same time last year.

Jerry Hastings, school board member for office number 4 and vice president of the school board, will be running for his seat which is due to expire next year.

The school board voted to adopt a resolution calling for an election on February 10, 2004, for school board seat number 4. A second election, if needed, would be on April 6, 2004.

A copier agreement was tabled for a second time as the board decided it would be "prudent" to seek bids on financing a lease agreement plan.

Financing for a lease agreement was initially to be set up through 1st Bank Oklahoma but School Board Member Rick Mosier voiced some concern over the four percent interest rate, saying, "four percent sounds a little stiff in current economic times."

Stephen Smith, with the J.D. Young Company, said that was the rate quoted by the bank.

The 60-month lease agreement would be through the J.D. Young Company while financing would come from another source.

Since the school district cannot obligate itself past its fiscal year, the lease agreement will have to be approved by the board annually.

The board voted to send the issue out for competitive bidding.

In other board business:

- the board adopted a revised policy on communicable diseases to reflect changes suggested by school nurses,
- board members recognized the high school girls softball team for their State Championship victory and
- the board set its 2004 meeting dates.

Claremore Progress
<http://www.claremoreprogress.com>

The URL for this story is:
<http://www.claremoreprogress.com/archive/article10952>