ISL proposed in district 2017-18 budget

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - For the first time in many years, local school district taxpayers may have to help offset a Republican-ushered 1.1 percent growth allowance for local school districts.

At Monday's Fort Madison Community School District Board of Directors workshop, district Business Manager Sandy Elmore showed board members what the new proposed 1.1 percent growth allowance will do to the current budget, a budget which just last week was set at 2 percent after the governor signed a bill into law that was passed before (the resolution) and we got petitioned." Elmore told the board.

However she said it would be set at 13.94/$1000 of assessed valuation, a 67 cent increase over the 2016-2017 budget. The increase in levy will amount to slightly more than $450,000 to a total property tax revenue of roughly $8.1 million to be coupled with state aid to fund the district in 2017-2018.

"At the status quo, we're gonna have to make some cuts," Elmore said.

Elmore said even though the district staff works daily to find efficiencies in the budget and makes cuts there regularly, maintaining current funding levels in light of recent measures at the Iowa legislature to push the 1.1 percent growth, will require the increase coupled with another option, an Instructional Support Levy.

"It’s been a loooong time since we had one. We passed it before (the resolution) and we got petitioned," Board President Timm Lamb asked if any of the board members had objections to going forward with preparing the budget for the board to approve adding it to the budget.

"That’s it. We’re going to do it," Elmore told the board.

"What you ultimately want is to be able to make the goals achievable as well as measurable. Whatever you ultimately want to be able to make the goals achievable as well as measurable. Whatever you ultimately want to be able to make the goals achievable as well as measurable. Whatever you ultimately want to be able to make the goals achievable as well as measurable. Whatever you ultimately want to be able to make the goals achievable as well as measurable. Whatever you ultimately want to be able to make the goals achievable as well as measurable. Whatever you ultimately want to be able to make the goals achievable as well as measurable. Whatever you ultimately want to be able to make the goals achievable as well as measurable. Whatever you ultimately want to be able to make the goals achievable as well as measurable. Whatever you ultimately want to be able to make the goals achievable as well as measurable. Whatever you ultimately want to be able to make the goals achievable as well as measurable. Whatever you ultimately want to be able to make the goals achievable as well as measurable. Whatever you ultimately want to be able to make the goals achievable as well as measurable. Whatever you ultimately want to be able to make the goals achievable as well as measurable.

"What you ultimately want is to be able to make

Tasks force makes felony drug bust in Keokuk

The Lee County Narcotics Task Force reports the arrest of two Keokuk, Iowa residents on felony and misdemeanor drug charges.

Tyran Monroe Jarrell, 38, and Jennifer Marie Lay, 40, both of 1713 Exchange Street, Keokuk, Iowa were arrested on February 2, 2017 at their residence on felony and misdemeanor drug charges. Jarrell is charged with Delivery Of Methamphetamine In Excess Of Five Grams, a class B felony, two counts of Unlawful Possession Of A Firearm, a class D felony, three counts of Unlawful Possession Of Ammunition, a class D felony, Maintaining A Drug House, an aggravated misdemeanor, two counts of Possession Of A Controlled Substance (methamphetamine and dextro-amphetamine), a serious misdemeanor, two counts of Unlawful Possession Of A Prescription Drug, a serious misdemeanor, and Possession Of Drug Paraphernalia, a simple misdemeanor.

The arrests of Jarrell and Lay stems from an investigation by the Lee County Narcotics Task Force into allegations that they were involved in the use of illegal narcotics in the Lee County area. A search warrant was served in connection with this investigation and items that support the charges were discovered.

School board continues its own growth

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON - The Fort Madison Community School District Board of Directors is narrowing its focus in goal-setting strategies to bring the entire district in line with future direction.

Harry Heiligenthal, Leadership Development Director with the Iowa Association of School Boards met with board members at Monday’s workshop to help the board learn how to identify specific goals and strategies to make the goals achievable as well as measurable.

"What you ultimately want is to be able to make that 30 second sell of your
school district,” Heiligenthal said. “When you see, say a mom, with a couple kids and she says she’s interested in moving to the district...what do you say...how do you sell it before she has to change a diaper or deal with something else.”

Heiligenthal asked the board if they want to set a few rigorous goals or something similar to what they’ve been doing or a combination of both. He then put the board members through an exercise of identifying what an 18-year-old graduate should know when he graduates.

The board members took turn putting sticky notes on poster board outlining what hope member Dianne Hope called “soft skills” and the anticipated book or hard skills. She said soft skills are intangibles such as competencies, behaviors, attitudes and personal qualities that help students work well with others.

Superintendent Erin Slater said setting specific goals that enhance the district’s student preparation for college and careers is a daunting task, but one that has to be mastered at some point by the board and future boards.

“What does that person look like,” Slater said. “The board chose to participate in as a means of bringing themselves to the level of those they give direction to. Board President Timm Lamb has been a huge proponent of the program and believes if the board is going to be able to set high benchmarks for the district and its employees and students, the board itself better have high benchmarks as well.

The board has received honors this year for its own personal development and Lamb said that should continue even with future boards.

“This work may never be done. We should continue to do this kind of development ourselves so we can better help the teachers, staff and students get better.” -Timm Lamb, Board President

real challenge is how do we measure that. You can’t create an effective goal if we can’t measure it.” The program is part of a Lighthouse program that

The American Legion are encouraged to attend. George Shields, Adjutant

For the Record

Fort Madison Police Department
02/03/2017 - 9:12 a.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of larceny/theft on Country Club Road. 02/03/2017 - 3:33 p.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of larceny/theft in the 900 block of Avenue A. 02/04/2017 - 1:35 a.m. - Fort Madison Police responded to a report of vandalism in the 900 block of Avenue G.

Lee County Sheriff’s Department 02/03/2017 - 7:46 a.m. - Lee County Sheriff’s deputies responded to an accident on 340th Street. A vehicle driven by Dusty Lynn Oliver, 34, of Argyle, lost control heading east on 340th Street, spun around and went into the north side ditch striking a small tree and damaging the left side of the vehicle. No injuries or citations were reported at the scene.

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Pen City Current
Fort Madison, IA
Racing backwards

Sylvia Jerden showing off her backstroke in Saturday’s Muscatine Swim Meet. Jerden competed in several events for the Fort Madison Sailfish, including the 200 medley relay, the 50 relay, the 200 backstroke, the 100 freestyle and the 200 freestyle. Pen City Current - Tuesday, February 7, 2017 - 3
**Results from the Muscatine Swim Meet**

**Sports**

7 ZECK, SAWYER-13 Muscatine 36.30
8 HAMILTON, NOAH-10 KE- OKY SWIM 32.99
9 DRAYKE-METZGER, CARTE-15 Fort Madison YMCA 32.95
10 JOHNSON, CHASE-10 FORT MADISON YMCA 30.51
11 MAYER, TEAGUE-15 WASHINGTON 29.37
12 CARLSON, CALEB-10 Muscatine 41.79
13 WILLS, LISK-9 KEOKUK Y SWIM 41.49
14 HAWS, GAIN-9 FORT MADISON YMCA 41.31
15 DIXON, KARSON-4 FORT MADISON YMCA 42.20
16 TAYLOR, TOMMY-10 Scott County YMCA 43.13
17 DOSTALEK, AIDEN-9 FORT MADISON YMCA 43.39
18 BENKINS, ALEX-9 Muscatine 44.49
19 EBNER, NOLAN-10 Muscatine 47.76
20 CUBBAGE, JAMES-9 Muscatine 49.45
21 JOHNSON, OLIVIA-9 WASHINGTON 50.71
22 WILLS, JORDYN-10 Muscatine 1:00.66
23 WASHINGTON 1:00.61
24 CUBBAGE, JAMES-9 Muscatine 1:00.66
25 HAYES, WILLIAM-8 FORT MADISON YMCA 1:00.66
26 CARLSON, CALEB-10 Muscatine 1:05.30
27 CALHOUN, MAURIA-11 Muscatine 58.36
28 ANDERSON, PAYTON-12 Washington 44.17
29 JERDEN, SYLVIA-12 FORT MADISON YMCA 44.92
30 NORTON, TOM-12 Muscatine 1:05.30
31 GRUNDER, GABE-11 Muscatine 48.72
32 MILLAGE, GENEVIEVE-11 MADISON YMCA 45.68
33 WYRICK, BRAYDEN-10 FORT MADISON YMCA 44.98
34 NORTON, TOM-12 Muscatine 1:05.30
35 GRUNDER, GABE-11 Muscatine 48.72
36 MILLAGE, GENEVIEVE-11 MADISON YMCA 45.68
37 WYRICK, BRAYDEN-10 FORT MADISON YMCA 44.98
38 MILLAGE, GENEVIEVE-11 MADISON YMCA 45.68
39 WYRICK, BRAYDEN-10 FORT MADISON YMCA 44.98
40 MILES, SARAH-18 Washington 1:19.52
41 MILLAGE, COLIN-9 Muscatine 38.01
42 BOYER, ANNA-10 Muscatine 54.22
43 MILLAGE, COLIN-9 Muscatine 38.01
44 BOYER, ANNA-10 Muscatine 54.22
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**Boys' backstroke**

Aiden Benda, in the foreground, and Isaac Mason compete in Saturday’s Muscatine swim meet.

**Sailfish neck and neck**

Rowan Benda and Will Hayes compete for the Fort Madison sailfish swim team in theMuscatine swim meet swim held Saturday.

**See Muscatine** page 5
Results from the Muscatine Swim meet

MUSCATINE - From the Muscatine Swim meet on Tuesday, February 7, 2017.

**MUSCATINE** 1:03.81
10 ENGELKEMIER, BIRD-9 WEILANDICH, MAKAYLA-17 ESTABROOK, WHIT-8 SUMMERS, AARON-17 KE-153 WOMEN'S 12-21 200
1.875 X 3.1.875 X 3.5 1.875 X 3.75 1.875 X 4 SYMPTOMS DID YOU KNOW

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2. A CFC participant.

**TREAT**

3. Provided as a public service.

**CURE**

4. A CFC participant.

5. Provided as a public service.
Cash Reserve Levy would bump tax asking another 17 cents/$1,000 assessed

require 148 signatures, which reflects 30% of the voters at the last regular school board election. After the public hearing, 28 days is allowed to petition.

According to Elmore, a proposed ISL of 3 percent would generate $442,000 additional for the district and would bring the rate to $14.44/$1,000 assessed. The maximum ISL can be 10% of the current levy and is capped at five years.

She also suggested a Cash Reserve Levy addition of $100,000 would increase the levy 0.17/1,000 assessed. The CRL can be done in increments of $100,000 with each increment bumping the levy by 17 cents per $1,000.

Lamb said an effort to implement an ISL in a year where the school district will be asking the community to vote on building a new elementary school again in September and where the Holy Trinity Catholic system is looking for $6M to build a new elementary school, is a scary proposition.

"I think it's a fear just because general perception in the public is that 'you're gonna do this and you're gonna do that' because they remember we didn't pass the bond for the junior high and then we used the sales tax to build it and they just said we did what we wanted," Lamb said.

Board member Tim Wondra said it's an ugly scenario of passing the buck. "Federal legislators make cuts and they pass it down to the state, and the state passes it down to the local boards, and then your commissioners, supervisors and board members are the ones that have to raise the property taxes."

Lamb reiterated that even with the ISL the district will still have one of the lowest tax rates in the state and most of the schools already have an ISL in place.

"Even if we do this we're still gonna be one of the lowest, and all these districts are going to be in the same boat so theirs will go up too," Lamb said.

"That's what people don't understand. You look at what we've been doing with the money, we've done a pretty good job handling our money and still maintaining programming."

Board member Dianne Hope said she had real concerns about misconceptions and proper communication with the district.

"I'm very concerned about a misconception that could be out there, that the school bond didn't pass and the school board raises taxes. That 'they're gonna do what they want' mentality even though we're talking about apples and oranges and apricots. We have to be very clear what we're doing," Hope said.

"We're asking to increase our taxes to our constituents and then we're gonna have to come back and ask for more. We're going to have to partner with the media and make sure we have a very accurate message."

Elmore said no money generated by the ISL or the CRL can be used for construction.

"1.1% is not enough. It's not enough and it pushes the burden onto the taxpayer," Elmore said.

Lamb said even with the ISL and potentially the CRL, the district will still be lower than almost all the other school districts in the area.

"Our gloves are basically going to have to come off and we're gonna have to go out there and tell people this is happening. We can't just take status quo," Superintendent Erin Slater said the district was planning on 2 percent after the Governor signed into law a budget that held K-12 funding, but now Republicans are moving toward the 1.1%.

"It's a lower growth than we were hoping for. It puts more mandates on our students. They also said underfund schools again next year. The school leaders said they will have the funding to implement those mandates."

"Republican leaders in the House and Senate are fast tracking their plan for another historic low increase in basic funding for public schools next year. The level of funding proposed at 1.1% next year is the lowest amount in six years. In fact, seven of the last eight years have been the lowest funding levels in the history of the school aid formula," Kearsn wrote.

"Last week, Iowa superintendents said there are severe consequences of inadequate public school funding again next year. The school leaders said they will be forced to raise class sizes, cut teachers, and reduce opportunities for students. They also said underfunding schools again next year would force them to delay purchases for books or classroom materials (65%); delay new technology (24%); and cut back on literacy programs (27%)."

Proposed budget

FMCS Business Manager Sandy Elmore stands in front of a chart of the proposed annual levy for the 2017-2018 fiscal year showing a levy of $13.94/$1,000 assessed valuation. The proposed additional Instructional Support Levy would bump the rate to $14.44/$1,000 assessed.
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