

Via Facebook: Trustee-elect Tom Hearn provides update:

People have asked me recently what has been happening since the election and what can we expect on July 1st. Christa, Dave and I have been meeting regularly with the administration to get up to speed on lots of issues but primarily the finances of the district. Due to under funding of the levy (in my opinion) and lack of legislative support the district has significant financial problems. There have been over 30 positions lost due to attrition and not refilling the position in the last few years and the school district's funding from the state is less than it was in 2009. People know that our per pupil funding in Idaho is among the lowest in the country and one has to ask where is the commitment to adequate funding of public education in Idaho?

The newly elected board members are trying to figure out how we can be as fair as possible to our employees and also leave adequate funding for all the other programs and responsibilities of the District. I can't tell you exactly what the board's proposal to the teachers will be, because it hasn't been decided, but I can say that going from a \$200 deductible to a \$2000 deductible for the employees and other such draconian cuts are off the table. We are also trying to avoid further loss of teaching and support staff positions.

As far as what is happening on July 1st, which is the legally mandated "annual meeting," the first order of business will be to select a Chair and Vice Chair. Then we have a fairly full agenda that day including scheduling some times with the CEA to restart negotiations.

I hope people attend this annual meeting and future school board meetings because we need your input and support. Board meetings historically have been attended by a small group of individuals who tend to speak up a lot, and often in my opinion, do not always reflect the will of the majority of voters. It would be nice to hear from a large variety of patrons who give the Board feedback whether you like or dislike what we are doing.

On a personal note I am trying to close down my clinical practice, which I have had for over 27 years, over the next few months and retiring (or at least working very part time). That will allow me to focus my time on the responsibilities of the board which I am happy to do and which I take very seriously.

I have gotten to know Dave Eubanks and Christa Hazel well in recent months and I have a huge respect for them. These 2 are smart, committed and caring people. Hopefully we 3 will be able to work well with Mr. Hamilton and Ms. Seymore and focus only on what is best for the children. Dave has called our newly elected jobs a "sacred trust" and I agree with him. I think over time people who voted for Dave, Christa and me will find that they voted for positive change in the direction of the school district.