

C'ville trustee named; bond vote set

By Marie Cheesney
staff writer

A new Clarenceville trustee takes his seat for the first time today on the board of education, 11 days before residents vote on a \$19 million bond issue which if passed will lead to a tax increase.

The trustees Thursday unanimously appointed Wilson "Butch" Bowden to replace Daniel Morrison, who recently resigned from the board while serving his fifth term.

The trustees picked Bowden after considering three candidates for the post: Bowden, Lisa Burr and Frank Lozano.

Two years ago, when some residents pushed to dissolve the Clarenceville district and consolidate with two nearby districts, Bowden, through the grassroots group informed residents for Clarenceville, helped the district win its fight to keep the district intact.

Clarenceville, based in Livonia, includes southeast Farmington Hills and northwest Redford Township.

With its membership now complete, Clarenceville trustees can turn their attention toward their next mission — convincing residents to approve a \$19 million bond issue in the Sept. 23 election.

IF THE issue is approved, Clarenceville taxpayers face a 4-mill tax increase which will appear for the first time on the district's December tax bills.

In the past, Bowden said he has always supported the board on money issues. Before giving his support to this issue, Bowden said he will first review where the \$19 million will be spent.

"As a taxpayer I don't want to see my taxes raised," Bowden said. "I'll review this one to see where the money is being put."

The district plans to hold two more informational meetings and four school "open house" meetings to outline details of the bond issue and to answer residents' questions.

Informational meetings will take place at 7 tonight at Clarenceville High, 20155 Middlebelt, and at 7 p.m. Tuesday at Grandview Elementary, 19814 Louise.

At 7 p.m. Monday, Sept. 16, open houses will be held at Botsford Elementary, 19515 Lathurs; Clarenceville Middle, 20210 Middlebelt; and Clarenceville High. An open house will be held at Grandview Elementary at 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 19.

The bond issue will be discussed at all four open houses.

The bond issue, if approved, will cost a homeowner with a \$60,000

house an extra \$120 a year, a homeowner with an \$80,000 house an extra \$150 a year, and a homeowner with a \$100,000 house an extra \$200 a year.

IF APPROVED, \$3 million of the bond issue will be spent to update each school building with the technology needed for the workplace of the 21st Century.

Nearly \$1 million will be spent on computer technology in Clarenceville High. The remainder would go for similar technology at Clarenceville Middle School (\$700,000), Grandview Elementary (\$320,000), and Botsford Elementary (\$180,000).

The other \$16 million will be used to renovate school buildings, remove asbestos, improve heating and water systems, bring facilities up to code, and make buildings more energy efficient.

The district's architects, Indianapolis-based Greiner Inc., estimate it will cost \$3.2 million to improve Botsford, \$2.7 million to upgrade Grandview, \$6.1 million to renovate

Clarenceville Middle, and \$6 million to improve Clarenceville High.

Clarenceville High principal David Simowksi called passage of the bond issue "extremely vital."

"Sometime in the near future we'll have to bring technology to the school buildings," Simowksi said. "It's a must, if not now, then sometime in the future."

ABOUT \$900,000 of the bond issue would be used to build a media center at Clarenceville High.

Instead of being tucked away in a far corner of the school, as it presently is, the new media center would be built in the middle of the school, in space that's now an open, tree courtyard.

"The media center should be the hub of the school, not at the far side of the building," Simowksi said.

Once the center is built, the old

media center would be used for smaller community meetings which don't require the 900 seat auditorium.

IF THE bond issue doesn't pass, the board most likely will bring back to the voters "a more modest proposal," said board president Dale Weighill.

Initially, school officials put together a list containing \$15 million worth of needed improvements. That list got whittled down to the \$19 million bond issue now before the voters.

If approved, the work will be done over the next three years, with the most-needed improvements done next summer.

Clarenceville now levies 0.75 mills for debt retirement, a millage that expires in two years.



'Contact with the Future'

Kevin Blaise (left), a Ferris State University optometry student from Farmington Hills, has received the Bausch & Lomb Contact with the Future educational travel grant. The award is given to a third-year student in the upper 10 percent of the class who demonstrates exceptional interest and clinical potential in contact lenses. The award provides for funded travel to the National Research Symposium on Contact Lenses. Steve Mulanix (right) of Bausch & Lomb Professional Services presents the award.

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