

USD 244 addresses key questions on BES future

Here is some information from our BES community facility meetings in February. I hope this question/answer article is informative for everyone.



Craig Marshall
Superintendent
Burlington USD 244

Was the new BES going to look exactly like the pictures shared in

May, 2025?
Not exactly. The pictures were a rendering that is conceptual in nature. Blueprints are much more specific and occur once a bond issue has been passed.

What is the assessed valuation of the current BES? What would it cost to re-

ovate the current BES?
The county assessed BES at \$7,804,300. We have done extensive research on the current BES over the past eight months, and the price tag to renovate the current BES into a building that could last another 50 years is \$34 million. This renovation of the current BES would not include bringing back 5th grade to BES or any increased space to the BELC.

Has the district looked at the needs of BHS and BMS in the future?

Yes. We constantly evaluate the needs of all facilities. BHS and BMS are in good shape overall. We do not see a need for a new BMS and/or BHS anytime soon.

Why is there a need for a new office and music room in the BES renova-

USD 244

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absent. Others present included Superintendent Craig Marshall, Clerk of the Board Christy Hess, Special Education Director Lindsey Graf, Technology Director Craig Kuhlmann, BES Principal Darla Long, BMS Principal Matt Spring, BHS Principal Lee Baldwin and Burlington Mayor Stan Luke.

TrustPoint Real Estate will be assisting the school district with the sale of six tracts of land located south of BHS and west of the recreation center. A listing agreement was presented under which each tract will be listed at \$17,500 and TrustPoint will receive six percent or \$1,000 of each sale, whichever number is higher. The board approved the listing agreement.

The board approved a Utility Easement Agreement between USD 244 and the City of Burlington, for 10-foot utility easement along the south boundary of the three USD 244-owned tracts that run along Martindale Street. Mayor Luke said it will expand an existing easement by 10 feet and will allow the City of Burlington to lower a water line down eight feet.

The district received one sealed bid from Aaron Skillman for the burning, spraying and haying of 17 acres of land north of the ball fields in the amount of \$15 per acre, for a total of \$255 per year. Skillman recommended doing a three- or five-year lease agreement. While he was fine with one year, he explained that, from a farming perspective, spraying or fertilizing carries on year to year and no one will want to do it on a one-year contract. The board did not want to start a multi-year contract at present but may consider it next year.

The board approved a \$1 per hour increase for current BELC aides and BELC instructors and an increase in the starting rate of pay to \$11.50 per hour for Aides and \$13 per hour for instructors. The increase was recommended due to difficulties maintaining and recruiting staff at the pay rates of \$10.50 per hour for aides and \$12 per hour for instructors. The increase will not apply to substitutes or high school students.

The board held one 15-minute executive session to discuss matters

pursuant to non-elected personnel exception under KOMA related to job performance with Marshall and Baldwin present. No action was taken upon return to open session.

In other personnel items, new hires included Troy Biehler as a BMS sixth-grade science/reading/social studies teacher and Dawson Burton as a BHS physical education teacher, both effective Aug. 4; Cooper Davis as a BHS assistant softball coach effective March 3; and Courtney Slezzer as a BMS assistant track coach effective March 2.

Transfers included Sage Kuhlmann from BMS fifth-grade teacher to BMS special education teacher, effective Aug. 1, and Addison Van Patten from BELC aide to BHS custodian, effective March 9.

Resignations included Samantha Hoven as a BES special education teacher effective May 21 and Amy Nelson as BES kitchen manager effective March 6.

Marshall reported the district received a \$78,000 grant from the Jones Trust Foundation for the BELC for scholarships for kids in need for the next three years.

One 10-minute executive session was held to discuss certified contracts pursuant to the exception for employer-employee negotiations under KOMA with the board, Marshall and Graf present. No action was taken upon return to open session.

In other action, the board approved:

- The Curriculum Leadership Institute contract for the 2026-27 school year in the amount of \$19,975. The per-day rate has been \$2,350 since the 2023-24 school year and will remain unchanged for 2026-27.

- The KASB membership renewal in the amount of \$10,972.52, an increase of \$26.12 from the 2025-26 total of \$10,946.40.

- The KASB legal assistant fund renewal in the amount of \$3,100, an increase of \$350 from the 2025-26 total of \$2,750.

- Donations for USD 244 Special Olympics Team of \$100 from Kevin and Lisa Mautz, \$100 from Arianne Seidl and \$100 from William and Judy Seidl and for Future Business Leaders of America of \$100 from Piero Bortolotti and Monica Zoppas.

- Bills and financial reports and minutes of the Feb. 9 regular meeting.

tion plan?

The office would move to the northeast corner of the current building and would focus on safety and security. People would have to go through the office before they can get into the building. A new music room would allow us to create a FEMA storm shelter which is mandatory in a renovation to meet current codes. A new music room would also allow us to increase the BES lunchroom which has been identified as a need to allow us to possibly go from three sections of lunch to two sections of lunch. Currently the lunch schedule starts at 11:15 a.m. and ends at 1 p.m. This would be better for students and their learning to not be eating lunch so late.

Does it make sense to put \$34 million in a building that has an assessed valuation of \$7,804,300?

That would be for everyone to decide on their own. Many people that attended our community meetings in February did not feel like this was a smart use of taxpayer money. When you renovate a building, you run into many unforeseen issues.

Why is the board considering a new BES?

A new BES located by the current BHS and BMS would allow all campuses to be located within ½ mile of each other. This would allow BES to utilize Wildcat Athletic Complex, the BHS theater, etc. The board is trying to be fiscally responsible and determine what is in the best interest of the district for the short and long term. If we have a new BES and can take one building off of the capital outlay list for improvements over the next 10-15 years, this will allow the district to use capital outlay money on our current facilities to keep them up to date (BMS, BHS, Bus

Barn, Wildcat Athletic Complex, BELC, and the downtown board office).

What are capital outlay funds?

Capital outlay funds are money used to take care of facilities. Examples of capital outlay expenditures are buses, floor projects, gym bleachers, boilers, chillers, roofs, etc. Capital outlay money can't be spent on teacher salaries. Capital outlay money we get from the county is based on our assessed valuation in the county. Currently, one mill of capital outlay raises \$597,000. Currently, we have 5 mills for capital outlay since we asked the public for one mill for three years to help us pay for the BHS Vo-ag addition/renovation. The state allows all districts to have four mills for capital outlay projects. That gives us \$2,388,000 each year for capital projects. While that may seem like a lot of money, it isn't when you consider all of the expenses we have with all of our buildings and the district hasn't had a bond issue for new buildings for 47 years.

Does the district have a seven-year capital outlay plan?

Yes. We have identified things that we need throughout the district over the next seven years. This document is very flexible as we don't have a crystal ball and know when things have to be replaced as we try to get all the life possible out of items. We try to estimate possible costs for items, but it is difficult as we don't know for sure the cost of projects 3 to 7 years out.

What is the life expectancy of a new BES? What is a life expectancy of a renovated BES?

A new BES could last the district for 50-70 years. A

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USD 243 BOE reviews staffing, enrollment

Ida Wilson
Reporter

WAVERLY — The Lebo-Waverly USD 243 Board of Education met Monday, March 9, hearing comments from the public, holding several executive sessions, approving staffing changes, reviewing enrollment matters and approving legal services for the coming year.

Board President Todd Wallace presided over a full board: Ryan Durst, Ashley Edwards, Katelyn Haddock, Matt Hopkins, Denise McNabb and Bryon Rosine. Others present included Superintendent Dustin Wilson, Clerk Kathy Holmes and Waverly Principal Bob Risch. Approximately 90 parents and students from Waverly also attended the meeting.

Five individuals addressed the board regarding a teacher and coaching matter. At one point, speakers were reminded not to discuss personnel matters during the open meeting. After several speakers had addressed the board, the meeting proceeded with the regular agenda. Some visitors left at that point, while others remained. The board did not comment publicly on the matter and no official details were provided. However, it was noted that a faculty member had recently been released from a portion of a supplementary contract.

The board later entered executive session for personnel matters for a total of about 100 minutes. Participants in those sessions included the full board, Superintendent Wilson, Athletic Director Mike Hevel and Principal Risch.

Board members also reviewed the results of a 2024 facilities audit during a March 5 special meeting. The audit identified a range

of repairs and improvements needed across district buildings and ranked them by priority. Financing options discussed included paying for projects with cash, lease-purchase or a possible bond issue.

Darrel Kohlman of DCS Services, a Wichita firm specializing in building and HVAC design and construction, assisted with the review.

The board accepted resignations from Kelly Stice as a Waverly Junior High/High School teacher, Keltie Benton as a district day-care worker, Jamie Moore as Lebo Junior High/High School girls basketball coach and Patrick Gardner as Lebo High School girls basketball coach. Suzanne West was hired as a Lebo Pre-K teacher.

The board will spend \$3,100 to retain the Kansas Association of School Boards as legal counsel for the coming year.

Administrators reported the district plans to purchase a new social studies curriculum for kindergarten through fifth grade and a new science curriculum for grades six through high school. District educators are currently reviewing materials from textbook publishers before making final selections. Officials noted a growing interest in placing greater emphasis on traditional textbooks rather than relying heavily on technology.

The board reviewed local enrollment figures and agreed to continue accepting nonresident students for the 2026-27 school year. Enrollment decisions in the lower grades are based largely on teacher-to-student ratios, while in the upper grades they are based primarily on building capacity. Nonresident students generate additional funding for the district.

Waverly council OKs street work, demolition

Ida Wilson
Reporter

WAVERLY — The Waverly City Council met Wednesday, March 11, hearing department reports and approving several items including a street chip-seal project, demolition of a vacant house, pool facility electrical upgrades and a contribution to the community Easter Egg Hunt.

Mayor Jake Marsh presided over a full council, including Council President Tammy White and members Taylor Everhart, Kevin McMillen, Paige Meader and Nicole Rasmussen. Staff present were City Treasurer Mary Collins, Maintenance II employee Mike Moloney and police officer Travis Palmer. City Clerk Pattie Pfeifauf was absent while attending clerk's school.

Council members approved accepting sealed bids for the city's 2008 work truck with a utility bed. The city also plans to dispose of a snow plow and spreader.

The council accepted a bid of \$135,698.99 from APAC-Kansas Inc., Shears Division of Emporia, for chip sealing north-south streets extending to Christie Street.

Council members also approved a bid of \$2,289.60 from Long Creek Electric LLC to upgrade the electrical panel at the city swimming pool. The project includes installation of new breakers and grounding for the pool house.

The city is seeking applicants for a pool manager and lifeguards for the upcoming summer season.

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Join us for a
Farewell Celebration
Honoring
Ken & Connie Oliver
as they start a new journey
Come and Go:
4-6 p.m.
Sunday, March 22
First Baptist Church
1101 N. 4th St.
Burlington

COFFEY COUNTY COMMISSION
SEEKING INDIVIDUALS
TO FILL POSITIONS ON
COUNTY APPOINTED BOARDS

Appointed boards offer Coffey County citizens an opportunity to participate in the affairs of their County and can be a very rewarding experience.

The following boards are seeking individuals to serve:

PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD
(3 Positions)
Serve a 3-year term
(Third Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m.)

AIRPORT BOARD
(2 Positions)
Serve a 3-year term
(Meets Second Wednesday of the month at Noon)

LIBRARY BOARD
(1 Position)
Serve a 4-year term
(Meets Third Monday at 6 p.m.)

All positions to be filled by April 30, 2026.

If you are interested in serving in one of these voluntary positions, or for more information, please contact County Clerk Angie Kirchner:
Phone (620) 364-2191 or
E-mail: angiek@coffeycountyks.org.

Join us on
Easter Sunday,
April 5!
at the 4-H Building
at Kelley Park

9 a.m. - Free Breakfast
10:30 a.m. - Easter Worship Service
11 a.m. - Children's Church
Easter Egg Hunt will be in Kelly park after services.

The Well
FAMILY CHURCH
GAIN EXPERIENCE LIFE WITH JESUS

HOMEMADE
HOUSE SPECIALS

Thursday's Special
Classic Burger (includes fries) - \$5⁹⁹

Friday's Special
Homemade Meatloaf Dinner
(includes mashed potatoes, green beans, and side salad) - \$11⁹⁹

Daily Specials
Open Faced Roast Beef Sandwich
(includes mashed potatoes with brown gravy and side salad) - \$9⁸⁹
Pot Roast Stuffed Baked Potato - \$11⁹⁹
Fish Dinner (Breaded or Grilled, choice of potato, side salad and a dinner roll) - \$12⁹⁹

ACROSS
THE BORDERS
320 Neosho St., Burlington
(620) 364-1455