

Clark School Board passes 2021-22 budget

At the September meeting of the Clark School Board of Education, the 2021-22 fiscal year budget was formally approved. There was some discussion prior to the approval of this \$4,163,464 budget.

The board has been working on this budget the last six months and most discussion items had been heard multiple times before final approval.

According to superintendent Travis Ahrens and business manager Mary Nelson, the two school administrators in charge of the 2021-22 budget, the estimated fund balance is at \$1,600,000. That would give the school approximately a \$200-\$300,000 surplus.

Clark is in the third year of five of annually opting out of \$350,000 of the tax freeze.

In his opening remarks, superintendent Ahrens opined that he would like to see the opt out dollars left at \$150,000 for this year, or half of what could be allotted.

Because of the fund balance surplus, board member Todd Fjelland asked is the opt out is an option to forge this year. "It looks like we don't need it this year, but five years down the road we definitely will need (the opt out) it," said Fjelland.

Ahrens noted that the school also is in the third year of five of receiving \$384,000 wind farm monies from the State of South Dakota. That will dry up after two more years (after this year).

"We've incorporated that wind tower money into our general fund.

We need to be prudent right now. If we stay at \$150,000 with the opt out money we will be healthy financially," said Ahrens.

He continued, "This \$150,000 will give us a protection, or cushion with health insurance and salaries in an ultra-competitive teacher market.

The board decided to stay at \$150,000 of the opt out as the discussion turned to the capital outlay portion of the budget.

Regarding capital outlay, the maximum is \$1,500,000. The school has \$651,000 levied out in capital outlay, up from \$595,000 a year ago. "There is lots of room there," said Nelson as \$935,000 is the current capital outlay balance.

The unknown here are the ESSER funds, or COVID-19 monies, that the school, with state discretion, can use until 2024. Nelson stated that so far the school has spent about a quarter of the ESSER funds.

School board (continued on page 3)

WEATHER			
Robert Cole - Official Weather Observer			
	HI	LO	PR
Sept. 7.....	86	59	0
Sept. 8.....	76	52	0
Sept. 9.....	74	50	0
Sept. 10.....	76	49	0
Sept. 11.....	82	59	0
Sept. 12.....	73	52	0
Sept. 13.....	73	51	0
2021 precipitation to date	16.75		
2020 precipitation to date	16.73		



Friday was a great day for Clark Homecoming 2021!

Homecoming is a big event for schools and at Clark High School last week's Homecoming was a big success.

Coronation was held Monday, August 31, beginning almost two weeks of festivities.

On Friday, September 10, the Homecoming Parade and football game versus Mobridge-Pollock was held and the weather cooperated

beautifully.

Above, on the field, end Mitchell Larson gets hit early, with the Tigers being flagged for pass interference.

The crowd picture says it all. The cheerleaders in front, the student body standing and the bleachers full of locals and alumni.

The Cyclones are off this week.

Pounds packed on during pandemic cause health concerns

Danielle Ferguson South Dakota News Watch

Many Americans, including adults and children in South Dakota, have gained weight since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and that has healthcare experts worried about the potential for long-term negative physical and mental health implications.

The extended stress experienced since early 2020 is seriously affecting mental and physical health, including changes to weight, sleep patterns and alcohol use, according to an American Psychological Association study released in March.

The national study found that the physical health of Americans has declined during the pandemic

because people are having trouble finding healthy ways to cope with the stress of the pandemic, and are turning to habits such as overeating and increased alcohol or drugs, which can lead to less sleep and further contribute to excessive weight gain or loss.

The majority of adults who say they experienced high stress during the pandemic reported weight gain. The psychological association study found that 61% of adults surveyed across the country said they gained weight during the pandemic, and almost half of those people said they gained more than intended, anywhere from 15 to 50 pounds. Another group, about 18%, said they

lost more weight than they intended.

Nutrition experts say weight gain can have a lasting impact on residents' physical and mental health.

"The isolation really led to a decline in mental status," said Watertown registered dietician Kelsey Raml. "Losing control of your health habits results in emotional eating, lack of exercise, and before you know it, 10 or 20 pounds are on. With weight gain, things like blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar increase as well."

South Dakota Department of Health spokesman Daniel Bucheli said the department will be tracking how weight gain has occurred

recently in the state, and does not yet have data to track changes during the pandemic. But healthcare professionals in South Dakota say they have seen anecdotal evidence that some of their patients have either gained or lost excessive weight.

The proportion of South Dakotans who are considered overweight or obese on the Body Mass Index scale was about 60% for the three years leading up to the pandemic, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. More recent data was not yet available.

Significant weight gain poses long-term health risks, according

to experts. People who gain more than 11 pounds are at higher risk of developing Type 2 diabetes and coronary artery disease, and people who gain more than 24 pounds are at higher risk of having a stroke, according to the National Institutes of Health. According to the CDC, people who are considered overweight are more likely to develop serious symptoms from COVID-19 than those who are considered a healthy weight for their body type.

Children also experienced significant weight gain during the pandemic, when many school and sports activities were paused.

According to a study published in the Journal of the American

Medical Association, about one in 10 children ages 5 to 11 gained an average weight gain of 5 pounds during the pandemic. About 16% of South Dakota children aged 5 to 19 years are considered obese, according to 2019 data from the South Dakota Department of Health. Nationally, obesity is present in about 17% of those same-aged children. Data from 2020 will be available in 2022, Bucheli said.

Native American children in South Dakota, who may have less access to affordable healthy foods and quality healthcare, are more likely to be considered obese on the

Pandemic (continued on page 10)



Warm, sunny weather brought out the cartoon character in all of us

For Clark Homecoming 2020, it rained. So, that means for 2021 Homecoming the weather needed to be nice and it was near perfect. It was warm, but a warm, sunny late summer day makes the Homecoming Parade even more special.

This year's theme was 'cartoons'.

At left is the sophomore float and at right is the second grade.

Winners of the Homecoming Parade categories were: Elementary - 1st place, third grade - Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles; 2nd place, fifth grade - Flinstones and 3rd place, first grade - Paw Patrol. Middle School - 1st place, sixth grade - Bob the Builder and 2nd place, eighth grade - The Magic School Bus. High School - 1st place, seniors - Scooby Doo; 2nd place, freshmen - Flinstones and 3rd place, juniors - Sponge Bob. Commercial - 1st place, Clark Family Dental; 2nd place, Dacotah Bank and 3rd place, Avantara Care Center.