

DISTRICT 86

Authorities investigating suspicious calls

Mike Ellis

DARIEN—District 86 board president Bill Carpenter said the district is actively investigating a suspicious robo-call that has been circulating concerning the District 86 facilities referendum, at the board meeting at Hinsdale South on Feb. 4.

A number of residents within District 86 have complained about receiving a robo-call regarding the referendum, purportedly from the district.

The caller identification for the survey reads, “D86 Opinion,” and the number listed is 630-468-0091, “468” being the first three digits of calls emanating from Hinsdale South.

The voice on the survey is a woman’s, but sounds computer-generated or pre-recorded.

The caller asks if the listener would like to participate in a three-minute survey containing seven questions pertaining to the referendum.

Recipients are then asked to press “1” to continue to the poll.

District 86 released a statement through its Facebook page on Jan. 29 denying any

affiliation with said survey.

“D86 Alert: D86 is not conducting any poll of any kind. Any pollster claiming to be from District 86 or polling on behalf of District 86 is not affiliated or endorsed by District 86 in any way. The caller ID says D86 Opinion, the number is a (630) 468-XXXX number, which anyone who knows our phone numbers knows could be a number from Hinsdale South, and the recorded voice says the call is for Hinsdale Township High School District 86.”

D86 Vote Yes, a pro-referendum campaign organization, has also denied responsibility for the poll.

Carpenter said once a referendum question is placed on the ballot, the district is precluded from making such communication with the public.

He said he has asked the Hinsdale and Darien Police Departments to investigate the robo-call as a criminal matter.

Budget cuts

During the public comment portion of the same meeting, Yvonne Mayer of Burr Ridge, a candidate for

Proposed application of budget cuts

- Public address system and emergency call buttons - \$1.5 million
- Security cameras - \$800,000
- Door access control - \$800,000
- Clock system - \$150,000

Grand estimated total: \$3.25 million

Note: Proposal assumes the failure of the April 2 referendum

the board in April, inquired whether it was the current board’s intention to reverse all cuts in the event that the referendum passes.

“I have said before and will say again that I’m not prepared to say that everything will be reinstated,” board vice president Kevin Camden said. ... “I think taxpayers and voters need to understand that there are some things that will not be coming back for very legitimate financial reasons.”

Carpenter said some club consolidation may still occur at both schools, but he will “absolutely” vote for all athletic programs to be restored if the referendum passes.

Board member Bo Blackburn said he would also like to see the transportation cuts reversed.

“We want to restore the full student experience,” Blackburn said.

Carpenter asked the board whether it would be possible to convene a special meeting on April 3, in the event that the referendum passes, to review the December budget cuts.

Board secretary Kathleen Hirsman, a lecturer at Loyola University-Chicago, said she is teaching a class that night; but from other members’ responses, Carpenter gathered that attendance would be sufficient to constitute a quorum.

Facilities costs

District 86 chief information officer Keith Bockwoldt and director of security Kevin Simpson completed an initial review of facilities relative to security at both schools.

If the referendum fails on April 2, the budget cuts the board approved on Dec. 17—which included the can-

cellation of football, wrestling and water sports at both schools—would be applied to the following items:

- 1. Public address system and emergency call buttons: \$1.5 million;
- 2. Security cameras: \$800,000;
- 3. Door access control: \$800,000; and
- 4. Clock system: \$150,000.

The total estimated cost of these items is \$3.25 million, roughly \$250,000 greater than the \$2.98 million estimate the district gives on its Web site for security projects under the referendum.

Board member Nancy Polak inquired about the clock system upgrades, which, given the magnitude of the cuts the board made, she said appeared to be comparatively non-essential to student safety.

Bockwoldt said the inaccuracy of clocks can have an adverse impact on student testing, and needs to be restored in order to align with the bell schedule.

Camden, Carpenter and Blackburn voiced their wholehearted support of the recommendations.

“I support the recommendation as proposed,” Cam-

den said. ... “We can’t spend enough on student security.”

In other news...

• The IHSA released a memo concerning student-athlete eligibility for individuals that may elect to transfer out of the district to continue their high-school athletic careers. In the memo, IHSA assistant executive director Sam Knox wrote, “IHSA by-laws 3.030 and 3.040 detail residence and transfer eligibility rules that govern student eligibility when students transfer to a new school. When a school district is not able to offer sports and/or activities it has traditionally offered, there is no by-law that would waive the residence and transfer by-laws students must meet in order to be eligible to participate at their new school.” “They make it clear that it’s nothing guaranteed, and that it’s going to be done on a family-by-family basis,” superintendent Dr. Bruce Law said.

• Law recommended adding June 3, 4 and 5 to the calendar to make up the three days of school that were lost during the week of Jan. 28 due to adverse weather conditions.

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