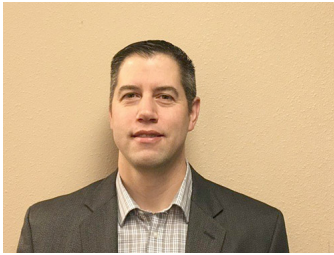


Hyatt at the helm of GMCS

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
Friday, 24 February 2017 04:15



New contract spans two years

The Gallup-McKinley County Board of Education unanimously approved a two-year contract Feb. 21 for new Superintendent Mike Hyatt. The act took place at the Board of Education's regular meeting where outgoing board members were given plaques and recognitions and one incoming board member was introduced.

At a Feb. 13 special meeting, Priscilla Manuelito, president of the Board of Education, was asked to negotiate a contract with Hyatt. A copy of Hyatt's new contract wasn't immediately available after the meeting, but the *Gallup Sun* has submitted a New Mexico Inspection of Public Act request to Gallup-McKinley County Schools to obtain the document.

Joe Menini, the outgoing board member who represents District 4, said he supports Hyatt because he believes Hyatt has been doing a good job since taking over for the departed Frank Chiapetti about two months ago.

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Chapetti was placed on paid administrative leave by the Board of Education until June 30. No reason was revealed in past board meetings as to why Chiapetti was dismissed. Chiapetti's contract pays \$132,000 annually. Hyatt was assistant superintendent under Chiapetti and was earning an annual salary of just over \$88,000 in that job. Manuelito has been authorized to negotiate a buyout of Chiapetti's contract, but the actual buyout hadn't taken place as of this week.

FAREWELLS

Members of the Board of Education said their good-byes to the members of the board who are leaving. A swearing-in ceremony is set for March 6 for new board members Charles Long, Christopher Mortensen and Michael Schaaf.

Manuelito joked that she'll be the sole female serving the board as a result of the new elections. Manuelito became emotional when saying good-bye to Lynn Huenemann. Mitchell told Huenemann that Huenemann helped him become a better leader on the board.

"You helped me to become a better leader," Mitchell said to Huenemann. "Thank you," Huenemann said in response. Mitchell also recognized Schaaf who won the District 5 race in a landslide and who was sitting in the audience. The District 5 seat was vacated by Huenemann who chose not to run again as was the District 4 seat by Menini.

A COUNSELOR POSITION

The Board of Education spoke about a traditional counselor position. A while ago, the Indian Education Committee changed funding for the Johnson O'Malley program from a traditional counselor to supplies and materials so as to be more inclusive of contractors who can provide mentoring.

Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services Pauletta White told board members that

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the district remains interested in a traditional counselor via Title VI funding which is specifically earmarked for Indian education. The subject generated some debate between Huenemann and fellow board members as to what the educational background and requirements of such a job should be.

White said a certified counselor employed by the district would need a master's degree which has been a little difficult for the Gallup district to find. On the other hand, White said, a traditional school practitioner would need a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in psychology, counseling or social work.

"We are looking at providing professional development so they can be a traditional school practitioner," White said.

White gave a church and state analogy, saying it was important that a traditional practitioner not cross the line between cultural and religious teachings. Huenemann said the need for a traditional counselor became a reality as the result of a work session last year that dealt with suicides in Thoreau.

***By Bernie Dotson
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