



Newly seated school board member Crystal Clemens sits between board members Nick Hatcher, left, and Steve Helm during her first official board meeting Monday evening. L&T photo/Giseelle Arredondo

Meeting sets course for 2013-14 school year

By RACHEL COLEMAN

• Leader & Times

Liberal USD No. 480 school board met at its usual time and place Monday night. This meeting was different, however, as several new faces joined familiar ones around the table.

Newly elected board members Crystal Clemens and Matt Friederich filled the positions of longstanding USD 480 board members Cheryl Louderback, who opted not to run for re-election after 18 years of service, and Dan Diepenbrock, also a long-time board member, who had stepped in to fill the spot left vacant when Reid Petty took office as a state representative in the

Kansas House.

Along with new faces, the meeting involved a rearrangement of a few familiar ones.



Paul Larkin, formerly deputy superintendent, assumed his new role as superintendent of schools, following the resignation of Lance Stout. Renae Hickert, also a district director, was promoted to the position of deputy superintendent. Former Sunflower Intermediate principal Jason McAfee joined the meeting as the district's new director of human resources.

Monday's meeting also involved routine fiscal-year shopkeeping tasks. The board elected officers: Delvin Kinser as president, by a vote of 5 in favor, 1 against, and 1 abstaining; and in a 4-3 split, the board elected Chris Jewell as vice-president, defeating a nomination by Tammy Sutherland-Abbott to elect Steve Helm as vice-president.

Throughout the meeting, the display board that normally shows the voting choices of each member was not functioning. Board clerk Jerry Clay, director of finance, said he was unaware of the situation and would look into it before the next meeting. Clay was re-elected by the board to serve as clerk with a unanimous vote.

Other appointments included board attorney Rick Yoxall, treasurer Rhonda Crawford, and auditor Hay, Rice & Associates, all selected by 7-0 votes.

Sutherland-Abbott commented that she was pleased to see a variety in the auditing process, with a new firm selected for 2013-14; local CPA firm Byron Bird has held the contract for some time. Clay explained that Hay, Rice & Associates submitted the lower bid this year, which determined his recommendation.

The board wrapped up its organizational business with committee assignments for the next year, as follows:

Technology: Jewell, Helm, Friederich

Transportation: Kinser, Friederich

Nutrition: Sutherland-Abbott, Friederich, Helm

Calendar: Sutherland-Abbott, Clemens, Kinser

Task Force: Nick Hatcher, Sutherland-Abbott, Clemens

Policy: Hatcher, Sutherland-Abbott, Clemens

Government: board president Kinser, vice-president Jewell

Curriculum/Textbooks: Helm, Kinser, Jewell

Buildings/Construction: Hatcher, Helm, Jewell

Early Childhood Development: Jewell, Sutherland-Abbott, Friederich.

New school board members, directors begin work

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The board also approved annual updates to school policy, setting calendar dates, protocols for petty cash and routine procedures, and other yearly matters.

All details for the policy changes are available for public viewing at the district website, www.usd480.net.