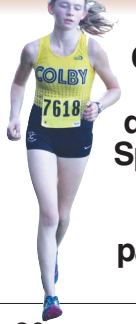


# TRIBUNE-PHONOGRAPH

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INSIDE



Colby girls defend Spencer Invite title page 10

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## Study team members appointed

By Kevin O'Brien

All but one slot on a has been filled on a 22-member task force formed to study the feasibility of the Abbotsford and Colby school districts consolidating.

At their last monthly meetings on Sept. 20, the two school board were tasked with appointing 11 members each to sit on the consolidation study team.

Representing the Abbotsford School District will be superintendent Ryan Bargender, board members Eric Reis and Gary Schraufnagel, teachers Ally Meserole and Georgia Kraus, support staff Selenia Espino, parents Nathan Jakel and Dawn Esselman, community members Don Medenwaldt and Pepe Aguilera and student Briseida Escalera.

Representing the Colby School District will be superintendent Steve Kolden, board members Todd Schmidt and Cheryl Ploekelman, teachers Steve Wozniak and Kris Woik, support staff Patty Rau, community members Randy Schade and Matt Oehmichen and parents Jay Heeg and Maegan Kaiser (with Josey Lueth as alternate).

Kolden said he will need to start "twist-

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### Back in masks

Students in the Colby School District returned to school with masks on Monday after the school board voted to require them in classrooms in hopes of cutting down on the number of COVID-19 cases and quarantines. As of last Friday, Sept. 24, the district had 32 active cases and 196 students and staff who are supposed to be quarantined.

STAFF PHOTO/ROSS PATTERMANN

## COVID rules in place for murder trial

By Kevin O'Brien

Not wanting COVID-19 to interfere with a month-long homicide trial, the judge overseeing the Ken Juedes homicide case accepted six pages' worth of health precautions proposed by prosecutors on Monday.



Cindy Schulz-Juedes

Judge Mike Moran embraced a plan put forth by district attorney Theresa Wetzsteon and assistant attorney general Robert Kaiser to keep jurors and others healthy during the jury trial of Cindy Schulz-Juedes, who has been charged with first-degree homicide in the death of her husband.

The plan, presented at a final pre-trial hearing Monday, includes a mask mandate for all participants in the trial, except when speaking on the record, and social distancing whenever possible.

The precautions also call for allowing witnesses to bring their own water and

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# Clark County to vote on \$8 million loan

By Dean Lesar  
The TRG

Clark County supervisors will vote in October on a proposal to borrow \$8 million to finance new highway department facilities in Neillsville, Loyal and Owen.

If approved, the loan would fund an ambitious construction project to replace "ancient" highway facilities at the three sites, including addition of a main shop and administration office in Loyal, and new truck storage, washbays and other improvements at all three locations.

The 29-member county board of supervisors was informed of the construction proposal at a Sept. 9 meeting in Neillsville. With the 2022 annual budget now under development, the board would

need to approve the financing plan in October to have the funds available to start the highway department improvements next year.

The board will vote on the borrowing proposal at its next meeting on Oct. 14, and will then approve a final 2022 budget on Nov. 9. The highway funding proposal will require a three-fourths majority vote for passage.

According to information presented by finance director Terry Domaszek, the highway loan would be taken for a 10-year repayment period at 2.95 percent interest. The money would be drawn over a two-to-three year period as the construction is proposed for separate phases in 2022, 2023 and 2024. The county would pay only interest in that initial draw pe-

riod, and would then pay full principal and interest payments for the remainder of the 10-year period.

Domaszek said the principal and interest payments, which would average a little more than \$1 million annually, would be worked into the county's annual budget with no increase in property tax rates. With expected gains in property growth in the coming years, the tax rate should remain at roughly \$8.02 per \$1,000 of value, Domaszek said.

Some of the new borrowing costs would be offset with a plan to refinance the county's existing debt. The county currently has a balance of \$1.31 million on a \$3 million loan it took out in 2015 to finance a new radio communication system, and that can be refinanced now at

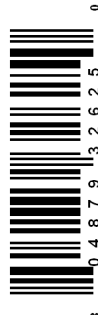
3.25 percent. That would save the county \$46,146 in interest over the remaining four years of the loan.

The county also has a \$5.37 million balance on its 2017 remodeling/expansion project at the Rehabilitation & Living Center near Owen. The county can also refinance that package now at 3.21 percent, with a \$66,358 savings on interest.

Both refinancing plans also need three-fourths approval from the county board, with a vote on them to take place Oct. 14.

Rebuilding the county's aging highway department facilities is not a new idea. The county board considered a building plan in the 1990s, and even purchased 40 acres of land west of Loyal for a new

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