

**At North Crawford**

## Final decisions are made on referendum projects

By GILLIAN POMPLUN

The North Crawford School Board acted to approve the final projects to be financed with funds from the November 2022 referendum at their meeting on April 19.

Starting with \$4,500,000, the board approved projects to cost \$3,572,044, leaving \$818,836. Phase one and phase one add-on projects approved included re-roofing the building, exterior window replacement, exterior upper wall re-placement, bathroom additions, shower renovations, upper level window re-placement, repaving the north, west and south parking lots with concrete, replacing the upper windows, upgrading paving to concrete, and parking lot striping.

Then, they made decisions about Phase Two Round One projects, spending another \$206,916 for daycare renovations, courtyard grading and drainage, north parking lot utilities, northwest playground grading and drainage, theater rigging upgrade, and owner estimated soft costs. This left them \$611,920 to allocate toward remaining projects still on the table.

At the April 19 meeting, the board voted to move forward with flooring replacements, library renovations, a greenhouse construction, maintenance shed renovations, a new storage shed, and elementary classroom casework.

After all the actual and estimated costs of approved projects are taken into account, \$133,442 remains of the original \$4.5 million. In addition, the financials do not include \$100,000 in revenue earned from interest, \$120,000 in construction contingency earmarks, and any potential savings from other projects.

Projects approved  
Resinous (epoxy) flooring projects in the building be completed by Protective Coating Specialists out of Appleton will include (\$189,606):

- middle school hallways
- middle school bathrooms
- cafeteria
- area outside of the Performance Center
- Commons
- Commons bathrooms
- grind and refinish the existing epoxy flooring in the front hallway

Library renovations  
Library renovation projects planned will include (\$87,491):

- new flooring - install new carpeting and a couple areas of luxury vinyl tile - work performed by Willow Creek Flooring out of Sauk City
- paint - new paint on all walls - work performed by local resident Bonnie Murphy
- new circulation desk - built and installed - work performed by New Furnishing
- book shelves, tables, seating
- storage/charging station - new upper and lower cabinets installed to store and charge variety of STEM devices

**Greenhouse construction**  
The Greenhouse construction will include the following components (\$100,208):

- purchase new 24' x 50' Greenhouse Kit - kit sold by Greenhouse Megastore
- installation - installed by local contractors Aaron Hooker, Mike Olson, and Brian Swigum
- site preparation and drainage - Showen Excavating
- concrete pad/walkway - Doug Heisz
- utilities - work performed by local contractors

**Maintenance Shed Upgrade**  
The maintenance shed renovation will include the following components (\$23,500):

- renovating the upper maintenance shed to allow climate control and additional storage
- insulate walls and ceiling, replace garage doors - local contractor Aaron Hooker
- utilities - work performed by local HVAC and electrical contractors

**Elementary casework**

The elementary casework project will include the following components (\$77,673):

- replacing upper and lower cabinets, countertops, and sinks in all elementary classrooms
- new upper and lower cabinetry - Foggy Bottoms out of Muscoda
- new countertops - Foggy Bottoms out of Muscoda
- new sinks and fixtures - Johnson's One Stop
- installation - local contractor Aaron Hooker

**Gymnasium floors**

The gymnasium floors repair project is not a project being paid for out of referendum funds. The small gym floor has water damage due to a tear in the roof last summer. The large gym floor has damage due to a malfunction in our HVAC control system.

As of Monday, the district is still unsure whether any or part of either gymnasium floor repair will be covered by property insurance. Either way, the district will need to move forward and have both floors repaired this summer.

The costs will either be covered by insurance, or will be taken out of the district's fund balance. If it is covered by insurance, the only cost to the district will be their deductible.

The work will be performed by Stalker Sports Floors out of New London.

Small gymnasium (\$59,725): the project will include replacement of a 29' x 50' area with new maple boards, sanding the entire floor, repainting lines, and finishing the floor with an oil-based finish.

Large gymnasium (\$25,500): the project will include sanding the entire floor, repainting lines, and finishing the floor with oil-based finish.

**In other business**

In other business, the North Crawford School Board:

- heard from Elementary Principal Amanda Killeen that they are almost done with Forward Testing, with results expected in August
- approved staff for summer school, which will run from May 22 through June 9, from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- heard from Middle School/High School Principal Rob Sailer that they have received ACT scores for students who took the test in March, with initial review of the results looking promising
- heard from Director of Student Services Cara Wood that her team had been busy procuring standardized testing, and with IEPs to be completed by the end of the school year
- heard from Food Service Director Jen Kapinus that she has been preparing ethnic meals, and kids could have their 'passports' stamped after eating the meal
- approved a donation of \$500 to the Village of Gays Mills Swimming Pool.

**Following closed session**

- North Crawford School Board actions following a meeting in closed session included:
- approval of Elementary Special Education teacher Emily Powell's request for an unpaid leave of absence for the 2023-24 school year
- approval of the resignation of Rita Hines, Food Service; Mendy Biege, Speech and Language Pathologist; Jamie Bearrows, Reading Specialist and Instructional Coach; Eileen Robel, High School Math Teacher (retirement)
- approval of hiring Amy Vetterli, 1st Grade Teacher; and Lisa Stoehr, Food Service.



A WISCONSIN DOT EMPLOYEE inspects the structure and flooding at one of the small bridges along the Lansing Dike on State Highway 82 on Monday afternoon. Rushing water in this area a few years ago undermined the dike below the pavement resulting in the fatality of a motorist whose vehicle was sent crashing to a whirlpool of water adjacent to the dike. As waters rose due to the flooding, the WDOT decided Tuesday morning to close the dike to all traffic until the flooding abates and the structure of the dike can be reinspected for safety.

**On Lansing Dike**

## Highway 82 is closed to traffic

By CHARLEY PREUSSER

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation made the decision to close the Lansing Dike on the morning of Tuesday, April 25. State Highway 82 travels along a series of bridges and causeways on the Lansing Dike from Wisconsin State Highway 35 north of Ferryville to Lansing, Iowa.

With the water still rising on the Mississippi River due to flooding, it is unclear when the roadway will be re-opened to traffic.

It is believed concerns about hydraulic pressure on the causeway and bridges was a determining factor in the closure.

Crawford County Highway Commissioner Kyle Kozelka confirmed the closure decision was made Tuesday morning by the WDOT. Kozelka indicated that county highway workers had been sent to put the barricades and signage in place closing State Highway 82 to traffic. The highway was closed at 10:15 a.m.

The closure has immediate ramifications locally, as it severely impacts travel between the two states. The distance to the next closest bridge crossing the Mississippi River is at Prairie du Chien, about 25 miles to the south, while the bridge in LaCrosse, crossing the Mississippi to LaCrescent, Minnesota, is about 30 miles to the north.

**In Ferryville**

## Sewage overflow notice was given

The Village of Ferryville announced Monday, April 24 that a sanitary sewage overflow may occur due to high river levels and village's inability to maintain treatment under the flood conditions.

Ferryville Director of Public Works Daniel Mattson indicated the pressure of floodwater on sewer mains and manholes was stressing the village's ability to keep the sewer plant functioning at 100 percent.

The reported sanitary sewer overflow was intended as a warning to help mitigate damage to homes businesses.

Since sewer water may mix with floodwater in the overflow situation, residents are cautioned about entering the water and well owners are advised to monitor their wells for possible pollution.

**In Town of Utica**

## Annual meeting gets interesting at times

By GILLIAN POMPLUN

The Crawford County Town of Utica held their annual meeting at the Utica Town Hall on Tuesday, April 18. The meeting was chaired by Supervisor Phil Mueller, as town chairman Jim Wedeberg was travelling. In addition, treasurer Kent Salmon, clerk Tanya Peterson, and two town residents attended the meeting.

The 2022 profit and loss statement was reviewed. Total income was \$1,087,929.25, and total expenses, including general government, public safety, and public works, was \$1,188,335.55.

One resident asked Salmon how much the township has in savings. Salmon responded the town has \$422,765 as of the end of March 2023.

"We bought a new plow and a road groomer in 2022," Mueller explained. "Also, our costs related to garbage disposal and recycling have increased enormously after lots of years of no increases from Town & Country."

Mueller moved that the town should commit itself to revisiting their Comprehensive Growth Plan, and contract with Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission for it using the town's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The membership voted unanimously to voice support for this initiative.

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**How high will she go?**

# Flooding on Mississippi River continuing toward a record

By GILLIAN POMPLUN

Oh my golly – spring spate on the Wisconsin River, huge wildfires just to our north, the shortest summer ever, and now a historic flood on the Mississippi River, all in just two weeks. It's going to be a spring for the record books.

The only question as the Independent-Scout goes to press is "how high will she go?" As Kickapoogians are more than familiar with, a big river flood is something that you see coming, and can only watch to see just how bad it will get. The main thing is, with the warnings, you have time – precious time – to prepare.

It's all hands on deck to do what you can to mitigate the impacts of the inevitable, and the only question in hindsight will be, "was it enough?"

**Snowpack melted**

High temperatures week before last, that had us all donning our summer gear, produced rapid melting of a huge northern snowpack with a high moisture content. The Twin Cities received 90.3 inches of snow this winter compared to an average 50.1 inches. St. Cloud, Minnesota, received 84 inches of snow this winter compared to an average 46.2 inches, and Duluth received 135.1 inches of snow this winter compared to an average 86.3 inches.

Reports have been flooding Facebook of roiling chocolate milk floodwaters in Mississippi River tributaries to the north such as the St. Croix River and many others. With the rapid melt carrying off soil and nutrients, time will only tell what the impacts to the Dead Zone in the Gulf of Mexico will be.

High runoff from the Wisconsin River basin, draining a huge chunk of Wisconsin, with its headwaters near the border with Michigan's Upper Peninsula, are complicating movement of water through the Mississippi River basin.

On Sunday, April 23, NWS reported that the crest at McGregor, Iowa (Prairie du Chien) has a 70-90 percent chance of exceeding 2001 flood levels due to the Wisconsin River confluence. Flows at the Muscoda gauge on the Wisconsin River had been very high for several weeks, at times exceeding 45,000 cubic-feet-per second (cfs). As of Monday, the flows are still high but have begun to moderate, with levels dropping to 41,800 cfs as of Sunday, April 23, at 5 p.m.

That being said, it means the likelihood of the crest exceeding the all-time record of 25.38 feet set in 1965 is diminishing. However, projections look to propel this flood into the #2 spot, knocking out the 2001 record of 23.75 feet. No laughing matter.

On Friday, at a press conference held at the Prairie du Chien City Hall, Mayor Dave Hemmer reported that a briefing with National Weather Service earlier that morning indicated the forecast was only considered reliable through April 28, and that possible rises on the river between April 28 and May 1 could go as high as 25.2 feet, just under the 1965 record levels of 25.38.

**Projected crest**

Forecasts having been marching steadily in the doomsday direction for towns up and down the Mississippi River basin for the last week, increasing every day. Good news for Prairie du Chien as of 8:32 p.m. on Monday, April 24, the forecast for the crest,

to occur on Saturday, April 29, is now 24.2 feet, down from 24.4 on Sunday, and 24.5 on Saturday.

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MELISSA AND MATTHEW Kolbeck were seen loading sandbags into their vehicle from the distribution center in Prairie du Chien on Friday, April 21. The two were getting sandbags for their daughter Misty Johnson who lives on Pine Street.

