



## Mackinac Island School Narrows Search

Three candidates will be interviewed for the superintendent position at Mackinac Island Public School Monday, December 7. The finalists were selected from a field of 22 applicants by interim Superintendent Michael Bootz and approved by the board at a special meeting Monday evening, November 30. The interviews will be open to the public.

"Before I recommended anyone, I did a very thorough background search," Mr. Bootz told *The St. Ignace News*. "Their backgrounds checked out very well and their experiences were what we were looking for. In the event that one of these three will not work out, we will repost it and go at it again."

To be interviewed is Carl Sztuczko of St. Louis, Michigan, the elementary principal at St. Louis Public Schools. He has been a middle school principal and a special education director and is involved in many community activities, said Mr. Bootz, including the Knights of Columbus. His interview begins at 4 p.m.

David Waaso of South Haven is the central office administrator working directly with the superintendent at South Haven Public Schools. The former elementary principal has been an assistant principal, teacher, and athletic director both at the high school and middle school levels. His interview begins at 5:30 p.m.

Steven Vernon of Rapid City, South Dakota, is formerly from Michigan and hopes to move back. He is the dean of students with the Rapid City South Dakota School District. He has been an assistant principal, a summer school principal, a teacher, and his father, Don, is the superintendent at Tawas Area Schools, said Mr. Bootz. His interview begins at 7 p.m.

The candidates will be interviewed by the full board.

Island resident and former Island school superintendent Richard Bolander told *The St. Ignace News* he suggests a school

## 2nd Grade Class Donates to Food Pantry



Helena Shepard's second grade class at St. Ignace Elementary School, the winners of this year's fall festival pumpkin decorating contest, presents a check for \$80.39 to the St. Ignace Food Pantry Wednesday, November 18. Representing the food pantry are Ron Tamlyn (holding the check) and Kip Rodriguez (far right); representing the Chamber of Commerce Business Association is Phil Ruegg of Ace Hardware (back right). The class received a lunch from B.C. Pizza in St. Ignace as a reward for winning the annual contest. (St. Ignace Chamber of Commerce photograph)

## County Road Commission Grants Raises, Longevity Pay

### Goal Is To Mirror Union Contracts

**By Michael Ayala**  
Hugh Bigelow and Dennis Vowell, the west and east district foremen for the Mackinac County Road Commission, will receive a \$15% pay raise to \$23 an hour, along with longevity benefits, the Road Commission decided during its Tuesday, November 24, meeting. The increase is to reward the foremen for their hard work and enlarge a divide between their pay and those who work under them, commissioners explained. The decision was prompted by an annual salary review of non-union management staff, which included clerks Vicki Hough and Rosemary Adams.

The performance of both foremen has been "exceptional," Manager Dirk Heckman said, and

at the very least they should receive a \$2-per-hour raise. A \$3 raise would be preferable, he added. Chairman Lester Livermore said the foremen's transition into the road commission was the best he had seen in years.

"It was basically seamless. I don't know what more you can ask," he said.

Union employees receive longevity pay after two years of service with the commission. They receive \$50 per year of service up to a maximum of 20 years, Mr. Heckman said. Longevity is paid in one lump sum in December, he added.

Neither foreman has received longevity pay since last year, the commission noted. Mr. Vowell,

who has worked with the road commission since June, did not receive the benefit in his contract. Commissioners were unsure why Mr. Bigelow, who has worked with the road commission for 14 years as district foreman, no longer received it.

The two foremen and Mr. Heckman are the only employees of the road commission who have not been receiving the benefit. All three are non-union employees.

Commissioner Frank Luepnitz said longevity pay had been negotiated out of the contract last year, while Chairman Lester Livermore said he did not remember how it was removed. Commissioner Tom Doty said the commission should reinstate the payment if it had been an oversight.

The commission removed longevity pay from one-year contracts with foremen last year, *The St. Ignace News* reported in December 2008.

Mr. Livermore told *The St. Ignace News* Monday, November

30, the initial intention of the management contracts was to mirror the union contracts, and any changes that occurred would be reflected. For example, if longevity was removed from the union contract, it would be removed from the management contract, as well. While Mr. Livermore wanted longevity to be included in the contracts last year, commissioners Mr. Luepnitz and then-commissioner Paul Amacher did not.

In light of the lack of longevity pay, Mr. Heckman said the commission could offer the pay and a \$2 increase, or opt for a \$2 raise instead, whichever would benefit the foremen the most. The commission found the foremen would receive a greater amount of money with a \$3 raise.

Mr. Doty did not like the idea of offering a raise without reinstating the longevity pay. He reiterated that it was unfair that the foremen did not receive the benefit while most road commission employees did. It also provided little incentive for employees to strive for greater positions in the organization, he said, if they would lose the benefit while being promoted.

"If you want good people, you're going to have to pay good people," Mr. Doty said.

Mr. Luepnitz disagreed with adding longevity pay with the raise. He explained he could agree with a \$3 raise, but did not want longevity in the mix. In light of the economy, cuts need to be made somewhere, he said.

All commissioners agreed the foremen deserve a raise for their performance. Mr. Livermore said that they shouldered more responsibility than anybody aside from Mr. Heckman. Mr. Doty and Mr. Livermore voted in favor of the \$3 raise and reinstating the longevity pay for two years until union contracts are negotiated again in June 2012, while Mr. Luepnitz voted against the motion.

Mr. Bigelow will receive \$750 next December for his 15 years of service for the longevity benefit. Mr. Vowell will not receive longevity pay until next year,

after he has been employed two years.

The road commission clerks also received a 3% pay raise. Clerk Rosemary Adams will receive 55¢ more and Vicki Hough will receive 64¢.

Mr. Bigelow and Mr. Vowell made \$20 an hour before the raises. The position beneath foreman, crew leader, is a union job and receives \$19.11 with longevity pay, he added. Mrs. Adams makes \$18.24 an hour and Mrs. Hough receives \$21.35 before the raise, which will take effect January 1.

The raises will take effect when the contracts are signed, which may be at the next regular meeting Tuesday, December 8, Mr. Heckman said.

The road commission employs 29 people. Union personnel get a 3% raise next year under their current contract.

### Road Commission To Pay Off Outstanding Equipment Debt

Mr. Heckman briefly explained the long term debt of the road commission. The road commission had \$2,151,376.90 in outstanding debt as of October 31.

Among the debt the commission owes, four pieces of equipment could be paid off using the Long Term Debt Equipment Fund, Mr. Heckman recommended. The combined debt of the four items is \$642,655.90, while the fund contains roughly \$473,000, Mr. Heckman said. Paying for the equipment now using all of the fund and the remainder of the cost with working funds – or general fund – will save about \$94,000 in interest over the course of the loans. It would also reduce the commission's outstanding debt to \$1,508,721.

The commissioners unanimously approved Mr. Heckman's suggestion to pay off the debt for the four pieces of equipment. The equipment fund is \$169,000 shy of the amount needed to do that, but the commission will take that amount from its general fund, which had a balance of \$1,578,000 at the end of October.

Commissioners will discuss their obligations to pay the remaining long term debt at their next meeting.

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