

Times Chronicle

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...n the Massachusetts Dental Poster Contest.
...rse Paula Holland, Dr. Angelie Gangoy, Laurel
...ntendent of Schools Dr. Harry Harutunian.
(Joe Hakey photo)

...ate in Torch Run

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...urgent need to raise funds for
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...The idea for the Torch Run
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...Olympics in the communities
...where the officers lived and
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School Committee approves Killam boiler repairs

By OWEN MACDONALD

READING - Years of wear and tear have finally taken their toll on a pair of boilers at the Warren J. Killam Elementary School, leaving Superintendent of Schools Dr. Harry Harutunian no choice but to replace one and repair the other if the school is to open in the fall, Harutunian told the School Committee last evening.

"We've known that these boilers are in really tough shape," said Harutunian.

Last winter, he explained, the School Department did \$1,800 worth of emergency repairs so that the boilers would function through the end of the season.

Lately, however, the boilers have had several "flame-outs", which have left the school cold upon opening in the morning. As a result, Harutunian said two different examinations of the boilers have led to the conclusion that the primary boiler must be replaced, and the second boiler "re-roped" to give it enough juice to act as a 48 hour back-up.

A new boiler and repair of one of the existing boilers, Harutunian said, could cost as much as \$85,000, and the new

one could take as long as three months to order and have delivered, making timing of the essence. As of October 15, he said, law requires the ability to fully heat the schools, and the boiler must be in place by then.

"I have no choice," said Harutunian. "I can't open that school without it."

The money will likely come from the fiscal year 2002 budget as an emergency measure, he explained, with a request for a transfer from free cash likely to occur at Town Meeting, or a Special Town Meeting, in the fall.

"We don't have money in our budget to pay for the boiler this year," explained Harutunian in a telephone interview this morning, and noted the transfer from free cash would keep the School Department from having to cut items out of the fiscal '02 budget to cover the boiler's costs.

Some School Committee members questioned whether the boilers could be set up to "limp along", perhaps until planned renovations at Killam would allow the town to seek reimbursement for the cost. Others asked if the new School Building Assistance regulations

Continued on Page 2A

Reading man

Proposal...

Continued from Page 1

— brought the state \$10.4 million in taxes and fees last year, according to the state Racing Commission.

The new legislation proposes to give the tracks \$2 million to boost purses, up to another \$1 million if state revenues from the tracks rise, and potentially over \$1 million more from the proceeds of the sweepstakes ticket.

"This is money that we are bringing in, that is being reallocated," Sarkis said.

Rep. Patricia Jehlen takes a different view.

"The intent of this bill is clearly to prop up an industry that is not viable over a long period of time," the Somerville Democrat said.

McGowan, whose new book, "Government and The Transition of the Gaming Industry," is out this month, said many other states have already approved or are considering sweepstakes tickets or slot machines to save racing industries.

McGowan said recent reports that the Nipmuc Indians are planning to build a casino in central Massachusetts or just across the Connecticut border have likely forced lawmakers to think more seriously about slot machines.

That type of thinking will make it more likely that the tracks will one day have slots, too, McGowan said, just as they do in Rhode Island and other states.

"The sweepstakes idea is probably more politically palatable than having slot machines, but do I eventually think it'll happen? It wouldn't surprise me," he said.

The sweepstakes proposal would allow each track to sell the sweepstakes ticket once a year.

State Treasurer Shannon O'Brien, who oversees the state Lottery, said the four tracks are fertile ground for ticket sales, accounting for more than \$12 million in lottery sales per year.

Jehlen said the sweepstakes proposal is likely to encounter opposition in the Legislature because sales would cut into sales of lottery tickets, which fund

young man is in need of a loving family environment that would encourage him to complete high school and participate in school events, employment and his volunteer work. If you are interested in caring for this child or children like him, on a temporary basis, call Michelle Roach at the Malden Area DSS office at 781-388-7132.

Killam...

Continued from Page 1

may allow them to include the boiler as part of a piece-meal renovation plan.

Harutunian said that he had two opinions which said that one of the boilers has to be replaced, and further, appeared doubtful of the success of seeking state reimbursement. The reason? Replacing a boiler, under current SBA regulations, would be termed a Category Four project as it is an improvement of the physical plant. Unfortunately, said Harutunian, the state has not funded any Category Four projects since the mid-eighties.

The other side of the sword was just as sharp, as Harutunian reminded the School Committee that the new SBA regulations, which seem to favor piece by piece renovation projects, will not go into effect until July, 2002, too late to help the Killam situation.

"I'll file the paperwork," said Harutunian, but said he was doubtful it would be funded.

The School Committee unanimously approved a motion which will allow the School Department to start bidding the boiler out as soon as possible. Harutunian requested that the specific cost not be set in stone, as he will be bringing the lowest bid to the School Committee when it comes in.

Harutunian said that his goal is to have the boiler in place by September 1, 2001, well ahead of the October 15 deadline by which the schools must have the capacity to be heated.

nonmembers are invited to the Annual Meeting on Wednesday, June 13, at 7:30 pm in the large meeting room at the Reading Public Library. After a brief business meeting, Corinne Fisher, Head of the Reading Public Library's Children Services, will speak on "Smart Start: New Research on Early Literacy and Ways to Use the Library to start your child reading. All are welcome, and refreshments will be served. Call the library at 781-944-0840 for more information.

Child in need

An 18-year-old Reading boy is in need of a foster home in Reading. He is a quiet, unassuming young man that has never been involved with drugs or alcohol, according to the Department of Social Services (DSS). DSS is able to provide some financial support to a family willing to care for him. This

Letter

Dear Editor:

It is indeed unfortunate that we have lost our senses. Affordable housing is not about decreasing property values. It is about making sure that all of us are provided choice and opportunity about where we live. It is about making sure that people who work in the community are able to live in that community. It is about recognizing that diversity includes economic diversity.

What a sad day it is when we say an emphatic no to opening our town to people who might not earn as much as you or I. As a town, we collectively take great pride in the quality of our lives, the quality of our schools, and the thrift with which we manage our finances. Property values have soared in recent years. Many of us who bought houses as few as ten years ago would not be able to purchase the same houses today.

Let's think long and hard

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Daily Times Chronicle

FRIDAY, AUGUST 3, 2007

Boiler problems at Killam appear solved

By OWEN MACDONALD

READING The Killam Elementary School will have a new boiler this fall if all goes well with the final stages of the bidding process, eliminating concerns that the school would not be able to open without the proper heating equipment.

The School Department received four bids for the boiler work, with the lowest one coming in at \$84,898. George T. Wilkinson Co., Inc., was awarded the contract by a 6-0 vote by the School Committee, but will still have to undergo a reference check and provide performance bonds for the work.

School Committee member John Russo made public some concerns by at least one Reading resident that Birch Meadow was housing some equipment which could have been used to solve the boiler issue, but Russo said that after speaking to Harutunian about the issue, he was satisfied the

bid process was the right way to go.

"I am satisfied this is the best way to do this at this time," said Russo.

Harutunian elaborated on the situation, indicating that former Maintenance Director Rick Barrett had offered to do the work on two burners at the Birch Meadow school to make them usable at Killam, but Harutunian noted several problems.

First, Harutunian said that having Barrett do the work was, in the opinion of his office and one outside source, a violation of procurement law because it circumvented the bidding process. Second, Harutunian said that doing the work in house would have led to the use of multiple subcontractors, which could be problematic in the future should the units need to be repaired. Third, Harutunian said that after having the burners examined by

Continued on Page 2A

Boiler...

Continued from Page 1

Wilkinson, it became apparent that they were the wrong type (oil only as opposed to oil and gas) to be used with the new boilers.

"Wilkinson said it would be cost prohibitive to use those burners," said Harutunian.

The School Committee awarded the contract 6-0.