

Dover board warned of money woes

By SANDY STEWART

Reductions in staff, reorganization of the elementary schools, cuts in curriculum and a possible operating levy — these were suggestions to the Dover board of education Monday night as solutions to anticipated financial problems in 1977.

Supt. Bill Kinneer explained that the only way the district will be able to stay within its 1977 income — estimated at \$3,821,575 — "is to reduce expenditures. And about the only way we can substantially reduce expenditures is to reduce personnel."

The district's financial situation

stems from a problem common to nearly everyone — income not keeping pace with rising costs. The superintendent noted that actual receipts for 1976 were \$3,866,697, more than the 1977 estimate. He said that about \$42,000 more in local tax money probably will be received, but added that he can work only from figures which the county budget commission will certify — the district's assessed value times its millage, which is 24.8.

Kinneer also pointed out that increased costs are eating away at the year-end balance. (On Jan. 1, 1976, there was a carryover of \$310,771. This year the balance is only \$208,575.)

HE CONTINUED that salaries and fixed charges, such as insurance, retirement and hospitalization, along with gas and electric costs, account for 90 per cent of the budget.

Kinneer told board members that he has met with secondary and elementary principals and asked them to submit a plan that will reduce the number of staff members.

He stressed, however, that "we are trying to look at a reduction of staff members that will bring about the least negative effect on the educational program."

The superintendent said a reorgani-

zation at the elementary level would eliminate split and extremely small classes, as well as decrease the number of staff members. The reorganization would make two elementaries primary schools (grades 1 through 3 or 4) and two intermediate (grades 4 or 5 through 6). Average class size would be 26 students.

He also stated that in order to stay within the budget and grant small (salary) increases, a reduction of 10 to 12 staff members is needed.

KINNEER POINTED out that a reduction in staff members "nat-

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urally is going to have some effect on the curriculum." He continued: "I have asked the secondary principals to take a look at their class sizes, the curriculum as it now exists and a possible reduction of expenditures for supplies, including textbooks.

"Even with the reductions in staff members and in expenditures, it is going to be an extremely tight year. I think the board might be wise to consider placing an issue on the ballot, either before the June primary, or at least the June primary, and I would estimate that this would have to be approximately a 3 or 4-mill levy.

"If it passes, it wouldn't be collected until 1978, but we could borrow up to 50 per cent of it. A 3-mill levy would bring in about \$300,000. We could borrow \$150,000 to get us through the year. We then would pay back \$150,000 next year and have \$150,000 for operating expenses. In 1979 we would receive the entire \$300,000, which I'm sure we would need because of the rate of cost increases."

Board members agreed to fully investigate all proposals before taking any action. Their first step will be to meet in executive session Jan. 31 with elementary principals and Donna Moore, elementary coordinator, concerning reorganization and staff reductions. A meeting with secondary administrators will be scheduled following registration for the second semester.

DON PETERS, administrative assistant, explained that nine of 10 persons contacted to participate on a committee to review and discuss curriculum have responded — one negatively.

The committee was formed after some parents and residents expressed dissatisfaction with the exclusive instruction of evolution in the schools.

Peters said he will contact board members and those who have agreed to serve on the committee when a meeting can be scheduled.

IN OTHER business the board:

—**AUTHORIZED** the clerk to request advances from the county auditor in 1977 as funds become available and to borrow up to \$250,000 as needed for current operation expense.

—**APPROVED** a reduction in the teaching schedule of Joanne Limbach to five periods a day. Mrs. Limbach was elected a county commissioner, effective Jan. 3. Her salary will be recomputed according to the decreased schedule.

—**ORDERED** home instruction for Ricky Lee Neading, a St. Joseph 2nd grader.

—**ACCEPTED** the resignation of Rick Burlingame, industrial arts instructor, effective Jan. 28, and hired Ken Mast of Sugarcreek as a replacement.

—**APPOINTED** the following to the substitute teaching staff for the balance of the school year: Bonnie Coffy, physical education; Trisha McClatchey, Russian and science; Diane Becker, Spanish and French, and Lynne Bente, sciences.

—**ADOPTED** "History of a Free People" by Bragdon, McCutchen, Cole as the basic text in the courses United States in the 20th century and development of the American west, beginning with the second semester. Initial cost is \$1275 or \$9.82 per volume.

—**RENTED** the high school gymnasium to Indian Valley Local Schools for a Dec. 10, 1977, basketball game between Indian Valley South and Strasburg highs.

—**GRANTED** permission to Floyd May to plan a theater-oriented trip to New York City for Thespians during spring break, April 2-7, at the students' cost.

—**DISCUSSED** purchasing more supplies, particularly those used in the cafeteria, from Dover businesses.