

Scotland

From Page 1

The issue might receive more discussion at Monday night's school board meeting. At that time, school officials could provide an update on their search for more information.

Scotland would likely pursue a stand-alone facility rather than attach an addition to the school, Alvey said.

"We are landlocked right now (on the school campus), but we are looking at possible neighboring sites for an auxiliary gym," he said.

Scotland officials don't have any specifics at this time in regards to a new facility, Alvey said.

"Our original drawing was for a full size gym floor — 50 feet by 84 feet — with a few rows of bleachers on one side for seating," he said. "None of these items are in stone. In fact, the school board wants us to consider a smaller version of the gym so as to save some space and money. So at this point, all options are just that and up for discussion."

Scotland athletic director Jim Kocer said the demand for gym time becomes particularly intense this time of year.

"Scheduling during the winter sports season with one gym provides a challenge," he said. "The

boys and girls basketball coaches do a good job of making it work, dividing up the time they can use the gym. Then, throw in some middle school games and home wrestling matches, and it makes things interesting."

Kocer said he welcomes the discussion about building an auxiliary gym.

"We have been making (the tight scheduling) work for so long, that we are used to it, but another facility would help the situation," he said.

The discussion about an auxiliary gym has taken on a new dimension with the district's discussion of whether to switch to a four-day school week, Alvey said.

"An auxiliary gym is found in a number of schools," he said. "(A second gym) would work well if we went to a four-day week with the longer school days — but the two proposals are not tied together."

Under a four-day week, Scotland school officials are looking at a school day running from 8 a.m. to 3:50 p.m., Alvey said. The proposed four-day week could also receive further discussion at Monday's board meeting.

"We are filled with activities nearly every day and from morning to night," he said. "Activities are given every consideration. What can we do with a four-day week with our current schedule? We like to think we are pretty creative thinkers."

The school district has also heard from members of the public desiring to use an auxiliary gym, Alvey said.

"We have people call (secondary principal) Ryan Bruns and myself, asking if they can use the weight room or walk in the gym," the superintendent said. "We try to accommodate people, but we have physical education from morning to the end of school, and we have before- and after-school practices."

Community members might feel more comfortable using separate facilities in an auxiliary gym, Alvey said. A second gym would also save on any wear-and-tear or damage on the main gym floor, he said.

"Right now, we have athletic power lifting. We have weights in the cardio room that may be considered more for males," he said.

"We have people who want to use family-friendly (facilities). If there is an auxiliary gym, we would try to put exercise (activities) in there."

An auxiliary gym could also offer 24-hour accessibility, such as through card keys, to meet busy lifestyles, Alvey said.

If the school district further

pursues an auxiliary gym, financing looms as a major consideration, Alvey said.

"We need to improve Scotland and the surrounding community," he said. "We want to get the best facilities we can without burdening the property owners with more taxes."

Unlike the recent track project, the school district doesn't have the full amount in its capital outlay fund — used for construction — to cover an auxiliary gym, Alvey said. The district could increase its capital outlay levy and reduce its opt-out request for the general fund, which covers the school's daily operation, he said.

"We are in the second year of our five-year opt-out and have not been taxing at the full opt-out amount," he said. "We are currently taxing at half of the \$350,000 annual opt-out."

For now, school officials will continue gathering information on the possible uses, expenses and options surrounding an auxiliary gym, Alvey said.

"It's on the board agenda until the board tells us to go ahead with something or says they're not interested," he said.

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