



# THE TRIBUNE

SERVING GREENBUSH, BADGER, MIDDLE RIVER, MINNESOTA  
ESTABLISHED 1908

\$1.00

OUR 112TH YEAR • ISSUE 46 • WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2021

## GMR Homecoming



photo by RYAN BERGERON

The Greenbush-Middle River Homecoming Court poses together at halftime of the Gator home football game in Badger on October 14. Pictured are (L-R): Front: Adalynn Sorenson (seventh grade attendant), Katelyn Waage (freshman attendant), Lauren Stenberg (queen candidate), Jacey Wojchowski (queen candidate), Theron Kuznia (queen candidate), Asher Burslie (queen candidate), Queen Tessany Bertilrud, Lauren Kvien (queen candidate), Hanna Martin (junior attendant), Berlyn Burkel (sophomore attendant), and Kayle Vacura (eighth grade attendant); Back: Bennett Bertilrud (seventh grade attendant), Chance Christian (junior attendant), Cole Blazek (freshman attendant), Ethan Waage (king candidate), Aven Augustson (king candidate), Caleb Vacura (king candidate), Kobey Dallager (king candidate), King Gavin Eeg, Brandon Brazier (king candidate), Brennan Collins (junior attendant), Jaden Solberg (sophomore attendant), and Walter Taus (eighth grade attendant).



photo by RYAN BERGERON

Greenbush-Middle River Homecoming King Gavin Eeg and Queen Tessany Bertilrud pose together after being crowned during halftime of the Gator home football game in Badger on October 14.

## Badger School purchases tractor for snow removal, a question remains

Ryan Bergeron  
ryanb@wikitel.com

The Badger School approved a \$46,768.96 purchase of a 58 horsepower Bobcat tractor to aid the district in plowing snow. This tractor includes a front loader, box blade, snow blade, and pallet fork. It has approved this tractor, but a question remained surrounding a snow removal bid.

The board chose this tractor among six different quotes— five from equipment dealers and one from a private party. The tractor the district chose was the third most expensive of the options.

As Badger Head Custodian Striker Hasson said, the lack of snow removal bids influenced the search for a tractor.

In terms of snow, the district would use this tractor to plow two back parking lots, the student parking lot on the side of the building, some of the front area of the building, the bus garage, and the Badger Arena purchased by the school earlier this year.

“This would be the biggest thing for the school that I would use it for is snow removal,” Hasson said.

As for other work, the district would also use this tractor for light duty bucket/dirt work during the summer, along with mowing. The school’s current tractor doesn’t have a bucket.

To pay for this, Ricke said the district could use its capital project levy that generates about \$52,000 a year. As of the end of June, the fund sat at \$87,870. The school is also looking at a school bus purchase, but Ricke said this would be funded by the school’s federal ESSER dollars.

“To clarify that project levy money, there’s only certain things we can use that for,” Board Chairperson Jamie Isane said, “so we can’t put that into anything. It’s got to be used for stuff like this.”

Isane then suggested the board should look at the one snow removal bid it received.

“If we move on a tractor,” Isane said before the board approved a tractor purchase, “we really wouldn’t need snow removal hired out.”

The one bid came from Curt Hauger at Ridge Sales in

Badger. The bid came out to the following:

— Trucks with Operator per hour came to \$90 per truck

— Tractor and Loader came to \$110 per hour

The City of Badger is also dealing with snow removal, influencing a discussion around the city potentially hauling the school’s snow. Badger Superintendent-Principal Kevin Ricke said he believed that at the last Badger City Council meeting, the city received a bid for two trucks and two operators at \$90 per hour from Ridge Sales. Board member Jeremy Swenson said the city bid didn’t include the tractor and loader. The intention on the city’s end is that it will load the snow, Ricke explained.

“They’re (the city) not going to be here at 4 am in the morning pushing out our parking lots, cleaning off our sidewalks,” Ricke said. “They’re going to come in with trucks and Eric Dunrud’s (Badger City Public Works) going to blow it into the trucks and they’re going to dump it... I got the impression that it was trucking and hauling away existing snow piles, not doing most of the plowing.”

Ricke added how he got the impression that the city had knowledge that the school was exploring a tractor purchase.

Isane said the school needed to clarify what snow removal is exactly being offered through the bid it received. Ricke said it would involve all in-the-way piled snow and windrowed snow.

“So say we move ahead with the tractor purchase, the actual snow removal, I understand the clearing part we would have taken care of,” board member Jodie Davy asked, “but the actual snow removal, we still need bids for that? Or what happens to the snow once it’s cleaned off?”

Ricke responded to these questions.

“Because of the city upgrading their equipment last year, we are proposing that get a tractor that can move snow this year,” Ricke said. “... You just can’t leave big snow piles long term, but they’re (the city is) offering to truck and haul away the windrowed snow and piled snow up (and) take it down to the low ground.”

Davy confirmed that the school just needed to get the

snow to a location where the city could pick up the snow.

Isane then asked Hasson if he had time to move all this snow. Ricke then mentioned how Transportation Director Tom Dostal and Hasson could work with one another on this snow plowing work—one on the sweeper and one on the loader. Going back to Isane’s question about time, Hasson said it will require overtime for him.

“I would love (for) a snow removal company or somebody to do it because (then) I’d have more time in the school,” Hasson said. “But as far as options, with our current setup, I would say, no, I don’t have time.”

Hasson mentioned how in terms of snowfall, the school had an “excellent year” last winter, not getting much, but some years that is not the case.

“Efficiently I think this is an adequate setup with the bids we got to move the snow and work with the City of Badger... for me to get it in the windrows and then to remove it and keep the buses rolling.”

After the board officially approved its tractor purchase, Swenson said the district should table the snow removal bid from Ridge Sales until it knows what it means.

“I know I was under the understanding before too that they were not going to clear any lots,” Isane said, “but we need to make sure of that before we should go buy a tractor that all of a sudden they don’t expect to be here moving snow.”

Swenson responded, “That’s what my concern is that we purchase a tractor and then we approve this bid and they’re here at four o’clock in the morning moving snow.”

The board understands that the Ridge Sales trucks would haul away the snow, but want to clarify that Ridges Sales is not thinking that it’s going to have to move all the snow from the buildings.

Ricke said he anticipated the board having a special meeting before its November meeting— as soon as it completes business manager interviews. This follows the board approving the resignation of Badger School Business Manager Shena Brandt, effective October 15. He said the board could get clarification on this snow removal bid ahead of and deal with this bid at the same special meeting that it approves a new business manager.

## Some area driver’s exam stations remain closed

Ryan Bergeron  
ryanb@wikitel.com

Back on March 27, 2020, the state, specifically the Department of Public Safety (DPS), closed its 93 exam stations and cancelled 19,000 scheduled exams due to the COVID pandemic. Today, State Senator Mark Johnson (R-East Grand Forks) is expressing his concern with the slowness in the reopening of these stations when COVID restrictions were lifted.

Area driver’s exam stations, such as in Crookston, East Grand Forks, Hallock, Thief River Falls, and Roseau, remain closed in Minnesota to testing, as part of the more than 70 stations closed as of August. (More updated numbers will be provided in this piece.)

This issue comes about after the state legislature passed a transportation omnibus bill on June 26, 2021 to reopen all 93 of its exam stations. The original bill was set at \$2.6 million, according to Senator Johnson’s office.

Senator Johnson discussed this issue, including the reasons behind the slow reopening, what he’s hearing from his constituents

### DVS looks to deal with issue

about it, and the importance of this issue to him. Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) Commissioner John Harrington and the state’s new Director for Driver and Vehicle Services Pong Xiong addressed the effort to reopen these stations at this committee hearing.

During the October 15 hearing, Commissioner Harrington expressed that the plan to reopen these exam stations was a “top priority” at the state’s Department of Vehicle Services (DVS)— a department that falls under his umbrella.

Asked about some of the area stations in his district, such as Crookston, East Grand Forks, Hallock, Thief River Falls, Roseau, Senator Johnson confirmed that these stations are still closed to testing— causing both new drivers and CDL drivers to travel further for testing.

“Their kid needs to get a driver’s license. They’re driving down to Bemidji most of them, Detroit Lakes some of them, whatever is open and has an opening to it,” Senator Johnson

said. “The other huge issue right now is CDL drivers, because they also have to go down to Bemidji or Detroit Lakes or Moorhead to try to find somebody that’s open that can actually administer that driving test with the CDL.”

Senator Johnson highlighted how this CDL issue comes as there’s a desperation for truck drivers. He said these individuals trying to get their CDL license are currently having to not only take the day off to go take this test, but also have to bring a licensed CDL driver along with them to go take this test.

“Okay, you said you want to get this going. How are we going to do it? We gave DPS money to open them up. We told them that they had to open them up,” Senator Johnson said. “And yet they’re still dragging their feet on opening up these testing facilities, so that’s where this really came from.”

Exam stations  
continued on page 12