

Meeting in regular session, Monday, March 26, the board of trustees of the Harmony Independent School District made news by what they did not do rather than by what they did. The trustees did not name a replacement for Superintendent Ray Miller who announced his retirement earlier this year. The board has been in search mode since December and has interviewed a number of candidates. But they did not express their choice in this meeting despite a 40-minute closed executive session to discuss and consider candidates.

In other action, the board approved selection of Sturdy Steel as contractor to replace the visitors' side bleachers at the football field at a cost of \$90,000. The Harmony maintenance staff will take care of the site preparation including removal of current base and the pouring of a new concrete base for the grandstands. Sturdy Steel is a pre-approved bidder through the TASB Buy Board.

Trustees also encouraged Superintendent Miller to continue to explore proposals to refund the district's I&S bond debt. Preliminary proposals suggest as savings of up to \$300,000 on the debt, most of which has an additional 15-year payout on the original 25-year term.

The board also extended probationary and term contracts for teachers and other contract employees of the district. One resignation was "reluctantly" accepted from the H.S. Spanish teacher.

Board members withheld payment of the billing from the firm that performed the most recent financial audit. The firm, Karen Jacks & Associates billed nearly \$14,000 for this audit, which was \$5,000 higher than previous years. Miller and the board are seeking an explanation. At their last meeting, the board decided to seek other bids for next year's audit.

Janna Stanfield of the Upshur County Clerk's Office explained the election process that will be in place this year for the Harmony ISD trustees election. That election will be held in November not May because the school is not located within a municipality.

The board also reviewed the so-called "Grandparents" policy which governs enrollment of students who are cared for by grandparents on a part-time basis. Miller was asked to come up

with a recommendation for such a policy.

The board also confirmed a current compensation policy regarding sick days or funeral leave of five days. In cases of severe health problems, the district allows a contributory pooling of sick time by fellow employees.

The next regular meeting of the Harmony Board of Trustees will be Monday, April 16. A special meeting of the board can be called with 72-hours notice.