

FAIRVIEW PARK

Council approves applying for grant to purchase van

By BRIAN LOVE

City Council recently approved a grant application to buy a new van for the senior center.

The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, the regional planning agency, offers grants of 80% of the cost for alternatives to public transportation that would assist seniors and people with disabilities.

The grant would amount to \$45,692 and the city would pay \$11,423, which would come from a special hold account.

The new van would replace the present van, which is described as being worn out.

"It has better gas mileage, and it runs," Public Service and Development Director Mary Kay Costello said at the Aug. 15 meeting. "That is an advantage. It runs. It will run reliably. It would be replacing a piece of equipment that, due to its age, it's over 10 years, and it has close to 80,000 City miles on it."

The van can seat nine people. It has a wheelchair lift and three adaptive seats.

"We're seeing more and more where a wheelchair passenger needs an escort or companion," Costello said. "This van would serve that purpose."

"There is one wheelchair van that is operational, but it cannot adapt other seating for people that may have some accommodations. It doesn't have extra space if you're trying to use your walker to actually get in your seats."

The van's availability is unknown due to supply chain issues, Costello said.

"The supply chain is getting better for some things," she said. "I have a feeling we wouldn't be waiting too long."

Council also approved inspection services of gas lines from Dominion Energy in the city on public rights of way and to ensure resident satisfaction with work performed on private property.

Wallace & Pancher would be paid \$75,000, with the city being reimbursed by Dominion Energy.

Contact this reporter at blove@westlifene.com or 440-871-5797.

FAIRVIEW PARK

Schools open on a positive note

By BRIAN LOVE

Keith Ahearn finally had a break. It was the first day of school in the city last week, and the second-year superintendent had visited every school, greeted staff and students and had hurried back to his office.

And it was just 11 a.m. "The first day has been great," Ahearn said. "I've been out to all of the buildings and it's smooth. So we're excited. We're in and ready to be back. Yeah, it's been very good."

Ahearn greeted 240 staff members and about 1,500 students for the 2022-23 school year on Thursday. It was a change from having to learn everything about the district, as he did a year ago.

"I can walk down the hallways and know the names of everybody," Ahearn said. "You're not learning everything about the organization. This year is really about trying to set a direction for the future instead of building relationships. I feel like it would get a real positive vibe."

The school board met the previous night, with Ahearn providing its members information. The district made it special, bringing in the high school's marching band, along with having sophomore speakers from the school's Leadership Academy.

The summer had been a busy time for Ahearn and many staff members. Improvements were being made in the buildings.

Mike Matthews, director of operations, gave an update on various security grants for which the district has applied. He also reported on other security improvements, such as putting extra



Photo courtesy Fairview Park City School District

Students at Gilles-Sweet Elementary were greeted by members of the high school marching band on the first day of school.

laminated on doors to make them more shatterproof.

"We've added some prop-door alarm systems," Ahearn said. "We're trying to make sure we protect the threshold of the building, and it'll get folks to make sure they close the door behind them."

At Gilles-Sweet Elementary School, new high-definition cameras have been installed.

"What we did to make the buildings ready for education today," Ahearn said. "Some of the hardware and software things we're trying is to make sure that we have our buildings as safe and secure as possible."

Also discussed was the review of staff ALICE training, the intruder response procedures used in many schools. Along with that was Crisis Prevention Institute training, which teaches how

to avoid increasing a conflict with a student.

Kelly Croy, author of "Along Came A Leader," was the keynote speaker of the meeting, Ahearn said. He discussed personal leadership.

"That's our theme this year," Ahearn said. "Any adult regardless of what your position is - from a teacher to a bus driver to a paraprofessional to a night cleaner - you have the power to impact the student learning environment for kids."

"We talked about how we can do that with a positive attitude and being kind. We're just practicing self care of ourselves so that we can be a support to others."

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"We found they aren't going to wear them the entire time," Zilka said. "They could pass them around to each other."

The city and public libraries are still looking for grants with which to buy more glasses. Thousands of visitors will flock to the area since the city is one of the few that is in the dead center of the totality.

"We're trying to find the correct glasses," Recreation Director Jacqui Hoffman said. "We want to find ways to get them to as many people as possible."

"We were already talking with the school district about education in the schools. They're looking at purchasing glasses to give out to students."

People still might want to purchase their

own glasses. The eclipse is going to go from Texas to Ohio, so glasses could become scarce. The correct glasses, like so many other things, are a target for scammers.

Dills suggested looking on the American Astrology Society website (<https://eclipse.aas.org/resources/solar-filters>) for a list of approved glasses.

"There's a specific code that's needed for them to be approved," Dills said. "If you're going to buy solar glasses, it has to have this code."

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