

State delays put Island school project behind schedule

Buffalo News Story By Laura E. Winchester

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The state Education Department is still reviewing the Grand Island School District's capital project, leaving the \$51.4 million program about three months behind schedule.

At Monday's Board of Education meeting – when it was originally believed that bids would be awarded – representatives of Campus Construction Management and Cannon Design delivered the news.

Plans for the high and middle schools' renovations and additions and new athletic fields were submitted to the state last October.

"We're at 18 weeks and still waiting," said William Zografos, vice president of Cannon Design, architects on the project. He said about 525 projects across the state are "backed up."

Thomas Caruso, Campus Construction vice president, said, "We're extremely frustrated," noting that it had planned to begin construction in April. In a new timeline, Campus Construction now projects the start of construction to be about July 8.

"We still plan to make every attempt to get the work done by August of 2015," said Caruso.

Also affected is the second part of the project – renovations to the district's three elementary schools. Those plans were submitted to the state in February. If the state approves the plans by July, bids will be awarded in September, he said.

Caruso said the project is on budget, with market prices for supplies holding at the rate in the construction estimates. He also said Campus Construction has a list of nine items totaling \$662,000, which could become part of the project if the bids for the major contracts are under the estimates.

In other business, the board decided not to fill the vacancy created by January's resignation of board President David Goris, given the short time frame until the May 21 board elections and budget vote.

Instead, the vacancy will be filled by the third highest vote-getter in the election, who will complete the two years left on Goris' term.

It was announced that the board plans another round of interviews with the two finalists for superintendent: Susan Frey, assistant superintendent of the Depew School District, and Teresa Lawrence, Clarence Central's director of curriculum and staff development.