

# nanent layoff notices *continued from page 1*

of which addressed the proposed layoffs.

"Today's memo came as a real blow," Mokler said to the board, adding "a four-hour notice was really a kick in the teeth."

The short notice also alarmed others, who said the board would be wise to delay its decision instead of implementing the layoffs the day of their recommendation.

"I'm concerned you're going to make a snap decision and it's not the right one," teacher June Christianson said.

Former teacher AnnDee Peth also expressed concerns about a premature vote.

"I'm hoping that a definitive decision won't be made tonight. Take the time to do it right," she said.

In addition to Christianson's and Peth's pleas, many other residents and teachers spoke to the board about holding off on a decision, including some reduced to tears over the situation.

New School Board president Joe Hatcher took the words to heart, calling the night an extraordinary evening, and ending the public comment session with a message of his own.

"I ask that we pull together as a community," Hatcher said, adding the district's road ahead will not be easy.

"We will make the best decisions we can make," he said.

Mokler later said at the meeting she was moved by Hatcher's comments, agreeing that "this is a crisis for all of us."

## WAIT AND SEE

In response to requests to take more time to examine the matter, the Ripon School Board voted unanimously to hold off making a decision until a later date.

The board proposed that the REA and school administration reach a new memorandum of understanding that would move final teacher contract deadlines from May 30 back to June 30.

As of press time, however, the parties had not yet met.

## CUT SPORTS?

In addition to the news of possible teacher layoffs, questions were raised as to whether other parts of the budget could be cut instead.

One of the most predominant suggestions from residents was school sports programs.

Zimman noted at Monday's meeting, however, that the Ripon High School athletic budget is approximately \$132,000 for everything involved with all sports combined.

"With the cuts we had to make, and potential layoffs, we're talking over \$1 million," Zimman said of what needs to be cut. "Sports are only about 10 percent of costs. Where will that other 90 percent come from?"

Zimman also reminded that if sports are cut, it may only create new budget problems.

"We'll lose an important aspect of the school and community, as well as all the money that we'll lose when children choose to go elsewhere," he said, noting it's probable some students will transfer to other schools in order to continue their athletic endeavors.

# Gifted/talented also cut

by Andrew Pantzlaff  
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By unanimous vote, the Ripon School Board decided Monday to reduce the district's gifted and talented (GT) program from a two-teacher model to a one-teacher setup.

The K-5 program will now host a flexible-grouping, resource-teacher position. Coordinator duties for the old position also have shifted to the district's curriculum director.

Starting next year, gifted and talented services will be provided to students by regular classroom teachers rather than through a pullout program by GT teachers. The shift comes as a compromise between two options decided on by the School Board.

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