

LTUSD board wants a handle on STHS' club debt

By Kathryn Reed

When the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board of education meets later this month, the five electeds will be asked to decide how to deal with the debt incurred by South Tahoe High School's Associated Student Body and what the future policy will be.

Consultant Terri Ryland gave a presentation last week about the audit she did regarding the continued deficit. This has been a multi-year problem. (Board member Sue Novasel was not at the May 28 meeting.) The total balance from the various clubs that make up the ASB account is negative \$20,892. Plus, the yearbook has a loan from the district totaling \$30,397.

"No one wanted to see the kids go without. I think that is what started the negative balances," Ryland told the board.



LTUSD is studying the books for South Tahoe High's clubs. Photo/LTN file

One of her recommendations is no club or individual class can spend money until it is in the account. Today it's OK to fund raise after the fact or after the event has been planned and

deposits made. This is partly what has led to the debt because the money raised has not always met the expenses.

The classes of 2010, 2011 and 2012 all graduated and left a negative balance in their respective accounts. There are no consequences for having done so.

An issue that was brought up by Roy Benavidez, who heads the ASB, is that ASB is responsible for paying the salaries of the adults who are tasked with doing the bookkeeping.

Ryland said she did a check and could not find a single instance where any other ASB was saddled with the entire bookkeeping expense. Most districts incur the cost, with some charging a percentage to the ASB.

Twenty hours a week – just for the ASB books – have been allocated and is what the student group must pay. The position was supposed to be for 15 hours, but 20 is what it turned out to be.

“Prior to 2010, several positions at the high school performed various parts of the ASB bookkeeping function. Costs for approximately 11 hours per week were \$27,000-\$34,000,” Ryland wrote in her presentation.

STHS Principal Ivone Larson pointed out that if the district were to incur the expense of the salaries from the last two years for the bookkeeper, then that would essentially wipe out the debt that is on the books.

CF0 Deb Yates told *Lake Tahoe News* after the meeting, “I’ll recommend we bring it in house to assess how many hours are really needed (for bookkeeping.)” (It will be on the board agenda June 25.)

It will be up to the board if the debt is paid off through general fund dollars or some other way and if policy as to how ASB is managed in the future is changed.

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On the June 11 agenda is the hiring of administrative intern Cindy Martinez as interim principal at Bijou Community School for 2013-14.

The meetings start at 6pm in the district office on Al Tahoe Boulevard.