

Board takes no action on soil sampling plan

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LEWISTON — The Lewiston-Porter School Board may pay graduate students from the University at Buffalo to see what kinds of chemicals, if any, have leached onto the property from the nearby Lake Ontario Ordnance Works, which manufactured TNT during World War II.

Joseph A. Gardella, professor of chemistry and associate dean for external affairs at UB, said Tuesday night that his group could collect 30 soil samples to identify which chemicals might have leached onto the Lew-Port property.

Gardella said it would cost the district just over \$51,000 for the students and a graduate student project manager to conduct the sampling.

The soil samples would be sent elsewhere for testing that would cost about \$20,000, which would be included in the \$51,000, said Gardella.

No vote was taken on the matter, but

board Vice President R. Nils Olsen Jr. said the deal would be a good one. The School Board has been waiting for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to complete the work, but government funding for cleaning up the nearby ordnance works has been drastically cut.

"The funding difficulties with the Army Corps are legendary every year," said Olsen.

Members of Residents for Responsible Government, a citizens environmental group based in the Town of Porter, have been investigating community concerns about possible contamination at the Lewiston-Porter campus, located about a mile from a cluster of Superfund sites.

About 40 people attended the meeting, held in the Community Resource Center.

In another matter, the board in a split vote failed to give a bonus to L. Wesley Hedges, dean of students/director of secondary academic service.

The board then went into a closed session for just over 10 minutes to discuss the merits of the case. The motion

failed because only three trustees said yes; Trustees Edward M. Lilly and Louis M. Palmeri said no, and Trustee Jack Burmeister abstained.

Trustee Franklyn M. Collins was absent. Without four votes, the matter failed to gain a majority of the seven-member board.

After the meeting, School Board President James W. Leighton said the bonus that would have been given to Hedges was 20 more vacation days, of which he would have been able to sell 10 immediately for a cash payout.

The board also voted, 4-2, to bring back department heads to the district. Lew-Port operated last school year without any department heads.

The total cost of the 21 department heads is \$58,125. The average department head would earn \$2,768.

Lilly and Palmeri voted against the move.

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