

Alta-Aurelia Citizens for Progress
P.O. Box 32
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left open.

Jan. 30 We employed a 'public records access' professional to request records from AACS tied to these matters. Olhausen first quoted us over \$2,200 for routine records. Our consultant said this was ten times what he sees for such routine records, and he asked Olhausen to reduce this cost. We then slightly amended the request and Olhausen final cost was \$222.50.

Mar. 4 Our records request of the BV County Sheriff's dispatch center (911) found no call made to the sheriff suspecting criminal mischief regarding the events above from 12/1/2023 through 01/31/2024.

Mar. 13 We wrote to Rasmussen Mechanical and inquired if they had any duty to advise the school not to shut the boiler down during the coldest days of the year. We also asked if they've had any conversations with AACS administrators or board members about a possible contract for any new school building at the AACS. They never responded. **(No. 1004)**

Mar. 11 School board voted to discontinue lease agreements to the three-story north portion of Former High School. They voted to inquire bids to tear down the Former High School.

Mar. 14 Sent letter (with supporting documents) to President Hinkeldey, asking him to review it and then call the sheriff. Seventy-seven minutes later he wrote back to us and said our request was unreasonable. He did not clarify or refute any of the documentation or timeline we provided. **(No. 1005)**

Mar. 15 Storm Lake newspaper reports from Olhausen that the "building is recovering a **busted** boiler that shuttered the facility." "Ongoing plumbing costs to ensure continued water access..."

Busted? Or shut off?

Apr. 7 Two windows on second floor on the south side of the building were seen open, one of them broken out.

Here are questions we think the Sheriff's office should investigate:

Knowing schools routinely do boiler repairs during seasons when heating is not needed, why was Rasmussen doing repairs during the coldest days of the year? Why were board members reviewing Piper's report on bonding capacities last fall? Who left a water faucet on, overnight behind locked doors in December? Who opened valves on 3rd floor around January 17th, resulting in significant damage to the building? Who opened the windows on the coldest days of the year when the boiler was off? Why did Olhausen have this work done in the bitter cold January, when Rasmussen said in their proposal that it would have to be shut off 2 days before, and that the work would take 8-10 business days to complete? **Why was there no adequate alternative heat source provided when the boiler was off? Why wasn't BV County Sheriff Elston ever called in to investigate any of this?**

Keep in mind actively used McBride Hall on the campus of the University of Iowa was built in 1885, making it 139 years old. Morrill Hall on the campus of Iowa State University was built in 1890. Our state universities are dedicated to maintaining their history. In a time when our DEI (woke) culture wants to erase the history of our nation, why not stand fast and uphold the history of the AACS? We are confident that the Former High School could be refurbished and used for education or a variety of other much-valued purposes in the community, such as daycare. The Aurelia building has been well-maintained and is in use today. Why can't we maintain our Alta Former High School building?

We are not accusing any individual of sabotaging the building at this

time, but we do feel strongly that the school board should still call Sheriff Elston and ask his department to investigate these events thoroughly. They could interview a lot of people, including some names we can provide.

We don't rule out a motive of 'legitimizing' the need for a new school by doing harm to the Former High School. But even our suspicion could be wrong. If a Sheriff's investigation reveals reasonable explanations for these series of events, then the community can be satisfied it was just a series of innocent coincidences and let it rest. But who will support building a future new school building if these questions go unanswered? **We wouldn't!**

Sign Our Petition

Join us! Call upon the school board members to contact the sheriff's office to request an investigation. That's the only way we can see the AACS school district moving forward on solid footing. We don't believe that for us to call the sheriff requesting an investigation would be sufficient, since we are not in direct authority of the building to the degree that the superintendent and school board are. If you want to amplify your voice go to our website below and sign our petition to the school board.

When you sign, you can provide us with your email address, too, so we can keep in touch. You can also download our paper petition form and gather physical signatures as well. We will give the school board until May 6, 2024, to notify us that they have contacted Sheriff Elston. If they do not contact the sheriff by that date, then we intend to organize a community response to their next school board meeting, held on May 13, 2024. To follow our activities and get notices see our Facebook page below.

Finally, this process has not been free of cost. If you want to make a generous donation to our cause, make a check out to Alta-Aurelia Citizens for Progress and mail it to our address below.

Thank you,

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David Fordyce, Co-chair
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Alta-Aurelia Citizens for Progress
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**ALTA-AURELIA
CITIZENS FOR
PROGRESS**

**YOU
DECIDE!**

CALL THE SHERIFF?

Residents and friends of Alta and Aurelia,

We are the recently organized Alta-Aurelia Citizens for Progress committee. We organized to communicate to the community a concern that needs the attention of the Alta-Aurelia Community School (AACS) board of directors, and we need your help. Some of us graduated from AACS and many of us continue to support AACS, but something has come up that a group of us feel strong enough about to now get the word out to you.

What's happened to the Alta Central Office Building/Daycare/Former High School building (Former High School) in the past few months? Some things did not add up, so we investigated. First, four previous school superintendents (Narak, Maharry, Evans, Walters) all wanted to get rid of the older portion of the building, but they met such resistance from the community that they couldn't pull it off. We believe that, before January 2024, the Former High School was one of the **most-used buildings** in the district, and still is one of the best built. This building also has great historical value and means much to so many Alta residents today.

We gathered information through records requests, first-hand witnesses, and school board minutes. We took our findings to school board President Tom Hinkeldey (Hinkeldey) and then to each board member. We suggested that they call the county sheriff. We think a sheriff's investigation would answer many of the questions that we have. Hinkeldey's reply was that our request was "unreasonable." He also said, "Look at the improvements other districts of similar size have made in the past 20 years". Unfortunately, Hinkeldey **left our questions unanswered**. We decided to bring our concerns to you, the public, through this flyer.

Our complaint was summarized by stating that we believe a crime of Criminal Mischief (\$716), possibly up to the degree of a Class "C" felony, depending on the dollar amount of damage which **may have** occurred at the Former High School. We have not been given an explanation why no school official, including board members, called the Sheriff as it occurred, given the evidence we presented to them, or even after receiving our complaint!

We review the evidence we presented to Hinkeldey for you below. But first, we note that last October the AACS board reviewed a bonding capacity report with Piper | Sandler bond (debt) company (Piper). Piper told the board that the most expensive bond for a new building would be \$27.3 million. This could cost nearly **\$43.8 million in new district property taxes** to repay the bond plus interest over 20 years.

Piper told them of the approximate average **new taxes on a house assessed at \$150,000** it would be **\$3,586 in new taxes** over the life of the bonds. The approximate average **new taxes** in BV, Cherokee and Sac counties that Piper estimated on average assessed farmland would be **\$6.00 per acre**. That would be **\$19,200 of new**

taxes on 160 acres over the 20 years. Again, these are estimated averages.

We know that saying **we suspect criminal mischief** is a pretty bold statement and we don't say it lightly or disrespectfully. But consider our evidence below. Decide for yourself if you think a sheriff's investigation would be unreasonable.

All supporting documents for our statements below can be found at our new website by number and page.

Consider this calendar of questionable events.

2023

Jul. 31 The inspector stated boiler in Former High School did not pass inspection and they needed to "**Repair/Replace the affected tubes as soon as possible.**" Pam Henderson, 43-year custodian for AACS, now retired, said that it is routine for mechanical repair companies to repair the boiler in a season when the boiler is not needed. It would be good to know if Superintendent Olhausen (Olhausen) called a repair company or authorized such a call to be made. (**No. 1000** p 2)

Oct. 9th AACS school board reviewed bond dealer Piper's report on bonding capacities. This report presents the option of \$43.8 million in future property taxes to repay the bond. (**No. 1001** p 29)

Dec. Credible sources say that a faucet on a sink on the 3rd floor home economics room was left on overnight. The room was locked. This caused water damage.

2024

Jan. 5 Olhausen ordered that the boiler be turned off the next day. It was turned off on the 7th (Sunday). Two days later (9th) recorded the lowest temperature in Alta in 2024 so far of -0- degrees.

Jan. 9 Rasmussen Mechanical of Sioux City submits a proposal to fix the boiler at a cost of \$35,987. The proposal states it would take 8-10 working days to complete the work. Work began Jan. 8th. During this 10 to 12 day period, the temperature ranged from 32 degrees down to 17 degrees below zero. (**No. 1002**)

Jan. 12 Olhausen met with the director of Ready, Set GROW Learning Center and asked them to leave by 2025.

Jan. 7-14 We understand that boiler was off. To our knowledge, no alternative source of heat was provided for the entire building. Individual tenant(s) may have heated their space(s).

Jan. With boiler off, two credible sources found some 3rd floor windows have been opened a crack at the top. One of our sources informed us that it was not usual for windows to be open like that.

Jan. 14 Rasmussen invoice says that the boiler was started on this date.

Jan. 17 4 Seasons (plumbing) came in and they found "Someone had opened up two valves on the 3rd floor and the lines thawed out and the water...worked its way down to administrative offices." (**No 1003** p4) One source let us know that the flooding in the building was from 2 sources: pipes leaking because of damage from being frozen and from these valves being