

UNION *Missourian*

School district buys old library

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The Union R-XI School District is expected to take over the former Scenic Regional Library Union Branch building.

The Board of Education approved the \$950,000 purchase at a special meeting Tuesday, May 3. Superintendent Dr. Scott Hayes said the district is buying the building using federal Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief Fund money.

Hayes said the district will discuss its plans for the building, located at

308 Hawthorne Drive, after inspections are completed and the sale closes, which is expected in late May.

The nearest Union R-XI school to the former library is Central Elementary, six-tenths of a mile away, across Highway 50.

The former library building opened in the then-new building in 1991, Campbell said.

The library district came down \$100,000 from its original asking price of \$1,050,000 for the 10,800-square-foot former library, Scenic Regional Library Direc-

tor Steve Campbell said Thursday. The building was on the market for more than four years.

"It's very exciting to finally sell it," he said. "And I think the people that live in the houses around the (old) library will be very happy that the school has purchased it versus a business, although I still thought it was a great location for a retail type of business. But I think it's so close to a residential area that it's going to be a nice addition to have a school there versus a business."

The sale did not include

the former Scenic Regional Library administration building, which is around 2,400 square feet. Campbell said that remains on the market, with a \$350,000 asking price.

Both buildings have been mostly shuttered since August 2019, when Scenic Regional opened its new Union branch at 251 Union Plaza Drive, off Highway 47 north, which includes administration offices for the nine-library system.

The Franklin County Health Department used the old Union branch for about six months in 2021

as a COVID-19 vaccination clinic site. Campbell said the sheriff's office briefly used the building for training, as well.

Originally, Scenic Regional planned to use money raised from the sale of the old Union library and administration building to help with the cost of the new Hermann Branch, which is scheduled to open June 27.

"It was on the market so long, and we were waiting, so we decided to just go ahead and finance Hermann," he said.

Now the money from
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the sale of the old library will go into reserves, Campbell said. "With all these new buildings, down the road 10 years, or whenever, we're going to need furniture and new equipment for these branches," he

said. "It will be nice to have that in place in reserves so we can use it when the time comes."

The sale will save the library district some money on cutting grass and removing snow, Campbell said. "We're talking about thousands of dollars,

not tens of thousands of dollars," he said. "It was costing us a small amount of money, and the insurance, of course, on the building."

The discussions on the sale took a little over a week, Campbell said.