

Mr. Rasmus called the June 21, 2023 MASD Buildings and Grounds Meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Present in the High School Library were Joseph Rasmus, Whitney Holloway, William Berger, Heather Mausteller, Susan Farr, Matthew McWilliams, Edward Sanders, Matthew Wardecker (Schneider Electric), Kirby Slear (Schneider Electric), and Chelsea Rosenberger.

MINUTES FROM 4/26/2023: BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE MEETING

- No comments were made on the April 26, 2023 meeting minutes.

SOLAR VOLTAIC INITIATIVE: IGA PRESENTATION: MATTHEW WARDECKER

- Mr. Rasmus began by reviewing the scope of the Investment Grade Audit project and introduced Mr. Matt Wardecker and Mr. Kirby Slear of Schneider Electric for the presentation.
- Mr. Wardecker began by presenting the Committee with the full Investment Grade Audit report. He began the presentation by explaining the Guaranteed Energy Savings (GESAs) process as well as reviewed the goals for the meeting. Additionally, he explained that the purpose of this meeting was not to push the district into moving forward or be locked into any one plan.
 - Mr. Rasmus asked if the Board decides to move forward with the project and moves into the design phase of the project, choosing to move forward with only certain aspects of the project, would it be possible to change, expand or limit the scope.
 - Mr. Wardecker answered that yes, that is the case and that Schneider Electric was known for having the ability to pick and choose which scope items to proceed with in a project.
- Mr. Wardecker then discussed the goals and initiatives, to reduce energy costs of the district, resolve the High School HVAC issues, and promote fiscal responsibility. He shared the scope summary, including ground-mounted solar panels at the Elementary School and the High School, new windows at the Elementary school, replace the High School air cooled chiller serving the auditorium, replace the rooftop unit at the Elementary School Administrative office, and a control software upgrade at the High School and Elementary School.
 - Mr. Wardecker shared with the Committee that Schneider Electric had helped Millville apply for two grants, however the first one was not accepted. He further explained that the second grant from the DOJ could be a budgetary offset for the Elementary windows. The purpose of the rooftop upgrade was to improve indoor air quality to improve the health and safety of the staff. For the control software update, Mr. Wardecker explained that this upgrade would maximize the new equipment's life expectancy and minimize the risks of premature failure. Additionally, he explained that the previous system left IT security liabilities.
 - Mr. Rasmus added the explanation of the time he began in the district when the Multi-stack warranty was going to expire, and the computers were reconfigured to work with the new physics of it. However, now those controls would not operate a new system. Essentially, the system was hotwired to make it work.
 - Mr. Wardecker commented that this was correct, and it will not be as simple as a replacement because the system was configured to work outside of the original manufacturer's design. He further explained that Schneider Electric would have to do quite a bit of redesign to the multi-stack.
- Next, Mr. Wardecker explained to the Committee the plan for the Elementary School Solar panels. He explained Schneider found that by locating the panels by the stadium, there would have to be quite a bit of underground wiring put in to get the generated power to the transformer's location. For that reason, the location had to be reconsidered.
 - Mr. Rasmus added that it would not have been cost effective to run the wiring in the previous way.

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- Mrs. Mausteller asked if the new proposed land would be the current field hockey field.
- Mr. Berger answered that the field hockey team now plays further back from this proposed location but did question if the district was already purchasing a fence, would that be able to enclose the panels.
 - Mr. Rasmus answered that yes, the district is going to purchase a fence with the funds, but he did not believe that fence would be high enough at only 4 feet tall.
 - Mr. Berger agreed that it would not be high enough.
 - Mr. Rasmus then commented we could potentially look into having a taller fence and using that fence to encompass these panels.
- Mrs. Mausteller asked how high the panels are off the ground.
 - Mr. Kirby Slear of Schneider Electric answered that it would be about 2 to 3 feet off the ground on the low edge up to potentially 8 feet at the highest point, to be determined by the district.
- Mrs. Mausteller asked if all of the proposed solar panels would be stationary or if they would have a tilting mechanism.
 - Mr. Slear answered that they were proposing stationary panels for a number of reasons, including the fact that they are more easily broken. In addition, he explained that those types of panels are more costly for the motor mechanism to make them tilt and the maintenance cost.
- Mr. Rasmus concluded by thanking Schneider Electric for their work with this late location change at the Elementary School for less underground wiring and the fact that the panels would now be more insulated from view.
- Next, Mr. Wardecker discussed the proposed solar panel location at the High School Location.
 - Mr. Slear added that getting the power to the High School will be harder because there is more space to cover and PPL lines to go under.
- Mr. Wardecker then explained the three different projects to consider based off the IGA findings. He explained all three types of projects at the 40% tax credit calculation from the federal government.
 - Mr. Berger asked if these calculations were considering the grant amounts.
 - Mr. Wardecker answered that the grants were not factored in because they are not certain.
 - Mrs. Holloway then asked for clarity if the tax credit would only be a factor if a solar project were included in the district's plan.
 - Mr. Wardecker answered that Mrs. Holloway was correct but that Schneider Electric did apply for a rebate on behalf of the district with PPL Electric.
 - Mr. Rasmus wanted to thank Schneider Electric for doing this, especially with the fact that there was a cost involved with doing so.
 - Mr. Wardecker commented that yes, Schneider applied on behalf the district and took care of the costs to get the extra incentive for the school. Mr. Slear added that it was approved.
- In summation, Mr. Wardecker shared that the district was looking at a \$4.85 million of energy savings over 20 years including an estimated 1 million in total revenue from SRECs.

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- Mrs. Mausteller asked for clarification about what would happen if the power went out, would the solar panels keep generating.
 - Mr. Slear answered that the solar panels would also power down because they cannot feed into the grid when the power is out.
- Mrs. Mausteller asked what the maintenance costs would be because she believed there can be some hidden costs with solar panels.
 - Mr. Wardecker answered that he had factored in maintenance costs of about \$13,000 a year and that the cost was removed from the total given as the guaranteed energy savings amount.
- Mr. Wardecker then explained to the Committee that the next step would be the authorization of Schneider Electric to proceed with Phase 2 at the June 26, 2023 Board Meeting. He clarified again for the Committee that moving forward would not lock the district into a project, but it would mean that the district was going to complete some type of project with Schneider Electric.
 - Mrs. Mausteller shared her concern that Heather that the district has not sought community engagement in this project. She added that she would like to see Schneider use local subcontractors for some of the proposed work if possible.
 - Mr. Wardecker answered that all contractors must meet Schneider Electric standards and that they did have preferred vendors to use.
 - Mr. McWilliams commented that the vendors need to be good quality and have the ability to complete the entire project, not piece meal aspects of it.
 - Mr. Rasmus believed there to be contractual language that could be put in so that potential liabilities could be covered.
 - Mr. Berger asked Mrs. Holloway if the numbers lined up with the overall savings.
 - Mrs. Holloway answered that she believed they did but that she did not know the current interest rates. She said it would be a savings but did not know some specifics.
 - Mr. Rasmus shared as an example, the building project at CMAVTS was put out to bid and there may be chances to put this project out to bid. He added that Schneider Electric has the ability to help in this process as well as financing.
 - Mr. Wardecker concurred, citing their use of larger banks for financing but that Schneider would work with the district's local needs as well.
 - Mrs. Holloway then asked in clarification if this project would include the district taking complete ownership at the end. She added a discussion about nearby school districts who were putting the savings away into an account to offset the costs, and that is how they were saving over time. Her confusion was how those other districts were getting the savings without the tax credit.
 - Mr. Wardecker answered that she was correct, explaining that the guaranteed energy savings would be for 20 years but after that, there would still be energy savings. However, from year 21 on, the savings would all go directly to the district. He further explained that with the induction of the federal tax credit, there would be more savings to purchase the panels up front and see the savings over time through the offset of electric costs. The other school districts, he believed, were leasing their panels over time through a PPA agreement.

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- Mrs. Mausteller asked what the district would do with the solar panels after that point.
 - Mr. Wardecker answered that it could go to a landfill, but another option may be recycling and that the cost for recycling would be down at that point in time.
- Then, Mr. Rasmus shared Mr. Wardecker's concern with the fact that the district is not currently under an electricity contract.
 - Mr. Wardecker explained that Schneider had factored the cost in by 9.5 cents per Kilowatt hour. They talked to their PPEC internal team to find out that the district has a heavy load. So, this meant that when the district used energy, we call for a lot at a time.
 - Mrs. Holloway shared that she had been looking into this because the electric contract was up in the middle of June. She explained that the district had a very good deal and were locked into a rate for three years. However, she has found now that the pricing changes by the day and is dependent on the temperature, especially now in the peak months for electricity use.
 - Mr. Wardecker agreed, adding that Schneider Electric has the ability to go to the utility providers on the behalf of the district to shop for pricing as part of PPEC. Mrs. Holloway added that the district did become a member of PPEC. So, Mr. Wardecker said it would be a matter of the district authorizing Schneider to provide that service.
- In conclusion, Mrs. Farr reiterated the concern that the community needed to have this information.
 - The Committee agreed that there should be a flyer put out to the community with these potential projects.
 - Mr. Wardecker shared his concern with getting the community involved at this point without actual designs and project details. At this time, he believed that the logical next step would be to authorize Schneider Electric to move forward to the next phase of the project, citing the length of the time needed to complete the design phases for the Multi-stack and HVAC system.

PROPANE/REFUSE BIDS

- Mrs. Holloway shared that she is having the bid closing the next Friday for propane and refuse bids. Overall, she explained, the propane bids were coming in lower than last year.

TOPICAL ITEMS

- Ms. Rosenberger shared that the Athletic Trainer from Geisinger approached our Athletic Director regarding some weight training machines they would like to donate. This donation would be put to the Board for consideration.
- Next, Ms. Rosenberger explained that the Senior Class of 2023 was planning to use their remaining funds towards the purchase of a new stove and other small appliances for the Family and Consumer Science Classroom.
 - Mrs. Mausteller asked if the stove could be sold or donated somewhere. The Committee agreed that this was a better outcome.
- Mr. McWilliams shared that there had been a contractor on the roof to clean off debris such as leaves, branches, screws, etc.
- Then, Mr. McWilliams explained that Susquehanna Fire would be doing all inspections of extinguishers and Cintas would be switching out the toilet paper and paper towel dispensers, which would be a savings to the district over time.

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- Finally, Mr. McWilliams discussed some projects being undertaken over the summer by the Maintenance department including the Liberty Bell upgrade and potentially the High School Auditorium stage steps.
 - Mr. Berger shared the concern that there is only a handrail on the right side of the steps.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm.

Chelsea Rosenberger
Assistant Board Secretary