

MINUTES – FEBRUARY 26, 2016

SPECIAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING & BOND COMMITTEE MEETING – 6:00 P.M.

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING:

Board Members Present:

Deborah Heart, John Hoctor, Alex Gorrod, Beth Schroder, Virginia Amidon and Mark Heid, Superintendent.

Others Present:

Kay Hill, Lori Hackbarth, John Westerman, Dave Barta, Leslie Hiebert, Ann Cochran, Channon Bighorn, Anna Bean, Greg Gallagher, Jordan Granum, Brian Enstad, Darrell Watson, Lou Marzales, Joseph Gonyeau, John Miller, Dana Peck, Lori Anderson, Linda Anderson, Jennifer Mitchell, Ron Hackbarth, Chris Hill, Steven Randall and Darcie Reed.

Call to Order:

Mr. Hoctor, Board Chair called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and welcomed guests.

Bond Discussion:

Mr. Heid led the discussion on the failed Capital Improvement Bond to renovate the high school facilities. He shared that the Board felt that running the bond again in April is a bad time since it is tax time for patrons. He shared that the current list of bond projects were reviewed by a second architect firm to validate the projected costs by project. This second opinion felt that these estimated costs for each project were very conservative and in the expected range of costs to district. It was noted that for example, if the library renovation, the tennis cost restructuring and the readerboards were removed from the project list, the state matching dollars will also be eliminated for that project. Mr. Heid noted that if the district's free and reduced meal rate increased to 70%, the district may even receive additional matching state dollars, (it is currently at 56% districtwide).

Mr. Heid shared data from other school districts in Washington who passed or lost a recent bond measure; twenty-eight districts ran a bond measure – seventeen passed and eleven failed.

Much discussion centered on whether to attempt the renovation bond measure again or not. Several attendees offered their opinions that included:

- run a campaign to increase the free and reduced meal rate
- be clear about bond vs. a levy
- share information about county discounts for lower income patrons
- some people did not like anything sports related on this bond project list
- people have moved here due to a good school with a good tennis program; we want this
- focus on getting yes votes from the two precincts that failed the bond
- the local radio station has a call in program where misinformation is shared
- someone needs to listen to the radio station and call in the correct bad information
- a committee created this bond and more people need to be the spokesperson for it
- incorrect bond information was shared at a public city council meeting recently
- the bond must be over ten million in order to maximize the state matching dollars
- most new real estate buyers coming to town have no emotional connection with our schools
- schools that are in good shape improve the community overall
- Goldendale has a poor class, and the middle-class is tired of paying for everything
- everyone needs to be talking about the bond and share information
- teachers would be willing to make home calls
- too many other projects are added on to the bond beside HVAC, Tech upgrades, auxiliary gym
- focus on academics, not sports
- the state matching dollars are critical information to share; create visual aids/charts
- get a fact sheet out, babysit the radio show for misinformation; make a compelling case for need
- we still need to get to 60% pass rate; that may not happen
- maybe promote the bond better, provide giveaways door to door
- with the second opinion on each project, we know these estimates are not overpriced
- don't train the community that the initial projects were not needed

- maybe there is a better way to renovate the library; most people felt the costs were too high
- the project estimates must be high in order to ensure that the project can be completed
- create and share a plan for the extra funds when any project is completed under budget
- the median age for this community is up from 39 to 47
- the median income dropped by \$12,000 in 2013-14
- explain why the costs are so high i.e.: labor, materials, prevailing wage, etc.
- to run another bond in August will be hard when school is not in session
- some people just disliked the projects and some are sour on school leadership
- a perception is that people see the superintendent as a cheerleader of sports only
- many agreed that students receive very important character lessons through athletics
- a perception that the school board does not listen to its citizens
- change the bond to delete some projects or run the same bond again in August
- cutting corners on past facilities bond upgrades has helped to create the problems of today
- the bond committee is not asking for anything that it does not need
- maybe there are other ways to finance improvements
- in recent years, a committee tried to raise enough donations to update the tennis courts but could not raise more than \$5,000
- myth busting might be a way to counter misinformation
- the local newspaper is willing to provide a weekly article
- promote via a website or video
- focus on the fact that a bond can only be obtained every thirty years for the school building
- create pie charts of project costs, if delayed
- alumni can help; may not know much about the HVAC system but want the whole project package
- segment each project out to individuals for them to be the spokesperson
- there are public disclosure restrictions
- gain more input – create a survey on general topics
- the Sentinel was thanked for their assistance with bond advertisement
- we must have this bond
- we should decide to run it again in August or November
- we want kids to succeed in life

OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Heid announced that the Board will meet in their regular Worksession on March 7, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. to discuss further what action might be supported regarding the Capital Improvement Bond. Mr. Hocter thanked everyone for coming and providing their thoughts and ideas on this important topic.

NEXT MEETING DATES:

March 7, 2016-Monday, Board Worksession, 6:30 p.m.-District Office.
 March 21, 2016- Monday: Regular Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m.-PS Library

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Hocter announced that there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

 Board Chair

 Secretary to the Board

 Recording Secretary