WATERFORD UNION HIGH SCHOOL
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
SPECIAL MEETING
Monday, December 2, 2024

Superintendent Francois called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM. Board members present at the meeting were: Gary Beck, Kelly Datka, Dennis Purtell, Mike Schoenfeld (virtual), and Doug Schwartz. Others present at the meeting included Mike David, CEO-Nexus Solutions; Jeff Mangan, Client Executive-Nexus; Hans Noel, Senior Development Engineer-Nexus; Bill McCoshen, Michael Best Strategies, LLC; and John Pudner, Guest of Bill McCoshen. Tom Halter, community resident, also was in attendance.

Official notice of the meeting was by way of publication in the *Waterford Post* on Thursday, November 28, 2024, by posting at the District Office (Door #7) and at Entrance #19, and was published on the District's website.

Facility Improvement Project Discussion

Discussion began with input from consultants McCoshen and Pudner, who have been working with Nexus Solutions at Nexus's expense to strategize uniting the Waterford community in supporting a building referendum. Following the April 2024 referendum, the consultants analyzed voter data and held focus groups during the summer months. Their consensus is that although the Waterford community is highly conservative, a successful buidling referendum outcome is possible.

Superintendent Francois noted that if the Board desires to hold a referendum in February, 2025, a decision is needed today in order that legal counsel may prepare the necessary resolutions. The Board would also need to schedule a special meeting for Friday, December 6 to take action and pass said resolutions to meet the filing deadline of Tuesday, December 10, 2024 in order to hold the referendum in conjunction with the spring primary. The next opportunity to hold a referendum is in April 2025 along with the spring election.

Discussion followed regarding the optimum time to hold a referendum. Consideration was given to the Waterford Graded District, which is planning to hold an operational referendum in April 2025. Board members were reminded that if a building referendum is delayed until 2026, not only would the mill rate likely increase due to the District's financial status and debt repayment, but construction costs are also projected to increase by approximately 7% over the next year. Nexus reported that construction costs have increased 25-30% since 2021.

In addition to the timing of when to hold a referendum, Board members deliberated the cost of a building project and reconsidered three project options varied in scope. Project A was the lowest cost option of $10.8 million and focused solely on essential infrastructure upgrades without major changes to educational facilities or expansions. Project B, with a cost of $29 million, builds on the infrastructure upgrades from Project A, adding significant remodels and a new addition to the auto and construction shops. Project C is the most extensive option at $45 million, incorporating all elements of Project A and B, plus a full tear down and rebuild of the Maple View area and further expansion of technical education. Board members were asked to deliberate the options before them, consider previous community input, and develop a building plan they feel the community will support.

Superintendent Francois shared examples of two referendum financing scenarios developed by PMA Securities, the first of which was forecasted for 20-year general obligation bonds issued in the amount of $47,900,000 with a targeted mill rate of $3.99. The second scenario showed that with the current mill rate of $4.15, the District could potentially borrow up to $54,350,000 with no increase in the mill rate.

Board discussion continued regarding facility improvement measures, timing of the referendum, as well as the feasibility of asking for a lower dollar cost project now to complete immediate infrastructure improvements with a plan to return in 3-6 years with another phase of building projects. Concerns expressed included properly educating community members about the building referendum and rebuilding trust with voters. There was also concern about the District attracting new students and families to the community to

help offset declining enrollment. There was also consideration whether to remodel or raze Maple View, asbestos abatement, addressing ADA accessibility, HVAC, and other infrastructure concerns of that area. President Schoenfeld noted that a similar $45 million project proposed in 2023 included additional renovations not included in the current projects, including the addition of a two-station competition gymnasium. Board members conceded that the community is likely opposed to and unsupportive of athletic facility improvements at the current time.

Board President Schoenfeld left at 1:00 p.m. due to another commitment.

Following additional board discussion of the options before them, community member Tom Halter shared his observations and opinion on the project he felt would most likely be successful with district voters.

The consensus of WUHS board members was to move forward with Project B with some modifications. Nexus was requested to prepare a final project summary list of the options discussed, which included the removal of the Technical Education area addition, replacing existing unit vents and AHU's in Maple View in lieu of replacing them, the addition of an elevator in the Maple View building and installation of a fire suppression system throughout the building. Hans Noel, Nexus, indicated that his initial calculations project that the building project cost would be approximately $24,900,000 based on these directives of the WUHS Board. A final FIM summary would be prepared by noon on Tuesday, December 3.

Members of the Board and meeting guests recessed for 10 minutes.

Upon reconvening, board discussion focused on drafting the final referendum question and how best to market the project to community voters. Board members recognized there exists a need to educate constituents about school finances and state aid. Other strategies for informing the community and next steps were discussed.

Following the conclusion of board discussion, there was a motion by Datka, seconded by Beck to adjourn. All ayes; motion carried. This done at 2:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Douglas P. Schwartz, Board Clerk