

The Lowellville Board of Education met in a work session on Wednesday, October 15, 2025 in the Lowellville Library; President Jennifer Johnson presiding. Mrs. Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Stephanie Yon- Present
Gerald Dubos- Present
Jennifer Johnson- Present
Joseph Sturm – Present
Brian Wharry-Present

1. Work Session:

- To review, discuss, and establish priorities for projects that need to be completed, while exploring available funding sources and financing options to ensure timely and effective implementation.

Discussion:

- Ms. Apisa reviewed the items in attachment A.
- Mrs. Johnson asked for clarification on the property tax bill. Ms. Apisa stated that ORC states that you have to fund public schools. So, if property taxes go away other things will increase such as sales tax, municipality taxes, etc. Legislators are trying to show the public that they are doing something to slow down momentum of the property tax reform.
- Ms. Apisa went on record to state that the debt issuance can't happen due to all of the information shared. What the Board wants the debt issuance for is not mission critical. Maybe in the next three years things will be different but in her opinion, now is not the time to take on a debt issuance. The permanent improvement levy needs to be done in May and June in order to get it on the ballot in November 2026.
- Mr. Dubos asked for clarification that there is talk that it will now take a super majority to pass levies. Ms. Apisa stated he is correct.
- Ms. Apisa stated that the district is healthy enough at this time. The district is at 40-50% carryover. The district has funds to complete some painting, roof repairs, bleachers (to make ADA compliant), sidewalks, and sanding down the gym floors.
- Mr. Dubos stated that the entire set of visitor bleachers (outside) need repaired now.
- Ms. Apisa stated that she does not think the optics are good for the district to do some of the concession stand, locker room, athletic improvements at this time. The fear is that if we take on extra costs at this time there may not be enough funds to do other things.
- Mrs. Johnson stated that if we are not going to take out debt at this time let's discuss what we can complete now.
- Joe Sturm asked if the district can hire a grant writer. He asked what the district should do now. Should we fix the bleachers or just put ramps in? Ms. Apisa stated that we need to make the bleachers safe.
- Joe Sturm asked if the district does not take out debt at this time, how much money do we have to use for repairs. Ms. Apisa stated that there is \$394,000 in P.I. funds, about \$383,000 in the roof fund, and about \$521,000 in the capital projects and grounds fund.
- Mr. Dubos asked when the P.I. funds will run out. Ms. Apisa stated that they will run out in 2027 (when the funds will hit the bank) and the district receives the funds two times per year. So, with the P.I. levy there will be \$1.34 million accessible to use before the fund runs out.

MISSION

- Mr. Dubos clarified that the district has not touched investment funds. Ms. Apisa stated that is accurate. The district will not use investment funds unless there is a need to make payroll.
- Ms. Apisa stated that some of the work that needs done will need to be bid out.
- Mrs. Johnson commented that the district should continue to advertise the work that has been completed (ex- when the track was completed and shared on social media).
- Joe Sturm commented that if the district takes ownership of the baseball complex there will be a need to invest a lot of funds in order to fix things and make them usable.
- Mr. Dubos commented that the district needs to find a large donor in order to cover the cost of some of these items.
- Ms. Apisa asked the board if they are in agreement to move forward with some of the repairs mentioned earlier.
- Mr. Sturm asked what projects need to be completed. Mrs. Sawicki stated that the interior of the building needs to be painted, sidewalks need repaired, gym floors need sanded down and repainted, roof repairs, visitors bleachers need repaired, girls dug out areas need updated.
 - Mr. Sturm stated that he does not want to put bandaids on items now and then have to redo them later.
- Mrs. Johnson stated that the Board needs to prioritize the repair needs and get started on fixing them.
- Brian Wharry stated that the district needs to keep moving forward and fix items but to not lose sight of the grand prize of updating /redoing larger projects down the road.
- Ms. Apisa recapped the conversation. The district will continue to keep moving forward and will make a list of repairs and obtain pricing. The board will review at a work session in November.
- Mr. Sturm asked how all of this would work. Do we need to hire an architectural firm? Ms. Apisa stated that the district does not need to hire an architectural firm. It will only add to our costs because they would do what we are already doing.
- Mrs. Johnson encouraged Mrs. Sawicki to continue to look for grants that are appropriate for the district. She stated that the new booster group seems to have a lot of momentum and that there may be a possibility to connect with them in the future for fundraising opportunities.
- Mr. Dubos commented that there are not many things that can get naming rights around campus. He stated that the district should offer the ability to have people pay for naming rights of items around campus. He also would like to see the addition of "Lowellville" added around the exterior of the campus in addition to all the Rocket signage.
- Mr. Wharry likes the addition of the 5th quarter, sock hops, tailgates, etc.
- Mr. Sturm asked the school to think about adding some color and/or murals when we schedule painting. He asked board members to bring their ideas for future repairs or additions to the next work session.
- Ms. Apisa stated that there will be a work session on Wednesday, November 19th at 5:00 p.m. in the library. The work session will be a continuation of the conversation held today and hopefully have some rough pricing estimates to share.

(25-10-8799)

2. Adjournment:

Moved by Jennifer Johnson, seconded by Brian Wharry to adjourn the work session at 7:19 pm.

ROLL CALL: Yon - Dubos- Johnson - Sturm - Wharry

Jennifer Johnson declared the motion carried 5-0

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Attachment A

Oct 8th, 2025 Ohio Legislative Activity

HB96 – Veto override of item 66 – effective in 90 days (November Ballots not impacted)

Levy language

- Item 66 not only eliminated the authority to renew fixed-sum substitute and emergency levies (which HB 129 could reverse, if passed) but also **enacted significant changes** that will apply to **all current expense levies** beginning with elections after January 1, 2026:
 - A district may **not submit a new money current expense levy** if its **general fund carryover balance** is greater than **100% of prior year expenditures**
 - Funds committed to permanent improvements within the next three years may be excluded from this calculation
 - Election notices and **ballot language for current expense levies** must now include:
 - The **percentage and dollar amount of the district's general fund carryover balance** (with wording for the notice and ballot language to be prescribed by the Secretary of State)
 - A change in describing the true value of property from "the county auditor's appraised value" to "the county auditor's market value."

House Ways and Means Committee passed

HB 129 - restructures certain levies into fixed-sum levies, modifies their treatment under the 20 mill floor, and creates renewal and fiscal distress options. **Bill passed 81 to 16**

Include all fixed sum levies in the calculation of the 20 mil floor

HB 309 - expands County Budget Commission authority to adjust levies. **Bill passed 77 to 19**

- **County Budget Commission (CBC) Authority.**
 - **Authority to Reduce Collections:** CBCs are granted authority to reduce the amount or rate of a tax levy (other than debt levies) if the commission determines the reduction is necessary to avoid unnecessary or excessive collections.
 - "Unnecessary collections" are defined as collections from a tax that go beyond the reasonably anticipated financial needs of the taxing authority for the specific purposes of the tax, after considering current fund balances, projected expenditures, and other available funding sources.
 - "Excessive collections" are defined as collections that exceed what is required to provide services at a level consistent with statutory obligations.
 - **Protection Period for Voted Levies:** CBC cannot reduce a newly approved operating levy during the first five years. This protection period does not apply to renewal levies.

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Attachment A Continued

- **Public Hearing Mandate:** Before reducing the amount or rate, the CBC must provide the taxing authority an opportunity to present information at a public hearing on whether and to what extent the levy should be reduced.
- **Tax Budget Requirements.**
 - **Carryover Balance Justification:** The annual tax budget must include an **explanation of the current or future need** for the unencumbered balance if any estimated carryover balance (which includes balances and receipts from sources other than the general property tax) **equals or exceeds 100% of the estimated expenditures** from that fund for the fiscal year. (R.C. 5705.29)
- **School District Millage Floor.**
 - If a school district's collections for current operating expenses fall below the required 20-mill floor (R.C. 3317.01), the district remains eligible for state education funding if that reduction resulted directly from:
 - A voluntary reduction of collections declared by the board of education in its tax budget (under R.C. 5705.29(E)).
 - An adjustment or reduction in collections made by the County Budget Commission (under R.C. 5705.32).

The budget commission for Fayette County -without notice voted to reduce the inside millage for both of the school districts in that county.

Both HB 129 and HB 309 are now pending referral to a committee in the Senate

Oct 15th –

House Ways and Means Committee will meet on the following legislation:

HB186 – Limit School District Property Tax Increases

HB 335 - Limit Inside Millage Revenue Increases

HB186 effect to Lowellville

TY25 (-\$92,297)

TY26 (-\$165,703)

TY27 (\$-165,703)

There will also be a two year look back if passed and the district may be obligated to pay back funds from there

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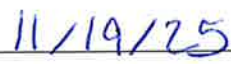
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS (BOARD POLICY: KD)

In order for the Board to fulfill its obligation to complete the planned agenda in an effective and efficient fashion, a maximum of 30 minutes of public participation may be permitted at each meeting. Each person addressing the Board shall give his/her name and address. If several people wish to speak, each person is allotted three minutes until the total time of 30 minutes is used. At the discretion of the Board President, the time limit may be extended to five minutes. During that period, no person may speak twice until all who desire to speak have had the opportunity to do so. Persons desiring more time should follow the procedure of calling the Board office to request to be placed on the regular agenda at the Superintendent's discretion. The period of public participation may be extended by a vote of the majority of the Board, present and voting.



President

Treasurer

Date

Date**MISSION**

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