

WESTERN DUBUQUE COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board of Education Minutes
Public In-Put Session Bond/PPEL Vote
January 19, 2012 – 7:00 p.m.

Call to Order:

Board President Bob McCabe called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Drexler Middle School gymnasium – Farley, Iowa.

Roll Call:

Present were Bob McCabe, Jeanne Coppola, Mark Knuth, Chad Vaske and Superintendent Jeff Corkery. Absent: Gary McAndrew

Board In-Put Session to Review and Discuss a Possible Bond Issue and Physical Plant & Equipment Levy Vote:

Superintendent Corkery provided a Power Point Presentation that outlined District plans to have a ballot issue presented to the voters on April 3, 2012 for a Bond issue and a Physical Plant and Equipment levy for 10 years. The proposals would be paid primarily from sales tax revenues and a reduction in the general fund tax rate resulting in no foreseeable increase in the District's overall property tax rate. Proposed projects would include security, classrooms and office renovations at the high schools, a gymnasium at Cascade HS, an auditorium at WDHS, district-wide technology upgrades; multipurpose rooms at Peosta and Cascade and athletic field upgrades.

The following topics were covered in the presentation to over 125 people in attendance. Previous construction projects; current building and infrastructure needs; PPEL fund needs and projections; methods of funding; PPEL levies used by other Iowa schools; sales tax revenue projections and current obligations against those revenues; use of sales tax revenues and other revenue sources to offset property tax increases; total WD Tax rate compared to other districts; tentative budget allocations for the projects; community advisory committees; construction project managers for the two high school projects and the use of previous studies documenting the District's needs.

School Board Comments:

Bob McCabe: We are a growing District and we need to keep working on the facility recommendations that were made by outside professional firms in 2005 and 2008. We need to finish what we have started and to also maintain our effort to keep the District's tax rate in the lower 1/3 of state school rankings. We are here to listen and no decisions have been made. We would like to go with an April 3, 2012 vote if enough support is apparent.

Jeanne Coppola: We do not need more facility studies. Use what we have and strive to make our schools the best they can be and provide security for our high schools. An auditorium is a classroom. Significant input has already been received and tonight's presentation reflects that input.

Mark Knuth: Facility recommendations made in the past will not go away. If we wait to accumulate funds for the cost of the projects it will take a lifetime and cost more.

Chad Vaske: We need to be pro-active. For little or no increase in taxes it will be less expensive to do these projects now rather than later.

Public Comment: The meeting then was opened for public comment. Following is a summary of the comments received.

- How will the buildings be maintained? Are there funds available for maintenance and upkeep?

- Will a formal petition to the school board be required?
- Where will school buses be paid from?
- There has been little change over the past several years in the improvement of the high school facilities. We should move as fast as we can so that future generations can benefit. The projects will keep the communities strong and help their businesses.
- People need to be educated on the projects.
- Building additions or improvements should be based on our needs and not on comparable structures in other school districts. An FFA building is needed. An auditorium should be considered if needed.
- April 3rd may be too early. Time and effort will be needed to ensure a favorable vote.
- Would a September vote be better than an April vote?
- Would like to see feedback from teachers. More input should be obtained before moving ahead.
- What will a spring election cost? Was the January 19th Telegraph Herald article concerning the proposed bond issue correct? Multi-year plans. What are the funding sources? Will the voted PPEL increase taxes. Were taxes increased due to the building of the Dyersville School? Will the sample ballot reflect a request to increase taxes? Iowa code says that a voted PPEL requires a tax asking increase.
- Projects are needed and the District should move forward with urgency.
- The Cascade Area Resources for Education (C.A.R.E.) pledges support and help with moving forward on the projects.
- Projects should be completed for the benefit of the students.

Superintendent Corkery thanked the attendees for their input and urged them to complete the survey that they were given covering information in the presentation.

Adjournment:

Motion by Coppola, second by Vaske to adjourn. Motion passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm on January 19, 2012.

David A. Wegmann
Board Secretary

Robert McCabe
President, Board of Education