



LONG RANGE FACILITIES PLANNING COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

MEETING NO. 5

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, January 6, 2016
Time of Meeting: 6:00 pm
Place of Meeting: Middle School North Library

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Welcome & Previous Meetings Recap: Committee chair Bryan D'Spain welcomed 38 committee members in attendance and reviewed the evening's agenda. Superintendent David Stelmazewski recapped the different areas of information studied by the committee since the group's first meeting: demographics, school finance, facilities needs assessment, technology long range plan, and district bonding capacity. He introduced Matt Gamble of Baselice & Associates public opinion group by letting the committee know that its input from the previous meeting had helped shape survey questions, specifically as to the different dollar amounts of possible bond initiatives that the community might support.

Community Survey Results: Mr. Gamble presented the results of the survey, conducted December 13-16, 2015. Survey respondents were asked a series of questions about a potential bond package. When asked if they would support a bond package of \$175 million that included funds for new schools, 49 percent of respondents - before receiving any other information - replied positively. After receiving information about enrollment growth in the district, tax implications and other details, 61 percent of the same respondents replied positively when asked about supporting a \$175 million bond, about building the needed schools now instead of delaying the process. The full report is posted on the Long Range Facilities Planning Committee webpage.

Review Summary of Priorities: The committee then reviewed a summary of its work from the previous meeting in which 20 of the 40 committee members favored securing funding to build three schools (two elementary, one middle) in a May 2016 bond package. Mr. Stelmazewski explained to the committee that using that feedback, administrators developed a scenario wherein three schools could be constructed and additional line item needs met by issuing a bond package of \$175 million. Baselice, as mentioned previously, constructed its survey accordingly.

Large Group Discussion: What followed was a table-by-table discussion of the merits of the \$175 million package and a more conservative package that would permit only two schools for \$150 million. It was noted that if the committee favored the smaller package, it was likely that the district would be back to the community with another bond election two to three years after passage of the package under discussion. The \$175 million scenario, administrators said, would meet the projected needs for facilities and allow the district to refrain from another

election for five to six years.

As the table discussions wrapped up and groups reported out, the overwhelming majority of committee members expressed favor and support for the \$175 million package. Support for securing funding for three schools now was strong. Specific expressions included,

- “May is the right time for this proposition. School safety initiatives need to be kept in the package.”
- “We are going to need a good effort to promote the bond in the community. There will be some ‘sticker shock,’ but we believe we need to ask for what is needed, including the three schools in this package.”
- “It is important to include three schools on the bond, while interest rates are low.”
- “Concerned about coming back with another bond proposal too soon after this one if we don't attempt to approve this package [with three schools]. The components in here that improve equity in the district need to stay in the package.”
- “We quibbled a bit about \$175 million; would like to whittle that down a bit if possible, but we think we can see it through successfully. Be sure to use short-term finance for technology.”

To a lesser degree, there was support expressed for the \$150 million package, with one table group concluding that a more conservative approach was recommended, given concerns about the tax impact of a bond package.

As the meeting concluded, members were asked if they could support a \$175 million package. The majority of members indicated that they could and that they were supportive of taking such a package as the committee's recommendation to the Board of Trustees on January 19.

Meeting Wrap-Up & Next Steps: All committee members were encouraged to attend the January 19 meeting of the Board of Trustees, at which time Mr. D'Spain will present the committee's recommendation.