

May 31, 2006

Dear Staff :

The West Bend Joint School District #1 Board of Education met last night to discuss the complexities of a long-range facilities plan. The meeting began at 5 p.m. in open session to receive public input. No public input was received at the meeting, although it was recognized by Board president Charles Hillman that input has been gathered monthly over the past two school years while the plan was being developed.

The Board then adjourned into closed session to discuss land options and related negotiated costs.

To assess the District's future land needs, a complete long-range facilities plan was hammered out that is estimated to cost \$119.3 million. It includes new school buildings; two land purchases; and the expansions, renovations, repairs, and additions that are required at all District schools.

To arrive at a comprehensive facilities proposal, the Board considered the priorities established through staff, parent and community input. The values of the community are: class sizes, safety at each school site, energy efficiency, adequate space to address the enrollment growth at all grade levels; providing academically strong programs including advanced coursework and a range of opportunities for students, within a cost effective, long-term design. In addition, the Board and administration have established a direction to advance virtual education and technology, expand pre-engineering offerings grades 6-12, and expand math, science and technology.

In response to the criteria above, the Board as a whole agreed last night that they would consider the following comprehensive long-range facilities plan at its June 11 regular Board meeting:

- Ø Close Barton; convert Silverbrook into a 600-student elementary school for the Barton students, as well as to alleviate enrollment pressure at Green Tree, McLane, and Fair Park elementary schools;
- Ø Complete energy efficiency work at Silverbrook;

Close Jackson Elementary School and build a new 650 student elementary school on a new site in the Village of Jackson;

- Ø Close Badger Middle School;
- Ø Build a two-story twin middle school complex, with two separate schools to maintain the house and small school climate, yet joined by a common space to sustain exploratory classes, advanced classes, and other special services;
- Ø Renovate the high school entrances and libraries, provide classroom additions for enrollment growth in special education and regular education, and address technology connectivity;
- Ø Address the Decorah Elementary School building conditions, including demolishing and replacing a wing of the building that is deteriorating;
- Ø Address the maintenance and expansion needs at Decorah, Fair Park, Green Tree, and McLane including items such as fire protection, windows, roofs, plumbing, parking, ceilings, heating and ventilating, and

items such as fire protection, windows, roofs, plumbing, parking, ceilings, heating and ventilating, and providing secure entrances at all schools.

Further, it is anticipated that the Board will ask one question on the ballot to seek voter approval to finance and implement the comprehensive facilities plan, which is projected to be completed over a three to five year period. All Board members acknowledged that proposing a comprehensive facilities plan to the community was the most effective solution because all projects must be addressed; a strategic plan allows for effective implementation; and if approved, the plan avoids increasing construction costs overtime. It is further projected that the sale of Badger, Barton, Jackson and Silver Maple schools will be used to off-set referendum debt, create a secure account for maintenance, and for possible land purchase for a future elementary school.

The education vision this plan represents for the future of the West Bend Joint School District #1 was important to the discussion last night. Noting that the buildings provide the environment for education, Charles Hillman made it clear in his comments that this facilities plan must prepare the District's schools with an infrastructure for current and future technology, including virtual access. Dr. Herdrich, Superintendent of Schools, stated that the educational vision for the future includes a depth of education programs that provides opportunities for students, and which prepares students in math, science, technology and related careers. Other Board members emphasized that the benefit of increased energy efficiencies must be realized in this facilities plan, and that new buildings must be designed to achieve fiscal responsibility and long-term functionality.

The facilities plan and options have been studied over a 20 month period by a Board-appointed Facilities Research Team, and with various opportunities for input from parents, staff and community members, including numerous consultations with the City of West Bend and Village of Jackson representatives.

The initial estimate to address all of the District's facilities needs was over \$140 million. Over the last several months, the firms of Epstein Uhen Architects and VJS Construction Services have worked with the principals of each school, Dr. Herdrich, and Warren Schmidt, director of facilities and operations, to reduce that estimate while achieving a comprehensive plan. This work led to the \$119.3 million proposal that will be an agenda item at the June 11 regular Board meeting, held at McLane Elementary School beginning at 7 p.m. If approved, the Board will then draft a referendum question to present to voters in November, 2007.

Information meetings regarding the facilities plan and tours are scheduled as follows: June 18, Badger Middle School 6:30 – 8 p.m.; July 12, Barton Elementary School 6:30-8 p.m.; August 16, Jackson Elementary School 6:30-8 p.m. The meetings are open and the public is encouraged to attend.

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