



MINUTES

SPECIAL WORK SESSION THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
NORTHWEST LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Monday, January 29, 2024 (6:00 PM)

1.0 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

1.1 Pledge of Allegiance

Request all to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

2.0 Roll Call

2.1 Call of the Roll

BOARD MEMBERS

Nicole Taulbee
Mark Gilbert
Jim Detzel
Chris Heather
Nancy Slattery

Number in Attendance: 11 Guests

3.0 APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

3.1 Motion to Adopt Agenda

The Board President recommended to adopt the agenda as presented.

ORIGINAL - Motion

Member (**Mark Gilbert**) Moved, Member (**Chris Heather**) Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'The Board President recommends to adopt the agenda as presented'. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **5** Nay: **0**. The motion **Carried 5 - 0**

Nicole Taulbee	Yes
Mark Gilbert	Yes
Jim Detzel	Yes
Chris Heather	Yes
Nancy Slattery	Yes

4.0 WORK SESSION TOPICS

A) Facilities Master Plan

4.1 Master Facilities Plan

The Board of Education met to review the recommendations from the Master Facility Advisory Committee, who presented their options as follows:

The Committee proposed that Colerain Elementary and Houston Early Learning Center be placed at the Houston site with two access drives closest to the site. This will maintain the athletic field at the Colerain Elementary and Middle School site. They proposed that the new Colerain Elementary be built first, then demolish the old building elementary to build Colerain Middle School

Discussion:

- **Mr. Detzel:** We can't have a K-8 building because of the athletic field? We could have the field at Colerain High School. Is it cheaper to build it upwards or outwards?
- **Mr. McKee:** Upwards, and this includes White Oak Middle School.
- **Mr. Heather:** The far south would go to the Colerain Middle School site, which is a further drive versus the current set up. The school would also not land in the subdivision.

The Committee reviewed the existing Pleasant Run Middle School and proposed moving it to the Hamilton Avenue side where the old PRE was, with an access road to Pleasant Run Middle School.

Discussion:

- **Mr. Heather:** That sits on a flood plan. Aren't there going to be issues?

Mr. McKee: We would go over the creek to avoid issues. We could also go with option two, which is to renovate and add on to the site and move the staff parking.

The existing Northwest High School site was reviewed along with two options for the new high school. Option one was to build on the back part of the property and place the Career Tech Center in the high school. Staff parking would be across from the stadium. Option two was to build in front of the current building instead. The Committee recommended to go with option one and relocate the athletic fields.

It was proposed that Colerain High School remain in its current site and build further back. The baseball and softball fields would be relocated

The Committee proposed an option to build a Central High School, which combines both of the high schools and would house 2,500 students. It would be built on the Colerain High School site and would require three phases to complete, over multiple

years. Northwest High School would be demolished and Pleasant Run Middle School would be built on that site. Busing would be needed for freshmen, sophomores, and non-public schools. This would require approximately 27 buses at \$100,000 each and \$60,000 per route, per year.

Discussion:

- **Mrs. Taulbee:** How far out would students need to be to transport?

Mr. Yater: Outside two miles.

- **Mr. Detzel:** Why are we considering busing high school students?

Mr. Yater: Because of the size of the District and the distance for all students to get to school.

- **Mr. Gilbert:** Are there any similar districts in Southwest Ohio?

Mr. McKee: There are other districts that provide busing, but they are not as large as we are.

Ms. Blust: This would include anyone who lives in our district and is attending. It would be a 30 minute bus ride. That would include approximately 15 non-public schools.

- **Mr. Tietzort:** The Career Tech is included with the plans. Is that the same size? Have we considered expanding it?

Mr McKee: That is getting into the funding piece, which we will talk about later with the various options.

The Committee recommended building one Central High School for operational efficiency and academic offerings with busing.

- **Mr. Heather:** In 1973, Northwest High School split off with 15,000 students. We have almost half of what they did then. We could do one high school.
- **Mrs. Taulbee:** Busing concerns me. We should offer it for students that have a need, but not open it up.

Mr. Yater: Would we need to change the policy to two miles for the high school, so we are not transporting so many students? We could continue with the plan for one high school and have busing as an operational discussion later.

Mr. Detzel: Don't you think that should be decided now? If we are going to decide on one high school, then we need to decide what we are spending on buses, not including employees. We struggled finding bus drivers now, do you not think we will struggle finding

them then? Every single school district is looking for bus drivers. What makes you think that we will be able to find 27 bus drivers?

Mr. McKee: Are you willing to pay for them?

Mr. Detzel: No, I wouldn't. We haven't had busing for 20 years for high school. Families will be able to work it out.

Mr. Yater: If the Board has the will to go to one high school, that's the part of the plan that we would submit to the state. We can always change our policy around busing, whether we go to two miles or one mile. If the will of the Board is one high school, with or without busing, then that is the direction we are going. Busing would be an ongoing conversation, whether it's something you would want to consider or not. It would increase costs. There would be upfront capital costs for buses and labor costs. We would have to add that onto the Bond Issue as an operating levy increase to operating costs.

- **Ms. Slattery:** What is the cost of contracting out for buses?

Mrs. Wells: About 25 percent more. When a public entity contracts a private entity, the private entity has to pay into social security and a public retirement system, which is about 24 percent between employee and employer that they charge on top of the contract. They also rotate the buses over time. When they buy new, they become their buses. If you were to ever bring it back in-house, depending on how many buses they own versus the district, you would have to buy all those buses at one time. We have looked at costs in the past and have been watching how districts who do contract out also have issues trying to find drivers.

- **Mr. Moore:** I have never been to Northwest High School in the mornings for drop offs or arrivals. On that site, can it handle the increased traffic patterns?
- **Mr. Scherz:** Would creating one middle school reduce the number of buses needed?

Mr. McKee: We would need to add ones within a mile of White Oak Middle School.

- **Mr. Heather:** Can't you declare impractical and not transport?
- **Mr. Yater:** Is it reasonable to go with one high school on the Colerain site, with or without busing? Are you in agreement that that is the direction to go?

Mrs. Taulbee: If you say it's feasible.

Mr. McKee: It will be tight.

- **Mr. Detzel:** When will we know what the cost is going to be?

Mr. Yater: At the end of this meeting when things are locked in, we will start crunching the numbers and get that to you. It will be another work session to look at those numbers.

- **Mr. Heather:** Will the cost be \$86 million for the high school and \$55 million for elementary?
- **Mr. Gilbert:** Is Transitions running out of room? Can we move those students somewhere else?

Mr. Yater: We would build Pleasant Run Middle School at Northwest High School now, and repurpose the Northwest High School Career Tech building for the alternative programs.

- **Mr. Detzel:** Is Northwest High School in that bad of shape that we can't wait? Can't we just use it for Pleasant Run Middle School? We have many students at Pleasant Run Middle school.

Mr. Yater: About 750, and Northwest High School has a capacity of 850. There are renovation options. If we renovate it, it would be more expensive than building a new one.

- **Mr. Detzel:** Why do you need the Career Center at Northwest?

Mr. Yater: We could repurpose it for the alternative programs. If we want Pleasant Run Middle School at the Northwest High School site, then we can get the figures for building new versus renovating to see which one you prefer.

- **Mr. Detzel:** Why do we have to renovate to put middle school students in the high school?

Mr. Yater: Northwest has long-term renovation needs. If we decide to keep Northwest High School and not build it new, we have to update things in order to maintain it long-term.

Mr. Detzel: Well you're going to have that with any building. You can do it as you go along.

Mr. Yater: We don't want to get into the same situation as we did with Monfort Heights. People are looking at us wondering why we didn't look ahead far enough to maintain the building over time, and now you've let it go, and now need a bunch of money. If we are going to keep Northwest High School and not build a new middle school, we do have to do some upgrades, so we can do our due diligence with the community to show them that we are doing the preventative maintenance, to make sure it is viable long-term.

- **Mr. Heather:** The state is only going to put in 20 percent
- **Mr. Yater:** Are you guys okay with Pleasant Run Middle School on the Northwest High School site and us bringing back numbers to look at renovating versus replacing, but maintain the Career Tech building for the alternative programs? We have one high school on

the Colerain High School site, Pleasant Run Middle School at the Northwest High School site with possible renovation or replacement based on the cost.

- **Mr. Detzel:** What's the size of the middle school? How many kids?

Mr. Yater: 750 right now.

Mr. Detzel: What's the size of the new middle school? What did you have planned?

Mr. McKee: 1157

Mr. Detzel: And you're going to bring some kids from Colerain Middle?

Mr. Yater: Taylor will be moving to Northwest High School. We will move Colerain Elementary to the Houston site, Colerain Middle School and White Oak Middle School combined to the Poole Road site, Central High School at the Colerain High School site, and Pleasant Run Middle School at the Northwest High School site as a new building or renovated building. That would be the four parts of the plan we bring back at the next Board Session with the associated costs.

- **Mrs. Taulbee:** Transitions?

Mr. Yater: Because of the size of the Career Center we would probably look at putting all the alternative programs there, and possibly vacating this property as well (Central Supports Offices) because this building is not going to last much longer.

- **Mr. Gilbert:** Our vocational students – how many kids is that on our site?

Mr. Yater: We have about 15 programs, with different amounts; I believe 250-300 kids total in our programs. This would be our junior and senior program kids, not elective kids.

Mr. Gilbert: Are we able to move them off-site to create more room?

Mr. Yater: Currently all of our Butler Tech kids that are on site at Colerain and Northwest, we still get partial funding for them because we are still doing their school academics. If we were to remove all of the Career Tech options at our high schools, then all of those students would have to go off site and we would lose that funding. We maintain some of their funding now because they are on our property and they are with our teachers part of the day.

Mrs. Taulbee: Does their funding outweigh the cost of the buildings?

Mr. Yater: We would get state funding to maintain the Career Tech on our site. We would still get the amount from the state for the building. Career Tech would still get funded.

Mr. McKee: We would have to bus them all.

Mr. Yater: Butler Tech does not have additional slots, so they would lose opportunities. They went to a lottery system a few years ago and they only have a certain amount of off-campus slots for all the districts they serve, so a lot of our students would lose that opportunity.

Mr. Detzel: They would have to go into the pool with the other 10 school districts, to get their name pulled through the lottery.

- **Mr. Heather:** We would need to piecemeal.

Mrs. Taulbee: We are not talking about doing it all at once.

Mr. Yater: We have a work session planned on February 12th, where we will talk about costs and phasing

- **Mr. Heather:** Replacing one elementary school with another one is one thing, but when you talk about combining the high schools into one and reducing administrators, it shows we are serious. While we need a new Colerain Elementary, we already have an elementary school. With re-appraisals going up and taxes increasing, I think we should give it a year.

Mr. McKee: We aren't talking about a Bond Issue or levy right now. We have to come up with a plan because at some point we have to deliver a plan to the state.

Mr. Yater: This is about having a plan in place for the state. We will talk about the funding of the plan at the next meeting. When that goes to voters, that is completely up in the air. Once we know what the plan is, we will monitor the numbers to let you know what it costs. We also need to continue to maintain the buildings that we have, so we will review that as well.

Mr. Heather: That's fine. What I can't wrap my arms around is renovating Monfort Heights.

Mr. Yater: Montfort Heights is not part of this plan because the Board approved to move \$10 million into the Capital Maintenance Fund to maintain the building without needing to remodel it.

- **Mrs. Taulbee:** I understand the financial piece of renovating versus replacing, but you guys need to consider these students deserve a building. Can you bring back anything around the buses?

Mr. Yater: We can bring rough numbers as to what it would look like. We wouldn't have the definite numbers. We have a lot of students that are currently ride-sharing or Ubering to

school.

Mr. Heather: I think they have Metro Now.

The plan will be presented for approval at a future regularly scheduled Board meeting.

The NWLSD Master Facility Plan Presentation can be viewed online as an ESB attachment with today's date.

5.0 ADJOURNMENT

5.1 Board President Called for Adjournment

The Board President asked for a motion and second for adjournment.

ORIGINAL - Motion

Member **(Mark Gilbert)** Moved, Member **(Chris Heather)** Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'The Board President recommends to adopt the agenda as presented'. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **5** Nay: **0**. The motion **Carried 5 - 0**

Nicole Taulbee	Yes
Mark Gilbert	Yes
Jim Detzel	Yes
Chris Heather	Yes
Nancy Slattery	Yes

The meeting ended at 7:05 PM.

Agenda item attachments are saved in PDF format and are viewable by the public. Waycross community media video tapes Board meetings. Taped meetings are available on-line at www.waycross.tv

President

Attest

Treasurer