



MINUTES

SPECIAL WORK SESSION THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
NORTHWEST LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Monday, February 12, 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: 8 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 (**Chris Heather**) Moved, Member (**Jim Detzel**) 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 final Master Facility Plan with associated costs and to explore funding options.

Previously the Board inquired as to the public/private partnership funding option used by Mason City Schools. The Superintendent and Treasurer researched and reported that Mason City Schools' community passed 9 mills to complete their Master Facility Plan, as well as, utilized the state CFAP program, partnered with the City of Mason for the land to build a new school complex and community center and entered into a public/private partnership with private entities to offset the additional debt for their athletic complex.

The Board of Education reviewed the recommendations from the January 29, 2024 Special Work session: "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 WorkSession with the associated costs."

Also brought back was the Master Facility Advisory Committee's proposal that the new Colerain Elementary be built first, then demolish the old elementary building to build a new Colerain/White Oak Middle School. Or, build the new Colerain/White Oak Middle on the existing Colerain Middle football field.

If the new larger middle school building is built on the existing football field, the flow of traffic in and out of the school will be tight. The benefit of building on the football field is that it allows for building Colerain Elementary and combining Colerain/White Oak Middle at the same time. The Board is in favor of replacing Colerain Middle at the Colerain Elementary site.

Discussion:

- **Mr. Detzel:** Why build a new football field at a cost of almost \$1,500,000 when athletes could play on the Colerain High School football field?

Mr. McKee: Tonight we are presenting several options and we'd like to make a decision about Colerain/White Oak Middle School, Pleasant Run Middle School and the central high school athletic fields.

- **Mr. Gilbert:** I have some concerns from a safety perspective.

Mr. McKee: There's also a potential security issue building that far back off the road. There are things we can do to deter potential bad actors.

Mr. Yater: The site poses logistical challenges for a lot of reasons.

Mrs. Taulbee: We would prefer to build on the existing site.

Mr. Gilbert: We're spending approximately \$70,000,000 on this building. We would like people to be able to see it.

Mr. Heather: This seems like we're shoehorning it in.

The options for Pleasant Run Middle School were reviewed. The Committee proposed an option to build a central high school, which combines both existing 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 would be built on that site. The second option is to relocate Pleasant Run Middle to a renovated Northwest High School building.

Discussion:

- **Mr. McKee:** Renovating NWHS would require a waiver from the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) to earn credits. Local funds can be spent however the district desires. The Northwest High School building has more space than needed for a middle school.
- **Mr. Detzel:** Where on the Northwest High School site would the middle school be built?

Mr. McKee: We would demolish the existing Northwest High School and build Pleasant Run Middle in the same spot. Both building or renovating requires a new central high school to be built first. Renovating involves gutting the school and putting everything back again, including a new roof. However, that still leaves the building with a 50 year old foundation, sewer lines and exterior walls. Older buildings create building code issues and with that comes increased costs.

Mr. Denzel: It costs more to renovate.

Mr. Heather: The bones of the building seem good, how renovating costs more seems odd.

Mr. McKee: The foundation and the exterior walls could be in good shape but once you tear into walls, issues can compound. The 1999 addition has issues with the exterior walls leaking.

- **Mrs. Taulbee:** How many kids are in the alternative program and how many do we anticipate using Northwest Career Center?

Mr. Yater: 125 and it will allow us to expand.

Mr. Detzel: I like the option of building a new school at the Northwest High School site.

- **Mrs. Taulbee:** What about the fields in the back?

Mr McKee: There would be some upkeep for community use or additional high school use.

The Committee recommended building one central high school for operational efficiency and academic offerings. 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.

Athletic facilities are 100% locally funded and will cost approximately \$12,500,000. The cost includes field relocations, an upgraded stadium, and a regulation track.

Discussion:

- **Mr. Yater:** This is an opportunity to bring everything up to date.
- **Mr. Heather:** It may be hard to put the baseball fields in the corner by Poole Rd.

Mr. Todd Thackery (SHP Architect): It would have a short left field and right field because it's tight.

Mr. McKee: If we can do a stadium we could adjust all fields and net the outfield.

- **Mr Gilbert:** With the combined high school, how big will the stadium be?

Mr. Thackery: Seating for 4,000 home fans and 3,000 away fans

- **Mr. Heather:** This would be self-raised, local money?

Mr. McKee: This could be a separate bond for the locally funded investment.

Mr. Heather: Are you sure they only offer \$16,000,000?

Mr. McKee: \$16,000,000 is what we earned on Phase 1.

- **Mr. Gilbert:** How big will the new building be? How long will it take?

Mr. McKee: Three years, a bit longer if we build in phases.

Mrs. Taulbee: Two or three stories tall.

Mr. Thackery: Based on how everything connects some parts of the building will be two stories other parts such as the gymnasium and auditorium will be three stories.

- **Mrs. Taulbee:** What about busing?

Mr. McKee: We will dive into that once we are ready to commit. There is more we can do with athletic costs such as adding the fieldhouse into the Master Facilities Plan and bond.

The Board of Education reviewed local funding options for the Master Facilities Plan.

Discussion:

- **Mrs. Wells:** The November 2023 five year forecast includes an additional one-time carryover of \$11,000,000. The result of the increase in property value reappraisal and the corresponding decrease in state funding is an additional net effect of \$8,000,000 over five years. I recommend a one-time \$20,000,000 transfer from the General Fund to the Master Facility Fund to assist our community and address our infrastructure needs.

- **Mr. Gilbert:** Can we move the funds back if we need them?

Mrs. Wells: No, but also realize \$20,000,000 is approximately two and a half months of operating expenses.

- **Mr. Gilbert:** Would we save on operating expenses by combining the high schools?

Mr. Yater: Some.

Mr. McKee: There would be savings in utilities.

The Board reviewed Northwest Local School District's local debt limit.

Discussion:

- **Mrs. Wells:** The local debt limit is \$139,000,000. If the District is in a state funding program such as the Expedited Local Partnership Program (ELPP) or the Classroom Facilities Assistance Program (CFAP) the debt leeway is 100% of the local share of the project + 50% local share vs the max local debt limit.

Mr. Yater: ELPP is locally funded upfront but earns state credits. CFAP is a state co-funded program.

The Board reviewed options for the state share of funding.

Discussion:

- **Mr. McKee:** The Ohio Department of Education annually creates the school districts' equity rank. In 2016 Northwest Local School District (NWLSD) was ranked in the 78 percentile and qualified for a state share of 22%. In 2024 NWLSD was ranked in the 55

percentile and qualified for a state share of 45%. The rankings are good for the entire fiscal year based on a three year average of property valuation per pupil.

Mr. Yater: We have contacted our state legislators. Our current agreement is at 22%. We are advocating for 45% and to maintain our \$16,000,000 in credits.

The Board reviewed phasing options for the Master Facilities Plan. Phase 1 began in 2015 and included the construction of three new elementary schools: Struble Elementary, Taylor Elementary and Pleasant Run Elementary. A Phase 2 of completing the entire remainder of the Plan would cost \$369,000,000 but the debt limit prohibits this option at this time. Various other phasing options were presented but many are not feasible because of debt limitations.

All phasing options presented can be viewed online as an ESB attachment with today's date.

Discussion:

- **Mr. Heather:** What about merging the high schools?

Mr. McKee: Similar to what we looked at previously due to the debt limit it's not a possibility. If we take the stadium out we could get close.

Mr. Heather: Could we delay the stadium? It's not used much.

Mrs. Taulbee: It's used everyday.

One phasing plan discussed designated a Phase 2 with Colerain Elementary and Colerain Middle built through ELPP and the remainder in segmented phases through CFAP.

- **Mr. Heather:** Chris, (McKee) which one would you choose?

Mr. McKee: Pick the day, they both have issues.

Mr. Heather: How long have we been talking about replacing Colerain Middle? Since I've been in school.

- **Mr. Detzel:** I have concerns for Northwest High School. We'd be losing a high school and having to wait for a middle school.

Mr. Heather: Chris (McKee) What would you recommend?

Mr. Heather: Colerain Elementary/Colerain Middle as a Phase 2 to get started and it fits within our debt limit.

- **Mr. Taulbee:** Building Colerain Elementary/Colerain Middle leaves out the Northwest side of the district. I think Colerain Elementary/Central High School is the best option. Families will stay and everyone will see something happening in their area.
- **Mr. Yater:** Once we are offered CFAP we have 18 months to secure funding.
- **Mrs. Slattery:** We need to show better outcomes for students, better scores and discipline before asking the community to pay.

Mr. Heather: We continue to show up in the news, the first step to take is improving discipline. PTA membership and community partners are down. We need more parental involvement. It's cultural.

Mrs. Slattery: That's not to say there aren't great students coming out of NWLSD, but this is the public's perception.

Mr. Yater: Our schools are safe and are improving. We are trying to increase parental involvement. The infrastructure of our buildings are at the point where our community will be inconvenienced with consolidated buildings operating a day and night shift, if we have a catastrophic failure and have to close a building. Then we will lose more families. We've started to see a shift since the pandemic. Our scores are the highest they've been since 2014.

- **Mrs. Taulbee:** I think we should sit on the plan until our number is called. I understand the need, but I like addressing the high school first.

Mr. Heather: In 2006 we talked about one high school and were ready to succeed and create our own district.

Mr. Detzel: Any district with two high schools will struggle to combine.

Mr. Gilbert: Colerain Elementary/Colerain Middle is high risk, but for buy-in from the community Colerain Elementary/Central High School may be the better option. I'm wary about leaving Colerain Middle alone though.

- **Mr. McKee:** If we wait for CFAP we could do everything but Pleasant Run Middle and segment Colerain Middle for about 4 mills.
- **Mr. Heather:** What would we call a central high school?

Mr. Yater: If this is our approved plan, we would have to start the process of bringing the two together.

- **Mr. Gilbert:** Is there a partnership we can do to assist with this?

- **Mr. Heather:** I agree with Nicole, a new high school is exciting.

Mr. Detzel: Agree, this would bring in the whole district.

- **Mr. Yater:** With CFAP we have to wait for the state to call our number.
- **Mrs. Slattery:** Can the current Colerain High School hold the students from both high schools?

Mr. Yater: Not with our career tech classes and the blended labs that combined classrooms and reduced space.

- **Mr. Gilbert:** Will Colerain Elementary and Colerain Middle make it until CFAP?

Mr. McKee: It's a concern. There are issues with the front facade, gym and roof.

Mr. Gilbert: It could be a black eye if something happened.

Mr. Heather: St. James School was built in 1912 and it's in excellent condition. Something has to be done.

- **Mr. Yater:** We will bring this to a future Board meeting.

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

5.0 EXECUTIVE SESSION

5.1 Executive Session

The Superintendent recommended the Board of Education approve the motion to move into executive session to discuss the Superintendent's Evaluation.

ORIGINAL - Motion

Member (**Mark Gilbert**) Moved, Member (**Jim Detzel**) Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'The Superintendent recommends that the Board of Education approve the motion to move into executive session as listed'. 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 Board approved a motion to move into executive session at 7:53 PM.

5.2 Return from Executive Session

The Board returned from executive session at 8:49 PM.

6.0 ADJOURNMENT

6.1 Board President Called for Adjournment

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

ORIGINAL - Motion

Member (**Jim Detzel**) 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 8:50 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