

HYDE PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
INFORMATIONAL MEETING ABOUT THE PROPOSED BUILDING PROJECT  
AND JUNE 7 BOND VOTE  
MEETING MINUTES  
HYDE PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GYM  
THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 2016

Board members present: Lisa Barry, Patti Hayford, Richard Bailey

Others: Marilyn Frederick, Dylan Laflam, Diane Reilly, Colin Lindberg, Randy Burnett, two engineers, about 35 members of the public

The meeting started at 7:00. Lisa Barry introduced architects Randy Burnett and Colin Lindberg, facilities manager Dylan Laflam and principal Diane Reilly.

Colin Lindberg showed sketches of his firm's plans for the building and site. He showed where buses will come in. Students will exit from the buses right to the school and would not interact with parking cars. There will be a separate parent drop-off area. Students being dropped off by parents will have to cross the bus lane, but he thinks bus drivers, more than anyone else, are aware of safety to children so the hazard is reduced. Their plan increases the number of parking spots from about 48 to about 65. They suggest regrading the site so the entrance can be level with the parking lot and the ramp and steps will no longer be needed.

The character of the old building is great. They plan to enrich it with painting and repairs and a better solution to replace the historic stair inside. They suggest a metal roof system would work well. It would be less combustible than asphalt shingles and they hope it would last 50 years. The downside is that we would have to make sure not to have circulation in areas where snow could be coming off the roof. Entrances and drives would need to be protected from falling snow. An elevator will be added and the stairs will be improved.

C. Lindberg showed pictures of a cardboard model illustrating the proposed look for the outside of the building. They propose opening up the lobby. Now there are bathrooms and closets in that area. They suggest relocating them.

The 1951 wing has a linear series of 8 classrooms. That wing was built when building and energy costs were much lower. Now we are required to meet new energy codes. Walls, foundations, roofs, windows and systems are all important in meeting those codes. Now the 1951 classrooms have unit vents that bring air in and heat it. Teachers have to speak over them and they have no ability to recycle heat.

The architects were originally trying to see what needed to be done to make the existing '51 wing efficient. There would have been difficulties installing the ductwork needed to save heat. The walls don't have much insulation. The roof is very simple. The doors open directly into the corridor. Doors should be pocketed so they don't smash into someone

walking in the corridor. Critical pieces are the need to increase insulation for the roof and the ability to upgrade the ventilation system.

C. Lindberg showed where the current stairwell is. Currently people passing the stairwell have to walk through the stair landing and those using the stairwell have to go through the lobby to exit the building after coming down the stairs. Stairs should be in a protected area all the way to the outside.

After evaluating the '51 wing the architects thought we should consider stacking the classrooms in a more compact addition. It would have a basement and central heating system. Less ductwork would be needed because of the more compact design. He showed the plan for the new addition. They suggest putting the elevator where the stairwell currently is. The lobby area would be opened up and circulation would be changed. A new stair would be put in in a new location. The proposal is to replace the current '51 wing with 3 floors that would each have 3 classrooms, for a total of 9 classrooms.

A sprinkler system will be put in for the entire complex. Hyde Park doesn't have enough water for it so we will need to put in tanks underground or in the basement. They suggest moving the kitchen to where stage is currently located. There will be upgraded bathrooms at the other end of the gym. There will be two stair systems. One is at the end of the 3-story addition. They don't propose having the elevator going to the basement because of the rubble stone under the old building. The roof over the gym will be retrussed to handle the insulation. A sink and a closet would be in each classroom. The ventilation and heating system would be very quiet. A cooling coil could be added. Randy Burnett showed how the building will look from the outside and explained how natural light will be brought into the center.

One of the engineers who worked with the architects said the unit ventilators in use are basically holes in the wall with a fan blowing in. They are not very efficient. They propose energy recovery ventilation. It takes in and exhausts air and uses the air being exhausted to preheat the outdoor air. Now we have a constant flow of outdoor air. The new units would have CO2 sensors so we would bring in only as much air as is needed. If a room is not occupied we would bring in none or only a little.

The school does not need to be cooled. That affects the heating system chosen. Some other systems would have better payback if we needed to cool the building also. The engineers constructed a computer energy model of the whole building in order to make an informed decision on what system would make sense. They compared projected utility costs to the cost of constructing the system and chose the system with the best payback.

One of the engineers said there will be multiple units around the building to minimize ductwork. Right now there are two different heating systems for the campus. The 1898 portion has one heating system and also its own electrical and plumbing service. The rest of the building has another electrical service, another heating system, and another plumbing service. The goal is to have one central location for all equipment. The size of the boiler takes into account the energy saved with energy recovery. There will be some

new toilet rooms and as part of the project every sink or toilet will be upgraded. Domestic water service will be consolidated into one service along with what feeds the sprinkler system. Every classroom will get its own temperature control zone. As a room needs heating or doesn't the control valve will open or close for that zone. Pumps will slow down as load decreases, leading to huge energy savings. Lighting will be LED, which is efficient.

R. Burnett said they want to be very mindful of the upfront cost but also the long term cost. One question that has come up was whether they considered a 2-story addition. The answer was yes. One thing that helped drive them to this design was that it has less perimeter. A more compact design is more efficient for heating. The original building is already 3 stories and we need an elevator to service that. The building currently has about 37K sq. ft. With this proposed new plan it will have about 46K sq. ft. A lot of the increase in square footage is tied up in circulation improvements. Some hallways don't currently meet codes. They are very narrow and have doors that swing into them. Projected enrollment was pretty flat. There is not a lot of demand for growth. They are adding one classroom. That accommodates expected growth for PreK because of new legislation. There are a lot of functions that have been mandated over the last 10-15 years that the school runs now that weren't taking place when the original design was put into place. The new layout addresses a lot of those functions that don't currently have the greatest intended design spaces for them.

Marilyn Frederick presented financial information about the proposed bond. When we first started talking about Act 46 and unification, the concept was that all the LNSU towns would become a single district. That didn't happen. There is going to be a modified unified union district. Unification will save tax dollars.

M. Frederick showed the current tax rate for each of the 4 towns that will be in the new district and what the tax rate will be after unification. For Hyde Park there will be a 5.3 cent savings. There is a single tax rate for all the towns in the new district. The 8 cent tax reduction is not off the current tax rate but off the new one. Every town will have slightly different tax savings.

There is a little bit of a cost impact from the bond but not the impact there would be if we had not unified. Unification helps us dramatically. The tax rate will be higher than if we didn't have bond at all, however.

In Johnson and Eden, the schools didn't start paying principal on their new bonds until they retired the existing bonds. That way they had no spikes in their tax rate. M. Frederick proposes that we delay principal payment on the HPES bond for 3 years, just paying interest during that time. The first year we would pay principal would be 2022. Lamoille Union's bond will be retired that year so overall bonded debt will go down.

Right now the cost of borrowing is 3.23%. That is one of the lowest interest rates we have seen for 20 to 30 year bonds. The Federal Reserve has said they will raise interest rates. Inflation is about 2%. She thinks this is a strategic time to borrow.

The cost of the new bond can be offset by retirement of existing bonds. The projected total bond payment is \$15.4 million, but adjusted for inflation it would be \$10.9 million in today's dollars. Dollars invested will add asset value. We have an obligation to keep the building up.

Paul Trudell said he was on the FEO committee after the last bond vote. He asked if M. Frederick is saying the bond would have no effect on property taxes. M. Frederick said it has an effect. We are still raising money. If we didn't do anything we would see even greater savings on the tax rate due to Act 46 unification.

P. Trudell said the previously proposed bond was going to have a bigger impact. M. Frederick said one reason the impact is lower now is that a larger unit has more students and number of students is very important in determining the tax rate. The tax rate depends on spending per equalized student. There is a higher tax rate if we have higher spending per student, so it is important to have more students.

Gary Smith said he was also on the FEO committee. As he understood it, the 4 towns that consolidated were all sharing equally on this project. That was how it was explained at the last meeting. But according to M. Frederick's handout, it looks like Hyde Park's tax rate will jump up dramatically in 2022, but that won't happen in Johnson. Why not, if all are sharing equally and Johnson and Hyde Park are similarly sized? M. Frederick said the table shows the existing bonded indebtedness for each town, not each town's share of this project. L. Barry said it shows the combined total that as a unified district we will all pay part of each year. M. Frederick explained that the table doesn't show what we will be paying, but what our bond will cost the district.

G. Smith said the school website the other day said our taxes will go down. M. Frederick said they will go down because of the Act 46 incentives, even though there is a cost to the bonded debt. With the new blended tax rate and the tax incentives we will still have a savings.

G. Smith said it will cost us less now because we are not paying interest, but what will the bond cost us 10 or 20 years from now? M. Frederick said everyone's bonded debt goes down. Eden just bonded and so did Johnson. Someone will eventually have to bond for something but she would try to use the same strategy of staggering. All the schools are in good shape right now and don't seem like they will need bonds soon.

G. Smith said he is wondering how much more his tax bill will be down the road. That number is important to people. M. Frederick said if everything else stays the same and this is the only thing we are paying for, taxes will go down because we are getting an 8 cent reduction from the blended tax rate, then 6 cents, 4 cents and 2 cents in successive years. G. Smith said he thinks it is better to look at the big picture and the cost in the future. M. Frederick said bonded debt will go down over time. If that were all we had to pay, we would have lower taxes in the future. She can't tell about other future expenses, though. D. Reilly said the state is keeping all the schools in line with a threshold so we

can't increase our budget much. Jim Fontaine said the school tax rate may change, but it won't be because of the school building. Bonded debt for the unified district is going to stay low.

J. Fontaine asked about the bathrooms. Is there a boys' room and a girls' room or unisex bathrooms? C. Lindberg said they have sketched it both ways.

A member of the public said she is a proponent of having a bathroom in the classroom. Was that looked at? C. Lindberg said they had that discussion. Their current plans don't show it that way. There is a cost savings if we can group the bathrooms. But it is not too late to decide to have bathrooms in classrooms.

A member of the public said she would like FEO committee members to talk about the proposed plan and how they feel about it.

P. Trudell said he has some concerns about the plan. He thinks it is more than what is necessary. On the site plan, it would be nice to separate vehicular and bus traffic. He would like to see that. If we delete the 6K square feet in the '51 wing, that generates 17K more sq. ft. The new square footage includes an elevator and hallways. Why not build the new part so we are only building 6K sq. ft. and maybe a little more to provide small group rooms like the teachers want? When he looks at the original building he likes the way it stands by itself. He is concerned that the new addition will reduce the value of the old building for Hyde Park. He would be happier with a 2 story addition so the 1898 wing could shine.

P. Hayford said a 3-story addition was something she thought about last time. She likes the way the architects have made the building look whole. She doesn't think the addition ruins the old building. The building will look pretty much the same as the JES building. The architects have addressed parking, the cost isn't \$18 million and there is no real added space. They have used every inch of the school. That is what we asked them to do.

A community member said when he hears about stone facades he hears "cha-ching." Are there things like that that we don't need to do? For instance, the existing windows in the gym are okay. He didn't see anything about the cost to change the location of the playground.

L. Barry said the proposal does include moving the playground. D. Reilly said the playground will still be accessible right from the parking lot. It will just be moved back some. We will add a bathroom accessible from the outside, which will be locked at night. As far as windows, the efficiency of new windows is really amazing. New windows will make it brighter.

C. Lindberg said a clapboard base is less expensive than stone. These are issues they are happy to talk about. They want the building to look as good in 10 years as when it is put up. They have a budget in which some line items might be moved around. Hopefully the community will support this proposal. The school is due for a lot of improvements. The

architects feel their design improves the geometry and volume of the building as viewed from town. From a mechanical standpoint it makes sense for the building to be more compact. Then ductwork can be shorter and there can be more efficiency.

R. Burnett said the 1994 wing will have 2 kindergarten and 2 preschool classrooms. They have bathrooms in them.

A community member asked if preschool and kindergarten are all day. D. Reilly said kindergarten is. Preschool will be all day when we have two classrooms. Right now it can't be all day because there is only one preschool room.

R. Burnett said grades 1 and 2 will be on the first floor of the new building. Life safety codes mandate what age groups can go on what levels. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor would be grades 3 and 4 and the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor would have grades 5 and 6 which currently are on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the 1898 wing.

J. Fontaine asked about projected energy savings. One of the engineers said the proposal is to use propane for heating. The other engineer said it is hard to justify anything other than gas or oil due to the low prices now. They have projected energy usage after the renovation but not current actual usage. D. Laflam said there will be almost no energy savings. The main reason for that is that the 1898 wing now has no HVAC. When we add a new mechanical system there will be savings in fuel but electric usage will stay level. Indoor air quality will improve. Adding proper ventilation will suck up the savings.

A community member asked if there is a way to put in the capability to have air conditioning in the future. Would it be cheaper in the long run to do it now? One of the engineers said if we knew right now that we wanted to cool the building, there are more efficient ways to do that. But we are not planning to cool it. There will be provisions to implement air conditioning in the future, but it won't be the most efficient way. A water source heat pump would be more efficient if we knew we wanted cooling. But right now because fuel oil costs are so low there is not good payback for a heat pump. Fossil fuels are the most economical now.

D. Laflam said his understanding is that the units have humidification. He is hoping that will help. We will be able to keep indoor temperatures cooler with a better HVAC system, so the necessity for air conditioning should go down. He thinks the new HVAC system will address most of the uncomfortable temperatures we have in the building.

One of the engineers said unit ventilators bring in hot, humid air direct from outside. The new system would dehumidify air as it brings it in, which makes it more comfortable. There will be some cooling from that.

A community member said he sees two different interest rates listed in two different places – 1.5% and 3.23%. What is the interest rate for the bond? M. Frederick said it is 3.23. The 1.5% figure is for short term interest for borrowing necessary just to get to the bond – legal costs, etc.

J. Fontaine asked how bidding is coming in now. R. Burnett said there is a bidding cycle. The timing they recommended which led to voting next week is to take advantage of bidding cycles. The hope is to have bid documents ready to go so we will be first in line for the winter bidding process. They have found they get the best pricing in the November/December period.

Carroll Peters said when he was on a tour of the building they were shown the heating system in the old building and how bad it was but it wasn't said then that there was another system in another part of the building. Is the other system okay? D. Reilly said those boilers are at risk.

C. Peters asked about the proposed location of the loading dock and whether it will be too steep to access it. C. Lindberg explained how the access will work. R. Burnett said they contemplated having the loading dock closer to the kitchen but the grades were challenging. The grades where they propose putting the loading dock are not as challenging and the proposed location provides great access for maintenance. There will be first responder access to about 80% of the building perimeter.

P. Trudell asked if the new heating system will have less or more heat loss than the existing system. One of the engineers said they can figure that out. His understanding is that it will be basically net zero. There are certain codes we are now required to meet, like ventilation requirements. Although they are making the system as efficient as possible, we will be adding things to meet the new code requirements. R. Burnett said even though the efficiencies wash out, we will get an upgrade of the facility. We will have cleaner air and the building will be properly heated. D. Reilly said we won't have snow coming in the windows and doors. Currently we have open airways and drifts in the hall. One of the engineers said there will be an opportunity to fine tune energy use by setting it back during holidays, etc.

C. Peters said the village voters approved a solar project. Their propaganda says there is projected to be 1 cent power produced locally and there are supposed to be more projects to produce our own power locally. Has any thought been given to do something more electrical instead of propane? That would reduce our carbon footprint. One of the engineers said that idea was modeled. The system that would work would be an electric based heat pump. We would need a backup water heating system for times when the temperature was very low. Because of the need for the backup system the cost was prohibitive. But we could entertain that. Another possible system would be a water source heat pump system, either geothermal or with a boiler and cooling tower. That could be used for heating and cooling, but it would be more expensive. They looked at prices and heating costs for all those systems. They made the recommendation they did because of the currently low fuel costs.

C. Peters said we do have to do something. He doesn't know if this is the project to approve.

A community member asked how long construction would take. R. Burnett said the goal would be to have a contractor in place by early February of next year. We would have as tight a schedule as possible to minimize the impact on education. What has been discussed is starting as soon as school is out in 2017. We anticipate about a 6-7 month construction period. D. Laflam said we are looking at a June 1 start date in 2017 with completion by February break 2018, possibly getting done a little sooner. The catch is that we have to give them the whole site and not house students here. He and D. Reilly are working on a few plans but they are not looking into it too much until after the vote. R. Burnett said they looked at a 2-phase approach with construction taking place in two different summers with kids in the school in between, but that would impact two separate educational years and there would be more cost because the contractors would have to remobilize.

A community member asked what options there are if the bond doesn't pass. L. Barry said there will be some expenses that will need to go into the regular budget. D. Reilly asked M. Frederick to explain what would happen then. M. Frederick said we would have to prioritize. We can't go any further with reducing the cost of the project. We would be talking about having to do short term borrowing of hundreds of thousands, if not over a million dollars, to get up to code. The expense would be put in the operating budget. If we throw that much money into the budget in one year instead of spreading it out it will skyrocket our cost per pupil. Our tax rate would jump and if we go over the penalty spending threshold the amount over the threshold will be double taxed. It's a really bad idea to pay for the work by short term borrowing. It would really affect the tax rate.

A community member said she was here when the board was talking about an \$18 million bond. It seems this is a much better plan. She credits the board. It seems like they really tried this time to make it more affordable. From her perspective it seems better. There was applause.

L. Barry said she has been very impressed working with the architects. It seemed like they were really thinking about the town. She feels good about the plan. She was not in favor of the \$18 million one but she looks for support for this one. The amount was higher originally but the architects made some changes and made it lower.

A community member said he would like to hear what the plan would be for where students would go to school during construction.

D. Laflam said the #1 option they are hoping to be able to use is the hotel in Morrisville that the courthouse has been occupying. Option #2 is using facilities in town. The sheriff's department could rent buildings they bought and parish halls could be used. Option #3 is to use other schools. Lamoille Union has a little space. Belvidere has a whole school that is not being used, but it is not close. The last option would be renting portable classrooms, probably putting them at Lamoille Union. There is no place on this property for them. That is D. Laflam's least favorite option, but it is easy. After a positive vote we will pursue those options more. We may use a combination of several.

D. Reilly said the teachers are aware of the possibility. They are making plans now. Everybody is excited and ready to move forward. She thinks it will be an adventure for the kids.

L. Barry thanked everyone for coming. The meeting ended at 9:09.

*Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths*