

MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING HELD FEBRUARY 5, 2019

Present: Mayor Tutaj, Alderpersons Wattawa, Schandel, Brickner, Feirer, Damon and Drew

Also Present: City Administrator Johnsrud, City Attorney Alexy, City Clerk/Treasurer Uecker, City Engineer Dejewski, Fire Chief Poplar, Police Chief Hunter, School Superintendent Peuse and Director of Finance Jonathan Mitchell, interested citizens

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Council President Brickner.

Superintendent Blake Peuse and Director of Finance Jonathan Mitchell gave the background, need and cost of the St. Francis School District referendum presentation to the Council. Superintendent Peuse reviewed the process and facility studies that went in to determining the needs for the District and therefore the referendum to borrow funds for updates to the school district. The needs were broken into two categories – Academic and Facility Planning.

Academic Needs

The District wants to maintain high quality education in the District; equity in programing; and outstanding extra-curricular activities. There are students with economic disadvantages, special education needs and English language learners – all of which are higher than the state average.

Facilities Planning

Finance Director Mitchell explained what has been done since the last facility upgrades. Several options were looked at including consolidating the K-8 schools, closing Deer Creek Recreational Center, reducing programs and services and securing additional operational funding through an approved referendum.

He then broke down the challenges by school:

- Deer Creek: needs HVAC upgrades, has narrow corridors that limit accessibility, lower concentration of resident students in the surrounding neighborhood, site configuration is hard for redesign and traffic flow
- Willow Glen: square footage is small, roofing is older, music room is located in the center of the building
 - ✓ Opportunities include larger hallways and classrooms, better parking area

The District contacted experts in HVAC, electrical and plumbing consultants as well as having architectural reviews and monitoring. There was also a Facilities Study Committee that reviewed the schools as well as reviewed and refined the suggestions made by consultants. A community survey was also done and that feedback was considered in the decision making process. Finally, all the recommendations went to the Board of Education for their review and refinement.

The District is proposing to do the following:

- Close Deer Creek academic building
- Renovate Willow Glen to be K4-8 grade building

- Enlarging parking at Willow Glen with a 2 – lane drive thru
- Gym addition
- Classroom redesign/renovated

Per Mr. Mitchell, these changes would result in ongoing operational savings of approximately \$600,000 per year. The District would do a “phase down” period of 5 years to make the transition to one school easier.

The Recreation Building would stay in tack at Deer Creek. The District is proposing to strengthen you and adult recreational programing, maintain youth athletics and potentially add athletic field space or single family homes in the area where the current academic building is located.

Because the District is almost done paying down debt, the capacity in the tax levy should not increase over the current tax levy level.

If the referendum fails and there is no consolidation of schools, the District may need to consider academic/operational cost reductions, reductions in programming and technology reductions.

Moved by Alderman Brickner, seconded by Alderwoman Schandel to adjourn. Motion carried.

Time: 7:20 p.m.