

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMO #36
Jamestown School District #1
2018/2019 School Year
July 16, 2018

RE: Facility Studies and Referendum Background
FROM: Superintendent Robert Lech
BOARD FOCUS: Information and Action

The purpose of this memo is to review the actions of the district and the Jamestown School Board as it relates to the examination of the district facilities and to support the recommendation of the Citizen's Advisory Committee.

Initial Steps to September 2015 Referendum

District Strategic Plan

In April 2013, a group comprised of the Jamestown School District school board, administration, teacher representatives, parent representatives, and community representatives took part in an environmental scanning process aimed at identifying areas of focus to monitor and plan for during the next five years. The group convened again in October of 2013. Recommended goals to address the areas of focus were reviewed and formally approved.

On January 19, 2014, the Jamestown School Board formally approved the district's strategic plan, which included:

Goal #3: The Jamestown School District will develop and implement a facilities and land master plan that addresses maintenance and upgrading of existing facilities, examines present school configuration, identifies needs for possible new facilities/structures, and ensures that facilities and land are utilized effectively and efficiently.

Facility Assessment

At the April 21, 2014 meeting of the Jamestown School Board, the district approved the DLR Group to conduct a facilities assessment and to assist with future facility planning. The assessment was conducted in July and formally reported to the Board of Education at the October 6, 2014 meeting.

Throughout the 2014/2015 School Year, the DLR Group facilitated a total of 12 meetings with various stakeholder groups (staff, administration, parents, community members, board members) to gather perspectives regarding the educational and facility needs of Jamestown Public School districts with the goal of ultimately creating a long-term facility plan for the district.

Enrollment Studies

The Jamestown School Board also engaged with RSP and Associates to conduct two enrollment studies. The first was conducted in the 2014/2015 School Year and presented to the board on April 6, 2015. The second study was commissioned in the 2016/2017 School Year to address a

changing economic environment in Jamestown. This most recent enrollment study projected a generally stable, albeit slightly increasing, enrollment of 2,247 by the 2020/2021 School Year.

Initial Referendum

Based on the facility assessment and enrollment studies, the school board approved an option with a focus on the most immediate needs of the school district's facilities. This proposed to address growth, improve air quality at each elementary building and the middle school, and create flexible learning spaces in each of the K-5 buildings. This option would have decommissioned Washington Elementary and increased the capacity of Louis L'Amour to 360 students (presently 125). This proposal met the enrollment projections of the demographer by the 2019/2020 school year for all school levels. The total cost of the proposal was \$19 million with a capacity for 1,080 elementary students.

This bond request, with a successful application of a state construction loan, would have resulted in a levy would be 25.11 mills. With the 21.4 mills from the high school being retired, the taxpayers would have only seen an increase of 3.71 mills from the previous tax year.

A special election was set for September 29, 2015. The passage of the referendum, by law, required a 60% approval requirement. With a total number of voters of 1,953 (1,140 Yes and 813 No), the referendum had a majority of voters (58.37%), but was 31 votes shy of the 60% threshold.

Post-Referendum

Community Debrief

On January 11, 2016, a referendum review committee of school board members, administration, teachers, support staff, parents, and consultants met to review the referendum seeking to determine the perspectives of voters that both approved and opposed the original referendum request. Two of the primary themes of feedback were to: 1) Provide a decision-making process that involved multiple stakeholders, and 2) Create a comprehensive plan that does not require multiple phases.

Capital Projects Plan (CPP)

On March 21, 2016, the school board retained Consolidated Construction Corporation (CCC) to utilize the facility assessment to create a 10-year capital projects plan as well as pre-referendum planning. Additionally, the board authorized DLR Group to design and engage with staff on pre-referendum planning.

On July 18, 2016, the capital projects plan was presented and approved by the Jamestown school board. This included information on the condition/expected useful life by system, prioritization of building level needs over the next 5-10 year span. The capital projects plan did not include educational needs or building code recommendations that were included the facilities assessment.

Additional Perspective Gathering

An electronic survey was administered in May of 2016 to gather perspectives from staff related to their instructional needs and the ability of the current facilities to meet those instructional needs.

On October 24-25, 2016, Chris Gibbs from the DLR Group met with building administrators to discuss the administrative perspective on the current facilities, how to best meet educational needs to facilities, examine how education is changing, best method for engaging staff at the building level.

Board Actions

At the November 7, 2016 school board meeting, the school board approved:

- 1) The authorization of a pre-referendum planning process would allow our architects to review the plan set forth in the last proposal and adapt to any necessary changes that are recognized presently or through the further engagement of stakeholders.
- 2) The authorization to form a Citizen's Steering Committee (school board members, school leadership team, staff representatives, community leaders, and consultants) to guide the planning process and ensure a strong representation of community. This committee would consider design, facility assessments, financing, and communications.
- 3) The approval to authorize a legal ad for a Construction Management at Risk (CMaR). CCC was ultimately selected through an interview process and approval by the school board.

Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) and Recommendations

Process and Purpose of CAC

The initial meeting of the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) was held on December 14, 2016. Subsequently, a total of 10 meetings have been held of the CAC with areas of focus including: a) facility tours, b) presentations on 21st Century education needs, c) community and staff engagement, d) cost analysis, e) selection of need areas, f) numerous prioritization exercises on projected needs, g) economic analysis, f) fiscal impact of priorities, etc.

The CAC was created to be representative of stakeholders across the Jamestown School District and to work within three goal areas: 1) Create a proposal which will address the primary infrastructure needs for aging facilities, 2) Create a proposal which will support the educational needs of teachers and students in the 21st Century, and 3) Create a proposal that will be supported by 60% of the voters in the Jamestown School District.

On April 15, 2018 the Jamestown School Board approved action to request the Citizen's Advisory Committee present a plan for a referendum that stays within the 5% debt limit.

The Citizen's Advisory Committee met on May 1 and June 20 to again examine priorities and determine the final proposal to bring before the Jamestown School Board.

Final Priorities and Recommended CAC Proposal

Through a thorough examination of the priorities and cost estimates, the CAC completed the prioritization and cost analysis to arrive with the following recommendation:

- 1) Address Capital Projects Plan (CPP) Highest Infrastructure Priorities Across the District with an estimated cost of approximately \$5.8 million
- 2) Improved HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, Air Condition, and Temperature Controls) with an estimated cost of approximately \$9.2 million
- 3) Improved Safety and Security with an estimated cost of approximately \$860,000.
- 4) Addition of Louis L'Amour (decommissioning of Washington Elementary) with an estimated cost of approximately \$8.8 million.
- 5) Build a New Transition House on the High School Campus with an estimated cost of approximately \$400,000.
- 6) Renovate Current Elementary Spaces to Include Makerspaces with an estimated cost of approximately \$375,000.
- 7) Addition of a Turfed Football Stadium and Track (including seating for 3,000 with consideration for a fieldhouse that provides shared locker rooms, concessions, bathrooms, etc. between the track, football, and soccer fields) with an estimated cost of approximately \$7.6 million.
- 8) Renovate Current Middle School Spaces to Include Makerspaces with an estimated cost of approximately \$150,000.
- 9) Renovate Current Middle School Science Rooms with an estimated cost of approximately \$1 million.

The total estimated cost of the priorities meets the school board's recommendation of staying within the 5% debt limit with a total estimated cost of \$34,445,000.

Washington Elementary and Ernie Gates Football Field

It is important to note that significant discussions were held within the Citizen's Advisory Committee regarding Washington Elementary and Ernie Gates Football Field. It was ultimately determined that next steps for the Jamestown School District needed to consider that Washington Elementary and Ernie Gates could not be mutually exclusive. The CAC determined these two facilities, while serving a much different purposes within the district, ultimately need to be considered as one entity. As such, both facilities need to either see upgrades to address safety and infrastructure needs or be decommissioned and replaced with updated facilities.

Additionally, discussions have been held with a firm that conducts renovations of historical buildings to residential dwellings. Based on discussions with this firm and the City of Jamestown, this would meet a potential need for low/medium income housing in the community and in that area. In this scenario, the district would sell the property of Washington Elementary and the land including Ernie Gates Football Field for fair market value.

Total Costs to Taxpayers

Based on the assumption that the district would receive the \$10 million construction loan from the State of North Dakota along with \$24.445 million in general obligation school building bonds over a 20-year span, the mill rate for debt service would be 35.71. To place this into context, the mill rate for the high school was 21.4, but it is important to remember that only 25% of the project was paid for by property tax with the other 75% funded through a \$.01 sales tax. The resulting referendum would be 35.71, or 14.31 mills increase from the high school referendum.

As a result, a \$100,000 home would see a tax impact of \$160.70, a \$100,000 commercial property would see \$178.56, and an average acre of agricultural land would have a tax impact of \$1.31.

While the total priorities do have a significant cost burden, it is important to recognize that the feedback from the community has been to address all needs at one time instead of suggested phases. The priorities outlined would allow the district to address the primary needs and address other facility needs through the current Capital Projects Plan. Additionally, the recommendations respect the cost efficiency of utilizing existing spaces to the degree possible.

Recommended Action:

Review the recommendations of the Citizen's Advisory Committee
Set a special meeting to approve referendum resolution