

The Ashley school board held a public meeting on Thursday, November 3, 2022 at 8:00pm in the high school gym to discuss the current facility condition, facility improvement concepts, school finances and possible project costs. Present: Lyle Fey, Jordan Jenner, Ross Litsey, Amy Schlepp, Jason Schmidt, Chris Doane, Teresa Dockter, Trevor Huffaker (EngTech), Tony Bender (Ashley Tribune) and approximately 40 patrons.

Trevor Huffaker, an engineer from EngTech, explained the district began with a capital maintenance evaluation by Consolidated Construction which projected maintenance needs over the next ten-year period. From there a building committee consisting of Mr. Schmidt, Amy Schlepp and Ross Litsey began conversations about the aging condition of the facilities, school safety, creating more classroom space and moving the fitness room. The school board decided to get EngTech involved to develop a master plan, give ballpark costs and help determine what direction to go. Mr. Huffaker and his team performed a facility assessment, took pictures (included in the Powerpoint presentation), researched historical records and had conversations with various staff. Their findings indicated the building has been maintained well and there are no structural issues, boilers are fairly new, newer electrical gear but electrical panels are original. Areas that could be addressed: outside of the building needs maintenance, asbestos (ok if intact, problem if crumbling), some code compliance (ADA & fire sprinkler), safety & security issues, aging HVAC (mostly original, some have been replaced), minimal fresh air, plumbing, outdated fire alarm system, no access control, elementary roof needs replacing.

Mr. Huffaker further outlined critical issues (0-5 years) and long-term items (6-10+ years). He presented a master plan in which the office space is moved to the entry/lobby area with a secure entrance vestibule & updated commons area, put a public ADA bathroom at end of office area. Move the weight/cardio room to the library which would create direct exterior access for the community to a fitness center. Move library to current PK/counselor rooms, move PK to south end where cardio room was, computer lab to counselor, counselor to HS lab, phy ed/health to Ag area, replace elem comp lab with study hall classroom.

Discussion on enrollment projections—should hold fairly steady for the next few years.

Explained funding methods: 1) General fund—majority of revenue generated by student enrollment. Based on current taxable valuation, 1 mill generates about \$9,500. Current levy is 71.20 mills & state average is 105.64 mills. Miscellaneous levy (within general fund) maximum is 12 mills, currently at zero. Lease Revenue Bonds can be authorized by school board without voter approval up to \$4 million, paid back by general fund; 2) Special Reserve Fund—can levy up to 3 mills, currently zero; 3) Building fund levy is approved up to 10 mills. Could increase to a maximum of 20 mills with 60% voter approval. 4) Sinking & Interest bond referendum would require 60% voter approval up to 5% of debt limit which is \$4.77 million. Details of a bond: 20-year fixed rate loan, 2% state loan if referendum is approved & can be paid off early. School has about \$500,000 available and could get a conventional loan but the interest rate would be higher than a bond.

Outlined tax impact on for each of the proposals \$1.5 million/\$3 million/\$4.7 million on a \$100,000 house, \$100,000 commercial property, and per acre. Mr. Huffaker stated preliminary thoughts are that the \$1.5 million base project would include the remodeling discussed, fire alarm system and elementary roof. The \$3 million would add HVAC, electrical service panels, emergency lighting and ADA upgrades. The \$4.7 million would

add all of the 0-5 year projects and beyond. Once the board decides what direction to go, they would begin to put together exact details and costs of the project. Mentioned the state has a \$100,000 energy match grant for lighting which may be worth pursuing with one of the projects.

Question regarding security cameras—Mr. Schmidt clarified that we put in 18 new cameras this past summer so administrators are able to see all hallways and doors.

Suggestion to put the Powerpoint presentation documents on the school website for those who couldn't attend the public meeting.

Mr. Schmidt asked the community members in attendance to complete a survey indicating which of the projects they would be willing to support.

Meeting ended at 9:25pm.

Teresa Dockter, Business Manager