



Facilities Planning Task Force

May 18, 2017
3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Welcome

Co-Chair and Executive Administrator Rob McElroy welcomed everyone, thanked them for attending today and reviewed the agenda for this meeting.

Review/Approve May 11, 2017 Minutes

Rob asked that a few minutes be spent reviewing last week's meeting minutes. One typographical error was noted. A motion was made by Roosevelt Elementary Principal Tom Gresham to approve the minutes with that one correction. Task force member Mike Anderson seconded that motion and there was a unanimous vote to approve.

Safety, Security, Emergency Management

Director of School Safety and Emergency Management Jonah Stinson presented recommendations that were made by Construction Services Group of Educational Service District 112. Those recommendations include lockdown shades, 2-way radios, PA/intercoms, electronic access control doors, interior classroom door locks, video cameras, as well as some ancillary work. Jonah also talked about the regional use of video cameras in open school areas (commons, hallways, etc.). There was a question from a task force member regarding the public perception of using video cameras. Jonah noted that, along with the addition of the technology, it is important to have good policies and procedures in place. There was another question regarding who would monitor the cameras and how long video would be retained. Jonah answered that the video would be used for post-incident management and typically districts retain the video for 15 days to 60 months. A task force member asked if, in anticipation of video cameras being installed, are best practices being investigated. Jonah indicated that we would conduct research to see what other districts are doing and work with our stakeholders to refine those. There was also a question about whether the lockdown shades would be provided districtwide. Jonah answered that it would be for all interior windows in all schools.

Technology

Executive Director of Technology Kurt Gazow provided an overview of the district's internet bandwidth from 2005 to 2017 and talked about the changes in technology over the past 20 years. He also addressed the difference between bond purchases and tech levy purchases. He then reviewed the potential infrastructure projects that he is proposing be included in the upcoming bond.

Review Tax Rate Implications/Scenarios

Co-Chair and Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Steve Clarke asked that Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations Simone Sangster spend some time with the group looking at what the tax implications would be for the potential bond projects. Simone reviewed past bond amounts, comparative tax rates of other districts and provided a picture of what impact bond amounts would have on tax rates.

Project Updates

Team members spent some time giving updates on projects that were presented at the May 11 meeting:

- **City Parks Collaboration:** Simone shared that we are at a point where it looks promising to use some City of Bellingham park land to help configure new school construction, although there are many details that will need to be worked out. We appreciate the good will and collaboration between the school district and city.
- **Maintaining Our Facilities/Buildings and Grounds:** Executive Director of Capital Projects and School Facilities Ron Cowan provided an updated list of maintenance projects. He noted that improvements for Alderwood, Parkview and Sunnyland have been removed from the list, as has the interior painting (another funding source would pay for the interior painting). There has been an addition of a Carl Cozier office renovation. There was a question regarding how much of the work would be done by district employees and how much by outside vendors. Ron answered that much of this would be provided by outside vendors. There was a question about accessibility issues at Columbia, especially in light of a Life Skills program being added. Rob noted that accessibility in our older buildings is a problem, but added that none of the students who are slated to attend the Life Skills program at Columbia have mobility issues. Any students with mobility issues would be placed temporarily at another Life Skills location. Steve added that an elevator is a very large investment, and likely would not be considered for a building that will be renovated.
- **Elementary Fields:** Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Bob Kuehl talked about the fields to create a standard for elementary school fields and the reality of the costs of those projects. A lot of investigation will be needed to determine the scope of the work. He noted that one idea is to put money into the bond to raise the standards and address some of the fields that have the highest needs. There was a question regarding why the middle school fields are not being considered. Bob answered that the elementary fields were identified as a high need, and there was a suggestion that middle school fields be considered by the next Facilities Planning Task Force for a future bond. There was a question whether the City of Bellingham has any plans to build sports/play fields. Task force member and City of Bellingham representative Greg Aucutt answered that there are no plans for additional formalized play fields in upcoming park projects.
- **High School Fields Sequence:** Ron shared that, due to contractor capacity and staff project management availability, he would like to see one field addressed per year. The fields take approximately 4 months to build. Steve added that it is not ideal to have some high schools wait until the next bond for their field improvements. We communicated that we would be recommending to complete the high school turf fields (phase 2) in the next bond.

- **Reader Boards:** Executive Director of Communications and Community Relations Tanya Rowe reminded the task force that there had been a question at the May 11 meeting regarding the effectiveness of reader boards. She shared that Forbes magazine pulled together research for a 2011 article “Does Outdoor Advertising Work?”. The research found that people spend a lot of time in their cars and that reader board signage is very effective. Data shows that approximately 58% of people learned about an event that they attended from signage. Tanya noted that the amount that is being proposed to be included in the bond would include funding for all schools to have reader boards installed. Further conversations would need to occur with schools regarding locations, timeline, etc.

Pulling It All Together: Bond Projects and Amount

Rob stated that we have bond capacity up to approximately \$159 million without raising the current tax rate. In summary, rebuilding three elementary schools; elementary field improvements; the addition of gym space for Shuksan Middle School; phase II of the Sehome, Bellingham and Squalicum fields; an additional tennis court for Bellingham and Squalicum; the maintenance/buildings and grounds improvements; safety & security upgrades; technology projects; completion of 2013 projects; and reader boards total \$155 million. There was a question regarding what would be next steps once the recommendation is given to Dr. Baker. Tanya gave an overview of the process:

- This group would draft a recommendation;
- The written recommendation will be presented to Dr. Baker, and he will email all district staff, families and the community to share that he has received the recommendation;
- There will be 2-way communication, such as Dr. Baker’s blog;
- He will then communicate with the community that either more processing is needed or that a bond resolution is forthcoming.
- The school board will review the recommendation and a decision will be made regarding whether to go through with the bond measure.
- Some scientific surveys may be conducted in order to gauge community understanding of the bond.
- A campaign group would then be formed for voter education purposes.

There was a question whether it is common to include increased costs from the previous bond and whether that is concerning. Tanya shared some of the past communications that addressed why this occurred and the rationale. Ron then talked about the school board’s policy governance model and how the superintendent is charged with processing a potential bond with the community via this group and other communications ([Sehome historical Promise story](#) and [Inside Schools winter 2017 edition](#)). There was a question regarding what was taken off of the list for the 2018 bond. Steve answered that the playgrounds, some district improvements and the Bellingham High School multipurpose room have been removed based on their earlier feedback on the need for more work. A task force member asked if we are fairly confident that the \$155 million will cover all of the projects, and Ron answered yes and added that the Sehome High School project has been a very complicated one (we will know the full cost of Sehome this July). He shared that a 3% escalation compounded estimate was used for the 2013 bond, and a 5%

estimate will be used for the 2018 bond. There was a question regarding how much taxes would be increased if an equal size bond is proposed in 2023. Simone answered that the tax rate would increase to the mid-\$5 range. Another question was whether the field estimates include tracks, and they do, with the exception of Bellingham, which is not regulation size.

Rob requested that if any further questions be emailed to either himself or Steve.

Rob added that Dr. Baker has requested that this group come together for 1 hour on June 1 to talk about another facility issue that will not impact the decision about this bond.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

*Next Meeting: May 25, 2017 3:00-5:00
Central Services Office*