

Bond Task Force – Meeting 4 Summary

January 9, 2018

Meeting #4, Tuesday, January 9, 2018, Custer Elementary School

Attendees: Task Force members

Julia Besola	Joy Born	Michael Britt
Faye Britt	Riley Cornelsen	Kristie Edwards
Edwin Elefson	Rusti Elefson	John Fairbairn
Maralise Fegin	Rob Fickeisen	Dustin Griffin
Gordon Harmer	Gregg Heyne	Lesli Higginson
Kathy Hopkins	Bud Larson	Wendy Lawrence
Sarah Lenssen	Joe Lupo	Taylor Lupo
Joey McAlpine	Doug McDonald	Bruce McKay
Sandi McMillan	Amy Nylén	Jamie Plenkovich
Julie Rice	Al Seaton	Nicole Smith
Terry Terry	Shauna Torretta	Tony Torretta
Jeremy Vincent	Garin Wallace	Candice Willson

Staff

Ferndale School District

- Mark Deebach, Assistant Superintendent
- Linda Quinn, Superintendent
- Erin Daniels

Envirolssues facilitator

- Penny Mabie

Zervas Architecture

- Terry Brown

School Tour:

John Fairburn gave a group of Task Force members a tour of Custer Elementary.

Welcome and Introduction

Penny Mabie, Envirolssues facilitator for the Ferndale School District (abbreviation: FSD) Bond Task Force (abbreviation: Task Force), welcomed Task Force members and observers to the meeting. She provided members with an overview of the meeting agenda and outlined the primary purpose of the meeting: hear about potential project needs and costs and begin to develop project recommendations.

Members and staff introduced themselves.

Task Force Reports

Penny asked Task Force members to share what they have been hearing out in the community about the work of the Task Force. Various responses included:

- Informing people about the Task Force effort at basketball games
- Be mindful of others' needs: audience is built with parents/community/members/business owners, etc.
- One Task Force member posted information on Facebook: responses were mostly positive.
- Is summer school going to be available and have a dedicated space?
- Public is highlighting that they value the pride they see at other districts around their facilities, e.g want the same thing
- An updated venue can be used for a host of things: Sports, facilities revenue generation, etc.
- Posted information on Ferndale Neighbors: 40 to 50 people liked the post. Fair comments were received. Reaching more and more people.
- Penny noted the feedback coming in from the Task Force website.

Penny thanked members for sharing. Penny noted she will be sending analytics from the Task Force website to the group, so they can see how much the site is being used. Erin Daniels, Ferndale School District, will share an outreach toolkit that is posted on a password-protected portion of the Task Force website. Penny will send out the credentials for the site.

Windward High School Update

Linda Quinn, Superintendent, Ferndale School District, recapped why Windward High School is closing and explained the timing of the announcement. She noted that staff wanted to be sure the Task Force had the information about Windward closing in their hands, so it could be factored into recommendations discussions. Linda also noted that all staff and the remaining Windward students will be incorporated into other programs in the district.

- A task force member asked if more information will be available to the community and to those affected by the pending closure. *Linda responded that additional activities are being scheduled and will be announced shortly.*

School Needs Project List

Terry Brown, Zervas Architecture, presented information about needs and associated budget numbers at each of the schools in the district that have capital projects needs. Terry explained how the budget numbers were determined and noted they include a contingency for unexpected increases. Terry answered questions about the list, including:

- Why does the district need to purchase a new site for Ferndale High School Option 3? Didn't the district already purchase property? *Response: The site the district owns is 29 acres. 40 acres is needed to site a new comprehensive high school.*
- How were the three options developed? *Response: After the 2014 bond measure failed, the district convened a group of interested community members to participate in a workshop with Terry. At the workshop, small groups brainstormed options for replacing or updating FHS. The options were discussed, conditions and constraints were identified by Terry, and the group worked together to narrow the options down to the three presented to the Task Force.*



- How conservative are these budget numbers? *Response: These numbers are purposely conservative, so as to build in flexibility and ensure projects can be completed within these budget numbers.*
- How does Meridian High School compare to these budget numbers? *Response: Meridian was built in 2010 and cost \$25 million. That was during the recession, so building costs were much less expensive. In today's market, the price would be \$37 to 44 million for the same project, which is 25% of the size needed for FHS.*
- When do numbers get more detailed and decisions are made? *Response: More specific costs are developed once design is completed. It is critical the budget numbers in the bond measure are enough to enable a design that accomplishes all the work needed. Terry noted that costs will force trade-offs with the project list.*

Mark Deebach, Ferndale School District, gave a brief overview of how the state's construction assistance program (SCAP), often called "state match" works. He noted the district must spend 40% of the cost of a project before receiving state match (if a project is eligible and state funding is available.) He noted the current bond expires in 2021, and costs \$0.82 per \$1,000 appraised property value. Task Force questions included:

- If a new bond measure passes, when would the community start having to pay the taxes?
Response: If the measure runs in November of 2018 and passes, new bond taxes would start in 2020.

Recommendations Development Workshop

Penny divided the Task Force into five groups for the workshop. An additional group was made up of students who were observing the meeting. She explained that each table had a laptop with an Excel spreadsheet that listed all the projects and associated budgets Terry had identified in his project list. Additionally, very gross estimates of the tax burden on \$1,000 of assessed value, and on a \$300,000 home are included. Finally, the spreadsheet also included gross estimates of how much state match might be available for each project.

Groups were asked to review the project list, apply the Task Force's guiding principles, and develop their proposed project list. Groups were also asked to record the rationale for why they did/did not include projects in their list. Once the groups were completed with their work, a report-out round robin was facilitated.

Results:

- All groups selected security upgrades.
- All groups selected either option 1 or 2 for Ferndale High School.
- No groups selected option 3 (Build new on new site).
- Selections varied for projects at other Ferndale schools, but no groups selected improvements at Mountain View Elementary School.



Rational

As groups reported on their choices, they included some rational for how they made them. Reports included:

- Group 1: Security is our priority. Skyline is an older building and has serious structural issues. There's a potential for a big match from the state for Option 2 at the high school.
- Group 2: Provide partial upkeep at Custer, hold on major renovations until the next bond. Reopening North Bellingham will generate community support. Replacing the existing high school at the same location will provide a better end product.
- Group 3: We can't and shouldn't pick and choose schools. All renovations are needed. Option 2 for the high school is the most practical option.
- Group 4: Security improvements are needed. The gym at Horizon is the core of the school. North Bellingham is needed and will provide options for those east of I-5. Doing improvements at Skyline will benefit the community as well as the students and faculty. Building a new high school (Option 1) will stop us from trying to make old problems work.
- Students: The roof and flooring at Central are really bad. Removing the 1938 structure at North Bellingham will address safety issues. Flooding at Skyline caused by drainage issues needs to be addressed. Leaks at Vista need to be addressed. Option 1 at the high school tackles most problems. If Option 2 added classrooms, it would be a better option.

Discussions after the workshop:

- Be sure no programs are sacrificed. Response: These improvements, particularly at the high school, would allow us to retain or enhance all existing programs.
- When thinking about reopening North Bellingham, we must recognize that its closing was an emotional issue, as was closing Mountain View.
- What would the life expectancy of remodeled buildings be? Response: Around 20 years.
- After much discussion, all members agreed they do not think any improvements to Mountain View should be included in their recommendations.
- Several members noted one of the Task Force's guiding principles was fiscal responsibility.
- Members discussed the need for equity across all schools and how that could be accomplished.

Penny encouraged and urged Task Force members to continue to be active in the community, discussing what the Task Force was contemplating, finding out what community members valued, etc. She noted that as informed Task Force members and respected members of the community, their words would be powerful, and they had accurate information to share.

Next Steps

Penny noted the next Bond Task Force meeting is on January 31st. The Task Force was asked for desired location and suggested Vista Middle School. An optional tour will precede the meeting. Penny noted she will provide a compiled list of the small group outcomes for discussion at the next meeting.

Penny closed the meeting at 9:00 p.m.



Handouts:

Meeting agenda

Guiding principles

Ferndale District Bond Planning Project List (from Terry Brown, Zervas Architects)

Task Force meeting evaluation

