

# **CLEAR FORK VALLEY LOCAL BOARD OF EDUCATION**

## **WORK SESSION**

**October 27, 2015**

**Clear Fork High School Auditorium**

**7:00 p.m.**

### **District Mission Statement:**

**We care for our students by modeling our community's heritage and tradition of excellence to increase student achievement.**

The Work Session of the Clear Fork Valley Local School board was called to order at 7:00 PM by Board President Mr. Jim DeSanto.

Roll call was taken and the following members were present: Mr. Jim DeSanto, Mr. Jim Klenk, Mr. Jim Jackson, and Mr. Randall Freeman and Mr. Jason Snyder.

### **INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS**

Ms. Wyckoff started the meeting by showing and explaining the results of the survey that was mailed to the 7476 registered voters of the district requesting their input. Of the surveys mailed out, 11.8% responded back and of those the results were 357 chose option 1 which was a single building, 439 chose option 2 which was 2 buildings 37 chose option 3 which was a new High School and moving the elementary schools into the existing MS/HS complex with renovations and there were 50 surveys that were sent back that did not support new facilities. Mr. Desanto soliciting the public for any comments with respect to the results of the survey before the board discussed the results. The board did receive a resolution that was passed by the Village of Butler and the Trustees of Worthington township requesting the Board of Education continue to operate its Butler School in the Village of Butler as well as a letter from the Butler Chief of Police Brian Darby advocating the same.

The first comment came from Mayor Darrell Banks of the Village of Bellville, 151 Highland Avenue Bellville. He stated that he favors two buildings because the elementary students would spend less time on busses and be closer to home. He also feels that two buildings would be better for the taxpayers because of the revenue that the individual villages will lose if the facilities are not located within the Village limits. A loss of revenue for the villages could be hurtful and even a little deterioration within the villages will affect the property values

within the villages and throughout the valley. He concluded that he will support the Board of Education in whatever decision they make that is best for the students and best for the district and the entire valley. Mr. Jackson asked Mr. Banks for an update on the waste water treatment facility that is located near the Bellville School. Mr. Banks said that the village has pumped millions into it in the last eight years and last week they were approved to go ahead with the next process and project which will add air into some areas of the sewer plant other than the digester so it will be much more aerobic and make it a better plant. Whenever they haul sludge there will be an odor but with a more aerobic the plant the fewer times that they will have to haul sludge. He stated that he can't promise that the smell will be eliminated but 8 years ago when he ran for mayor he felt that something could be done and they have done something about it and they will continue to do something about it and he feels that it is much better than it used to be. He is not satisfied with that he wants it to be better all the time. Mr. Jackson stated that the smell was one of the contentions about that site.

The next community member to speak was Mr. Lonnie McGhee, 2230 James Road Bellville. Mr. McGhee stated that he has been in the Technical Water Service Business for 35 years and the district does not want to be in the water and sewer business. He stated that at the High School there is no choice and the district already has a water and sewer plant for that facility. Both plants will support another building. The sewer plant at the High School has a 20,000 gallon daily flow capacity but only has about 5,000 gallons average daily flow currently. The sewer plant and the water system are both designed to handle an addition or doubling in population so there is not a problem connecting to the current systems that are at the High School Facility. He went on to state that he would encourage the Board to keep the two schools in the villages because that would keep the district out of the water and sewer business. He stated that the towns do not have a choice but the district does and he would encourage the district that even if they would decide on a single facility located near the current High School the district should petition both communities to bring utilities out to it. It would be far better in the long term interest of the district to utilize public utilities.

A community member who did not stand nor state his name requested that the board president read the resolution that the Village of Butler and Worthington Township passes as well as the letter from the Butler Police Chief. Mr. Desanto read the resolution and the letter aloud. Mr. Banks stated that the Village of Bellville elected not to support levies from other entities therefore they did not write anything that he is there representing himself.

After the public comments Mr. Desanto briefly discussed the three community meetings that were held last week regarding the prospect of building new facilities and how he has been approached about the topic and he solicited comments from the other board members on their experiences with regard to public interactions and the survey results. Mr. Jackson thought that there would have been a higher percentage of surveys returned but he later found out that an 11.8% return was good. He stated that the first survey which was on line tilted towards a single building by a 60/40% split but during the town hall meetings and with the returned surveys from the registered voters it has flipped and the support is for two buildings. He wanted to hear the pro and cons of both sides and the purpose of the meeting was to examine those to figure out what is best.

From this point on, Mr. David Conley from Rockmill Financial Consulting facilitated the meeting and went through the finances and directed the discussion as a neutral party. He started off by explaining that the district can finance up to \$14 million just by extending the earned income tax that is already in place and not asking for any new or additional tax increases from the taxpayers to finance either option. He said that the focus of the meeting should be on which option to select going forward with. As the survey results indicate there is a vast majority wants something and the timeline for the decision is an important factor that needs to be considered. His first point was from a timing perspective if it made sense financially to go forward with this process now or wait. He focused the meeting around four key factors: 1.) Would there need to be a tax increase if the district decided to go forward now or later, the answer was no. 2.) Since the district will have to borrow money, interest rates are a factor in the financing. Are the interest rates going to be more or less favorable to build now rather than waiting is the question. That is something the board will have to conclude on their own based on their own experiences. 3.) From a construction perspective, is it likely that inflation will cause the project to be more or less expensive in the future, which was a question that was directed toward Mr. Bill Prenosil, a senior planning administrator with the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission. 4.) Is it likely the State of Ohio would give the district more money or less money if the district chooses to build now rather than later, which was also directed toward Mr. Prenosil. Mr. Desanto stated that in his opinion with respect to all four factors he feels that it is better to go forward now rather than wait. Mr. Prenosil said that by waiting the percentage would change from 39% to 38% district share but the funding is also grounded in enrollment. Since funding is based on dollars per square foot and square foot per student, because of the

excess space that is currently at the High School Facility and declining enrollment district wide, waiting will cost the district more over time. He explained that each time the district passes an October the OFCC does another enrollment projection so with declining enrollment; waiting will affect the district share. Also, in April the OFCC does a projected annual cost set which accounts for projected inflation in the construction industry which will cause the overall budget of the project to increase. He stated the longer you wait the costs increase and the budgets reflect that. He agrees that it is safer to go sooner rather than wait. Mr. Jackson asked about Locally Funded Initiatives and if the district could completely locally fund a project like air conditioning at the High School at the same time a new facility was being erected. Mr. Prenosil said the state will not contribute or participate in any partial project but the district can completely fund an upgrade at a different facility at the same time of construction and take advantage of the benefit of the construction going on rather than waiting to do a separate project. He stated that that is a common practice for districts to tack on other projects at the same time to take advantage of the construction. Mr. Joshua Predovich of SHP Leading Design explained to the audience that a locally funded initiative, LFI is a project cost that is outside of the cofounded project which is 100% locally funded. Traditionally they are items that the state does not recognize as part of their design manual or something that is over and above the boundaries of the project. These also include some items that are part of a “good, better, best” strategy where the state will fund an item at a base level but the district might want to utilize a better or the best level available for that that item which the increase in cost would be an LFI. SHP is currently looking at the proposed building sites and the utilities as well as the soil testing. Mr. Klenk requested to see the historical 10 year data of the enrollment figures to see the numbers to see where the district is with respect to the enrollment and the projections as to where any growth is and which school/community is projected to experience increases or declines. Mr. Predovich showed the past 10 year enrollment history and the projections for future enrollment for 10 years based on birth rates and housing development information and open enrollment. From this data he explained how the OFCC determined the enrollment number that would be used for the funding proposal. The district is experiencing a slow decline of enrollment of 5% over a 10 year period. This is important so the district doesn’t overbuild and have to maintain a larger facility than is needed. The decline in future enrollment was projected in the 6-12 grade levels. Mr. Klenk wanted to see the breakdown between the two communities to examine if there was a significant difference in the

enrollment projections for the two buildings. He stated that the district might need to have a plan in place in case one building's enrollment dropped while the other maintained or grew. Mr. Prenosil did acknowledge that with a single building it is easier to manage the use of the space and shift around staff. He said that the advantage of one building is that the fluctuations in neighborhoods don't disrupt the school and provide more options. He stated that one building is easier to program from a design and because there is more space available to utilize because with two buildings the district is duplicating shared support spaces like mechanical rooms, kitchens, cafeterias, hallways, driveways, the site and gymnasiums. The district will have more programming space with a single building to use for instruction. He then explained why it is more expensive per square foot to build a smaller school. Mr. Predovich discussed the specific construction cost differences between the single vs double building option.

Mr. Jackson brought up the point of class size and said that an advantage of two buildings was the community's desire for small class size. He said that citizens are concerned about their "kids getting lost" in a larger building and the small class sizes are very important to the community. He stated that even if the district went with a single building the board would have to look at provisions to maintain small class sizes instead of the 1:25 ratio that the state recommends for a planning number. Mr. Predovich said that the design manual for the state has changed and there is some ability to reallocate space into additional learning spaces to maintain smaller class sizes. The square footage will have to remain the same but there are options on how to utilize the space. For example the corridor or hallway with classrooms on each side can be utilized differently so it is an instructional environment and not support space. Mr. Conley asked about the timeline and it was explained by Mr. Prenosil that he needs to know as soon as possible so we can go before the OFCC board in January in order to obtain a promise from the state for their share of the funding. Mr. Conley stated that we would have to have a motion in the November board meeting in order to go to the Budget Commission to be placed on the ballot in March. If we hold off until April then the district will have to use the current 2015-2016 enrollment numbers which are lower than last year's enrollment numbers which would in turn alter the funding and the projected budget for the project.

Mr. Jackson inquired about the site for a building in Bellville and if the district would even be allowed to build on the current site. Mr. Predovich explained that there are 5 proposals coming in to SHP for a site impact study and he anticipated having more information in a

few weeks but the geotechnical information from the core borings would not be available until the end of November.

Mr. Conley, help direct the board narrow down and focus the discussion and come to a conclusion. The board discussed and felt they could eliminate option 3 and focus on either option one vs two. He summarized the advantages of the two options. The advantages of a single new facility, option one, were that it is easier to design, easier to program, easier to manage from a construction standpoint, easier to manage from an enrollment perspective long term and a lower cost in construction. He discussed the cost to operate a single campus vs two separate campuses. The cost variance to operate with respect to utilities is that would be approximately \$7,000 less expensive annually to operate a single facility vs two. As far as personnel variances, it would be driven by class size and an evaluation of an acceptable student to teacher ratio. Mr. Klenk introjected that a reduction of staff and/or administration is an educational philosophy would be discussed during the design phase of the project. It was also mentioned that would cost approximately an additional \$105,000 annually in bussing to go to a single facility over the bussing to the current two facilities. Mr. Klenk asked the administration to take the enrollment projections that are projected three years out 2019-2020 and do an analysis of the savings in personnel costs with one building vs two buildings.

Mr. Desanto proceeded to discuss what he felt the advantages to two facilities are over a single new building and how it would impact the students. He stated that he feels that the advantage of two schools is that students are in smaller buildings. He feels a smaller building provides a better educational environment and the students are in a neighborhood where they can walk to the library, or take field trips to different parts of the towns which currently happens on a regular basis. Ms. Wyckoff supported Mr. Desanto's comments by discussing research studies in educational publications like ASCD on the positive impact of smaller schools and class sizes. She also stated that currently with the two buildings there are a lot of parent volunteers that are active in their small individual community schools who are just as important in the education of the children. She referred to them as "educational intangibles" that could disappear with a single larger building so that is something else that the board will need to consider in their decision.

Mr. Jackson had a concern with the curriculum and a disconnect between two buildings and Mr. Snyder had a concern with what could happen to the villages if the district decides to go with a single building and wants to avoid what happened in Perrysville when the elementary school was moved from the community.

Mr. Jackson stated that after the town hall meetings and the survey and community input he is supportive of two separate buildings. Mr. Klenk wants more data but will support whatever the community wants and based on the survey is two buildings. Mr. Jackson wanted to go on record saying that he does not want to go ahead and vote for option two and then find out we can't build the Bellville building on the sites that are available in the village. He wants to make sure that if he elects to go with the two schools option that both schools are located within their respective villages. Mr. Klenk wants to be sure that the district would have the funds to continue to operate two facilities. Mr. Snyder feels that what is best for the kids and best for the community is the two buildings option. Mr. Freeman will support either option but thought that the single option would be better financially and Mr. Desanto stated that he feels that option 2 is the better option. He would hope that the district would have enough information to vote at the next board meeting.

2015-272 **Upon Motion** by Mr. Desanto and seconded by Mr. Jackson, the Board adjourned the Work Session at 8:47 PM.

<b>The vote was:</b>	<b>Mr. Desanto</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Mr. Snyder</b>	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Mr. Jackson</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Mr. Freeman</b>	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Mr. Klenk</b>	<b>Yes</b>		

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Jim DeSanto, Board President

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Bradd Stevens, Treasurer