



## **Blaine County School District # 61**

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### **Meeting Minutes Plant Facility Levy Committee Monday, June 8, 2009 District Office**

Those in attendance: Dr. Jim Lewis, John Gaeddert, Howard Royal, Rob Lonning, Jim Laski, Kate Heinecke, Molly Michalec, Janet Askew, Lynn Askew, Susie Reese, Mike Chatterton, Jenni Davidson, Heather Crocker, Jeff Neel, Darlene Kisler

- 1. Welcome & Contact List:** Dr. Lewis asked Susie to give a copy of the contact list to each member, and welcomed everyone. Dr. Lewis received an e-mail from Robb Peck which states that it will be very difficult for him to continue to be a member of the committee. Dr. Lewis would like to talk with Howard Royal who lives in Carey and see if they can find another person to take his place.
- 2. Board Changes and Implications:** **Dr. Lewis stated,** “As you know two of our board positions have changed and we need to discuss some of the implications that were alluded to. I believe we have added two good members and who I believe ran for the right reasons. This is a community school district not my school district. There was some talk about how much infrastructure there was during my term. Some of the platforms had to do with let’s stop building and start teaching. The truth is if we allow the ongoing needs of the facilities to go by the wayside, in four years we will be going before the public and asking for money for a bond which will require interest and then there will be a bigger raise in their taxes. If we don’t do this we will not be able to continue giving raises and continuing with the programs we have now. If I do have a fault it is because I think 10 years ahead. I believe it is important for this committee to also think into the future. We need to look at what are the needs and what are the wants. With that I would like to open this to the committee.”
- 3. Discussion of District Budget and Funding**
  - **Jim Laski** asked if Mike would give an overview of the budget, so we as a group can get a feel for what is necessary.
  - **Mike Chatterton** said that we could get through the next four years before we would have to go to the taxpayers for an override levy to fund salary increases and such. We knew with the new law that we would have to start setting money aside so we could continue going the way we have. This is the carry over amount that has been brought up. The state set a set amount for tax payers at 29 million dollars.

The new law only allows school districts to get money from sales tax and some taxpayer money. We started taking the excess money from the state and put it aside. If we had not done this, we would have had to ask taxpayers for both levies this year.

- **Jim Laski** asked where the 29 million dollars comes from.
- **Mike Chatterton** said this is just a set amount that we are guaranteed because of a special law passed for five districts.
- **Lewis** stated that it is important for everyone here to understand that we do not have a “slush fund”, and never have had one. We have less than three months reserve and our accountants have suggested we have a minimum of 90 to 120 days in reserve. If we had to use this back up reserve we would have less than two months of operational money.
- **Jeff Neel** said that we should really have no less than six months in reserve.
- **Jim Laski** asked how the district might be affected by the hard economic times. More people in this recession may not pay their taxes on time, how would that effect the district?
- **Mike Chatterton** said around 94 to 96 percent of taxes collected over the last 20 years has always been collected on time. We collect that each year and the remainder within the next 10 years, when they are collected in a number of different ways.
- **Jim Laski** asked what happens if million dollar homes become 600,000 thousand-dollar homes, what is the impact to the district?
- **Dr. Lewis** said homes only appraise every five years however, it does not matter because we are on the fixed dollar amount of 29 million dollars we receive from property tax and not a percentage so they appraised value of homes do not impact us. The message that needs to get out to the community is that, if we don't hang together as a community and that 29 million budget stabilization act goes away, we are in a world of hurt. Many people across Idaho would love to see this community fail and be on the same spending package like everyone else in the state. If that stabilization package went away, we would have to go to the taxpayers every two years for a 29 million dollar override plus more for salary increases. If that happened we would have to cut 65% of our staff. What Mike and I feel our job is to do, is have operating cash so our taxpayers are not paying more on their taxes.
- **Heather Crocker** said there is a presentation that Mike Chatterton made called school budget 101 that shows how the district's budget works and how the money is used. This presentation is also on the district's website [here](#). I encourage you to ask Mike to come and make presentations to whatever group you feel it would benefit.
- **Mike Chatterton** said the plant facility levy pulls money away from the need to have a supplemental levy. We need to keep separate money for buildings and programs so there is no competing for money.
- **Dr. Lewis** stated that the changes in the board should not change the function of this committee. This community needs to stay together and so do we. If we as a group do not agree with what the strategic plan the community came up with then we need to do some training and get on the same page.
- **Janet Askew** stated that she is glad there is conversation about curriculum and feels that because of our solid financial planning, including passing the Plant Facility Levy

10 years ago, we are now at the point where we have the luxury to discuss curriculum improvements. We are not like many other school districts that are worrying about whether or not they have leaking roofs and heating systems for their kids, and having to cut curriculum to take care of buildings.

- **Dr. Lewis** thanked Janet and said he could not have expressed it better, and that this is the message we must get out to the public.

**4. Website Presence:** **Dr. Lewis** said he would like Kate Heinecke to help us decide where and how we would like the minutes and any other documents from the committee to be presented on our website. **Dr. Lewis** said he feels there should be three areas posted to the website: 1. Minutes. 2. Mission goal statement. 3. Where the levy connects with what part of the strategic plan. I believe the following are the groups who this committee should be concerned with: 1. Facilities. 2. Safety upgrades. 3. Technology. 4. Greening of the buildings.

- **Kate Heinecke** showed the committee the district's current home page and noted the Strategic Planning Section on the right column. This will be where we will post all Levy information, with links to a corresponding Levy section within the Strategic Plan section on the site.
- **Dr. Lewis** would like to have the committee members names listed with contact information. This will allow the community to contact members with questions. We absolutely want to be transparent. The committee agreed that the contact information would be e-mail only.

**5. Discussion of Strategic Plan Goals and where they fit into the levy**

- **Rob Lonning** suggested that the committee should clarify the difference of what parts are focused on and why we will only focus on certain parts of the strategic plan.
- **Jeff Neel** felt a new name would better help people to understand that this is not only about buildings. After a group discussion, the name will remain the same because it reflects the name state code has placed on this type of levy.
- **John Gaeddert** mentioned that he felt, we should really have all the strategic goal groups presented so that there is no argument that this district only cares about buildings and not kids.
- **Dr. Lewis** mentioned our job is to change that perception through communication and education. This is education not only for this committee and the board, but for the public as well.
- **Lynn Askew** followed that the budget is very complicated and is very difficult for people to understand. Lynn suggested that we really meet with the opposition head on. **Dr. Lewis** stated that even in this economy we need to help people understand that we are not raising their taxes.

**6. Mission Goal Statement:** **Lynn Askew** stated there are two main things we should look at for our mission statement. **1.** Using the strategic plan with the 10 major goals as our guide. That we as a group prioritize them based on needs and wants and then decide how best to present them to the public. **2.** The second aspect is that if we go forward with our needs we need to make sure that we have success with the election.

- **John Gaeddert** suggested that our main goal is to make sure that every student has the best education possible, and that we can keep our teacher student ratios the same, then look at planning for the facilities followed by safety and technology.
- **Jeff Neel** mentioned how the levy is a much more flexible tool than a bond. We are being more prudent with taxpayer dollars by using a more flexible tool.
- **Lynn Askew** suggested that a mission statement makes us transparent to the public and it will help keep the committee on task. That transparency will be beneficial for all.
- **Rob Lonning** suggests tying into the strategic plan should be front and center and sound financial planning as a sub group. Discussion ensued between members to formulate the following mission statement and goals:

#### **MISSION STATEMENT:**

**The levy committee aims to implement the community's vision for Blaine County School District as outlined in the Strategic Plan by designing, presenting, and supporting a levy adequate for the infrastructure of a world-class, student-focused community of teaching and learning.**

#### **GOALS:**

- **Maximize our ability to achieve the ten 21st Century goals identified in our Strategic Plan by ensuring adequate resources.**
- **Maintain the general fund budget for students, staff, and curriculum by targeting necessary infrastructure expenditures.**
- **Continue sound financial planning for the future that provides prudent stewardship of tax dollars.**
- **Bring our community together in support of this mission by effectively communicating the need for this levy.**

- 7. Timeline review:** Proposed meeting dates to be moved to the following: June 22<sup>nd</sup> @ 2:00. July 20<sup>th</sup> @ 2:00. Aug 6<sup>th</sup> @ 2:00 backup date August 4<sup>th</sup> for Rich Bauscher to attend.
- 8. Evaluation of Need vs Wants:** There is some question about the technology piece as to what is a general fund expenditure and what is a levy expenditure. Dr. Lewis has asked Jerry Hutchins to come to the next meeting to explain this better.
  - **Mike Chatterton** explained that operational budget is for supplies, salaries, benefits and other miscellanies. The facilities budget is for hard assets such as buildings, computers and security. You can think of these as consumable and non-consumable. Our proposed levy budget for the next 10 years, should not increase tax dollars.

- **John Gaeddert** asked if the district could put together a spreadsheet that will show where each goal falls in together, instead of 10 separate sheets. All agreed it would be much easier to look at it all together in one spreadsheet. Kate Heinecke will put that together and send it out to the committee prior to the next meeting.
- **Lynn Askew** would like each member to review the data before the next meeting, and then the committee will go through the whole spreadsheet together as a group at the next meeting.
- **Mike Chatterton** asked if he could take five minutes to explain some things that might help this group better understand the need for a levy.
- **Lynn Askew** asked Mike to put that on hold until the end of the meeting.
- **Dr. Lewis** suggested that we keep these meetings to two hours.
- **Lynn Askew** said the next meeting would be spent looking over this spreadsheet and really putting this together. We will go over all the details and decide the needs and wants.

#### 9. Discussion of committee representation and communication

- Dr. Lewis** stated that Theresa Castellano has not been able to come and he really feels it is necessary to have all areas represented. He asked if anyone knows of an additional person from the Ketchum area who might be able to represent that area.
- John Gaeddert** wants to make sure that when the committee goes before the board that we as a group really have thought this through and that we have something to present that the board will want to take forward.
- Rob Lonning** felt that there are 7000 people in Hailey, which he represents and wants to make sure that we really have informed the public so that they do not feel they were left out of the process.
- Dr. Lewis** suggests that the board would put something out there for the community to have a place to talk to them.
- Jim Laski** thinks there should be people from the zones on the committee because this was such a big issue during the elections. He asked if each board person would find people from their zones to be on the committee to represent this levy election.
- Lynn Askew** feels that communities are better represented than zone representation. Lynn is talking about really finding ways to communicate with the public.
- John Gaeddert** feels that it would be a really good thing to take the committees request to the strategic planning group before going to the board.
- Dr. Lewis** suggested that we could probably take this to the steering committee before going before the board. He also thought that there should be a new board member and a seasoned board member attending each of these meetings.
- Mike Chatterton** suggested that we send the minutes to the steering committee and to the entire strategic planning group to get feed back.
- Lynn Askew** said we would add that for an agenda item for the next meeting. We will also be going over in depth the goals and where they should fall, as either needs or want so we can begin to put together a recommendation for the board.

**10. Enrollment projections - Mike Chatterton** explained the following to the committee: I took a snap shot of the district and we are down in enrollment by 54 students at the end of the school year. Mike handed out a spreadsheet that shows how, why, and when we will need a new school. If the board approves all-day kindergarten there are rooms that will already

be in use that had been set aside for growth. (See bookmark - Building Capacity Summary)  
This spread sheet shows capacity and projected enrollment, which will help the committee to see when, why, and where the need for new facilities will be in the future.

**11.** The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

**Attachment A**

	Classroom Capacity at 22 students	2008-09 Enrollment	Percent of Capacity	Projected 2009-010 Enrollment	Percent of Capacity	Projected 2010-11 Enrollment	Percent of Capacity	Projected 2011-12 Enrollment	Percent of Capacity	Projected 2012-13 Enrollment	Percent of Capacity	Projected 2013-14 Enrollment	Percent of Capacity	Projected 2014-15 Enrollment	Percent of Capacity
Bellevue Elementary	352	293	83.24%	308	87.50%	348	98.86%	361	102.56%	390	110.80%	402	114.20%	415	117.90%
Hailey Elementary	506	437	86.36%	449	88.74%	429	84.78%	419	82.81%	420	83.00%	416	82.21%	423	83.60%
Hemingway Elementary	462	422	91.34%	462	100.00%	473	102.38%	497	107.58%	507	109.74%	504	109.09%	509	110.17%
Woodside Elementary	506	396	78.26%	426	84.19%	435	85.97%	456	90.12%	467	92.29%	467	92.29%	476	94.07%
Total Elementaries	1826	1548	84.78%	1645	90.09%	1685	92.28%	1733	94.91%	1784	97.70%	1789	97.97%	1823	99.84%
Wood River Middle School	792	630	79.55%	654	82.58%	721	91.04%	759	95.83%	784	98.99%	821	103.66%	854	107.83%
Wood River High School	1232	831	67.45%	885	71.83%	916	74.35%	929	75.41%	916	74.35%	981	79.63%	1035	84.01%
Silver Creek High School	66	14	21.21%	16	24.24%	14	21.21%	16	24.24%	16	24.24%	24	36.36%	25	37.88%
Carey Elementary	440	133	30.23%	133	30.23%	127	28.86%	130	29.55%	123	27.95%	116	26.36%	119	27.05%
Carey High School	220	128	58.18%	132	60.00%	135	61.36%	132	60.00%	145	65.91%	152	69.09%	157	71.36%

**Points of Interest:**

- 1) If enrollment holds to the projected increase of 2.4% an Elementary School should be online between 2013 and 2014.
- 2) Wood River Middle School will need an 8 room addition available between 2012 and 2013. This addition will drop the capacity to 80.99% in the 2012-13 school year. Hopefully this will buy us a few years to plan for another Middle School to be built.
- 3) Enrollment projections will call for another High School or additions to the existing High School during the next ten year cycle.
- 4) During the school year 2011-12 we may have to look at hard boundaries for all of the Elementary Schools to even out enrollments.
- 5) The more the Preschool Program grows, the quicker we are going to need a new Elementary.
- 6) The full day Kindergarten program will also accelerate the need for a new Elementary.