

Special Meeting of the Columbus Public Schools Board of Education

Mission:"Engaging All Learners to Achieve Success"

The Special Meeting of the Columbus Public Schools Board of Education started at 7:00 AM on Thursday, February 27, 2014. The meeting was held at Columbus Public Schools Administration Building, 2508 27th Street
2508 27th Street
Columbus, NE 68601

Candace Becher: Present
Ken Curry: Present
Alan Dostal: Present
Mike Goos: Present
Francis Kuehler: Present
Theresa Seipel: Present

I. Call to Order

II. Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call

III. Open Meeting Notice of Posted Law

IV. President insures that all can hear the proceedings

V. Opportunity For Public To Be Heard

No one spoke to the board.

VI. Presentation on Survey Poll

Dr. Troy Loeffelhof said voters rejected the proposal in 2011 and the administration and board were told to listen more. The district did do this by seeking input from the community. There were 16 community meetings and seven facility committee meetings. There was a Google online survey to determine which direction to go as well as surveys done at the community meetings. A professional company did the final survey. There were 304 people surveyed most with whom are regular voters in primary elections. The survey was conducted from Jan. 28- Feb. 1. Of those surveyed, 96 percent voted in 2012 election; 68 percent were Republicans; and 59 percent voted in two or more primaries. There were 30 percent who were 70 plus; 16 percent who were 45 or younger; most were empty nesters with only 14 percent who currently have kids in CPS Schools; and 50 percent have had kids attend CPS. The majority of those surveyed supported the initiatives and strategic planning of the district. They also approved building a new high school and wanted the lowest possible tax increase. The common supportive themes include: providing a school with modern up to date facilities; providing a new high school large enough to accommodate a STEM academy and Career and Technical Education course; and providing facilities that help attract employees and industry. Seventy-one (71) percent of the undecided voters approved a new high school on 38 St.; 69 percent approved shifting middle school students to the current high school; and 66 percent approved moving preschool and some administrative offices to the current middle school. People were concerned about the cost of the project and the 7-cent levy increase. The board listened again

and re-evaluated the high school program, square footage, interest rates, payment by the district, leveraging cash reserves, and levy reduction strategies. (What can the district use from this current levy?) The original high school program cost was reduced from \$58 million to \$49,400,000, which is a 15 percent reduction of the original scope. The levy also dropped from 7 cents to 4.75 cents, which is a reduction of 32 percent. This was able to be accomplished by using the levy already being taxed and taking some risk through cash reserve. Dr. Loeffelholz said the question he heard in presentations was the levy is too high and people pay too much in taxes. He said this board has been responsive to the community saying people pay too much in taxes. In the last 10 years, the levy has gone down from 22.3 cents to 13.92 cents. If the bond passes, the levy will increase to 18.5 cents, which is still four cents less than 10 years ago. The general fund levy is at \$1.05 and can't go any higher. CPS is one of the 10 lowest spending school districts per student in the last 10 years. The average house in Columbus costs \$111,754; and with the 4.75 levy, the tax impact would be \$53.08 per year, 4.42 per month, and 14.5 cents per day. What happens to the current middle school? The gym will stay. The space will allow for the preschool size to double with 8 classrooms to start. The kitchen will be reduced in size but still allow lunch and breakfast to be served. There will also be a training/professional development boardroom. The district plans to keep the 1924 for two years to see if there is any interest. Dostal said the survey was well done. Curry said some people lost focus, and people need to remember this high school project is to solve the middle school need and do it in a cost effective manner. He said it is a solution for the middle school. Dr. Loeffelholz said the new high school is to replace a middle school.

VII. Discussion and Consideration of Guaranteed Maximum Price

The Guaranteed Maximum price: \$49,387,328.

VIII. Discussion and Consideration of Bond Resolution

The election will be held on May 13, 2014. Alan Dostal said the board and administration have spent a tremendous amount of time on this issue. They asked for community input, which is critical to this project. He said the board is very appreciative of the community. Dostal said the plan is not perfect, but it is the best we can put together; and it is a very reasonable plan. This needs to pass for the good of Columbus. Dostal said you cannot have progress without the cost of education. He said people like to think of this as cost, but it is an investment.

IX. Executive Session

No Executive Session was held.

X. Adjourn

The board adjourned at 7:37 a.m.

I, the undersigned, being the duly qualified Secretary for the School District No. 1 of Columbus, Nebraska, certify that the preceding is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Regular School Board meeting of Thursday, February 27, 2014.

President

Secretary