



PUBLIC FORUM NOTES

Date: November 20, 2013

Project: **RSU #19 Major Capital Improvement Projects**

Subject: **Nokomis Regional High Public Forum**

Discussion:

1. Darren Briggs introduced the project and explained that we are early in the process. He explained to the people that it is about them and that we want to see what the public wants and address their needs. No decisions have been made at this time. We have just started and are in the idea collection stage.
2. Greg Potter explained where we are in the process. The district has two approved state funded projects, #3 Newport Elementary School and #6 Nokomis High School.
3. Greg explained pre-concept and concept contracts with Oak Point Associates (OPA) which include a district wide study, site analysis, enrollment projections, and renovation vs new construction analysis. The money is reimbursable if the public votes yes for the project. If not, they are responsible for the cost of the contracts.
4. Greg stated that these are state funded projects and that OPA is currently instructed to stay within the state funded dollars for design. The district could raise additional money for enhancements if they chose to do so.
5. Greg emphasized that this is an inclusive process. We want to hear their ideas, worries and concerns.
6. Greg explained that the high school may be new or renovated but the elementary school would be new as recommended by the state.
7. Rob Tillotson explained that we are at step four of the process. The analysis compares the option of renovating the school to like-new condition, including replacement of the portables, with construction of a new building that would provide a space that is the right size for the population and efficiency of space. A new building would not disrupt the students. The existing high school has been well maintained but the mechanical systems need replacement, there is asbestos in the building, buildings do not meet current structural loads, the windows and building envelope are not efficient, etc.
8. Darren opened up the floor for questions and gave OPA's email site (rsu19@oakpoint.com) to participants if they have any additional comments.

Q: Would a renovated school be the same as a new school for room sizes?

A: Yes, we will do our best to do that. Sometimes it is a little tricky because of existing construction limitations. Mechanical, electrical, lighting and daylighting systems are also upgraded.

Q: Will there still be flat roofs?

A: We can build roofs either way, but the state does not pay for pitched roofs. Also, pitched roofs are not practical on large buildings.

Q: Who has paid for the engineering services up to now?

A: The district.

Q: How is that organized?

A: OPA is paid by the district by phases. The district will provide a line item in the budget. It is paid for up front until it passes and then the district is reimbursed by the state.

Q: How long is the process?

A: About three years.

Q: When we vote, will the drawings and specifications be completed?

A: No, there will only be concept drawings and then we develop the construction documents after the vote.

Q: How long does it take from concept to construction?

A: About one year.

9. Rob explained that if the referendum passes, the construction cost cannot go over the approved amount.

Q: When we vote, is it simple majority?

A: Yes.

Q: Can they get a copy of the state handbook or put it on our link?

A: Yes, we can do that.

Q: Is equipment in the project?

A: Yes, furniture, technology, infrastructure, moveable equipment, etc.

10. Greg explained the furniture process and the technology at Chelsea elementary as an example.

Q: How long will we be paying for this?

A: This project will be totally state funded unless the community decides to add enhancements such as a larger auditorium, generator, etc. It should not affect taxes.

Q: Is the elementary site suitable to rebuild the school?

A: No, the state does not like the site because of the train tracks and the delay they may cause for emergency equipment.

Q: Where would the new elementary school go?

A: Not sure yet, possibly on the same campus as the high school and middle school. We can look at other sites.

Q: Would we fix the current septic system or try to connect to the town sewer system?

A: Connecting to the sewer system will be very expensive because the sewer line is miles away and the state does not pay to run the piping that far.

Q: Will the state pay to connect the school to University of Maine for distance learning if we already have the program?

A: Yes.

Q: Will the other elementary schools in the district be incorporated into the new elementary design?

A: We are looking at all eight towns and seeing if there are options. We do not have any intent on creating a single mega-elementary school, but we may be able to consolidate some. We are looking into the options at the state's request. We want to know what the communities think.

Q: The current Williams Road site is 200 acres. How much of it does the high school use?

A: Rob pointed out the boundary on the site map and explained that not all of the acreage is usable due to wetlands, setbacks and a nesting area.

Q: Will the state force you do something?

A: No, there are lots of negotiations with the state to come up with a concept that both sides can agree on.

Q: Do we have OPA from start to finish of the project?

A: Yes, unless you do not like us.

C: Important to invest in infrastructure so things work correctly.

11. Greg discussed how we can look at chip boilers, etc. for fuel options.

Q: Where do students go during a renovation?

A: We must be creative to have school around a construction site. We will do lots of logistical planning and staging plans. The state does fund the cost of portable classrooms.

Q: Does the state fund geothermal?

A: Not fully. The state will pay for a wood chip boiler and will pay the difference toward geothermal.

12. Darren discussed the possibility of a central heating plant.

Q: Does the state pay for areas for students to lounge?

A: Yes, we can have student gathering spaces worked into the plan.

Q: When will the building be done?

A: In the spring we will have a better idea of time. It depends on what direction the project takes. It takes approximately 16 months for an elementary and 2 years for a high school for new construction. A renovation would be longer due to phasing.

Q: Does the state pay for demolition of the existing building?

A: Only if the location of the school is being used for fields or part of the new building. Otherwise, the building goes to the town.

Q: At what point in the process does the district decide new or renovation?

A: We are looking at the options for both projects now and will have a better idea over the next 4-6 months. We will be back again with concepts and then again with final concept plans for straw poll.

13. Darren explained we will be having more meetings and public forums where the public can chime in on what they find interesting or any concerns they may have.

14. Greg wants to know what kind of things this project can do enhance the program. What is the community interested in offering. Take your information to the streets and get people involved.

Q: Can the new building have FCS, business, shop etc. that the middle school can use?

A: Yes.

C: We want more participation and need better communication with the community. We want a full room at meetings. We need a road show where we go to people and not expect them to come to us. We need this project and it is important to the district. We can put inserts in the Rolling Thunder that include the discussions at the forums. We should also have lunch meetings for community members who cannot make night meetings.