

**Board Facility Committee Meeting**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**January 6, 2015**

**Present:** Terry Beaver, Libbi Lovshin, Aidan Myhre, Kent Kultgen, John Carter

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Mr. Beaver called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. He gave a recap of the goals of the committee. He said no final decisions will be made at this meeting, but if a resolution is agreed to tonight it will be taken to the full board of trustees on January 13<sup>th</sup>. He reviewed the procedure of the meeting. General Public Comment will be taken after the committee discussion.

Ms. Myhre thanked the district employees for their work over the holidays.

Dr. Kultgen reviewed the K-12 Vision in detail with what would take place at each school including the timeline. He stressed that with any decision we make that we can't lose sight of student academics. That's our #1 priority.

Dr. Kultgen said that we heard from the community that all students/all schools must be touched. This plan does that. He then reviewed the parameters of the plan. All elementary children will benefit.

Once the board approves a plan, administration will go out to the buildings and talk to staff gathering their ideas as to what specifics they think should be done at the buildings.

Dr. Kultgen said the goal is to get students back in their neighborhood schools. Boundaries will be redrawn. With this plan, the two schools in the valley will be able to handle the enrollment with seats left over.

Central school has two options. Modularity could be placed on the Central site under one roof. Students would have to go outside to get to the gym/lunchroom. This would be at the current Central school on Warren Street.

Option two would be to have Central students remain at the Lincoln Site and renovate Lincoln school.

If approved, Dr. Kultgen recommends we run a June bond. Construction wouldn't start until next year. Boundary realignment would begin right away. Many boundaries would have to be redrawn. Then next fall we would begin talking about high schools.

Ms. Lovshin asked how long it would take to accomplish the projects scheduled to be completed through the building reserve. The district receives \$1.2 million a year. There is a fine line between deferred maintenance vs. renovation.

Ms. Myhre said neither option of the Central solutions is outstanding. Dr. Kultgen said it shows the complexity of Central. He added that the district offers students the choice to attend another school if there is room.

Mr. Beaver was concerned about the recovery rate if we are going to encumber a \$75 million bond. Dr. Kultgen said there is a bill in the Legislature asking to expand facility money for schools.

Ms. Harris said that each year, money is added back to the building reserve. When you pay back principal you recover that for the bonding capacity. A bond is different than a home mortgage.

Ms. Myhre suggested we postpone some projects so we have more bonding capacity in five years.

Mr. Beaver asked if keyless entries are part of this. Yes. What about intercom or intracom systems meaning there is not only communication within a building but also between buildings. Mr. Boles said yes, it can. There is so much more than just audio to these systems. There is much flexibility.

Dr. Kultgen said we're in a situation that is not going away. We know our bonding restrictions and we know it's a very complex matter. We hear from the community that it's time to do something. Many people are ready to move forward and it can be exciting.

Ms. Myhre said her concern is not having enough cushion with our bonding capacity.

Mr. Beaver asked the committee if we go to full board, do we take it with option A and Option B for Central.

**General Public Comment:** Mr. Beaver allowed those with public comment to only talk for three minutes.

Rachel Carroll Rivas – How does this plan get us the things we need? What do the budget implementations mean to staff? To teachers? How does this plan get us to better education for students? What about small class sizes? Programming is so important. She said she is excited about language immersion; not excited about single key entry.

Dr. Kultgen said that the district has classrooms that heat up to 90 degrees in the summer, and students wear coats in the winter. Many schools don't have the right number of bathrooms. Technology is missing. No electricity is available in some classrooms. Air handlers are missing in some of the rooms. Resources can be put back into the classroom.

Ms. Myhre added that some classrooms don't have ADA accommodations. Some students can't even get into a classroom. Some schools don't have the room for teachers / classrooms to collaborate. Class size varies from school to school. We want to keep them more equal.

Mr. Beaver said that rebuilding/renovation it will allow us to have better student learning. Student learning has changed over the years. We need spaces for students to work in collaboration. Currently we don't have that in our classrooms. Learning has changed over the years and we need technology that we don't have currently.

Pete Brown – 220 Wallace – Option two for Central is dead on arrival. This Sunday there was a protest for parents of children attending Lincoln. Parents want their children to be at Central. They want the school to be reopened. Modulars are insulting. He said the district can put modular at Central for same amount that you can fix it. Tack on ADA upgrades and sprinklers and you're just over 2 mil. There is levy money and money from Montana Board of Investments. Abatement work could be done. He told the committee they are walking away from this. The neighborhood doesn't want to see modulars. Because of this the bond will fail.

Christine Brown 220 Wallace – She echoed her husband and added to what Pete said. Where is Option C to renovate Central? There is a petition signed by parents to renovate Central. There is layer upon layer of insult.

Emily Brand – 715 Breckenridge – She said she would like to see Option C for Central. Getting kids back in the neighborhood is important. It's okay for students to ride the bus but it's hard for parents to be engaged in the school when students go to Lincoln. Renovating Central doesn't mean that it has to be a school forever. It doesn't have to be an educational facility forever and maybe sometime it could be consolidated and made into something other than a school. Downtown doesn't look good right now; it looks dumpy right now.

Matt Morgan – MPA - 1821 Bowling Street – Chere Jiusto couldn't be at the meeting so he read a letter from her. He pointed out there was a large discrepancy between CTA's \$2 million figure vs. Don Platisha's \$8 million figure to fix Central. He also asked why not sell Front Street and use building reserve money and apply for grants to keep Central open.

Dr. Kultgen addressed his concerns by saying the district did pursue the FEMA grants. But a portion of the grant stated that the district needed to include design work which would cost approximately \$350,000 therefore the district chose not to apply.

Mr. Beaver asked Mr. Platisha about the difference in the two estimates. Mr. Platisha said we discovered additional structure issues after the report from CTA was released. Mr. Carter added that if he were to look on page 20 of the CTA report it says it would cost \$8.5 million to renovate.

Ms. Lovshin said the seismic retrofit is \$1.2 million. Dr. Kultgen said that not all expenses were included in the CTA breakdown of expenses.

Mr. Carter said the price tag on each Option for Central includes everything, not just the construction.

Michael O'Neil - 610 Hillsdale – He expressed concern that we are making this way too complicated. Central school goes beyond the connections to that school. It's a great place for a school because it is centrally located. Investing more in our schools will only complicate transportation routes. He doesn't think moving HHS is a good idea. The simplest solution is often the best solution. Problems with Central School are somewhat an opportunity. We could do renovation there to get closer to vision. We need to renovate the middle schools. And it becomes very complicated to relocate the high schools. When there are highway projects, there

are always ramifications. He encouraged the committee to go simpler. He liked last year's which included a full renovation of Central, Warren, Jim Darcy; a much better approach.

Sarah Sullivan 820 Holter – She said she appreciated the plan. She has wanted a vision for years for all of K-12. Even if we do phase one and didn't pass another phase we have taken care of a lot of kids. She appreciates Emily's comments. She said she understands the pain of the Central community and moving into another venue for Central. Getting three bonds passed may be hard. Maybe shave some things at Warren or some other schools that aren't in too bad of shape. Her child is in a Hawthorne classroom of 28 students – not enough students to have 2 classrooms. Smaller schools don't always mean you'll have smaller classrooms.

Becky Albertson – 633 Ewing – She said Option A sounds like your possible getting us back to our home school. If we're going to get back to Central we should fix the school. How can kids be at that site in modulars.

Chad Lee – 1427 Highland – The overall theme shows the committee didn't listen to community who said they want neighborhood schools. He said he would be inclined to vote against it. High schools were added for the politics of it. Who says Capital High is not working.

Jon Rush – 720 Holter – He said a meeting or two ago, Mr. Beaver said we should put something on the ballot. He agrees with that. The committee had a plan then pulled it back. We talked about building a 21<sup>st</sup> century school when Four Georgians was built. That was the building that was going to revolutionize education. Rossiter was the same. Now there is another idea. There was a building levy report that showed the spending on the schools through 2013. There was money spent Ray Bjork Learning Center and nothing on Central. We should ask Ms. Harris to provide the schedule of payments of a 20 year bond. Why is Jim Darcy costing \$18 million when Mosaic's report says \$11 million? The district has a lot of unanswered questions.

Dr. Kultgen said the costs in the Mosaic report two years ago were construction costs and not as detailed as the ones today are.

Mr. Carter said the most recent construction cost is \$13 million.

Doug Shenkle – 3301 Evening Star Drive – He said he is a taxpayer on a fixed income. He’s had a lot of experience with modulars and Central. The modular at Lincoln are nice. As a leader in Science, he has spent hours at Central in an unworkable building. As it currently exists it’s not good to renovate and use it. The modulars of today are much better than they use to be. As a taxpayer, no plan is perfect. There is no way were going to agree to that. We can’t say to Central parents that they are going to get a perfect facility.

Darryl James 715 Power Street – He said he agreed with Sarah Sullivan. He commended the facility committee. He said he did a petition last year and now he’s giving credit to the board. This seems like a very sound plan. If there is a way to carve some money off the current proposal that would be a good idea. Maybe pull out Smith as a 500 student school. Smith should be put on hold unless you expect an explosion across the interstate.

Dr. Kultgen said on the east side of town there are 900 students. If Smith is at 420 and Jefferson at 270 student, that leaves 200 students for Helena Middle School.

Carolyn Adams – 1029 State Street – She found it interesting that we looked at Bozeman and Billings. Why haven’t we looked at Missoula? They came up with ideal size school as being 350. They are trying to reduce the 500 student schools. A 500 student school seems large. Is a 500 student school ideal? Where would the two high schools be built? It’s important for students to be able to walk to school.

Mr. Beaver said there is no way we will please everyone. We must do what is best for kids. The concerns in the past have been concerns for parents, staff and now we are left with concerns for kids.

Ms. Myhre said she didn’t feel the committee had a refined plan. There needs to be more thought put into Central, redrawing boundaries, and walkability; something that is not modular. We haven’t thoroughly exhausted the Central options. We need to shave the current bond recommendations and then we need to put something forward.

Mr. Beaver said the teachers at Jim Darcy are saying that modulars are the best. He’s convinced that modulars at Lincoln are the best. We don’t get the benefits from current classrooms like those of a modular. Electrical, ADA requirements,

cooling, and heating are all good in a modular. Modulares are very capable buildings. There is teacher learning and child learning space. It is extremely difficult to go back into the Central building that exists at this time. There are insurmountable problems. It was stated that if we had another earthquake, a student would die in Central School. We will have extreme difficulty in gluing Central back together. This can't compare to other cities and what they've done with old buildings. The two options we have for Central are good but he still has reservations. The second option at Lincoln site still causes him reservations that are greater than Option A.

Ms. Myhre said she has tremendous sadness for Central parents. We have to put our students into a great learning environment. Are there alternatives?

Ms. Lovshin said Bryant is a small campus along with it being a small school.

Dr. Kultgen said adjusting boundaries is a six year process. There are 3500 k-5 students that need help.

Ms. Myhre said the plan still needs to be refined.

Dr. Kultgen said we need to touch all kids.

Ms. Myhre asked if we could combine Montessori programs. Dr. Kultgen said no because there aren't enough classrooms.

Dr. Kultgen surmised that this plan wouldn't go before the board but rather refine more.

Ms. Lovshin asked if it could be ready to go before the board – she said she is tired of talking about this as is the community. Not willing to wait.

Ms. Myhre asked if we have to present to board on Tuesday to follow timeline – Dr. Kultgen said no.

Mr. Beaver asked Ms. Harris if we could recover rapidly enough – don't see need to postpone anything.

Ms. Myhre said she struggles with spending so much of the bonding capacity on schools. She's not there. Want to be expired and excited about what they are doing.

Ms. Lovshin said the modular are a bridge – what if we build Jefferson and Smith, it's still three years out. They will be displaced for three years. Central parents want staff on the Central campus. This would be 1/ 2 the life of a student.

Ms. Myhre suggested building modular at Jefferson.

Mr. Carter said he felt it best to keep all the Central students together which is why they did an Option using Lincoln school and Central school.

Mr. Beaver asked Mr. Cummings, principal at Jim Darcy and Ms. Nasset, principal at Central to talk about the modular they currently have at their schools. Mr. Cummings said achievement of students in the modular is higher than adequate in the exterior classrooms. For whatever reason modulars take on a negative connotation. They are the best rooms at Jim Darcy. They have great light, they are sheet rooked, and have air conditioning. The modulars have good air. They are great exterior classrooms.

Ms. Nasset echoed what Mr. Cummings said. Her staff wants to have meetings in the modular. Her concerns are adequate lighting and being separate from main building. With the proposed option all Central students will be together.

Ms. Myhre said she would like to have one more meeting. Maybe develop a plan with boundary realignment with Central students being at Jefferson. The boundaries between Jefferson and Smith could be adjusted but students would be grandfathered in based on HMS becoming an elementary school.

Mr. Beaver said there would be one additional meeting scheduled for Tuesday, January 20<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.