

**Board Facility Committee Meeting**  
**Thursday, September 11, 2014**  
**May Butler Center**

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

**Guests:** Alexander Deedy, Jon Rush, Doug Shenkle, Chuck Butler, Darryl James, Patty Hartman, Chere Jiusto, Diane Neff

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**General Public Comment:** Chuck Butler complimented Dr. Kultgen and the board for reaching out to the community on behalf of his grandchildren.

Dr. Kultgen began the meeting stating that the committee should elect a chair; there will be minutes taken and then the chairperson will report to the full board at the regular board meetings. He went on to say there will be short-term and long-term goals of the committee. Short-term are displaced students, technology, optimal learning environments. Long term goals are looking at K-12 as a whole, educational adequacies and operational budget. There are community experts and community surveys available. The chairperson will help set length of meetings, vision and future meetings. With that being said, Dr. Kultgen turned it over to the committee to select a chairperson.

Ms. Myhre said she chairs the Community Advisory Council and recommends Mr. Beaver. Ms. Lovshin is the Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees. Mr. Beaver graciously accepted being the chairperson.

Mr. Beaver said that the committee needs to discuss the goal of the committee. What are the parameters of the committee? What should the committee address and what shouldn't they address?

Ms. Myhre said that you read in the paper about Bozeman taking on a 10 year plan. What's our 10 year plan? What are the urgent priorities in facilities?

Ms. Lovshin said she had mixed feelings about setting a four year plan because we don't know who will be the trustees in four years or two years for that matter. They could completely change a 10 year plan.

Ms. Myhre said she thought they should set the parameters – optimal right sized schools and technology.

Mr. Beaver said he thought it was tough to establish long-term plans. We started this in 2007 thinking we'd have a solution in three years. We're no further along than when we began. It doesn't seem feasible to establish a 10 year plan. Our plans are continually evolving. We know our oldest facilities and may plan to upgrade them but along the way something may happen to another school that needs addressed immediately. If that happens, the 10 year plan changes drastically. An example is Central. Closing Central happened unexpectedly and now that's where we are focused.

Ms. Myhre said we should tackle the little things and maybe a broader plan will evolve.

Ms. Lovshin said that we have many small urgent things. We need to establish a direction and look at the urgent things such as middle schools, technology, Central and Jim Darcy.

Dr. Kultgen said the committee needs to provide direction. We started by looking at K-12 and then we narrowed to K-5. Our goal is to have no surprises.

Mr. Beaver said we need a consensus as to what to do. Do we plan ahead or do we look at direction and is it possible to do that direction.

Ms. Lovshin said that the bond, Jim Darcy and technology are urgent. Time's ticking and how does Central play into the decision. Jim Darcy is particularly urgent. Central students are displaced and Warren students are displaced in being bussed to Smith. These things need addressed as soon as possible.

Ms. Lovshin said seven years has gone by using the big picture and we still have nothing. No action has been taken. The board did take action, but then pulled it back.

Ms. Myhre said let's look at the whole picture and then look at the urgent needs.

Mr. Beaver said we can do what we want. If during the process we see that we're not going in the right direction, we can change.

Dr. Kultgen said there has been urgency all along.

Dr. Kultgen said that we know we have 8,000 students and know we need to come up with a bond that will pass.

Ms. Lovshin asked how much time we have in order to take care of Jim Darcy. Mr. Carter said we would need a bond by the first of the year to have a school by 2016.

Dr. Kultgen reiterated that we need a bond that will pass.

Mr. Beaver asked if we should be concentrating on these parameters – Jim Darcy, displaced students, technology and then expand the committee to include other problems that arise along the way. We need to pass a bond that includes what will be a viable bond.

Ms. Myhre asked if we can assume that this committee may come up with a completely different bond proposal than the board did earlier in the year.

Mr. Beaver said yes. Otherwise why have a committee. He asked Mr. Carter what they were missing in their discussion.

Mr. Carter said they needed to look this with a sense of urgency. There are steps that go with that. We need to make bond decisions and look at schools along the way. Unexpected things are going to happen. You need to look at the buildings because that is where we house our students – they need to be safe and dry. You need to realize we have a limited bonding capacity. Sustainability. In Mr. Carter's day to day, there are everyday concerns. He worries about the unknowns. Everything has a service life – boilers, roofs, etc. There is urgency. There is brick and mortar to worry about but there is also educational adequacy for students. There is definitely more needs than money. To make changes means a change in culture. We have to invest our money wisely. Other districts have set trigger points such as when a school gets too big something happens; when a school gets too small something happens. We really struggle as a district and as a community to accept change.

Dr. Kultgen said they can offer community surveys. The district can get a private company to conduct surveys on a variety of things – right sized schools, etc.

Mr. Beaver said what good does a survey do when the community doesn't have an understanding of things, example – right sized schools. Why do a survey when we know what the results are going to be?

Ms. Myhre said marketing research is valuable. Status quo is not acceptable. Having the same number of facilities is not acceptable either. C.R. Anderson is too big and Helena Middle School is too small.

Mr. Beaver said that at the present time the middle schools are not the major problem. The bond approved was to build a Jim Darcy and Central School to a 500 student school, place technology in all K-8 schools and renovate Warren. We seem to be procrastinating the election because we know it won't pass.

Ms. Myhre suggested the committee have a brainstorming session and get community feedback.

Ms. Lovshin said there are so many combinations as to what we could do as far as putting together a bond.

Mr. Beaver said we are assuming that a 500 Central school is good. The Community is just not there.

Ms. Myhre said that Central is so up in the air.

Mr. Beaver said we can't do anything until the City makes a decision about Central.

Ms. Lovshin asked if we should proceed without Central being part of the bond.

Mr. Beaver asked if they thought technology was a stumbling block. The community doesn't seem to like the technology labs. Is Jim Darcy the only thing in the bond that we think will pass?

Mr. Myhre said it won't pass as a stand-alone. It needs other things. Maybe we need to buy property. Maybe expand Smith – it's a great neighborhood. We could redraw the boundaries. Possibly make Smith a 400-500 school.

Mr. Beaver said a 500 student Smith tells Jefferson and Bryant families that we are going to close your school. Will the bond pass with families thinking their schools are going to close? What does this do to neighborhood schools?

Ms. Lovshin said that 11 schools are too many. Some will close.

Ms. Myhre said look what we did at Jim Darcy by adding a Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade. We can do great things by making classes bigger.

Mr. Myhre said anything we do is 3-4 years out. Kids coming into kindergarten will transition over time. There are two key things 1) We are here to educate kids and 2) we want quality safe facilities.

Ms. Lovshin said that bonds are used to build buildings. We need to stay clear on how we spend our money.

Mr. Myhre said the district has great bonding capacity.

Ms. Lovshin said we do but can't do it in a vacuum. People want to know where their kids are going to go to school.

Mr. Myhre said we need to build a 500 student Jim Darcy and a 500 student Smith – that will be a three year transition. We currently have Jim Darcy students all over the district.

Mr. Beaver asked how many 500 student schools do we need. We need four north of the tracks serving 60% of our students and three south the tracks meeting 40% of our students to meet our needs so Smith could be a 500 student school. Therefore the fourth one could be Kessler or buy more land.

Ms. Myhre said or we could turn C.R. Anderson into an elementary school and build a new middle school.

Mr. Beaver said we need three schools south of the track and need something in the center of town.

Dr. Kultgen said this is a great conversation. Maybe at the next meeting we should brainstorm.

Ms. Lovshin said it would be helpful to have the acreage and lot sizes of each school.

Dr. Kultgen said this is a very complex issue. Especially if you bring in the middle schools and high schools to look at the big picture. We could sit with 20 focus groups and get 20 different recommendations.

Mr. Myhre suggested they brainstorm at the next meeting and could we have experts available – John Carter, Don Platisha and others? It would be discussion vs. decision. We won't need to start at ground zero. And we must realize that not everyone will be happy with our decision.

Mr. Beaver said we need to have enough happy people to pass the bond. When shall we have it? **It was decided the next meeting will be Friday, September 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 a.m. at the Ray Bjork Learning Center.**

Dr. Kultgen asked if they would like a professional group at the meeting. Will there be specific items on the agenda?

Mr. Beaver said we could have a lot of community participation. Are we ready for that?

Ms. Myhre said we should continue the discussion and then reach out to the community.

Mr. Beaver said then we will have brainstorming among the committee only.

The committee requested maps/ lot sizes/acreage/ year built.

Mr. Beaver said that they will desire participation from the community from the discussion items.

Dr. Kultgen said the application for Central is next Friday. He met with the architects and is ready to hand in the application as soon as possible. How does the committee feel about submitting the application?

Ms. Myhre said she feels there are some questions that need answered. What are other possibilities of what we can do with Central? We also need to look at developing a plan that will pass. Submitting the application activates the groups in the community to come out against us. She feels we should move the application to the back burner and look at other options. Submitting the application only motivates the community to get fired up.

Ms. Lovshin feels we need to know our options with Central before proceeding. We need to get the City's input and then go with the options.

Mr. Myhre said we can address urgent needs without answering whether to demo Central or not.

M. Lovshin said until we know the answer the building sits empty.

Mr. Beaver said we have to know. Everything is on the table. Until we have an answer, Central is out. Nothing comes into play until we know the City's decision. We need their decision in order to keep everything on the table.

Mr. Myhre said but the City may keep sending the decision back with more requests from the district. This whole thing is taking time from Mr. Carter and Dr. Kultgen to chase the unanswered.

Ms. Lovshin asked if we have a sense that the City won't give us an answer.

Dr. Kultgen said they have to give us an answer within 60 days. We postponed what's on the table because of Central. Does the community think we'll proceed if we can demo Central?

Mr. Beaver said if we don't proceed, where do the Central parents go from here? Without the City's decision we lose Central voters.

Ms. Myhre said if we don't allow the demo, we can't build a 400-500 student school at Central.

Mr. Myhre asked if the City would have a decision in 60 days.

Mr. Myhre said that no one wants a boarded up school. What are potential ideas for other uses for the school?

Mr. Beaver said as long as we're playing with buildings or rebuilding, no one will step in and want it.

**General Public Comment:** Darryl James said Central is a problem in asking the city for demoing Central. There are countless other configurations. 1. Why do you need to tear it down, and 2. Have you looked at other alternatives such as repurposing it. There is not enough good reasons to tear it down. There are signs in community's yards because of the unknown.

Doug Schenke said the committee should take a look at K-6 schools with 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> schools. Also add safer entrances to the elementary schools.

Ms. Myhre said there are increased costs with K-6 schools.

Patty Hartman – Saving the neighborhood school component is very strong. People want the smaller schools. District staff is concerned about not being heard about their various ideas.

Chuck Butler – It's too bad the entire community couldn't have heard the meeting discussion tonight. The board is listening and trying to figure everything out. He said he doesn't think the City will approve the application to tear down Central. Why not think about other options. There's agony with filing the application to demo Central. The district doesn't need any more negative headlines in the paper. The valley needs something but the City needs something too.

Mr. Beaver added that this is putting the city in a tough spot. We need the Central site for a school. The district can't afford to compromise education for buildings. The trustees were put on the board to take care of kids and we can't afford to put kids' education on the line for buildings. We don't compromise education by buying old books or hiring bottom of the class teachers so why should we compromise a building for the education of children. We can't compromise Central. This puts the trustees in a terrible situation.

Mr. Butler added that when the city won't allow the demo the building, what are the next steps.

Cher Justo said thanks for the meeting. Trustees must reflect on the concerns they are hearing from the community. What Mr. Butler said is also her sense. Asking the city to demo Central is something unpopular. Going through the application process is pressing a button for community groups to man a

campaign against schools. The historical group hasn't done anything yet – they are waiting to see. Central school currently isn't able to be a good school. Other communities are revamping old building, why can't we? She hates to see the process. There are alternatives. Mosaic had a lot of good stuff. They are qualified. She suggested the trustees do some brainstorming and use the Mosaic report and ask what we can agree on. When the city or people tell you no, you need to listen.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Kultgen added that this was the 147<sup>th</sup> facility meeting since 2007. He hopes the community sees these as healthy discussions.

There is a Community advisory council meeting scheduled for Friday, Sept. 12 at 8:00 a.m. at the May Butler Center. Mr. Upham will discuss academics and how they relate to facilities.

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, September 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 a.m. at the Ray Bjork Learning Center.