

**Facilities Committee Meeting
Friday, September 19, 2014
Ray Bjork Learning Center**

Present: Terry Beaver, Aidan Myhre, Libbi Lovshin, Kent Kultgen, John Carter, and Diane Neff

Guests: Jon Rush, Doug Shenkle, Chuck Butler, Rick Hays, Alexander Deedy, Quintan Kujela, Beau Downing, Michael O'Neil, Betsy Baur, Chere Jiusto

Mr. Beaver called the meeting to order at 7:00 a.m.

Mr. Beaver said we would continue the dialog from last week. No decisions will be made. We'll discuss anything and everything. There are very few parameters but there are some.

Dr. Kultgen said he would like to hold the application for the demo of Central School.

Ms. Myhre said this is a good decision. Central is an asset to our district and we need to decide what to do with it.

Mr. Beaver said prolonging it becomes a test case. The land is an asset but not the buildings.

Dr. Kultgen said in order to pass a bond there needs to be some excitement behind the bond. He suggested we take a breath and look at the whole district.

Ms. Lovshin said there were mixed feelings last week and thought about it over the last week and can support the decision of holding the application.

Mr. Beaver said that by postponing we could talk to preservationist. Can we talk to City Commission?

Dr. Kultgen said, yes, and the County Commissioners also. This would be a great start.

Mr. Beaver asked if talking to the commissioners is legal within the parameters of the guidelines of demolishing a building.

Dr. Kultgen said we could talk about buildings in general; not specifically about Central.

Mr. Beaver said he would like to talk specifically about Central and the campus.

Ms. Myhre asked if we could do an RFI – See if anyone else is interested in the building. Mosaic talks about making it an administration building. We are so focused on it being a 500 student school. If we don't do something with it, it just sits there. An RFI would be a fairly inexpensive way of seeing if anyone is interested.

Dr. Kultgen said he would do some research to see if the City can meet and will check out the RFI.

Mr. Beaver asked if we can we make arrangements with architects and real estate folks to see what their concerns are.

Dr. Kultgen said that he has been meeting with realtors and architects. Architects say they are willing to meet with the committee.

Ms. Lovshin said she would be interested in having conversations about other buildings too.

Dr. Kultgen said we can see what is happening to Central is and this will also be happening to other buildings in the district down the road. Need to look at broader picture.

Mr. Carter said it seems we're focused on one thing. It's our mission to look at the district as a whole. If we focus on one school we lose the focus of what we are trying to accomplish.

Ms. Myhre said we should look at the broader picture. We need to look at the ideal spot for our schools.

Mr. Beaver said we have to look at schools in light of life expectancy which they have all exceeded. We have to make it acceptable to others in the city. We've mention four groups we would like to meet with. Is that four different meetings or one?

Dr. Kultgen said that the city would be a separate meeting. He will research and let the committee know. He would like to get the groups brought in as soon as possible. We're not out to make anyone happy. We need to look at the best education for our kids.

Mr. Beaver asked how we can anticipate there won't be more groups that want to meet with us.

Dr. Kultgen said these are professional groups that sought us out. There may be other groups that want to talk to us.

Ms. Myhre we have to step back and take a look. We're here to educate kids. We need to have schools where the kids are and then look at the conflicts with the schools.

Ms. Lovshin said it's not just a focus on Central. We need to look at everything. Why can't we look at conversations that already occurred?

Ms. Myhre said we need to know where we're going before we meet with the groups.

Ms. Lovshin said we have articulated but haven't formalized it. We're not far from what the overall vision is.

Dr. Kultgen said our goal is to educate children, but the community must support us.

Mr. Beaver said he could agree to a two week extension to postpone. If no progress, then we should submit the application. To prolong a month is too long. We've postponed Technology and we're hurting kids. Trying to get a kid 15 minutes a day on a computer, that's ridiculous. We have a plan that eliminates that and we just keep prolonging it. Is that reasonable?

Ms. Myhre said she doesn't think it is. If we limit ourselves, we're putting ourselves in the same position. We need to come up with a bond that meets our needs and one the community supports. If we say two weeks we're boxing ourselves in.

Dr. Kultgen said let's not put it off and find ourselves a year down the road in the same situation. We were close but need to run out of here with excitement rather than controversy.

Mr. Beaver said he could agree to postpone the application indefinitely. Ms. Myhre wants to start big and go small.

Ms. Myhre shared her idea on the white board - Two high schools, two middle schools. One challenge we have is East Helena wants its own high school. Ideally we'd have four feeder schools to each middle school. Falling under Capital High School, Four Georgians is already a 500 student school; Jim Darcy needs to be a 500 student school. What other campuses make sense to meet critical needs? Bryant feeds into Helena Middle School. But is it a good school? Like or dislike? Maybe not make all schools 500? Maybe Bryant should be a 350 student school.

Dr. Kultgen asked if we have really explained that we can't have 11 schools. We need to explain that.

Mr. Beaver agreed that Smith could be a 500, Warren could become a 500; Bryant doesn't have a large enough campus to be a 500 student school.

Mr. Beaver said maybe we need to look at Ray Bjork Learning Center.

Ms. Myhre asked if the committee is in agreement that we need to build at Jim Darcy and Warren. If we build Smith to a 450 school from where will those kids come?

Ms. Myhre went on to talk about the West side schools - Rossiter is already 500 students. Do we want to look at maybe building a new high school?

Mr. Beaver said yes, that would be a possibility. Maybe move the middle school to HHS but the site is bad. We've pumped water out of subservice for a long time.

Mr. Carter said HHS is a high groundwater table. There are pumps designed in the construction. Ms. Myhre asked if we built a new school on the site, maybe we could place it differently on the site. Mr. Carter said it's a 26 acre site. He went on to say that the district hasn't really addressed it at this time. Ms. Myhre asked if we want to explore this possibility. Dr. Kultgen said we need to check it out so we know. Is there property behind the Department of Transportation? Mr. Carter said there may be land southeast of Custer. We need to look at property that is on city services or has the ability to hook to it. Mr. Carter has the city growth plan. With the plan we can tell where the kids are. Do we want to see if any land is available? Ms. Lovshin said she thinks it's worth looking into.

Mr. Carter discussed HMS. It is a 1935 building designed as a high school with multiple stories and concrete walls. It's a big piece of property but vigilante stadium takes up a big portion. A conversion to be an elementary would be challenging. It could be done but it's not ideal.

M. Lovshin asked if it would more challenging to turn it into an elementary school than to upgrade to the middle school.

Mr. Beaver doesn't think they are using the property adequately. Lazy green should be incorporated into facility. The facility is horrible and would love to see it rebuilt. Would like to tear down the south $\frac{3}{4}$ of building. We need to keep the auditorium and 10 classrooms and then build into lazy green it would open up a functional middle school elementary school. As Rodney handles traffic kids can't use the lazy green. We may want to look at closing Rodney.

Ms. Myhre said HMS is too small for a middle school. Mr. McKay says there is space just not the right space. To enlarge the smaller rooms is almost prohibited.

Ms. Myhre said we could possibly build a new HHS, move HMS or turn HMS into an elementary school. Could CRA become an elementary school? Yes. Maybe purchase land for another middle school. Mr. Beaver said a new problem could be arise. There's a new development coming in near Four Georgian. It's a large apartment complex that could generate 100 students who would go to Four Georgians. Dr. Kultgen said this would be a good discussion with the city. Mr. Beaver said we need to talk about acquisition of land at some point. The discussion from today's meeting covered the following:

New HHS

Move HMS

CRA becoming an elementary School

Purchase Land

Jim Darcy -500 students

Warren – 500

Smith 500

Dr. Kultgen said our goals are as follows:

1. Create a successful bond
2. Provide optimal learning environments for students
3. Limited resources that must meet all the needs of our students

Mr. Beaver said we need to recognize there are many possibilities. Build Jim Darcy, Warren and Central on the Central campus and add technology keeping all elementary schools open with consideration of closing schools when they reach a certain population. Then if they don't meet a certain population for two years in a row, then we would consider closing them. The community may better understand if the population doesn't meet requirements. Central may not be a 500 school the first year. We need a spare tire and Central would be that school. We've seen it happen with Hawthorne, CRA and Central. It's only prudent for a district to do this. Folks could maintain neighborhood schools with the realization that their school might close.

Mr. Beaver went on to say that this bond has to be a stand-alone bond. He doesn't think taxpayers will pass another bond. This time has to be self-sufficient. If we build Smith to 500 students this isn't a stand-alone. If Hawthorne fails as a building for whatever reason, it would be easy to move the students to Central. The district could do some upgrades to Broadwater, Bryant and Jefferson putting new gyms in these schools.

The next meeting will be at 7:00 a.m. on Friday, September 26th at Ray Bjork Learning Center. The committee will continue with this conversation and Dr. Kultgen will begin inviting the groups talked about. Is there any new data needed for the next meeting? Need data about the high schools

General Public Comment:

Chere Jiusto – Thank you for opening this dialog and being sensitive to the community’s feelings. There are experts available to talk about what you’re looking for. There is a lot of hopeful information that will aide you in your discussion. Not always easy.

Rick Hays – Good decision on Central. This gives the opportunity to do things on a dual track while moving ahead with passing a bond. There is a desperate need for Jim Darcy. This is the number one priority. Build a new Jim Darcy and add technology to K-8. As far the East side discussion you may want to talk to Mountain Meadow to purchase some property.

Chuck Butler – Good decision putting Central on hold. How much would my taxes increase? Dr. Kultgen said that on a \$40 million bond, with a \$100,000 taxable value on your home this would be roughly \$40/year. Mr. Butler added that this meeting was a very monumental meeting.

Beau Downing – He has talked to a lot of people in the valley. There are more kids in the Jim Darcy boundary than a new school can accommodate. It seems to be a real numbers game to re-draw lines. Not sure when it happens. Building a 500 student school in town means schools are going to close. Community is well educated on this issue. He asked the committee not to come back with the same message, presented differently. The community understands. Jim Darcy needs built now. Do a survey to see why students are displaced. Some are displaced because of parent choice because they work in town and it’s more convenient for parents.

Ms. Myhre agreed that every 7-8 years we need to look at boundaries, but we need to continue with facilities.

Mr. Downing went on to say that there may be benefits of adjusting boundary lines prior to building. We will have to redraw the boundaries between Rossiter and Jim Darcy. All people hear is bond / building / closure.

Betsy Baur – This was a great discussion. She objected to the purpose of committee. The committee’s number one priority should be to develop short term goals. We need to have a long term goal and then develop bond based on phase one and phase two and three.

Greg Upham – In 2014 93% of the budget goes to staff and 3% to utilities. We’ve been adequate for a number of years. We need to definitely address the why? How will it happen? Benefits? Challenges? Community needs to understand all these things. If we have a successful bond in 2015, where are we in 2035? I selected 2035 because if we pass a bond in 2015 that will be a 20 year life of the bond, the budget will increase to be 98% for staff. We are in a sense of urgency. It’s a very complex issue.

The meeting adjourned at 8:39 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, September 26, 2014 at 7:00 a.m. at the Ray Bjork Learning Center.