

**Facilities Committee Meeting
Monday, October 13, 2014
Ray Bjork Learning Center**

Present: Terry Beaver, Aidan Myhre, Libbi Lovshin, Kent Kultgen, and Katy Fields

Guests: Jon Rush, Doug Shenkle, Rick Hays, Alexander Deedy, Quintan Kujela, Chere Jiusto, Andres Haladay, Jan Lombardi, Brian Cummings, Darryl James, Don Platisha, Mike Dowling

Mr. Beaver called the meeting to order at 8:00 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.

Ms. Myhre said we need to invest in buildings.

Mr. Beaver said we have invested in maintaining the current buildings; we just have not built any new buildings.

Mr. Beaver said there are three things that we must consider in this bond and they are to be educationally sound, fiscally responsibly and socially acceptable to pass the bond.

Mr. Dowling stated that a year ago, talk started about school planning. Three months ago community members, Darryl James and Randall Green, wanted to keep the outside perspective coming in. Recognizing that this is one of the most challenging things our community has been faced with for a long time with layers of emotion, politics, and physical challenges. This group is trying to keep the focus on recognizing that we have to have something that works. This group has put in over 20 hours in the last three months to brainstorm this challenge. There are no solutions yet, but great ideas. Their approach starts at the high schools, and then filters down to the middle schools and population density that affects all of the schools. Jefferson County and East Helena filter into East side schools which also affect solutions.

Mr. James gave the group an overview of where existing schools are and where development could occur.

There is a one mile radius issue in regards to the walkability to the existing schools. There is an amazing amount of overlap on the maps in regards to the one mile radius. C.R. Anderson's building would make sense to contain Kessler and Hawthorne. Bryant is small enough to be a consideration for closure. Jefferson encompasses a huge area to be a walkable school zone by district standards. Bryant school children are mostly bus riders. We have good solutions to the issues on the West side of town however the East side is more complicated. Helena High School has the same reasons as Jim Darcy to have a new school. There is always the argument of building new vs. remodeling. Logistically it would be easier to build a new school rather than remodel the existing building at Helena High. What can we do with populations on the East side? We could expand Warren school. Smith has acreage to build a new school. Jefferson is a good building. The traffic patterns at Jefferson could be solved. Jefferson does need better educational spaces and a gym. Broadwater Elementary needs security improvements. Phase

two of the project could include combining Kessler and Hawthorne into the building at C.R. Anderson and build a new middle school. Where would we build a new middle school? Consideration for phase one would be addressing the overcrowding at C.R. Anderson.

What needs to happen at the high school level? Where is it appropriate to build on the property at Helena High School? There are many problems with rebuilding Helena High School while it's being used. Opportunities to build a new school gives us a good site to rebuild the old building into something else. We need to maximize the use of the Helena High School property.

We also need to consider the placement of schools for the long term. Helena Middle School is a central site so it makes sense to keep this site. The barrier of Montana Avenue will have to be addressed.

It is becoming clear that there are solutions to put together a Phase One package for the bond. Where do we want to be in 20 years? Helena High School is in dire need of upgrades. Is the Caird property an option? Yes it is in the mix however it is only about two acres.

Mr. Beaver asked if it is necessary that Phase One be a stand-alone phase. He believes it would be very difficult to pass a second and third phase bond. We have a dire need to convince voters why it is a good plan.

Mr. Dowling asked that we put together a day long workshop.

Mr. Beaver asked what is wrong with Helena High School as it stands.

Mr. Dowling responded that security is a big issue. There are too many entrances and the classrooms are too small. The standard of construction at Helena High School is very low. There is only one inch of insulation on the roof. A new building would have a much smaller foot print. We don't feel that we have all of the solutions right now. We need to have a daylong workshop to vet out the pros and cons to all of the ideas that have been presented. The purpose of a day long workshop would help us trust the process to bring us to consensus to have a plan to take to the voting population.

Is it worth exploring the Caird property? Maybe a campus exchange with Helena College? Helena College says that they would have a conversation about the property with us in the future.

Questions from the community:

Is any part of Helena High School viable to build upward? No, the building was poorly constructed.

We need to look bigger than what's been mentioned today. The Neighborhood Center, the Armory etc. We need more time and research. We need a process for the High school and middle school planning to lead into planning for future. Middle school funding is tied to elementary and we have already had this conversation.

Savings from the consolidation of buildings would go directly to the students and to staffing and to care for the needs of the existing buildings.

Resistance from the community is because of how it has been portrayed to the community. We need to show the community a 21st Century school.

One consistency in all the meetings is the discussion of purchasing land.

The next meeting will be with the city and county planners. The meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 21st at 5:30pm.at the Ray Bjork Learning Center.