

MINUTES OF BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES WORK SESSION  
August 26, 2019

The Board of School Trustees met in a work session on Monday, August 26, 2019, at the Education Support Center. The following members were present: Mrs. Elizabeth Galligan, President; Mrs. Jenny Highbie, Vice-President; Mrs. Elaine Murphy, Secretary; Mr. Joseph L. Brown, Member; Mrs. Donna Corbett, Member; Mrs. Rebecca Gardenour, Member; and Mrs. Lee Ann Wiseheart, Member. Also present were the following administrators: Dr. Brad Snyder, Superintendent; and Mr. Bill Briscoe, Assistant to the Superintendent for Administration and Operations.

**A. CALL TO ORDER:**

Mrs. Galligan called the work session to order at 6:00 p.m.

**B. RECITE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Mrs. Galligan asked everyone to join in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**Discuss School Safety Referendum:**

Dr. Snyder shared that a school safety referendum is new referendum opportunity for school districts, and in his opinion, it is the right thing to do for kids. In November, two school districts, Carmel and Bremen, will be the first to take to the voters and, if successful, will result in a tax increase for these counties.

Dr. Snyder shared the following information regarding the student and staff security referendum:

- “We are in this together, if we are in this at all” – Johnny Cash
- “New” Safety Referendum
  - July 1, 2019, Indiana General Assembly wanted public schools to have a new revenue option
  - Local referendum elections with a maximum rate of .10 cents
  - Eight consecutive years
  - Locals have a choice to approve or disapprove
- Permitted Uses
  - To employ or compensate a School Resource Officer (SRO)
  - To conduct a threat assessment of a school building
  - To create or update a school safety plan
  - To develop or update school emergency response systems
  - To purchase equipment to improve the safety of a school building, school grounds, or school buses
  - To establish or fund a School Safety Office
  - To pay capital expenses to improve the safety of a school building
  - To establish and administer programs to address youth specific mental illness, addiction, anger management, bullying, and school violence
  - To develop and administer professional development programs for teachers, administrators, and other school employees designed to improve school safety and reduce violence
- Changing Societal Safety Concerns
  - Transportation – Bus
  - Weather
  - Man made
  - Sex offender registry, DCS, CHIN
  - Self-harm – Isolation
  - Social media – cyber-bullying, cyber-threats
- Maintain and Expand Safety Initiatives
  - Video surveillance
  - Access control
  - Security badge system
  - Raptor secured entrance
  - Cyber-security software
  - Communications monitoring
  - 800 MHZ radio systems
  - 400 MHZ emergency radio system
  - Two-way radios for buildings
  - Sustainability of other systems
- NAFC – Lilly Grant
  - Four Year Grant: 2017-18; 2018-19; 2019-20; 2020-21
  - Mental Health Therapists in 14 schools
  - Six agencies: ACP, Centerstone, Family Ark, Family & Children, Home of the Innocents, LifeSpring

- Expanded Social Workers from 2 to 5
- Last year, 350 different students received services
- Wildly effective and popular – if lost, will force cuts to educational program
- Potential Proposed Use
  - 70% - Social Emotional Improvements – therapists, social workers, staff training, PD, and staff preparation
  - 30% - Harden and Protect – Safety Director and office, bollards, cameras, fencing, door improvements, SRO's, technology, time barriers, etc.
- Referendums in Indiana
  - Operating: 80-37
  - Capital: 39-36
  - Safety: 0-0
- 2019 School Taxes
  - High: \$3.08
  - Low: \$0.51
  - State Average: \$1.06
  - NAFC: \$0.99
- Safer, More Safer, and More Safer
  - @ .05 cents
    - \$100,000 - \$8.18 (\$16/year)
    - \$250,000 - \$32.56 (\$65/year)
    - Student Safety - \$1.67 million
  - @ .075 cents
    - \$100,000 - \$12.28 (\$24/year)
    - \$250,000 - \$48.84 (\$97/year)
    - Student Safety - \$2.49 million
  - @ .10 cents
    - \$100,000 - \$16.37 (\$33/year)
    - \$250,000 - \$65.12 (\$130/year)
    - Student Safety - \$3.33 million
- Student Equity
  - Carmel – Rate - .05 cents
    - Assessed Valuation - \$9,698,913,538
    - Levy - \$4,849,456
    - Per Student - \$297
  - NAFC – Rate - .05 cents
    - Assessed Valuation - \$3,325,086,531
    - Levy - \$1,662,544
    - Per Student - \$143
  - NAFC – Rate - .10 cents
    - Assessed Valuation - \$3,325,086,531
    - Levy - \$3,325,087
    - Per Student - \$286
- 2020 Primary
  - May 3, 2016 – 22,373 ballots – 37.5%
  - Presidential
  - Federal: No Senate, 9<sup>th</sup> House
  - State: Governor, House Reps (70 & 72)
  - County: Floyd Circuit Court, Recorder, Treasurer, Coroner, Surveyor, Commissioner, Council
- Proposed Ballot Question
  - For the 8 calendar years immediately following the holding of the referendum, shall the NAFC School Corporation impose a property tax rate that does not exceed ten cents (\$0.10) on each one hundred dollars (\$100) of assessed valuation for the purpose of funding mental health and physical safety measures for all NAFC students and staff.
- Outcome
  - Improve safety for all students and staff
    - Mental health services and socio-economic support
    - Enhanced investigative tools and first responder support, etc.
    - Increase time barriers, harden asset

Dr. Snyder introduced Mr. Pat Terrell of Winston Terrell Group, a consulting firm that helped with the previous referendum. Mr. Terrell said his company has worked with school districts on 47 referendums in the State and won 41. They currently have four school districts with referendums on the ballot for November. He stressed the importance of communicating to the public. Eight out of ten registered voters do not have children in school. Therefore, we need to remind them how important the school district is to the community and the valuable assets it brings to the community. Need to be ready to answer the question, "why should I vote yes?"

Board members were given the opportunity to ask questions.

Mrs. Wiseheart asked the cost to contract with Winston Terrell Group. Mr. Terrell said the cost is \$25,000 and covers the time from when the contract is approved and signed until the Board approves and signs the resolution. After the resolution is approved, he then becomes a member of the PAC (Political Action Committee) until the election is held. His company will promote the district's message to the community, help with raising money for yard signs, literature, etc., help with direct mail if we choose to do that, make volunteer phone calls, and walking community, create voter contact, and carry the positive message.

Mrs. Galligan asked thoughts about using social media to promote referendum. Mr. Terrell said, in his opinion, social media can be your biggest problem and biggest asset at the same time. If use social media, need to be correct in everything you say, aggressively portray the facts and remain positive, and recommends you not engage with someone directly.

Mrs. Wiseheart asked if Winston Terrell has done multiple referendums at the same time before and what they see as the biggest challenge for being successful with this. Mr. Terrell said yes, they have done multiple referendums at the same time. In order to have a successful campaign, need to put together the best members to promote the message and continuously distribute updates about what is happening in the district. Communicating to the community is very important!

Mrs. Gardenour commented that there were some taxpayers in the community who were unhappy after the last referendum because they felt they were not told the truth about the tax rate not increasing. This could be a tough sell because this time taxes will increase. We need to be sure we are upfront about the amounts and the purpose of the referendum from the onset.

Mrs. Wiseheart said that in the last referendum, she voted against the contract with Winston Terrell Group because the Superintendent did not bid out to other potential groups. However, she was very pleased with the services they provided the school corporation during that referendum. But again, in order to be good stewards of taxpayer money, she feels this service should be bid out to potential groups unless the Superintendent has knowledge of other groups and is confident Winston Terrell Group is the best fit. Mrs. Higbie commented she is comfortable with this firm because they are familiar with our corporation and community and that is important.

Mrs. Jane Herndon with Ice Miller Legal Counsel explained the highlights of the safety referendum and how it differs from operating and capital referendums. If a district loses a safety referendum, you cannot put back on the ballot for 700 days unless 500 or 5% of voters say it is okay to do so. If a district is successful in obtaining the safety referendum, they cannot do another one for another year. The language does not reference new operating or capital referendums during that time. No public hearing is required for a safety referendum. If a final decision is made by February, still have time to get on May ballot. The "quiet period" begins when the resolution is approved by the Board. The later that is done, the more time you have to communicate the message to the community.

Also, the Board maintains the levy and will have the authorization to levy the full amount (.10 cents, .05 cents, etc.) or they can change the amount annually.

Mrs. Gardenour asked how much the district currently receives each year from the Lilly Grant. Dr. Jensen said the district received approximately \$3.1 million for the four-year life cycle. It costs approximately \$300,000-\$340,000/year for mental health services and \$95,000/year for School Resource Officers. We would like to add social workers as well. Mrs. Gardenour said she feels with those current costs, we do not need "the pie in the sky." To be good stewards, possibly ask community for 5 cents or 7 cents instead of 10 cents.

Mrs. Wiseheart added that she appreciates knowing there is flexibility in the amount that can be levied each year. We should not sustain the current programs; they need to be expanded and the new safety referendum would do this and would include adding a safety office and increasing building security. Mrs. Galligan agrees that it is a positive to have the flexibility to lower the levy year to year if not needed. Mrs. Gardenour added the School Board and community need to be reminded the levy could possibly come down each year.

Mr. Brown commented that, in his opinion, people will support safety and mental health. However, we need to be prepared to answer questions like "why do you need?" and "why can't you take out of current funding you have?" We need to have a detailed, eight year plan on what the money will be used for and the reasons why it is needed. Also, we need to be sure all schools are included and all grade levels. Furthermore, he feels it is best to have in May 2020 election. Doesn't feel it is good idea to have on ballot in the general election with school board member elections. We need to be a leader in this one. Mrs. Murphy agrees that it is a time sensitive issue.

Mrs. Wiseheart asked if research shows the community would not be in support of this, will that be presented to the Board. Mr. Terrell said they can have meetings with groups of stakeholders, make presentations, and survey them. A phone survey can also be done.

Following the Board member discussion, Dr. Snyder said he plans to bring the contracts forward at the September 16<sup>th</sup> School Board meeting and then begin meeting with team members bi-weekly until the Board approves resolution. After that, the PAC will meet. The Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, School Board, and Chief Business Officer may promote a position as long as they are not using school money or school facilities.

**D. ADJOURNMENT:**

With no further business to be brought before the Board, the work session was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Schindler, Recording Secretary