

MINUTES OF BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES TOWN HALL MEETING
JANUARY 21, 2020

The Board of School Trustees held a Town Hall Meeting on Tuesday, January 21, 2020, at Floyd Central High School. The following members were present: Mrs. Elaine Murphy, President; Mrs. Elizabeth Galligan, Secretary; Mrs. Rebecca Gardenour, Member; Mrs. Jenny Higbie, 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. Mr. Joseph L. Brown, Vice-President; and Mrs. Donna Corbett, Member were absent.

Present Information Regarding Potential School Safety Referendum;

Dr. Snyder shared the following information:

- “New” Safety Referendum
 - July 1, 2019, Indiana General Assembly gave public schools a new revenue option
 - Local referendum election – maximum rate of .10 cents – NAFC Schools asking for .085 cents which will generate \$3.1 million/year
 - Eight (8) consecutive years – beginning in 2021
 - Communities have local option to enhance
- Permitted Uses
 - Employ School Resource Officers (SRO)
 - To conduct a threat assessment
 - To update a School Safety Plan
 - Develop or update school emergency response systems
 - Purchase equipment to improve the safety of a school building, school grounds, or school buses
 - Establish a school safety office
 - To pay for capital to improve the safety of a school building
 - To establish program addressing youth specific mental illness, addiction, anger management, bullying, and school violence
 - To develop professional development programs for teachers, administrators, and other school employees to improve school safety and reduce violence
- NAFC – Lilly Grant
 - Four (4) years: 2017-2018; 2018-2019; 2019-2020; 2020-2021
 - Mental health therapists in 14 schools
 - Six agencies – ACP, Centerstone, Family Ark, Family & Children, Home of the Innocents, Life Spring
 - Expanded social workers from 2 to 5
 - Last year, 350 different students received services
 - Widely effective – if lost, will reduce current educational program
- Blueprint – 2 Fronts
 - Proactive
 - Harden and protect our assets – access control points, increase time barriers, more cameras, fencing, bollards, technology, door improvements, safety director and office, SRO’s, etc.
 - Preventative
 - Social and emotional – therapists, behaviorists, social workers, anger management, mental wellness, relationship resources, threat assessment & safety planning, staff training & drill preparation
- Goal – Prepared, not scared
- Individual Cost for More Community, Student, & Staff Safety
 - @.085
 - \$100,000 home - \$13.92 twice/year (\$27 annually)
 - \$250,000 home - \$55.35 twice/year (\$110 annually)
 - Aggregate - \$3.1 million per year

- 2019 School Taxes
 - High - \$3.08
 - Low - \$0.51
 - State average - \$1.06
 - NAFC - \$0.98
- Proposed Ballot Question
 - For the eight (8) calendar years immediately following the holding of the referendum, should the School Corporation impose a property tax rate that does not exceed eight and one half cents (\$0.085) on each one hundred dollars (\$100) of assessed valuation and that is in addition to all other property taxes imposed by the School Corporation for the purpose of funding social, emotional, safety, and security needs for all students and staff including, but not limited to: (a) additional school resource officers; (b) physical safety and security improvements; (c) student programs to address mental wellness, addiction, anger management, bullying, and school violence; (d) professional development/training which focuses on proactive safety strategies?
- 2020 Primary
 - May 3, 2016 – 22,373 ballots – 37.5%
 - Presidential
 - Federal – no Senate, 9th House
 - State – Governor, House Reps (70 & 72)
 - County – Floyd Circuit Court, Recorder, Treasurer, Coroner, Surveyor, Commissioner, Council
- PAC
 - Safety for our Schools Floyd County (SOS Floyd County)
- “We Are In This Together, If We Are In This At All”

Dr. Snyder opened the floor for questions. The following questions/comments/suggestions were shared.

Can school corporations choose which election to put the question on the ballot? Yes, question can be on the ballot in primary or general elections.

There was some controversy with the previous referendum on how left over money was spent. What if there is a potential problem with this one? The funds can only be spent on the nine purposes listed in statute. NAFC Schools is interested in using funds for the four purposes highlighted in the ballot question.

Why wasn't the money that was used for the soccer field spent on security? The 2016 referendum was a capital referendum so funds had to be spent on “brick and mortar.” Some safety issues were addressed such as improving the car rider line / traffic flow at Highland Hills and other safety upgrades at the referendum schools.

Would see better use of funds if 70% was used for “hard” expenses and 30% for “soft” expenses instead of the way it is currently proposed.

Feels it is important to know which schools are getting the School Resource Officers.

Do not understand the math used to reach \$13.92 on a \$100,000 home.

\$100,000 AV

-45,000 Homestead exemption

\$55,000

-19,250 35% of remaining value exemption

\$35,750

- 3,000 Mortgage exemption

\$32,750 amount actually taxed on

x.085/\$100

\$28.00

Commend the administration for thinking of actual programming to support children. It is important to continue the programs that were started with the Lilly funding.

Is there a long term plan after eight years or we will be in the same situation as now with Lilly? No, currently this is the only “tool in the bag.” Possibly after the eight years, may have a different ask for the community or there will be changes made at the General Assembly to help.

Who is responsible for prioritizing how money is spent? Superintendent through the School Board.

How does community hold accountable that this will only be for eight years? Wording on the ballot question says eight years. So, voters will decide if they want for eight years or not.

What is the thought process behind having on the ballot in May vs. the general election in November? There are no elections in 2021. Consultants say the general election could “become crazy” with the presidential election in November. Thought the community would “hear us” now more than in November.

How are you currently paying for mental health programs and school resource officers? Through funds from Lilly Grant and school corporation funding. We provide seed money to the mental health agencies and they also bill insurance. School corporation does not pay salaries directly.

School prevention programs and also school safety have worked as a result of having built these relationships with community agencies as well as better communication with students and parents.

The 70/30 split seems appropriate. Seventy percent (70%) addresses needs before they become a problem and 30% addresses after it is a problem. This is a community safety tax. If we reach 90% of the population here, we can maybe have a safer community.

Proud of school corporation taking a step forward because, as a teacher, have seen vast improvement since the Lilly Grant was started. Want to continue these programs we have started. There is a waiting list of students to see the counselors and do not want to prevent these students from having these services.

Feel we need to pull parents and students together and go forward. It takes the entire community.

In regard to the ballot question, feel the items such be listed in the order of how much money will be used for each from greatest to least in order to be more transparent.

Having these partnerships is critical. This referendum is a community decision and we need to rally around it. Our kids deserve this.

A concern is that some of our schools are at or over 100% capacity now. Will you be coming back in the near future on another referendum? Do you have a master plan and if not, can this be put on hold until November to have time to develop a master plan? In 2027 the middle school debt falls off, and in 2028 the FCHS debt falls off. The community could do another referendum at that time on a tax neutral basis. Growth is anticipated in the hill and valley so other things can be done in the interim to help alleviate.

Differences have been seen in kids’ behavior since having the Lilly Grant funding. Therefore, I am supportive of this referendum.

Where will you get the funds to continue programs if this is voted down and the Lilly Grant goes away? Will other programs be affected? Administration will look at programming and resources and make recommendations to the School Board. These will be hard conversations.

The School Board will hold the administration accountable on where the money is being spent. After years, if the anticipated funding for that year is not needed, the amount can go down.

This can be adjusted each year up to a cap of \$0.085 cents if needs change. If angry about past referendum, don’t hold frustration on this; this referendum is for our kids. We pay for them now or pay for incarceration later.

PAC has been formed to provide education to public and support for the referendum. Indiana legislators set nine items these referendum funds be used for; it is not unique to our community. Grateful the school corporation is tackling this effort for our kids.

Thanks to everyone for coming out. School Board members are available to answer any questions.

With no further comments, the town hall meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Schindler, Recording Secretary