

MINUTES OF BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES TOWN HALL MEETING
JANUARY 22, 2020

The Board of School Trustees held a Town Hall Meeting on Wednesday, January 22, 2020, at Prosser Career Education Center. The following members were present: Mrs. Elaine Murphy, President; Mr. Joseph L. Brown, Vice-President; Mrs. Elizabeth Galligan, Secretary; 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. Mrs. Donna Corbett, Member and Mrs. Jenny Higbie, 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
 - NAFCS - \$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.

Explain how you get the \$27/year increase for 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

For the School Resource Officers, will police officers from the city and county be used and if so, have you spoken with them and will they be reimbursed or will the school corporation start their own police department? Administrators and School Board members have met with local and state law enforcement personnel, fire personnel, community members, parents. Police officers from the city and county will be used as we are doing now. They are reimbursed quarterly with salary prorated based on usage.

How does the public know the tax assessment will come off after eight (8) years? The wording on the ballot question says eight years. After that time, unless a new referendum is passed, the DLGF will not allow the school corporation to budget the money.

Feel the wording in the ballot question that lists the projects the money will be used for should be switched as A & B cover only 30% of the money that be used and C & D cover 70%. Feel A is more persuasive as people understand the need for SRO's and they will not read the remainder of the question. There have been many discussions about the wording of the ballot question and it is open for debate.

The school corporation can access insurance and Medicaid for mental health services and property tax should not pay for those types of services. We provide seed money to the mental health agencies for servicing over 700 students and they also bill insurance and Medicaid. School corporation does not pay salaries directly.

In favor of armed officer in each school building. These individuals build a bond with the student body. I support a tax for that.

Many property owners do not get all the exemptions listed in the example given. Also, renters do not pay property taxes. This is hurting the lowest income individuals. Schools already get 63 cents on every dollar spent.

This is about the kids. School administrators need to collaborate and look at programs with school counselors and understand job duties of each and work to provide the best programs for the kids.

There is evidence supporting these mental health programs are needed. Having these services available in the schools is very worthwhile.

Mental health services covers a wide range of services and involves many different types of families and backgrounds. Personnel is needed to be available in our schools for our kids to learn skills and gain tools to be productive citizens of our community.

Wording on ballot question is misleading. Also have concerns about the last referendum spending. There needs to be more transparency about where and how the money will be spent. Agree that services are needed; however, why is it 70/30 split and not 50/50? Will there be another referendum in November for teacher salaries? If so, why not do both referendums at that time? When adding up the costs, they come out to 70/30 and the Administration feels comfortable with this. Also, this is the first the Administration has heard about a teacher salaries referendum.

Parent of autistic children in the district feels these programs are desperately needed in the schools. Also supportive of more training for teachers, more cameras, and training for students on bullying prevention and understanding peers who are different.

Mental health is a serious issue, but is something we can do something about. Our parents and grandparents did what they had to do for us and now we need to do what we need to for our kids and community. If not us, then who? Believe in the school system and what they are doing and need to continue to be proactive.

This benefits not only the school corporation, but our entire community.

Our schools are safe, but with these initiatives we can make them safer.

Very passionate about this, but as a School Board will hold administration accountable and oversee that money is spent in the appropriate way. If all the money is not spent, the rate can come down.

Lilly Grant funds a portion of salaries and agencies also contribute. We need to come together for the kids in our community to be successful.

By hiring additional SRO's, the city and/or county may have to hire additional officers to put on the streets and this could potentially cost more county taxes.

Very passionate about this. Times have changed and our kids needs additional help and teachers need additional training. At the end of the day, can you say you did what you could to help?

Dr. Snyder said he appreciated everyone being in attendance as these are difficult but important conversations. He thanked everyone for their comments. He doesn't like the situation school administrators are in, but due to legislation, schools are faced to work with the community to get more funding for these types of programs. This is a community decision. If the good people of the community want us to do more, we will. If not, we will do the good things for kids with what we have.

With no further comments, the town hall meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Schindler, Recording Secretary