



Bond Steering Committee Meeting 4

June 27, 2017

Library, Wayside Middle School

Welcome

The fourth meeting of the EMS ISD Bond Steering Committee began at 6 p.m. Tuesday, June 27, 2017, in the library at one of the district's oldest campuses, Wayside Middle School. Chief Operations Officer Clete Welch opened the meeting with a welcome to members and a review of key insights from the previous meeting. He summarized that the district has projects totaling \$506 million that could potentially be included in a bond election. The projects address growth, safety and security, failing systems, aging systems and facilities, and standardization and equity. Projects would be designed to be phased in over a period of eight years (2018-2025) and would be completed as capacity allows and growth dictates.

Community Survey Results

Matt Gamble with national research firm Baselice & Associates provided an overview of a voter opinion survey. A random telephone sampling of 401 community respondents was conducted June 11-20 to:

- Assess general attitudes about the district;
- Assess current levels of support and opposition to a new bond proposal; and,
- Measure voters' awareness of district needs in comparison to their support/opposition of a new bond proposal.

Mr. Gamble shared that while any survey is a snapshot of today's opinions, which can change, current perceptions of the district are highly favorable overall. Approximately 84 percent of respondents rated the image of the district, its leadership, and its fiscal management as positive. The topics of addressing growth, increasing safety and security items, and issuing bonds with no tax rate increase resonated highly with respondents. Specific projects that garnered positive response included the construction of a fourth high school to meet future growth needs and rebuilding Wayside Middle to accommodate enrollment projections and make the facility more equitable with other middle school campuses in the district.

The survey also showed that while 55 percent of respondents overall think the district needs more schools and classrooms to meet enrollment growth over the next five-10 years, more than 20 percent of non-parents surveyed were unsure of the district's needs. Additionally, the survey showed that parents do not vote as often as non-parents.

A question was asked about the geographic distribution of survey respondents. Mr. Gamble reported that the survey polled residents in two zip codes — 76131 and 76179,

which represent the large majority of district residents. No measurable patterns or trends regarding any of the polled topics or projects emerged between the west and east sides of the district. About 10 percent of respondents answered that they were employees of the district.

The committee will use the results of this survey in determining specific items for a possible bond proposal based on community understanding and support.

Homework Results & Responses

Mr. Welch then provided an overview of homework responses from the previous meeting. The assigned asked members to reflect on the proposed projects and prioritize them individually. The majority of members responded that they would like a new bond proposal to address needs for approximately the next eight years. Members reported being comfortable with a bond proposal amount estimated at \$500 million as long as there is no tax rate increase and bond timelines match the life of assets. Additional discussions included prioritization of proposed projects schedule and non-negotiable projects (such as safety and security items).

A question was asked regarding the timeline of the new high school; specifically, if the timeline will be postponed if enrollment growth stagnates. Mr. Welch responded that the district will not build it just because the funds are there; the timeline would be moved out if growth stagnates. However, if the current rate of growth continues as projected, the district will have to add portables to the existing high schools if the fourth high school is not built on the proposed timeline. Based on current projections, all three current high schools will be over capacity in 2025.

Another question was asked about the age of Gililand, Eagle Mountain, and Saginaw elementary schools and what their condition will be like in 10 years at the end of this bond program. Mr. Welch said that all three of these schools were renovated in the 2008 bond program and have been maintained since that time. At Gililand, the 2008 bond provided a security vestibule, new flooring and gymnasium, renovated cafeteria and upgraded equipment, a new playground, and drainage modifications. Saginaw Elementary received a new cafeteria, a security vestibule, three new classrooms, and new flooring and paint. Since then, additional repairs have upgraded the WPA building as well. At EMES, a geothermal energy system was installed, which yields long-term payback. Also in the 2008 bond, EMES received gymnasium modifications and new carpet and tile.

Questions were asked about the cost analysis of turf vs natural grass, and the health and safety concerns of turf. Regarding cost, Mr. Welch explained that turf allows district and community programs to resume activities sooner after inclement weather (no rainouts due to field condition), which reduces cancellations and lost revenue. Turf also is lower maintenance, which results in a cost savings in the operational budget. Dr. Chadwell added that one of the largest variables between grass and turf is water and the availability of water wells, which are cheaper to operate.

Regarding health and safety, one member raised concerns about increased risk of skin infections and injuries on turf. Mr. Welch and experts from Huckabee discussed the procedures used to properly maintain the turf fields to prevent infection and injury. According to Huckabee's sports consultants, studies have shown there are actually more toxins in dirt than on turf surfaces. Dr. Chadwell added that, in fact, when he was coaching soccer he saw more injuries on grass than on turf.

Dr. Chadwell did mention that, like grass, turf is susceptible to damage caused by driving on it or other forms of vandalism and that gates would have to be put up around turf fields to minimize that possibility.

Potential Bond Projects Update

Mr. Welch outlined updates to the estimated costs of each bond criteria area based on feedback from the committee at the previous meeting and in their homework provided. Updates included modified escalation costs, elimination of duplications, modified project phasing, clarified scope/quantities, and addition of an allowance for a proposed YMCA Natatorium agreement*. As of June 27, the estimated total cost of proposed projects is \$525,854,467.

**The district is currently in discussions with YMCA on the possibility of partnering for a new YMCA Northwest Campus facility that includes a natatorium, which the district's swim teams would be provided access for practices and competitions. No agreements have been signed and negotiations are continuing.*

Campus Tour

Committee members participated in a group tour of Wayside Middle classrooms and facilities.

Group Discussion

Committee Chairman Paul Jacobs led the group in a discussion of line items grouped within each project category. The purpose was to review the items together, ask questions of the district experts, and determine consensus levels for each category. During the previous meeting, the committee agreed to define consensus as unanimous agreement for the purposes of any bond proposal recommendation. Specific line items are listed on page 43 of the meeting [presentation](#). The committee voted as follows:

- Addressing future growth, \$275,965,510 — Consensus
- Safety and security, \$6,870,522 — Consensus
- Replace failing systems, \$627,792 — Consensus
- Replace aging systems, \$41,237,261 — Postponed, requested additional information regarding life expectancy of items listed vs timeline of maturity of the bonds
- Replace aging/inadequate facilities, \$142,070,882 — Consensus on projects listed but postponed consensus on timeline; requested additional information on individual project costs and options for project timelines, specifically to move the Wayside Middle School replacement sooner than originally scheduled

- Standardization and equity, \$39,082,501 — Consensus with removal of SES gymnasium (expansion not supported by enrollment)
- Contingency budget, \$20,000,000 — Consensus

Closing

Mr. Welch summarized that additional information regarding projects in the categories of replacing aging systems and replacing aging/inadequate facilities will be broken out for the committee and provided at the next meeting. Following that meeting, the committee co-chairs will prepare a report to present to the EMS ISD Board of Education on July 17. In that report, Chairman Jacobs will provide a brief summary of the Bond Steering Committee process and outline the recommendations of the committee. The Board has until August 21 to decide on calling for a bond referendum.

The meeting adjourned at 8:48 p.m. The final meeting of the Bond Steering Committee is Tuesday, July 11, in the Board Room at the Truett Absher Administration Building.