

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
FREEMAN SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 358
February 21, 2024
7:00 pm

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: The special board meeting of the Freeman School District Board of Directors was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Board Chair Dave Teague. There was a quorum present.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Danielle Santman, Annie Keebler, Dave Teague, Randy Russell and Alan Steinolfson were present. Bill Morphy and Nate Talbott joined via Zoom.

GUESTS: Debbie Morphy, Todd Reed, Summer Teague, Kellie Miner, Aimee Hoyt, Gretchen Brebner, Sean Gilbert. Via Zoom: Cory Plager, Jim McNeill, and an additional 13 participants.

LEVY ELECTION UPDATE:

- Certification of the Levies from Spokane County is Friday, Feb. 23, 2024
- This is also the deadline date for an April re-vote
- Back up Resolution is prepared if decision to rerun a levy is needed
- To date, 1900 votes have been received – EP&O Levy passing with 54%, Capitol Project Levy at 48%; 50 votes short of passing
- Cory and Jim presented information informing the board of the different options to consider going forward
- Two attempts can be made to run a levy in one calendar year
- Cory Plager presented a School Board Election Update power point to include:
 - Levy and Bond Overview
 - Levy Voting History
 - Election and Resolution Filing Dates
 - Property Values and School Taxes
 - Considerations
 - Propose second Capital Levy attempt at same amount in 2024 - April, August, or November
 - Propose second Capital Levy attempt at a lower amount, reduce projects
 - Propose second Capital Levy attempt in 2025 or beyond
 - Do not propose second Capital Levy attempt

Dave Teague: Propose we keep the same amount that we previously asked for

Randy Russell: Would it be helpful to narrow down the 4 options/considerations to two options. I have ideas from the Leadership Team if that would be helpful.

Jim McNeil: The Capital Levy was close to passing. It is a reasonable option to rerun the Levy. Gain the support to pass.

Cory Plager: The projects are worthy of resubmission. It is what is in the best interests of the students. Look at the scope of the projects.

Randy Russell: Deferred maintenance is a concern if the levy is not rerun, especially with cost escalation.

Dr. Russell asked for thoughts from the guests regarding the considerations -

Gretchen Brebner: Suggests levy run again. People don't understand the field funding; how much it cost; how it is being paid for; how does the LGO Bond fit in. If run again, answer questions. How will the new Capital Levy pay for the field, grants, fundraising.

Randy Russell: We have used a LGO Bond the last 3 levy cycles. It is paid back over the three years, but are able to acquire the money at the beginning of the levy cycle instead of being able to use a little each year. And also, able to lock in better interest rates.

Dave Teague: We are always trying to figure out how to get out the information. There are many rules that need to be followed. We had to tackle the water issue. Kids are using the facilities more often and longer seasons. The field has been a positive impact for students. The decision was talked through exhaustively.

Randy Russell: We are open to any ideas on how to get the information out to the public. There were 12 meetings where the water issue was discussed and how to fix it. There was no attendance at these meetings. Our water situation has never been better than in the last 6-8 months.

Doug Pace: We need to understand the obvious. With the addition of the football field, we also upgraded the track and field areas and the Middle School playfield. The MS has far exceeded its age. It's difficult to ask for taxes. The SRO is needed. Our campuses are far away from town. The Capital Levy funds this

position. We need to message the positive – hosting other sports activities for other districts. Yes, it is frustrating; no one wants to pay more taxes.

Randy Russell: Yes, we were able to do upgrades in the MS – HVAC and the DAWG Bowl field. We have had ongoing discussions with the county regarding traffic flow to include a traffic study. We have two bathrooms not working in the portable right now that uses Capital Project funds to repair. We have been putting our information on a couple of media sights. However, we cannot battle misinformation.

Dave Teague: It's very hard to provide context on social media. We are obligated to maintain our campus from prior taxes. Human interaction is needed; can't solve an issue in an email or in social media.

Danielle Santman: We are happy to meet with anyone one to one.

Randy Russell: We are committed to continue to be good stewards of the taxpayer's money. We provide a great education. We take great care of our investments.

Cory Plager: Freeman is not the only district to use an LGO Bond. It is not rare to get ahead of construction. It is a state strategy. You are not alone in using this construction strategy.

Randy Russell: I recommend we narrow our 4 options down to 2.

Dave Teague: I feel we go back out in April. It was a close election. Increase the communication; what is best for kids, best for the taxpayers; maintain our campus. Our buildings are well taken care of but we want to maximize/protect our investments. We don't know what might break.

Bill Morphy: Echo Dave. Important to the future of our students, taxpayers, and staff.

Annie Keebler: Echo Dave.

Danielle Santman: Makes sense to run again. November would not be a good time to run the levy.

Cory Plager: Referring to the timeline, April would be best.

Randy Russell: By running in April, the election would be known before the budget.

CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION

Annie Keebler moved the Board approve Resolution 5-2023/2024 – Replacement Capital Levy for Safety, Security, Technology and Infrastructure Improvements, as presented to run on an April ballot. Danielle Santman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The Resolution will be filed on Friday.

APPOINTMENT OF FOR/AGAINST COMMITTEE:

Annie Keebler moved the Board approve the pro committee for the voters' pamphlet statement of Jennifer Offereins, Emily Lagreid and Bruce Berglund, as presented. Danielle Santman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT: The board meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Recording Secretary

Board Secretary

Board Chair