

20/20 Vision

11/4/09 Committee Meeting Notes



ATTENDEES: Harry Applegate, Cathy Axcell, Bill Baddour, Tim Barrett, Mike Bilardo, Dawn Dawson, Bridget Demonica, Kathy D’Ettore, Ken Didion, Jon Dregalla, Chuck Dubil, Kim Durbin, Tony Falcone, Lisa Forshey, Patricia Fox, Tim Freeman, Lori Gettings, Brian Gottfried, Pam Griebel, Ed Hack, Bob Hertl, Tony Jones, Dan Kalish, Dan Keenan, Joe Koncelik, Lois Leonard, Jan Litterst, Andrew Mangels, Kim Mather, Julie McCallister, Michael Medoro, Duane Miller, Paul Misterka, Dr. Pete Mogyordia, Patricia Needham, Mark Pepera, Bob Plantz, Dave Puffer, Bob Ramer, Rudy Ringwall, Kelly Roath, Carolyn Rummery, Nancy Schill, Steve Schill, Jen Seighman, Bonnie Smith, Laura Steinbrink, Tim Sullivan, Bud Tetzlaff, Kurt Thonnings, John Turk, Melisa Yeoman, Tom Mays

RESPONSES TO FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS: Common themes that arose were facilities/faculty/programming need to fit Westlake’s “image” and expectations of citizens. Our students should be able to compete locally, regionally, nationally and internationally with technology. Balance the need for quality facilities – support educational excellence without overburdening the taxpayer. Make Westlake’s facilities match the excellence in education. There is a willingness to look at our facilities.

FINANCIAL QUESTIONS & ANSWERS: We reviewed the comments from the last meeting. There were some common themes: balancing the need v. overall tax burden on residents, being frugal, obtaining good value/quality, cost of project should be looked at with overall tax burden.

We posted answers to questions on our blog/web site. Questions about comparisons on school millage. Overall tax burden in Westlake is relatively low compared to other surrounding districts and Cuyahoga County.

In 2018, about \$2 million will drop from our debt service. The following year a little over \$500,000 will drop off. In whatever we ultimately decide, there are opportunities to infuse that into reducing the overall tax burden.

OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:

1. Building staffing – simulation of staffing levels in grade-level configuration v. neighborhood schools, using 2009 enrollment projections. There will be staff cuts and additions.
 - a. Option 1: 5 buildings. Simulated savings \$400,000 from building staff perspective
 - b. Option 2 & 3: Simulated savings \$300,000
 - c. Savings based on the completion of the entire project
2. Utilities: electric, mechanical, heating, plumbing

- a. Current systems outdated, inefficient and many at the end of their life cycle
 - b. Spend a lot of money repairing equipment and devices.
 - c. Increasingly difficult to repair and parts hard to come by
 - d. Use funds for large projects (\$450,000), using that to keep up with repairs to make to these systems.
 - e. To bring us up to minimum state standards is about \$22 million in replacement costs for those utility systems
 - f. New systems would result in savings (more efficient, modern technology, better design). Savings between new building v. renovated building is about 20%.
 - g. Budget for 2009-10 includes \$1.5 million for utilities. 20% is about \$300,000 savings
 - h. If we go with Ohio Schools Facilities Commission and attempt to get 5% offered, they require full building A/C. That requirement would minimize any savings realized from more efficient systems.
3. Transportation: Maintaining current eligibility to ride distances, bus ride lengths, all-day kindergarten, current start/end times
- a. Grade level configurations reduces target load level to maintain bus ride lengths, requires 9 additional buses (\$810,000 capital expense), 9 additional drivers (@ \$200,000), 1 additional mechanic
 - b. To minimize impact of grade levels, can revert to shuttles dropping kids at a transfer point, creating a campus setting for elementary schools
4. Questions
- a. Central place dropping kids off: trying to sell a very large levy and have to have less controversial things to make it work
 - b. Is this considered busing students to private schools? All of the information provided is only elementary schools. Intermediate and WHS are already district wide and private schools will not change.
 - c. Could we cooperate with other districts to share busing? Looking at it. Challenge is not everyone has the same start times. It doesn't really impact.
 - d. What about elementary kids riding the bus with high school kids? Simulations did not include that. Tried to maintain what we have now.
 - e. Aren't there issues on Dover Road? We don't always have good gas pressure on Dover when it's cold out.
 - f. What would happen if the Governor's recommendations go with longer school days or more school days? That's outside of the simulation. Naturally it will cost more.
 - g. Would it make more sense to do campus style? Start times for elementaries, Parkside and LBMS are all within 10-15 minutes of each other. The only one that stands out is WHS.

SITE CONSIDERATIONS: Todd Wroblewski

- a. Size, utilities, accessibility, location go into site selection

- b. Other site criteria: topography, community connectivity, access to public transportation, soil characteristics, site preparation, codes and zoning, adjacent property, etc.
- c. Size guidelines:
 - a. Elementary school: 10 acres plus 1 acre per 100 students
 - b. Middle school: 20 acres plus 1 acre per 100 students
 - c. High School: 35 acres plus 1 acre per 100 students
- d. Existing sites are a good size and could support addition and/or new construction
- e. Land use study in 2004-05 (available on web site) shows conceptual layouts of buildings with additions or new facilities.
- f. Planning logic
 - a. Grade level: 5 buildings. Goal is to have as many sites located to center of district as possible
 - b. Neighborhood: 6 buildings. Might look at dividing districts into thirds (East, Central, West zones)
- g. To be determined are soil, environmental, utility capacity, traffic study
- h. Questions
 - a. How soon will you have answers to those undetermined things? We're in the process of looking at the sites. We already have buildings on the sites, so safe to assume we can build on those sites.
 - b. How many acres of Bradley Road are usable? Don't know if wetlands truly exist on that site. Wetland study has not been done. Difference of opinions cannot be resolved until a study is done.

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS: Dialogue for 30 minutes. Team Focus Group reports should be turned in. You have an individual report to take home and return at the next meeting. This is your worksheet for the next month to give you a record of the facts to date. It also is a record of your thoughts. At the next meeting we'll talk about locally funded initiatives and additional square feet above the numbers you have to continue to offer programs you are used to having in Westlake, as well as funding options.

- a. Master Plan #1
 - a. Advantages:
 - i. Collaborative benefits with teachers
 - ii. Specialists working together in same area
 - iii. Combine neighborhood feel with pods as a compromise
 - iv. Savings on staffing
 - b. Disadvantages
 - i. Perception on losing neighborhood schools
- b. Master Plan #2
 - a. Advantages
 - i. Cheapest for transportation
 - ii. Easier to sell to parents
 - b. Disadvantages

- i. Could be most costly with 6 buildings to heat/cool/staff
 - ii. Handling special needs kids and providing them the best opportunities
 - iii. Busing
 - c. Master Plan #3
 - a. Advantages
 - i. None noted
 - b. Disadvantages
 - i. Rich v. poor sections of town
 - ii. Doesn't match teacher certification
 - iii. Require more staffing
 - iv. Standards may be more inconsistent

CLOSE: Board member Tom Mays thanked everyone for participating in something that will affect our city and kids for the next 50+ years.

Next meeting is Nov. 18 at Parkside Intermediate School. Tour at 6:15pm, meeting at 7pm. Meeting topics will include locally funded initiatives and funding options/plan. Feel free to come in from 6-7pm on meeting nights if you have questions you'd like answered.

