

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING  
OF  
BOARD OF EDUCATION, SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 172  
ADAMS COUNTY, ILLINOIS  
HELD ON FEBRUARY 12, 2014 – 5:30 p.m.**

**Meeting Convened**

The Board of Education of School District No. 172, Adams County, Illinois, met in special session February 12, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. at the Quincy Holiday Inn in the Lake Conference Room, located at 5821 Oak Street, Quincy, Illinois, in said school district.

**Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order by President Erwin, who directed the secretary to call the roll. On the call of the roll, the following members were present and answered to their names: Members Ali, Bailey, Erwin, Mays, McNay, Niekamp, and Stone. Whereupon the president declared that a quorum was present.

**Questions and Comments**

President Erwin opened the meeting to questions and comments to members of the Board, by members of the public and employees of the district, in compliance with state statutes.

Mr. Jeff Kerkhoff presented an alternate plan for facilities. He told the Board a decision on facilities is historic and they need to be sure to make the right decision.

**District Facilities/Finances Discussion**

President Erwin said it has been two months since the Board has discussed options for district facilities. The Board was unable to reach consensus at that time and took a much-needed break. She asked each Board member to express his opinion about the options.

Member Bailey said he is not against the proposals but felt that the timing was too rushed to place a referendum on the ballot this March. As a next step, he suggested the district spend some money up front to have professional engineers and architects develop a plan for new buildings and remodeling.

Member McNay said he thinks Board members are moving toward the same goal and there are several roads to get there. He said he is not opposed to moving 9<sup>th</sup> grade to high school but the cost needs to be considered. If the Board is going to spend money and make decisions, all options for improving schools need to be reviewed.

Member Ali said he is in favor of K-6 and even K-8 configuration and he would like to see 9<sup>th</sup> graders with QHS. All variables need to be explored. \$75 million is a huge amount of money and complicated time table. The Illinois County School Facility Tax (county sales tax) may be a viable option coupled with something else. He favors enlisting the help of engineers and architects up front and to get information from other districts that may have done a project this size.

Member Mays said he came to the table late with regard to moving forward with new and remodeled facilities. He thought the district should go slowly with one or two schools. He said moving 9<sup>th</sup> to high school is absolutely priority number one and his number two priority is getting kids out of Baldwin. Baldwin causes an additional transition and interruption in learning for kids. He favors K-5. He said

Baldwin takes the wind out of their sails. The teachers are excellent at getting students past that hurdle but valuable time is lost. He does not favor a sales tax under any circumstances.

Member Stone said he liked K-8 at first because it provided the fewest transitions for students. However, our facilities make it more difficult for K-8. Community feedback indicated K-5, 6-8 and 9-12 as the most favorable configuration. He is in favor of a referendum because of current interest rates and property tax would remain level. He said a county-wide sales tax would complicate the process. He does not want to mix the two and will not support a county sales tax and burden the community.

Member Niekamp said he has only received one letter in support of new and remodeled facilities. Those who support it should be willing to donate their own money.

President Erwin said it is pretty clear the majority of the Board is ready to move forward. She said 9<sup>th</sup> grade at the high school is a priority. She said when she went to high school, there were 2,000 students there. She questioned whether they would fit right now. Joel clarified that an addition and remodeling at QHS would not just be to accommodate 9<sup>th</sup> graders but would upgrade the building for an improved learning environment. President Erwin said reorganization has been talked about for many years and never did go forward due to financial issues. Previous boards have not pushed forward and done any ground work. She said if a sales tax is approved, the public may feel they have approved an increase and will not approve a bond issue later for the Education Fund. She asked if no consensus is reached, could administration proceed with existing facilities to do the K-5, 6-8 and 9-12 configuration. Superintendent Cobb said he has been given a mission to improve learning and curriculum and will move forward to do as much as possible with existing buildings if necessary. President Erwin said the current structure is not working and why should the Board continue to dump money into obsolete buildings. Member Mays said he does not want the number of transitions that we have now for students. Logistics to use Baldwin as two or three grade schools would need to be worked out.

The review and evaluation of current facilities conducted last year was discussed. Member McNay noted that Junior High and Senior High were rated satisfactory structurally. It is some of the elementary buildings that are in critical need. Member Stone said that more of the Life Safety repairs have focused on the larger buildings deferring from elementary knowing that in 2017, new elementary buildings may be considered. Reorganizing to K-5 or K-6 and moving 9<sup>th</sup> grade to the high school has been talked about for many years.

A timeline was discussed. Member Bailey is against a deadline at this time. Placing a referendum on the ballot in November 2014 versus the primary in February 2015 or April 2015 election was debated. President Erwin noted that there will four board seats up for election in April and there could be four new members. At least this Board is mostly on the same page and has worked on this.

Superintendent Cobb reiterated that if the Board does not agree on new facilities, administration will be moving forward anyway with ways to improve education within our current structures. The biggest hurdle will be redistricting, which needs to happen regardless of the facilities plan. It was suggested redistricting only be done once, after all changes are made.

Member McNay presented information on the county-wide sale tax. A county sales tax can only be used for brick and mortar and up to 1% can be assessed. The revenue generated would be divided among the school districts in Adams County. Quincy would receive 71% of the money -- \$4.8 million per year. He favors the sales tax option because he said a referendum will be very difficult to pass in Quincy. Eighty percent of the \$4.8 revenue can go toward a bond. However, the sales tax would be a much slower process. He distributed a four, seven, and 20-year plan. New facilities could be built as the money is accumulated. The beauty of this option is that it will be paid by everyone who shops in Quincy, not just property owners. The other county superintendents have expressed some interest. President Erwin said

that an increase in the Education Fund will be needed at some point. Member McNay said that would be easier to sell with declining property taxes for the next several years. President Erwin said she felt if the sales tax option was approved by taxpayers and property taxes decrease, they would not agree then to bump it back up.

Member Ali said he likes the county sales tax idea as it would not be all on property owners. He suggested a combination of a bond referendum and sales tax option. Property taxes would remain the same with the referendum and then as phase 2, the sales tax option could be taken to the voters. Member Mays commented that is how the working cash was passed—the tax rate remained the same. Mr. Murphy said looking at both ways – a hybrid – may be the way to go. Down the road, the sales tax could be used to maintain lower property tax. The Life Safety portion could be decreased and more asked for education fund. President Erwin suggested starting with bonds.

Mr. Murphy said before deciding on funding, decisions need to be made on grade levels and structures. The decisions made up front will drive the building needs. Member Mays suggested employing architects to draw up plans tied to dollar amounts for two new buildings and high school addition. Member Ali suggested two phases, starting with a smaller project first to show the community the quality and garner support. Member Mays said there should be no restructuring or redistricting in 2014-15 if new schools will be built. Redistricting should be done following completion. President Erwin said having plans drawn up will help people visualize how the buildings will look, where the music room will be located, where will cubbies be, etc.

In summary, President Erwin said it seems to be the consensus of the Board to spend money to have plans drawn with estimated pricing for new buildings, remodeling, and building an addition at the high school. Mr. Murphy agreed that a specific master plan with more concrete information will help the Board make decisions. President Erwin said staff needs to be involved in the planning and provide input at meetings, not just a survey monkey.

There will be more discussion on facilities next week at the regular February meeting. An item for the Board to approve administration developing a master plan will be added to the agenda.

### **Executive Session**

*At 7:55 p.m., it was moved by Member Ali and seconded by Member Stone that the Board suspend the rules and go into executive session to discuss a) the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the School District, and i) pending, probable, or imminent litigation.* On the call of the roll, the following members voted Aye: Members Ali, Bailey, Erwin, Mays, McNay, Niekamp, and Stone; and the following members voted Nay: None. Whereupon the president declared the motion carried.

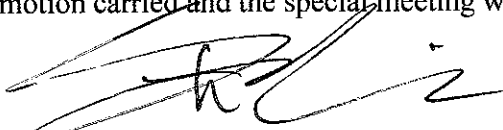
### **Resumption of Rules**

*At 8:25 p.m. it was moved by Member Bailey and seconded by Member Ali to resume the conduct of the special meeting under rules.* On the call of the roll, the following members voted Aye: Members Ali, Bailey, Erwin, Mays, McNay, Niekamp, and Stone; and the following members voted Nay: None. Whereupon the president declared the motion carried.

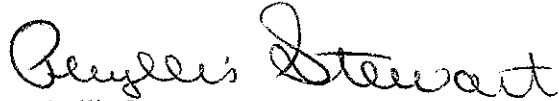
### **Adjourn**

*It was moved by Member McNay and seconded by Member Bailey that the special meeting adjourn.* On the call of the roll, the following members voted Aye: Members Ali, Bailey, Erwin, Mays, McNay,

Niekamp and Stone; and the following member voted Nay: None. Whereupon the president declared the motion carried and the special meeting was duly adjourned.



Stephanie Erwin  
President



Phyllis Stewart  
Secretary