

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING
OF
BOARD OF EDUCATION, SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 172
ADAMS COUNTY, ILLINOIS
HELD ON AUGUST 14, 2014 AT 6:00 p.m.**

Meeting Convened

The Board of Education of School District No. 172, Adams County, Illinois, met in special session August 14, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in the student cafeteria at Quincy Senior High School, located at 3322 Maine 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 Bailey, Erwin, Mays, McNay, Niekamp, and Stone; and the following member was absent: Member Ali. 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 distributed some information to Board members with seven cautions relevant to the building bond issue.

Former Quincy Mayor Chuck Scholz spoke in favor of the facilities plan and bond issue as a re-investment in our community's future. He said new modern and safe schools will spur economic development, promote investment and increase Quincy's Equalized Assessed Valuation. Quality education will be a number one selling point and is tied to economic development. He urged Board members and voters to carefully consider improving the quality of life and investment in Quincy's future.

Teri Carey questioned why all the buildings need to be built at once and burden the children in the future with the debt.

Dr. George Crickard spoke in favor of the facilities plan. He said no new schools have been built in Quincy in 42 years and something needs to be done. He said the plan as presented is a very nice option for all students. Quincy needs a strong public school system. We are losing business and economic development. Dr. Crickard has volunteered to lead a community effort if the vote tonight is to proceed. He said his group is ready to launch.

Superintendent's Cobb's Recommendation

Superintendent Cobb stated that two summers ago, the QPS School Board directed his administration to review the current facility situation and develop a plan to address the aging buildings. He appointed Joel Murphy to lead and conduct a facility study for the Board to consider options in the fall of 2013. The Board reviewed the information and directed the Superintendent to form a steering committee consisting of community members, educators, business representatives, etc. to gather additional information along with hiring an architectural firm to develop in conjunction with the steering committee, an architectural master plan. The Superintendent's steering committee has met since February of 2014 and has presented to the Superintendent a recommendation for the Board.

Superintendent Cobb read the ballot question:

Shall the Board of Education of Quincy School district Number 172, Adams County, Illinois, acquire land, improve the sites of and build and equip three new elementary school buildings, demolish the Monroe Elementary School Building, improve the site thereof and build and equip a new elementary school building thereon, improve the site of, build and equip additions to and alter, repair, renovate and equip the Baldwin Intermediate School Building and build and equip a new elementary school building at said site, improve the site of, build and equip additions to and alter, repair, renovate and equip the Quincy Senior High School Building, alter, repair equip and provide technology improvements to existing school buildings of said School District and issue bonds of said School District to the amount of \$89,000,000 for the purpose of paying the costs thereof?

Architects Presentation

The firms of Architechnics, Klingner & Associates, and Poepping, Stone, Bach worked as a team to develop the facilities plan. Members of the Design Team are: Architechnics, Inc. – Todd Moore, Martin Meyer, and Darin Prost. Klingner & Associates – Steve Wavering, Eric Barnes, and Mike Carter. Poepping, Stone Bach & Associates – Dave Schlembach. Todd Moore said the team worked well together. It has been a five and a half month process. Every option was vetted with the Steering Committee who provided direction to the architectural team. Information was gathered on all existing buildings including Health/Life Safety and Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. The community and staff were given an opportunity to respond to a survey on facilities. Meetings were held with all departments in the district to gather input on what is needed to teach our children in the best environment possible. Information was gathered from other districts in the state and nationwide on the type of sites needed, the size of classrooms, and ideal set up for parent and bus pick-up/drop-off of students. Costs were figured for many options from renovation of the old buildings to building all new K-5 schools or a combination thereof.

Todd Moore presented a PowerPoint of the building floor plans and designs which includes the following:

New Elementary School at Monroe Site	
New Elementary School at Baldwin Site	
3 New Elementary Schools/sites	
Addition at Senior High School for 9 th grade	
Total Cost	\$ 89,000,000

Following the presentation, Member Niekamp asked about architectural fees for the project. Mr. Moore said approximately 7% of construction costs are for architectural costs. Member Niekamp said taxes are too high and that is why people are moving out of Quincy.

Mr. Moore commented on the advantages to building five new elementary schools at once. It will allow the district to move to the K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 configuration which is favored by the community and staff. Current buildings are 42 to 124 years old. Junior High is an exception and will likely be standing strong for another 100 years but not the others.

President Erwin pointed out that it is a choice of \$89 million for new buildings or \$67 million over the next 20 years in Life Safety Projects to maintain the older buildings. State law requires buildings be kept up to code. There are many big ticket items on the Health Life Safety list.

In response to a question from the audience on where the money will come from, Business Manager Joel Murphy stated that the District is in a unique position of having some of our current debt retiring soon and the same level of payment can be applied to the new bond payments The District’s Financial Advisors have estimated that this proposal can be accomplished without increasing the overall property tax rates from their

current level. With an improving economy, interest rates will be inching upward and we want to take advantage of current low rates as soon as is possible. Mr. Murphy said it is similar to a 20-year mortgage.

Tom Dickerson asked if the plan designs would allow for additional classrooms if needed at some time in the future. Mr. Moore said the sites will allow for expansion that is why a two-block area is needed.

Mark Tuley commented that he does not think the public will go for such a large plan and suggested to start with just the 9th grade addition for example.

Member Mays said this structural change can be accomplished within the current tax rate and the historically low interest rates make it ideal.

President Erwin said it would not be fair to build one school and keep shuffling students around from year to year. What if voters did not pass the next phase? We want to provide all students these opportunities.

Member Stone said he was not in favor of building five new schools at first but the logistics of moving kids around, having some K-3 buildings, some K-5 buildings, changed his mind. As a parent, you would want your child to be in the new school. He said this Board has been fiscally responsible and funds are in the black.

Member Mays pointed out that taxpayers do not vote on the \$67 million that will be needed to maintain the current buildings. He said of the \$6.2 million from the Working Cash Bonds, \$2.2 million brought the education fund in the black and the rest was banked for rainy days. There has been no borrowing. The Board has worked hard to live within its means. President Erwin commented that the district is off the state's financial watch list.

Gus Rieckhoff commented that Working Cash funds will be needed again to meet costs. Schools will have to close because of budget constraints. How can more money be borrowed if the district is maxed out?

Member Niekamp asked about the cost of storm shelters for new buildings if required by state law. Mr. Moore said storm shelter costs are included in the plans and will be the gymnasiums.

Jeff Kerkhoff said providing everything alike for students scares him. He said there is too much focus on keeping things the same and it is creepy.

Member Ali Joining Telephonically for Vote

Member Ali was present telephonically during the Resolution vote only. He was out of town for business.

Approval of Resolution on Bond Issue

It was moved by Member Bailey and seconded by Member Stone to approve the Resolution providing for and requiring the submission of the proposition of issuing School Building Bonds to the voters of School District Number 172, Adams County, Illinois, at the general election to be held on the 4th day of November, 2014 (Doc. Reg. No. 2728). On the call of the roll, the following members voted Aye: Members Ali, Bailey, Erwin, Mays, and Stone; and the following members voted Nay: Members McNay and Niekamp. Whereupon the president declared the motion carried.

Member McNay thanked Joel, the Steering Committee and others who worked on this project. He said he agrees with the need for new buildings but disagrees on funding. He supports the Adams County Sales Tax option which would take some burden off of tax payers.

Member Stone said it is not a perfect plan but it is the best one and he can support it. The debt can be

structured so as not to raise the tax rate. He said this vote does not preclude the district from also looking at the sales tax option. However, the current issue before the Board is the Building Bond.

Member Bailey said it has been a good process. It is a question of spending money on old buildings or new. The evaluation of the buildings indicated the elementary schools were in the worst shape. The new buildings will bring pride and more people to the community and will show the community that education is valuable.

Member Mays thanked the steering committee and staff for their hard work. He said the Board meetings have been held in each school this year and members have had the opportunity to tour each building. He said it is a tribute to all past Boards that the old buildings have been well maintained. It is time for structural change. It started with the previous Board, turning this District around financially. Now we are the beneficiary of that work. Even when the State has cut \$500,000 from our budget, \$29 million in debt is being retired. The Board and staff have embraced better education for our students and our buildings need to reflect that. Voters need to help the Board decide – new or maintain. We have created the capacity, we can deliver. We can live within our means and build better schools. What parent wouldn't want that for their child. With the sales tax option, it would be three years until just one school could be built. Schools are more than just brick and mortar. We know that. Look what we have done inside our schools with aligning the curriculum standards and assessments given three times a year to measure student growth. Decisions can be made based on these assessments, summer school mandates, etc. We need buildings that equal where we want our kids to be.

President Erwin thanked everyone for this tedious process. She said it has been her passion since she was elected, especially to have 9th grade at senior high. She said she sees what teachers deal with and they are doing a great job. The new buildings are needed and it is a perfect time. This Board has been fiscally responsible and has respected each other's opinions. This referendum is a community effort and process and will benefit the community.

Adjourn

It was moved by Member Mays and seconded by Member Stone that the special meeting adjourn. On the call of the roll, the following members voted Aye: Members Bailey, Erwin, Mays, McNay, Niekamp, and Stone; and the following member voted Nay: None; and the following member was absent: Member Ali. Whereupon the President declared the motion carried and the special meeting was duly adjourned.



Stephanie Erwin
President



Phyllis Stewart
Secretary