

**Salmon School District #291
Board of Trustees
Special Board Session Minutes
March 7, 2019**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Overacker at 6:07 p.m.

Present were Chairman Chuck Overacker, Vice Chair Juniper MacFarlane, Trustee Kellen Miller, and Trustee Natelson. A quorum was present. Also present were Superintendent Chris Born; Director of Finance, Planning, and Program Evaluation, Eileen Holden; and Clerk, Deb Cheney.

REGULAR SESSION

Chairman Overacker led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Born presented a slideshow with frequent questions and answers regarding the upcoming bond election. See attached.

Trustee MacFarlane stated that the questions submitted in writing would be read.

Question - Has there been a feasibility alternative analysis? How did you come up with 25 million dollars?

Answer – Vice Chair MacFarlane stated that she felt Superintendent Born had answered those questions. A feasibility analysis has not been done at this time.

Mr. Born said added on costs are included on the bond. Architecture costs, site prep, ground prep, parking lot, sidewalks etc. has been added into that.

Question - Property taxes. The questions came from a person who does not qualify for an exemption or circuit breaker. How does the person pay an extra \$500 if bond passes? How do I pay for that?

Answer – Trustee Miller stated that he has grandparents who are living on social security as well. He is opening two businesses and understands living on a limited income. He stated that he is young, and although he and his wife do not plan on having children, there are things worth investing in. He stated that those on limited incomes may need to question their expenses. Having an educated population is important.

Trustee Natelson responded to the question. He stated that he works at the hospital where professionals would not come due to the schools. Those who move to Salmon will be taxpayers and will help with the tax burden.

Trustee Born stated that taxpayers would pay 70 cents per \$1,000 value, which is the lowest in the state, other than Leadore. The increase will be a big jump for us, but if the full 25.6 million is bonded out that will put the District in the bottom average range for all schools in Idaho. Yes, a big jump for us but not a big jump compared to other Idaho school districts.

Question - Why aren't we American taxpaying citizens allowed to express our public opinions?

Answer – Trustee Miller stated that taxpayers are allowed to express their opinions. He stated that the Board decided to not hire an architect so the community could be involved in coming up with the design for the school. Your opinion will be heard.

Trustee Natelson stated that both of his children are gone and he is on the Board for those kids coming up now. Education is in the home. There are kids who enter kindergarten who don't now how to hold a pencil because parents aren't involved. The Board wants people to be involved. They need ideas on saving money.

Question – The person wrote that he is concerned because he has an Autistic grandson who is in school with much older and bigger kids. He has concerns about the safety of younger kiddos being integrated with much older kids.

Chairman Overacker stated that when the Jr. High was closed they alternated lunch and class times to keep kids separated but there are times that they are co-mingling. Hopefully, if we do build a new building there will be better separation so we can keep the elementary and Jr. High students physically separated for the most part. That is the goal.

Question - When can community people come together?

Answer – Vice Chair MacFarlane stated that hopefully that will happen soon.

Question - Who pays taxes?

Answer - Trustee Miller stated that land owners/property owners pay the taxes.

Question – What will be the disposition of the administration, annex, and CDC buildings? Will the existing modular units be used, and if so, how will they be used? To what purpose will the proceeds of the Pioneer/Middle School property sale go towards?

Answer – Superintendent Born stated that the CDC building does not belong to the District. It was previously leased from Health and Welfare. Health and Welfare wanted out of the lease with the City of Salmon. The city offered us the building for payment of the utilities. It is a very expensive building. We are there for a little while. If the bond passes we will be there for at least two years. Born stated that he will meet with the city in mid June if the bond doesn't pass. We will probably have to move the Pre-K to the music room in the SPED office. If the bond passes the district office and sped office will be sold.

Superintendent Born stated that he has attempted to sell the junior high and all surrounding property for the low price of \$377,000 but there were no takers. The Board voted to have the old middle school demolished. They have emptied out the building and repurposed or sold everything that can be, such as heat pumps, lights, ceiling tiles, lockers, etc. He stated that the District found that the middle school is asbestos free except for the roof. Eventually, if the bond passes the middle school will be demolished.

Superintendent Born stated funds from property sales could be used to pay off the interest or it could be put in a fund for the next building. Born stated that he knows people have questions about where the money went from the sale of the Brooklyn school. He stated that every time a bond was run, the money from the sale of the Brooklyn was used to run it. There is still money in the account and he and Eileen won't use it.

Chairman Overacker stated that if the bids don't allow us to put administrative offices in the new building, then it would be kept where it is. Superintendent Born stated that if we can't afford it the district office will stay where it is

Question – Your illegal bond promotion mailing listed a 5,000 SF gym. That is that size of a basketball court only. What about the bleachers, the locker/team changing rooms, bathroom and associated gym storage?

Answer – Vice Chair MacFarlane stated that the gym would be a full sized gym. The square footage of the building includes the bleacher, changing rooms, bathroom, and associated gym storage.

Question – 650 student high schools are being built in Idaho for \$12-14 million. Where in the world did that \$25 million (\$34 million with interest) figure originate? Did any Board member verify same or was it just accepted with no discussion?

Answer - Superintendent Born stated that Rich Bauscher spoke to contractors who build schools to see what it would take to build a school in Salmon. Contractors stated the cost would be higher in Salmon due to availability of materials, distance, etc. Born stated that a cushion was added so the Board doesn't have to come back and ask for more money. Trustee Natelson stated that the price of fuel is more expensive here as well.

Question - Bauscher's 2018 Building Condition Evaluation Form stated that our K-5 had a poor rating. Why did this drive the decision for a new school solution instead of a less expensive repair the existing school solution?

Answer – Trustee Natelson stated that it comes to a point that the money you're putting into the school isn't worth it. He used his truck as an example. Natelson stated that the Board talked to a lot of people and decided that it isn't worth it. It is a necessary evil.

Vice Chair MacFarlane stated that three grades are being educated in portables. When the decision to use portables was made there was no end game. The portables are not permanent buildings. She asked people to think about the wear and tear of 25 students coming in and out of the buildings. The buildings are not going to be around forever and the District needs to have housing for those students.

Superintendent Born stated that scare tactics were used in past bonds. He is only interested in facts. There has been 1.7 million dollars used on a new roof and to shore up walls. The band aids get more expensive than the buildings.

Question – Bauscher's 2018 Building Condition Evaluation Form is completely subjective. Did any of the Board members participate in its creation? Did any of the Board members question it? Did any of the Board members read/understand it prior to it being published?

Answer – Chairman Overacker stated that none of the Board members questioned the results. The District hired a professional to evaluate the building. That is what Rich Bauscher does for a living. Did we question the format? No. It was professionally done.

Trustee Natelson stated that you take a professional's recommendation. He stated that a person wouldn't want him to take care of their brain.

Vice Chair MacFarlane stated that she spends about 2 hrs. a week at the Pioneer. She has talked to teachers who teach in the classrooms and feels comfortable knowing what the building needs are.

Question - 5 years with no lock on 2 doors for maximum material cost, \$800.00, and 2 hours maximum installation. I am wondering why this very important problem wasn't corrected.

Answer - Superintendent Born stated that portables are out of common sense compliance. They were installed backwards. They are checking out new locks, but just fixing the locks does not take care of all the problems with the portables. They do not have bathrooms. When the locks were brought to his attention they were addressed.

Question - Hasn't Salmon tried almost every way possible to pass a bond in the past? For example, gotten plans and estimates only to fail, tried to rally support for alternatives only to fail, or paid or not for various services only to fail.

Answer - Trustee Miller stated that there have been 9 attempts in the past. If we keep trying to do what has been done in the past that is crazy. This time has been totally different. Maybe there will be a little traction with this one.

Question - What was the cost of earlier proposals? Pragmatically, if we are trying to lessen tax burdens to people, especially the poor and elderly, would it not be smart to pass this bond now before the cost per square foot goes up and perhaps bond interest? Won't this bond cost more and more to the taxpayers if we wait due to likely increases in dollars per square foot for a facility and odds that bond interest will go up?

Answer - Trustee Natelson stated that the answer is yes. Prices go up. He compared it to car prices. Costs will continue to go up. Past bonds were less because costs were less. We have to educate the children. Government regulations make it hard. The Department of Education also has more regulations, which makes the costs go up.

Question - Aren't bond interest rates at historically low rates and could drastically effect overall burden to tax payers if we wait to pass this bond and rates go up?

Answer - Chairman Overacker stated this was discussed before; costs will keep going up. Interest rates are low right now. The Board is hoping we can buy the bonds for even less as interest rates are going down. He met with Piper Jaffray on February 1st and found that interest rates are very good right now.

Question - Pioneer school is what should be as Admin Building, not spending 1.6 million on Admin Building.

Answer - Vice Chair MacFarlane stated that teachers are doing a wonderful job even in the school they are in but she would love to give them a great place to do their work. Yes.

Question - There were questions about whether or not there was an environmental survey done, what the cost of cleanup would be, how extensive it will be, soil analysis, soil engineering, etc.

Answer - Superintendent Born stated that a soil survey has not been done so the District does not know what additional costs will be. He does know there will be additional architectural and grounds costs and there are cushions in the bond budget. Charles LaMoure said the soil testing had been done years ago and it wasn't bad.

Question – Who estimated the attached costs, and on what dates were these costs provided to: a) the pro-bond Ad Hoc Committee? b), the school board?

Answer - Superintendent Born referred to the print out with costs. Mr. Bauscher asked contractors what the cost would be. It would not cost the same as the medical building that ran \$346 per square foot. After speaking to the contractor Mr. Bauscher thought it would run about \$300 per square foot. A professional was hired because professionals have a better idea of what they're doing. The District doesn't have money to pay for up front costs.

Superintendent Born stated that the Ad Hoc Committee was formed in October/November. The committee brought different ideas to the Board. The K-8 idea came from the committee. The committee also decided they didn't want an architect involved. Superintendent Born stated that he doesn't know the specific dates. It was after the Ad Hoc meeting.

There were no further questions.

Mr. Born reminded people they could attend tours.

Chairman Overacker thanked everyone for coming. He adjourned the meeting at 7:24 pm.

Chuck Overacker, Chairman

Date

Deborah K. Cheney, Board Clerk

Date