

School Board may seek \$6 million

Written by Carol Pomeday
Wednesday, 20 January 2010 22:09

Plan calls for addition, remodeling classrooms, smaller tech-ed center

The Cedar Grove-Belgium School Board last week learned what it can get for \$6 million, the amount the district currently pays for a debt on the elementary school that will be paid off in April.

Rather than reduce taxes, the board is considering a referendum in April to borrow \$6 million to relieve crowding in the elementary school, improve conditions at the middle school and build a technical education center at the high school.

A \$20.5 million referendum to build a new middle school and technical education center was soundly defeated, 1,240 to 648, in November. A \$4.5 million referendum to construct a competitive swimming pool lost by a larger margin.

Last week, Abacus Architects and Joseph Schmitt Construction, both of Sheboygan, presented preliminary plans for a scaled-down project that includes updating heating and ventilation systems and providing handicapped accessibility.

Those plans are expected to be discussed at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 28, during a special board meeting with the Long-Range Planning Committee.

The proposal for the middle school calls for adding a new entrance, moving the office to the entrance to monitor who goes in and out of the building, adding two classrooms at the northwest and southwest ends to square off the building and remodeling the interior to provide larger classrooms and new windows. Eighth-grade science labs would be moved to the current office area.

At the elementary school, the architects propose adding two classrooms at the end of the east wing for 5-year-old kindergarten through fourth grade.

The board is considering contracting with child care centers, such as Stepping Stones in Belgium, or churches for 4-year-old kindergarten classes.

The additions and remodeling are estimated to cost \$5.4 million.

A 13,000-square-foot, \$800,000 technology education center is proposed west of the present high school technology rooms. A \$1.14 million technology education

School Board may seek \$6 million

Written by Carol Pomeday

Wednesday, 20 January 2010 22:09

center was proposed in November.

The estimated cost for all the projects is \$6.2 million.

Abacus proposed a second phase, if needed, that would add four more classrooms on the north end of the middle school and two classrooms on the northeast end of the elementary school for \$1.3 million.

“We’re over the post-referendum blues,” Supt. Steve Shaw said at the Jan. 13 School Board meeting. “The big things that came up (in the post-referendum survey) was the economy, no new taxes, the design and that we didn’t keep up the buildings.”

Kit Dailey, who advised the board on the referendum, cautioned to “tread lightly and be responsive to the community.”

“Look at what you said you needed and why you needed it,” she said. “That message doesn’t change much. What changes is how you address that.”

The board and a Long-Range Planning Committee proposed building a new middle school because the current middle school, which is 20 years old, has small classrooms and poor heating and ventilation systems.

The board said it did not want to put much money into the middle school because of its deficiencies.

No money, except normal maintenance, should be put into the swimming pool, board members said.

“Just run it until it dies, and then shoot it,” board member Jim Lautenschlaeger said.

Dailey suggested the board ask people who were opposed to a new school be involved in developing plans for the April referendum.

“Look at those who are most opposed and bring them to the table,” she said. “It’s not easy and it’s not fun, but their concerns are legitimate.”

“Right now people are more concerned about putting food on the table than

School Board may seek \$6 million

Written by Carol Pomeday

Wednesday, 20 January 2010 22:09

education,” board member Terry Eernisse said.

Dailey responded, “Your job is to keep the level of awareness up, to keep talking about it.”

The long-range planning committee’s co-chairman Kevin Isken has taken a position with Joseph Schmitt Construction and will be working on the school project.

A decision on whether to hold a referendum April 6 and the wording for the referendum must be made by Feb. 16.