



**To:** Dr. Annette Freiheit

**From:** Ben Beery | BB

**Date:** February 15, 2022

**Comm. No:** 9999

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**Subject:** Independent School District #861 - Winona Area Public Schools  
Community Task Force Meeting #7  
February 9, 2022 Meeting Minutes

**Attendees:**

Annette Freiheit, Superintendent  
Nancy Denzer, Board Member  
Michael Hanratty, Board Member  
Jeremy Graves, Staff Member  
Katie Pearce, Staff Member  
Toni McDevitt, Staff member  
Brenda Nelson, Staff Member  
Laura Watkins, Staff Member  
Amanda Indra, Staff Member  
Kaylee Haun, Community Member  
Ted Hazelton, Community Member  
Julie Heinrichs, Community Member  
Allen Hillery, Community Member  
Drew Kings, Community Member  
Kris Lynch, Community Member  
Karen Sullivan, Community Member  
Ed Thompson, Community Member  
Laura Greseth, Community Member  
Julie Biggerstaff, Community Member  
Lucy McMartin, Community Member  
Lindsay O'Shea, Community Member  
Christa Schul, Community Member  
Paul Aplikowski, Wold Architects and Engineers  
Ben Beery, Wold Architects and Engineers

**Discussion Topics:**

A. The group toured Jefferson Elementary and the ALC Building.



- B. The group shared their thoughts since last meeting:
  - 1. Article in the newspaper:
    - a. Some teachers reached out to the staff person quoted in the paper to talk about the discussion. There seemed to be a lot of support for a seventh through twelfth grade model.
  - 2. Dr. Annette Frieheit shared some historical information on enrollment at the fourth grade level.
  - 3. One staff member discussed the options with their department and something like letter 'H' was favored.
    - a. One staff member discussed with a similar District and they wished they had built a new High School.
  - 4. Moving fifth graders back into the Elementary might not solve every issue – working on the fifth grade experience might be a useful future task force.
- C. Wold shared Ehlers Financial rough order of magnitude financing costs. For a home value of \$200,000 the tax amounts for a 20 year term are estimated as follows:
  - 1. \$29,550,000 Bond: \$0.00 estimated annual tax increase
  - 2. \$50,000,000 Bond: \$74.00 estimated annual tax increase
  - 3. \$75,00,000 Bond: \$159.00 estimated annual tax increase
  - 4. \$100,000,000 Bond: \$244.00 estimated annual tax increase
  - 5. Questions from the group:
    - a. When does the tax fall off?
    - b. How does that compare to the last referendum?
- D. The group reviewed the facility options from the last meeting and the new added options based on the task force discussion from last meeting.
- E. The group performed a dot exercise on the options. Each task force member received three green dots and one red dot. The goal is to put green dots on the most viable options and the red dot on an option that was least viable. The results are as follows:
  - 1. Option A: Green Dots: 19 Red Dots: 2
  - 2. Option B: Green Dots: 0 Red Dots: 0
  - 3. Option B Variation: Green Dots: 1 Red Dots: 5.5
  - 4. Option C: Green Dots: 4 Red Dots: 3
  - 5. Option D: Green Dots: 0 Red Dots: 2
  - 6. Option E: Green Dots: 5 Red Dots: 0
  - 7. Option F: Green Dots: 2 Red Dots: 0
  - 8. Option G: Green Dots: 0 Red Dots: 0
  - 9. Option G Variation: Green Dots: 6 Red Dots: 0
  - 10. Option H: Green Dots: 2 Red Dots: 6.5
  - 11. Option I: Green Dots: 15 Red Dots: .5
- F. Discussion on the options:
  - 1. It was stated that the intent is to eliminate the options – what are the group's thoughts? It was clarified that the community will need to support the option so it is important to have that focus during the discussion.



2. Based on the results of the dot exercise, the group was comfortable eliminating options B, B1, D, F, G and H.
3. That leaves options A, C, E, G1 and I for discussion.
4. Discussion around Option I:
  - a. Some are concerned about option I believing it will not get an approval from the community.
  - b. Some are considering a modified option I – keeping one Elementary open for Pre-Kindergarten.
    - 1) Could childcare center work?
5. Some are very concerned about closing buildings as WAPS recently has closed buildings and some in the community are still hurting from that.
6. There was discussion that less change likely means more likely to pass which would lead to Option A.
7. Option C was discussed that it might be too many transitions.
  - a. It was noted as a family – you might be used to being in different buildings due to age of your students.
  - b. The group discussed that there is some efficiency with evening out of class sizes. It may not outweigh the increased transitions.
  - c. It was talked that the private schools in the community tried this for a while but it caused some uproar in the community.
  - d. This option could challenge building community or loyalty in the early grades.
  - e. After this discussion, the group was comfortable eliminating this option.
8. Option I:
  - a. Some in the group felt it was unlikely to pass so it should be removed.
  - b. Some in the group seems to be a good use of space and is the most cost effective.
  - c. Some in the group felt this was different in terms of closing buildings because no one is left out; no one gets preferential treatment.
  - d. What would the selling point to the community be on this option?
    - 1) Being in the elementary model longer.
  - e. It was noted that this is 1,000 student building, is that concerning to anyone?
  - f. The group discussed modifying this option to keep Goodview for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten.
  - g. Could playground space be added to the middle school site?
  - h. Gym space:
    - 1) Does it work for PE? Answer – likely it works for school day.
    - 2) Community Ed or non-school day use loses gym space across the District in this option, which could be an issue.
  - i. Some feel like 1000 student building size and driving across town would not be well supported by the community.
  - j. It was noted that based on the discussion, this option should continue to be discussed. However, once some of these other factors are considered (gym space, Pre-Kindergarten etc.) that the cost of this option will go up. The group will review the revised option at the next meeting.



9. Option G:
  - a. One group member felt this was not a good option as it is lots of change.
  - b. There was a comment that there are recent or planned investments at WK – will it be a challenge to sell a referendum?
  - c. Is having seventh graders with twelfth graders an issue?
    - 1) Some felt the community would not like it but group members felt that there are many other Districts with this configuration.
    - 2) There is also overlap with activities.
  - d. This option is proposed to continue to be discussed.
10. Option E:
  - a. The group was comfortable eliminating this option.
11. After concluding the discussion, the remaining options are A, G1, and I.
- G. Next Steps were discussed:
  1. A discussion was had about options:
    - a. One group member hoped we could get to one option.
    - b. Need to breakout maintenance funding in future options.
  2. Need community education, administration and special education input on the options.
  3. The group discussed tax impact – will the community support a tax increase?
    - a. There is hope that there would be support for a tax increase but there needs to look at lower cost options.
    - b. A proposal of \$30-\$50million and what might be phased.
      - 1) A tax increase of about \$6 month was passed last time and it will translate to about \$75 million now. This might be another way to look at what the community might support.
    - c. This could be part of masterplan approach too as long as it is messaged that way to the community. There could be a long term plan for two votes spaced out over time.
- H. Key Messages:
  1. Still brainstorming but getting closer.
  2. Need focus on what the voters
  3. Identified realistic options to keep the focus on the students.
  4. Need greater community involvement on the plan before finalizing anything.
- I. Next Meeting(s):
  1. February 23, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.
  2. Tentative March 2, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. (if needed)
- cc: Cindy Amberg, Community Member  
Jackie Goyette, Community Member  
Andy Pierce, Community Member  
Theresa Sadler, Community Member  
Luke Sims, Community Member  
David Kuklinski, Community Member  
Tyler Ertl, Wold Architects and Engineers