

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING held Tuesday, September 28, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in the boardroom in the district office building.

**This meeting will be available for public remote participation at the following link:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSydTbPJWn38IQFBvPq8TOW>**

The following Board Members were present to begin the meeting: Michelle Lambert, Dave Staheli, Dale Brinkerhoff, Ben Johnson, and Jeff Corry. Lance Hatch, Superintendent; Todd Hess, Business Administrator; Kevin Garrett, Steve Burton, Roy Mathews, Janette Stubbs, and Monica Torres were also present.

President Lambert began the hearing at 5:30 p.m.

Kevin Garrett offered the prayer.
Roy Mathews led the pledge of allegiance.

President Lambert welcomed those in attendance and explained the meeting procedures. She turned the time over to Business Administrator Todd Hess to present an explanation of the bond issuance.

Mr. Hess explained there are projects throughout the district that are needing to be completed in order to accommodate projected growth and to update and replace aging facilities. He reported a needs assessment was conducted and he reviewed the following results:

1. Several of the current facilities are inadequate for current needs and will not accommodate projected growth
2. Overcrowded facilities make teaching and learning less effective
3. Antiquated facilities require constant costly maintenance and repairs

Mr. Hess then summarised the most critical needs which include: the expansions at the two middle schools; the replacement of an aging East Elementary; a remodel of the Cedar High School Science Wing; construction of a Multi-Purpose Facility providing a kitchen and lunchroom for Parowan High, and improved space for Parowan Elementary, and additional space for extracurricular activities; and the relocation and construction of a new Transportation Facility to allow for growth and improve safety. Mr. Hess reported the bond amount was determined and the Board resolution was passed for the amount of \$69.5 million. This will include a 20 year payment period with interest between 2% and 5%. He explained the maximum annual debt service on a \$300K fair market value personal residence is \$212.16. This is an increase of \$93.50 from 2021 and decrease of \$30.89 from 2020 and decrease of \$134.34 from 2015.

The time was then made available for comments from persons in attendance at the hearing.

Preston Davis said he is a member of the Iron Dixie commission of rights. He said he has no problem maintaining facilities for students, but said he feels he has to bring something else up: our families. He said he has spoken to families who are scared to death to speak to board members and administrators for fear of retribution. He said a mom contacted him regarding a book that was sent home from her child's school that she felt was inappropriate. He said he will

go to the state school board and attorney general to deal with the issues if he has to. He said the Board should not ask for a bond until they have their house in order.

Dwight Hargat said he was not aware this public hearing was only about the bond so he is going to make his comments about the bond. He said he has a way to help the district save \$92,000. He is the father of four children who he hopes will attend public school someday. He is here to speak for one of the parents who, like himself, have turned to alternative education because just like the federal government, military leaders, justice system, and health department the education department seems to have lost their ability to hold their people accountable through discipline. As an Afghanistan combat veteran he said he has seen first hand the carnage the leaders are wreaking on our country. Our elected leaders have lost their ability to hold their own people accountable. He said he would like to remind the Board the education system was made for the children, not the teachers. He referred to a teacher who he said verbally abused his students and it was never documented. President Lambert reminded Dwight that the Board cannot hear personnel issues in a public meeting. Dwight continued and said the teacher refused to apologize after posting an inappropriate message on social media. The teacher in question was transferred to a school in Cedar City called Youth Health Associates, a treatment center designed to care for kids who have a history of mental illness and sexual misconduct. He asked for an explanation. He said school boards are elected to be the community's voice in education. Where was the community's voice? He said it's time for change and time to hold all of our counterparts to the standard or honorably forsake your position to someone who would better serve the community. He asked the Board to fire the teacher and save the district \$92,000.

Doug Hall said the Board couldn't have picked a worse time economically to be doing construction projects. He said he agrees with most of the projects, but doesn't agree with the way the Board has worded the proposition on the bond referendum. As it sits, it is a general statement saying the Board can do whatever they want with the bond. What's on the referendum gives no inkling of the actual projects to be completed and all we can do is rely on you and hope you do the right thing. He said most people, that haven't followed this process, when they read the referendum they will think this doesn't tell them anything and they'll vote no. He said a good analogy is if the city came out with a bond referendum and asked the public to approve \$10 million to build roads, or do some waterworks or do some sewers. He said the citizens would not only vote no, but heck no. The other part of the problem is the estimates that are listed in the bond projects are probably the highest you'll ever see. The problem is that in two years when you start construction, those costs could go down and any money you have left over is yours to allocate as you see fit because of the general wording on the proposition. He said he has heartache over that. He said in 2017 North Elementary was built and came in at \$14.5 million and now we're looking at \$32 million for East. That's over twice the amount. He said he questions that number. He suggested waiting a year or two until prices stabilize. For these reasons he said he will vote no to the bond issuance.

Norm Forbush said he agreed with Mr. Hall. He said he can still say good things about Superintendent Hatch, but one of things he needs to do is make sure the school board regains their credibility. There are those who need to go away, there are those who are already gone.

What has happened in the past has left sour grapes. You need to get your house in order. He said he is voting no to the bond.

Richard Jensen said he generally wants to support the bond. He said he has no problem with the projects, but has a couple issues with the bond as a whole. The rebuild of East Elementary is going to cost \$32 million. We are getting 30-32 rooms for that figure. The remaining \$38 million, though we are only getting a total of 16 rooms, a bus garage, and the Parowan building. It seems like in dealing with growth that \$32 million is not being spent as efficiently as the \$32 million for East. If we are talking about growth issues it would be preferential to build a new school and replace East at a later date. He said he has concerns about the information put out regarding the tax impact. The \$212.69 annual debt service is not the maximum it could be. The tax increase of \$93.50 on a \$300,000 house is only 2%, not what it could be at 5%. This isn't reflected on the graphs and isn't truthful. APA is hoping to be here next year and within a few years taking 700 students. The information presented to the Board previously on projected growth wasn't accurate.

Liam Gent, father of five children in the district, said John Webster is the best transportation head Iron County has ever had. Whatever money is allotted to him he will be very effective at using it to make the transportation part of the school system the best it can be. He seconded a lot of the concerns of getting the wording on the ballot correct. It's really important.

Once comments had been made by those wishing to do so, President Lambert thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the meeting at 6:04 pm.

Board President

Business Administrator