

## I. Welcome and Committee Business

Facilitator Dick Withycombe welcomed committee members and asked them to review the minutes of their June 2 meeting, which they approved with two changes and one clarification.

### Corrections to June 2 Minutes

- Once passed by voters, ~~Limited General Obligation Bonds (LGO)~~ **Unlimited Tax General Obligation (UTGO) Bonds** allow the district to tax at whatever rate is necessary to repay the approved debt. However, school districts make significant efforts to estimate the resulting tax rate and to communicate that accurately to voters. The estimated tax rate is based on assumptions about interest rates, the district's bond rating, the district's AV, and bond structure. *(slide 11) (Page 2)*
- *Some disciplines are taught only at Getchell, not because of the facility but because of the small learning environment strategy. Whatever we recommend should support the teaching strategy, whatever that is. (Page 5)*

### Clarification of Minutes

- The district has four outstanding general obligation bonds. Voters approved bond measures in 2006 and 2007. In 2013 and 2015, the district refinanced these to take advantage of lower interest rates, saving more than \$5 million. All of this outstanding debt will be repaid on or before 2025. *(slide 9) (Page 2)*

Executive Director of Finance and Operations Jim Baker provided this clarification of the text above: There are four bonds on the ledger, two voted and two refunded (refinanced) by board action. Refinancing saved interest cost, but did not extend the term of the bonds.

### Future Meeting Dates

The handout listing future committee meeting dates will be corrected to include Tuesday, November 17 (6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the board room). The gap before that final meeting will provide a window for community input through thoughtexchange.

### Information Requests

Committee members submitted the following information requests for their September 15 meeting.

- Enrollment patterns of the last three years and enrollment projections for the next three years (taking into account new housing starts)
- The district's plan for housing a prekindergarten program

- The numbers of portables at each school by use, such as regular instruction (e.g., second grade classroom), special program, school-wide program (e.g., music), offices, student services, and storage
- The numbers of transfer requests by school, with the reasons for these requests (if available)
- A revision of the “State of Facilities” summary that includes the findings of the School Safety Assessment and the estimated costs of correcting identified deficiencies, in which the cells are color-coded to indicate the urgency of the need (green, yellow, red)

## II. School Safety Assessment

Assistant Superintendent Ray Houser reviewed an executive summary of the “School Safety Assessment Phase 1 Report,” copies of which were provided to committee members. This was a districtwide summary of the assessment process and findings; the district staff had not yet had an opportunity to review the school-level findings.

The assessment was conducted between May 5 and June 1 by a well-regarded firm, Interstate Analysis. Its purpose was to ascertain the vulnerability of students and staff in school facilities. Because of the relatively short timeframe, the project was limited in scope; however Ray said the district will continue to monitor school safety as a routine assessment.

Interstate Analysis staff visited each school campus three times, each time with a different focus: exterior site assessment, nighttime visibility assessment, and interior building assessment.

The executive summary identified a few “safety and security vulnerabilities common to each campus.” These were: unlocked or open exterior doors that could enable intruder access, landscaping that could provide concealment, and two-way radio systems that were not tested on a regular basis in an emergency drill or exercise. It also identified a few vulnerabilities found on multiple campuses: low perimeter fencing (less than six feet), open-campus layouts with 24-hour vehicle access, and inadequate signage. Ray said that, in general, more vulnerabilities were found at older schools than at newer schools.

Ray said he and Facilities Supervisor Greg Dennis “have our marching orders, and we will begin that work this summer.” He added that Greg is already attending to issues related to landscaping and signage and that the new VOIP phone system will significantly improve emergency communication capabilities.

### Questions discussion

- *Would people still be able to use school campuses 24 hours a day? Will taxpayers be able to use school tracks?\** The concern is more a matter of an intruder driving a vehicle onto the campus during the day.

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\* The comments of committee members appear in italic print, those of the facilitator, presenters, and central-office district staff in regular print. Unless enclosed in quotation marks, comments have been edited for brevity and clarity.

- *Here at Getchell, there's no parking if the gates are closed, which isn't conducive to a neighborhood school.*
- *When will a more comprehensive report be available to the committee? We don't feel we can provide more detailed information about individual schools until we've had time to digest the data; we'll provide more information in the fall. At this point, we wanted the committee to understand districtwide needs and the impact of facility age.*
- *I support community access, but I can also see the need for safety precautions. Both access and security are important.*
- *Building a strong sense of community will increase security because students will report their concerns to adults.*

Dick told committee members the district staff will analyze the full report and provide information that will enable them to consider whether there are appropriate responses that fall within the scope of a bond measure.

### III. Tour of Marysville Getchell High School

Shawn Stevenson, principal of the Academy of Construction and Engineering, and Dave Rose, principal of the School for the Entrepreneur High School, provided background information. The school was designed to maximize support for instruction. There are no internal hallways in the instructional buildings; that space is used instead for common areas and for instructional activities. Most classrooms have a lot of windows for transparency.

The four school buildings are essentially identical. Each one has a large instructional space that is used for a different campus-wide program; for example, the International School of Communications has a band and choir room. Many spaces in each instructional building were designed for multiple uses and for flexibility in instructional group sizes. The outside deck areas are for future expansion (additional classrooms).

Together, the four schools enroll approximately 1,400 students; their combined capacity is 1,600 students. Each floor in each instructional building has a teacher collaboration area. When the school reaches full enrollment and all classrooms are needed each period, teachers will spend their prep periods at their cubicles there. Each building has a commons area, and the campus also has a shared cafeteria with a preparation kitchen, as well as a shared gym.

#### Questions Before the School Tour

Shawn, Dave, and Ray answered committee members' questions before the tours.

- *How much interaction is there between students from the different schools on campus? For the most part, students take classes within their small learning community, except for things like choir, band, and AP classes. Socially, students see each other at lunch and all-campus assemblies and in ASB and afterschool activities. When they have the opportunity, kids mix easily.*
- *How are staff assigned? Staff are assigned to individual schools based on enrollment. Over time, the level of staff sharing between schools has varied. As enrollment has*

stabilized near full enrollment, it has been easier to maintain staff and there are fewer shared staff members.

- *Are the operational costs on par with those of the other schools?* We bus students here from all over the district, but in terms of staffing it's similar to other schools. Getchell has about 200 more students than Pilchuck and one more administrator. Each of the small learning communities has a principal, but no vice principal. Each also has a head secretary, an attendance secondary, and a counselor. The small schools share a health room, a cashier, and two security staff.
- *Do students from other high schools come here for classes?* Not many, because we don't have any districtwide programs, such as the MPHS auto shop or the culinary arts program on the Totem campus. There aren't many large spaces here; Arts and Technology runs a program at Totem, in their manufacturing space.
- *We talked about school rivalries last week. Is there a sense of rivalry between the small learning communities?* I would say there's a healthy balance. Kids have pride in the Getchell campus, in our athletics programs for example; and there are a variety of activities schools do together. I also see a healthy challenge between schools. The shared affinity for the whole school means the rivalry within the campus is generally positive.
- *How do students learn about and access other things they may want to explore?* There are elective courses, and they can see what other students are doing. There's an annual transfer window when students can change schools if they wish, and most students who want a different opportunity will have it by fall. During the school year, it's more difficult; but that's not much different from Pilchuck. There may be more barriers to midyear changes here because it's a transfer process, but students do have access.
- *How does Running Start affect enrollment?* Districtwide, about 190 high school students are involved in Running Start. For partially enrolled Running Start students, the district shares the state per-student funding proportionately with the community college; for fulltime students, the district keeps seven percent for administrative expenses and sends the rest to the college. Participation has been consistent over time, and the primary reason is that kids want to get a head start on earning college credits, without paying tuition.
- *Do students have an opportunity to transfer to any district high school?* Yes, every February there is a transfer window. Between five and seven percent of high school students choose to transfer, but there is no pattern of leaving any one campus.
- *Are teachers tied to one school?* Teachers may transfer or be transferred in the same way as between any other schools; the same procedures apply. These are considered to be four separate schools; unless their contracts state their time is shared, teachers are hired for one school.
- *Are you providing feedback about these facilities to inform future high school construction?* We haven't encountered many issues; the buildings have done very well. The classrooms are smaller than some others in the district, but that reflects the decision to put space into shared and flexible instructional spaces. A larger parking lot might make things easier at dismissal when all the parents are trying to get in, but I

don't think there were many mistakes. The buildings meet the needs of students. The gym is not large, but that was a conscious decision about what was needed.

- *There has been some community concern about limited crossover for AP courses.* Last year was the first year AP classes were truly shared; the school schedules are locked together much more than they were before.

## Questions and Comments Following the School Tour

Dick invited committee members to share their observations and ask questions.

- *How large is the site, and what was the construction cost?* The total construction cost was \$95.2 million; \$25.2 million of that was state matching funds, not local taxes. The school was designed for 1,600 students; and it's a 20-acre site.
- *How was the district able to get a state match for this when Marysville-Pilchuck had capacity?* Because it had 28 portables; we had a capacity issue because we were using portables for instruction. We still have more than 100 portables districtwide, so the district qualifies for state funds both ways — unhoused students and age of construction.
- *Does the district own additional land?* It owns an additional 40-plus acres to the east of the Getchell campus, a potential building site on the east side of Highway 9, and two parcels totaling about 50 acres in the Strawberry Hill area.
- *These buildings don't feel big. How many classrooms do they have?* Each building has 14 classrooms; they're designed to enroll about 400 students each. In terms of space, we have enough classrooms to meet the needs of the students on campus.
- *If there were 1,600 students here, the gym would be very tight. The students don't all fit on the bleachers now; we have to borrow risers from other schools. Some of the things that happen in a traditional high school are difficult with that gym. We have to be careful how we do assemblies, and we run practices well into the evening because of the number needed. Those were conscious decisions, but there are pros and cons.*
- *Getchell has to host its wrestling tournament at MPHS, and things like the volleyball tournament can't be held here.*
- *Would it be feasible to use some of the space on the site to build a bigger gym and use the existing one as an auxiliary gym?* This property adjoins the 40-acre parcel, but you need a bridge to get there.
- *There are things we chose to do here for education, such as the flexible instructional spaces in each building, and so the gym is smaller. There had to be some give-and-take; you can't have everything when the total square footage is mandated.*
- *My sons both attended school here; they loved it, they felt connected to everyone and also to the campus.*
- *If this is an option school, would it make sense to cap enrollment rather than build those additional classrooms?* Yes, if there were high school capacity districtwide. It would take four to six weeks to add those classrooms, one classroom per building; and much of that time wouldn't be construction, but permitting. The district owns the plans.

- *Why not just build them to begin with?* Because school districts can't build for projected enrollment, only for the enrollment they already have.
- *Are the trees and green spaces part of natural space requirements?* Yes, and also part of the conditional-use agreement with the city.
- *This feels like a more focused education environment than MPHS.*
- *It feels like a college; even in college, students spend most of their time in their major buildings, with some time in common spaces.*
- *You drive into the Pilchuck campus through the athletic facilities, so it feels like the emphasis is on sports. Here, it feels like the emphasis is academic.*

Dick gave the two principals an opportunity to share final words.

- When this facility was planned five or six years ago, it was so exciting. You see here features of the schools we had to travel to see. This is a nice thing for our community. There will be some push-and-pull, in terms of what different people want from this facility, but there are things it allows us to do educationally. The different schools can use their space differently; they're able to focus on instruction. It was intentional, that it isn't all spread out. I believe we are fortunate to have it.
- This structure has been recognized locally, across the state, nationally, and even internationally — mostly around how it is designed to support instruction. Five years later, we're still giving tours.