

I. Welcome and Correction to Minutes

Facilitator Dick Withycombe welcomed committee members and provided a meeting overview. The committee approved the September 15 minutes with the following correction to page 2:

- This year, **two middle schools (Cedarcrest and Marysville)** and three elementary schools (Liberty, Marshall, and Shoultes) were closed to transfers because they were full.

II. Marysville Pilchuck High School Cafeteria

Jim Baker, Executive Director of Finance and Operations, briefed the committee on the development of a new cafeteria for Marysville Pilchuck High School (MPHS). Dick said this presentation was in response to a concern raised by a committee member about construction projects outside the committee process and what that means for the role of this committee.

Jim told the committee the only project currently in planning is the replacement of the cafeteria at Marysville Pilchuck, “the direct result of the tragic event of October 24, which to all intents and purposes closed the food service and commons.” The school has created a makeshift cafeteria at one end of the gym, which has to be set up and taken down every day. The results of a survey of students, staff, and community members were clear: more than 70 percent said they wanted the old cafeteria demolished and a new one built as far away from it as possible.

In the weeks after the tragedy, the district received many offers of help. One was from Representative Hans Dunshee, chair of the house appropriations committee. When he asked how he could help, the district said the school needed a new cafeteria; and he undertook to champion that cause in Olympia.

Time is critical, not only for food service, but also to support school and community activities. With the prospect of legislative support, the superintendent authorized project preplanning; and a district committee, which included various MPHS stakeholders, began work in mid-December. They developed design specifications and hired architectural and construction-management firms; and the new commons will be completed by September 2016.

As the legislature went through three sessions, the planning continued. In the end, Representative Dunshee achieved a one-time, \$5 million line item for Marysville. However, the new cafeteria would cost about \$8 million. The district asked the state School Construction Assistance Program if it could use that legislative funding as local match to qualify for matching funds. The answer was yes, and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction contributed an additional \$2.5 million. Thus the district acquired \$7.5 million to replace the old cafeteria.

Assistant Superintendent Ray Houser added that the district’s Request for Proposals (RFP) clearly limited the scope of the project to the cafeteria replacement. Architecture firms were informed that decisions regarding the remainder of the campus were in the hands of a citizen committee.

Jim showed slides of the architect's elevation drawings, site maps, and schematic drawings. Knowing the new cafeteria may someday be integrated into a new school — and that people wanted it to be away from the old cafeteria — planners considered its location carefully. They chose the open space behind the gymnasium, currently occupied by two portables. This location also preserves the option of locating the main entrance of a new MPHS on the east side.

The new cafeteria will be attached to, but not accessible from, the gymnasium. At 16,000 square feet, it will be almost 18 percent larger than the old one. In addition to the commons with seating for dining, the new space will include a student store, DECA classroom, restrooms, ASB offices, serveries, and a central kitchen that also supports five elementary schools.

- *What happens if the school is replaced and the gym is torn down?** We had an engineering study done on the gym, and we are convinced it has another 30 years of useful life. If the high school is replaced, that portion would likely be maintained.
- *How much of the planning work you just described will be part of this committee's work?* All of the planning and design work you've seen would take place after the committee's recommendations go to the superintendent, the board has authorized a bond measure, and the voters have approved it.

III. Information Requested

State of Facilities Report

Facilities Supervisor Greg Dennis reviewed a revised "State of Facilities" report on which the structural, mechanical, and electrical deficiencies are coded red, yellow, and green to identify the areas of most immediate need. Highest priority was placed on needs related to safety, health, and security.

The committee requested further revisions to the report: to break out the ninth-grade campus; to identify permanent capacity (without portables); to include ideal enrollment (allowing for projected enrollment growth); and to indicate how many portables should be replaced due to condition.

Ray said that the district staff had been conscientious about designating needs red or yellow and that committee members shouldn't assume green means the absence of needs. "All of these are needed," he said. "The red cells are the highest priorities among significant needs."

- *If we can't address all of the red items in this bond, would the district have to do them within, say five years?* That's variable. This year, for example, we had two boiler failures; we have other boilers that might last one, three, five, even 10 years. The red ones need the most immediate attention, but it's hard to predict.
- *How long a process is replacing a school?* It depends on the grade level, but the rule of thumb is that it takes about as long to plan as it does to build. For an elementary school, that would be about 18 months for planning and design and another 18 months for construction — three years. For a middle school the total of planning and building time is about four years, for a high school about five years.

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

- *Would owning the Grove design save time on a new elementary school?* It would potentially save time, as much as a year and \$1 million. However, that's an open question; no decisions have been made.
- *Would it take less time to expand and modernize, than to replace?* It depends on the project scope and the condition of the building. Because of the age of some buildings, it could be as time-consuming and costly as building new.

New Construction Costs

Greg reviewed a summary of average statewide construction costs by grade level, based on data provided by Doug Nichols, Director of the Construction Services Group at Educational Service District 112 in Vancouver, who spoke to the committee on May 19.

Construction costs are calculated by multiplying the space allocated per student by school capacity by average cost. In addition, there are soft costs, estimated at 40 percent; these include such things as architectural and engineering fees, sales tax, furnishings, and equipment. Dividing the total cost by the total area (square feet per student multiplied by capacity) yields the cost per square foot.

In Marysville, the average elementary capacity is approximately 500 students. The three middle schools enroll 680, 800, and 900 students. Marysville Getchell was designed for 1,600 high school students; Marysville Pilchuck has 1,250 students, but was designed for a larger enrollment.

In the discussion that followed, these considerations regarding new construction costs emerged.

- These average costs do not factor in the state match (the contribution of the School Construction Assistance Program). That varies by school district, and Marysville qualifies for a relatively high match. The district received \$5 million toward the construction of Grove and \$25 million toward the construction of Getchell.
- These are average 2015 costs, and construction costs go up over time; the cost of future construction at all grade levels will be higher.
- These average costs are for brick-and-mortar construction, not modular buildings, which are less costly.

IV. Project Priorities

Emphasizing that these would be preliminary conversations, Dick asked committee members to meet in three small groups to discuss two questions. What do you believe to be the most critical projects, setting aside for now the issue of cost and focusing on need? What values are reflected in your choices? After 35 minutes, the small groups reported out.

- *We talked a lot about rebuilds, at Cascade and Liberty but also at MPHS. We were concerned about student safety, so we felt that all of the red items that wouldn't be corrected in replacements need to be done. And we talked about the possibility of rebuilding a middle school onsite or in a different location, either Totem or Marysville.*
- *We talked about rebuilding Liberty, Cascade, and Marysville Middle School, and also about a partial rebuild of MPHS. Also, creating a fund for general maintenance as well as for things like roof replacements and correcting mechanical issues. As for values, first was safety and security, then: providing a good learning and teaching environment,*

equity, and community support. Thinking about safety, we discussed upgrading all fire alarms districtwide.

- *We talked about rebuilding Liberty and Cascade. Also safety and security (upgrading fire alarms and intercoms at all schools) and structural upgrades (e.g., new roofs so buildings will last). We had just started talking about middle school options, such as adding modular systems at Cedarcrest to eliminate the need for portables. And we felt there should be something on the bond for MPHS, but didn't decide what that would be.*

In his summary, Dick identified the following shared interests at this point.

- Addressing the needs at Cascade and Liberty, possibly through replacement.
- Ensuring safety and security, addressed school by school but consistently across the district to establish a standard.
- Considering further the needs of middle schools, most likely Totem and Marysville.
- Responding to a community interest in addressing facility issues at MPHS.
- Thematically, looking at improvements related to creating an environment in which students and teachers can perform at their best (e.g., roof replacements and HVAC upgrades).

V. Next Steps

Dick summarized tasks to be completed for the next meeting. District staff will develop cost estimates for the priorities small groups identified, and Withycombe Scotten & Associates will draft value statements based on those same reports.

Three committee members will draft recommendations: on establishing a maintenance fund, on preserving school tradition when replacing schools, and on facilitating community engagement in school facility improvement. A long-range facilities plan drafted by another committee member will be shared with the committee.

Committee members who wished to visit Totem Middle School were asked to contact Jodi Runyon by September 24.