
Community Bond Advisory Committee Meeting #8 - Meeting notes

August 1, 2023 5:30 dinner 6pm start

Attendees

- Molalla River School District Staff: Tony Mann, Tony Tiano, Keith McClung, Lauree Nelzen
- MRSD Board Observers - Linda Eskridge, Neal Lucht
- CBAC members - Sarah McArthur, Tom Eskridge, Dwight Mason, Jimmy Lanahan, Kurt Brandemihl, Julie Bystrom, Lauren Lucht, Corinne Johnsen, Mitche Graf, Leota Childress
- Absent –Allison Holstein, Ron Higginbotham, Crystal Robles, Mac Corthell, Michelle Rickles, John Meyer, Sally Dillon

Consultants

- Cassie Hibbert /Wenaha Group
- Dale Kuykendall/Wenaha Group
- Jeremy Wright/Wright Public Affairs

Community Member observing

- Kattie Riggs

Notes

Welcome and Agenda Review/Recap of CBAC #7

- Cassie Hibbert with Wenaha Group welcomed the group, reviewed the agenda, and gave an update to the overall process. She provided a recap of CBAC meeting #7 on July 11. She stated tonight's meeting is to create the Draft Recommendation for the bond project.

Miscellaneous Updates and Pricing Updates

- Cassie stated the population studies are still pending from Portland State University. The District should have information by the end of September. In the meantime, and as discussed in previous CBAC meetings, the capacity for the Middle School is an educated assumption until that data is received.
- The group also discussed pricing updates to the Bond package, including updates to the OSCIM grant program for 2024. It is confirmed that the Molalla River School District will be eligible to apply for a \$6 million grant.
- The number of Molalla River School District Voters that live in the City of Molalla is 7,174. The total number of voters in the Molalla River School District boundary is 17,249. This was a follow

up to a question from the last meeting regarding how many voters will be asked to vote on both the Police Bond and the potential School Bond.

- The Committee reviewed a summary sheet of the costs for the projects identified as highest priority during the last CBAC meeting. The summary sheet identified 3 potential project packages, as follows, that corresponded with the questions in recent community polling.
 - \$120 million bond + \$6 million OSCIM grant = \$126 million package
 - \$2.61/\$1,000 Assessed Value (AV), 30 year bond term
 - 134,000 SF Middle School Rebuild for 700 students (Expanded Option)
 - Improve Safety/Security
 - Improve Accessibility
 - HVAC Upgrades and Supporting Electrical
 - \$106 million bond + \$6 million OSCIM grant = \$112 million package
 - \$2.31/\$1,000 Assessed Value (AV), 30 year bond term
 - 115,000 SF Middle School Rebuild for 700 students
 - Improve Safety/Security
 - Improve Accessibility
 - HVAC Upgrades and Supporting Electrical
 - \$92 million bond + \$6 million OSCIM grant = \$98 million package
 - \$1.99/\$1,000 Assessed Value (AV), 30 year bond term
 - 115,000 SF Middle School Rebuild for 700 students

Community Polling Results

- Jeremy Wright from Wright Public Affairs talked about the late July 2023 community polling regarding the bond project. The telephone polling targeted likely voters in the May 2024 election and asked for opinions regarding the pricing packages listed above and which projects people would support.

Break

Draft Recommendation Discussion

- Cassie asked the committee what surprised them about the polling results from Wright Public Affairs. One response was safety and security were not top tier concerns. Another one was that the Middle School package with the lower price point was preferred.
- Cassie asked the committee what was confirmed for them through the polling results. Some responses were the community room at the Middle School was a big seller, and that support increased as the price was reduced. Another response was parents that have kids in our schools love the district.
- The next question to the committee was what are the challenges now. Some responses were education of the community on the bond information, reaching a large group of supporters that may not vote, and explaining the current condition of the Middle School.

- A sheet with a spectrum of potential bond amounts was handed out. Cassie asked committee members to draw a circle around the price range they preferred and could support on the draft recommendation. The group then reviewed all the sheets. The group submitted mostly middle to lower range, around \$92 million and lower, with a few in the \$120 million range.
- There was discussion on the reasoning behind the choices for members. Some responses were keeping the price point low and do not give people an opportunity to say no. Others felt they didn't want to cheat students out of an education if the recommendation is too low in price.
- The group then looked at page 9 of the packet that was handed out at the beginning of the meeting, which began a discussion of the 2016 bond. The majority wanted to keep the recommendation simple, and recommended that the District address the other priorities (safety and security, accessibility, and HVAC upgrades) outside of the bond package.
- Members were asked to vote again on priorities, after reviewing cost and polling feedback. The options were to rebuild the Middle School, to improve District safety and security, to improve District ADA Accessibility, and to upgrade District HVAC systems.
 - The vote to rebuild the middle school was unanimous (10 out of 10 votes).
 - One person voted to add all 3 optional bond packages – Safety/Security, Accessibility, and HVAC upgrades – to overall bond recommendation.
 - 4 people voted to add Safety and Security to the overall bond recommendation.
 - One person voted to add ADA Accessibility to the overall bond recommendation.
 - One person voted to add HVAC upgrades to the overall bond recommendation.
- The committee members that supported Safety/Security, ADA Accessibility, and HVAC had the opportunity to explain their opinion to the group.
- There was another vote following this discussion. The vote was 3/10 for safety and security, 2/10 for ADA Accessibility, and 1/10 for HVAC upgrades.
- There was discussion about grants and other avenues to address safety/security, ADA accessibility, and HVAC projects.
- Following a final vote, the committee decided their draft recommendation would include a rebuild of a 115,000 SF Middle School as the sole project in the bond proposal.
- The committee strongly recommended that the District evaluate their current resources in order to accomplish safety and security upgrades as soon as possible, but outside of the bond project.

Commitment to Decision

- The group discussed the benefits of their draft recommendation. The majority agreed that having a new Middle School would free up the Facilities Department to address other building needs in the District.
- The Barriers and the potential strategies to mitigate the barriers was discussed. Barriers included overall cost and the community's willingness to pay, lack of trust in the District post-COVID which could create low voter turnout, and education of the current condition of the Middle School.

- Strategies to mitigate these barriers were: good communication, the committee took the lowest possible price point, focus on the OSCIM grant, better schools equal higher property value, and the longer we wait the more expensive it is to build.
- Some committee members suggested that CBAC members might consider involvement with a Political Action Committee (PAC) for the bond. Other strategies included creating talking points for the committee members to talk to the community, and hold open houses at the middle school.

Next Steps

- The next step is the presentation of the draft recommendation at the August 24th Board meeting. Mitche Graf, Lauren Lucht, and Sarah McArthur volunteered to speak at the meeting on behalf of the committee. Wenaha Group will put the presentation document.

Next Meeting and Closing

- The next meeting will be November 14th with dinner at 5:30pm and the meeting from 6-8:30pm.
- Meeting adjourned at 8:40pm