

Westside Community Schools
Facilities Task Force Meeting
Thursday October 23, 2014

Robert (Bob) Zagozda, Chief Financial Officer, welcomed the group. Bob passed out a handout (see attached) regarding Political Activities by School District Employees. He explained that Alison McGinn, our legal counsel for the district, put this together and explained to the group that staff cannot use district email to promote political views during work time.

Since the last meeting, tours were taken of three schools in Council Bluffs, IA and of Dundee Elementary in Omaha. All three CB schools were remodels.

Longfellow Elementary School (CB): three-section, added a bump-out to existing structure for a good sized vestibule for security and office space, skylights connect the existing building to the new pieces, skylights provide lots of light and really made it feel continuous, doors were widened to meet ADA requirements, side window next to door, added pops of color on floor and walls, added new cabinets & countertops, added built-in cabinet chargers for devices (iPads, computers, etc.). They had a non-working 'fireplace' the community wanted to keep, it was kept and is used for a reading area. Out of the three CB schools, this is the only one that kept the existing gym and added a cafeteria in the new construction.

Roosevelt Elementary School (CB): combo cafeteria/gym, sound proof music room, opened up entrance with columns and bumped back the walls to help with congestion & openness, had unique, functional, easy-to-clean furniture made by a local artist. Unlike most that just had exterior cameras, they also have security cameras in bottleneck areas within the building.

Edison Elementary School (CB): great use of color as the principal had an art background

Dundee Elementary School (Omaha): existing interior of building has large corridors, tall ceilings, lots of space, dedicated art room, tied in the original architecture very well with the new renovations, they are able to use the gym as a storm shelter because the roof isn't exterior (there is a room on top of it).

Bob then asked that everyone get in their groups and discuss their likes and dislikes from the tours:

Group 1: Need to assess the cost to remodel vs. demo and rebuild. DLR says to use the 60% rule: if the cost to remodel is 60% of demo and rebuild then it is more cost effective to build new. They integrated the old buildings so well. The question was asked how many of ours could be remodeled? Discussion of multi-level buildings – principals in the room prefer single level buildings for better accessibility and staff development.

Group 2: Compared to our schools, these other schools had better bones to start with. Liked that they kept the historical feel and aesthetics of the buildings. Liked the curves, softness and great lighting they added.

Group 3: They liked the large size of the buildings, security features (camera, ample exterior lighting), splashes of color. Any added space should be hard space not just dual purpose.

Group 4: They liked keeping traditions, color, lighting, libraries, media centers, built-in charging stations.

They didn't like lockers in the classroom at Dundee, interior cameras in one CB school (not sure they liked this), mixed-views on the exterior cameras, none of the schools addressed pick-up and drop-off, no green spaces.

Group 5: Regarding the CB schools, they had concerns about the amount of autonomy the principals had in designing the schools. They felt it should be more centralized and uniform for the district in regards to flooring and wall materials. Elementary principals are generally not in that position for long, if they were not very creative or involved then the school was generic looking compared to one that was very involved and had excess color, etc. Would prefer it to be more uniform for the district.

Discussion following: Ken Baldwin suggested that when it comes time to determine renovations and building design, materials, etc. the architect should get input from the staff, community, students, etc. so we are sure we are getting a good cross-section of ideas. Question was asked whether it is more cost effective to build up or out. In residential it is usually cost effective to go up but in commercial building it can be more costly because of elevators, fire escapes, space needed to provide for common areas. CB's HVAC was GeoThermal, higher initial cost but will decrease over time. The community would support the environmental and economical long-term cost reducer.

Refer to handouts (Task Force Meeting/Program Space Consideration Results from October 7, 2014 and Project Advocates Facilities Master Plan Program Summary/PK-6 Configuration). They were asked to discuss as a group. Group responses: Adding square footage to our schools will not be to fill with more open enrollment students. Be sure we have dedicated Special Learning, PE, Food Service, Art, Music & World Language rooms.

Blane asked groups to review the Project Advocate Facilities Master Plan document (attached) and then to rate each program Low, Medium or High Priority related to importance and urgency. (See Attached Results)

The Decision in the Middle (Blane-Powerpoint)

Narrowed the options to either 7-8 or 6-8. He will present this to the Board.
Approximately 75% of those surveyed were in favor of the 6 – 8 configuration. If chosen, this option would cost 33 million with a 1.6 million ongoing cost.
Currently our student to teacher ration in the WMS is 17 ½ and WHS is 15 ½.
We'd like to have the best middle school in the country.
Blane will give his recommendation to the Board. He is leaning towards 6 -8; however, cost is the main barrier.
On November 3rd the Board will decide on the grade configuration.

Next Facilities Task Force Meeting:

Monday, November 10, 2014

4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. ~ ABC Building