

The public is encouraged to attend the school board meeting on May 13 at 7 p.m. in the high school gym. The board will meet again on June 10 at 7 p.m. with decision making on the agenda.

By Jan Rahn

Managing Editor

The Perkins County Schools Board of Education encourages members of the district to attend the upcoming May 13 meeting—because on the agenda for the June meeting will be a decision on the future of the district's facilities.

In February, public meetings were held to share preliminary design ideas. Estimated costs were shared and the public asked questions and provided feedback on two options presented.

At that time, the options presented included:

Option 1: Demolition and new construction at the middle school site in Madrid.

Option 2: Vacating the Madrid site and adding on to the high school in Grant.

Returning again and again to the drawing board, final versions have been drafted of designs for each of the two options.

The school board used public meeting feedback as well as feedback and questions from the general public to drive further work on the two designs, said Superintendent Tobin Buchanan.

“Although both designs still represent square footage and cost estimates until they go to the stage of actual design, the board has been able to arrive at a version for each site they feel comfortable with for decision making purposes,” said Buchanan.

Final Version of Options

Here are the options arrived at by the board which will be put on the agenda for decision making at the June 10 meeting:

Option 1 at the Madrid site includes demolition of the three-story section of the building with new construction to recapture that space.

It also includes upgrading electrical, lighting, and mechanical systems to the remaining portions of the building to make sure all parts of the middle school are within federal compliance and create a positive and up-to-date learning environment.

The estimated cost of this option, including contingencies and fees is approximately \$5.2 million.

Option 2 at the high school site in Grant includes northern expansion to include a cafeteria/kitchen area, second gymnasium, and junior high classroom area for seventh and eighth grade students.

There would need to be some remodel and upgrades to the existing facility to allow classroom access, along with upgrading some areas to meet ADA (American Disability Act) requirements.

The estimated cost of this option, including contingencies and fees is approximately \$6.5 million dollars.

Both project cost estimates include adding sprinkler systems to new and existing construction, as required by law.

Other Items Discussed

The board discussed the cost to relocate the bus barn at the high school, which is estimated at

around \$250,000.

An expansion of the elementary school entrance to create a secure entrance to the building is an estimated cost of over \$400,000.

The cost of this project was higher than expected due to the fact that new construction add-ons require full facility fire sprinkling.

Buchanan made it clear that this elementary entrance project was for security and public access upgrades, and not essential to placing sixth grade back in the elementary site should the board select Option 2 going forward.

It was decided that although the elementary entrance project may need to be done in the future, it would be more economical to wait until one or the other of the construction projects has begun.

A more temporary buzz-in camera system will more than likely be in place to provide for a secure entrance during the day at the elementary school for next year.

Financing Options

The board also discussed financing options related to either project.

Keeping the total tax levy around .70 for the next fiscal year would allow the board to have approximately \$3.2 million dollars in the special building fund for new construction.

Depending on the ability to phase the project, the board would have to consider delaying the project in order to save up the money, or finance a portion of the project.

The board will compare the amount of interest to be paid for financing to the additional cost associated with waiting to complete either project.

Upcoming Meeting

The May 13th Board Meeting will be held in the Perkins County High School Gymnasium at 7 p.m. The board encourages all members of the public to attend, ask questions, or share ideas and comments at this meeting.

Meeting agendas, attachments, drawings, and other board meeting documents can be viewed by the public by going to the eMeetings link under the Board of Education link on the Perkins County Schools District website www.pcs.esu16.org