

School facility master plan study reviewed

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

Facility conditions and educational suitability of both Holyoke Elementary and Holyoke JR/SR High schools were assessed recently in a facility master plan by the Neenan Company.

Neenan representatives David Kurtz and Joe Glaze provided information on the plan at the Aug. 17 meeting of Holyoke Board of Education.

The Neenan Company performed an assessment of the district and built a master facility plan.

Supt. Bret Miles emphasized the district is not trying to find certain solutions, but trying to have all the data to give options, rather than solutions.

Following the presentation of the plan, the next steps involve board review, staff/administration review, community input, documentation of strategy for facility improvements to determine BEST 2010 application options/scope and documentation of strategy for funding facility improvements including the November 2010 mill levy override election.

Kurtz pointed out the master plan strategy started with two questions: How much life is in the existing facilities and when will the district need to replace the facilities?

The educational suitability trumps the facility condition, as the facilities are in good shape and can be remodeled. The master plan also looked at a 10-year solution, 20-30-year solution and how remodel compares to new.

Detailed cost matrices, as well as recommendations, are part of Neenan's report to the board.

Kurtz noted the existing elementary school has 47,200 sq. ft. Based on 145 sq. ft./student and 325 students, total sq. footage needed for K-6 is 47,000.

Total square footage needed for grades 7-12 is 330 sq. ft. per 247 students or 81,400 sq. ft. The current JR/SR high is 119,400 sq. ft. As a result, any proposed new school that's linked to grant

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funding will be two-thirds the size of the existing JR/SR high school.

Immediate needs at the elementary facility were cited by Neenan as roof conditions, boiler, bus drop-off and storm sewer issue. At the JR/SR high, Neenan cited roof conditions at the JH, mechanical units in the auditorium and gym and site safety.

Educational needs included technology/power at both schools, safety at entryways, small group rooms at elementary and no daylight in classrooms at JR/SR high.

Options projected for Elementary School

Elementary School 10-year solution option is projected at \$2.5-\$3.1 million (about 21 percent of new school). The 20-30-year solution is projected at \$8.1-\$9.9 million (69 percent of new school). A new replacement school is estimated at \$11.7-\$14.4 million, with cost based on cost/sq. ft. of schools Neenan is currently building.

Kurtz noted immediate needs include reconfiguring bus/drop-off area, adding fencing to back of playground area, fixing sewer area, lighting, data/power/technology access and entryway security.

The 10-year option cites roof replacement, interior and exterior doors, kitchen, boiler replacement, power and restroom fixture issues.

The 20-30-year option starts to address educational needs including the remodeling and reconfiguration of space. Specifically, it looks at removal of the library, reworking the whole drainage system, incorporating a new air system and addressing the playground that won't last another 20-30 years.

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JR/SR High options reviewed

JR/SR High 10-year option costs are projected by Neenan at \$5.5-\$6.8 million (26 percent of new). The 20-30-year solution is projected at \$10.7-\$13.1 million (50 percent of new).

A new replacement school is estimated at \$21.3-\$26.1 million. Kurtz again pointed out this school is based on two-thirds the square footage of the existing school.

Included in the JR/SR high 10-year solution is replacement of sidewalk, parent drop-off change and widening the sidewalk toward the elementary school where JR/SR high students walk to the lunchroom. Additionally, it would look at roof replacement, hall carpeting, power, data and lighting.

The 20-30-year solution would look at minor renovation in most of the building, and major renovation in some. It would also look at a new direct digital control (DDC) system for automating heating and air conditioning. Funds are also targeted toward grounds repairs and additions.

Strategic implementation includes a district/community review of the master facility plan, then finalization of the improvement strategy, followed by review of funding opportunities.

Financials reviewed

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Supt. Miles told the board the fourth quarter financial report (ending June 30) and the July monthly report both indicate the district will begin the new year with a fund balance of \$1.6 million, as had been projected for the 2010-11 preliminary budget, which was adopted in June.

Miles added they felt fortunate to add the facility master plan and staff bonuses without using more of the fund balance. He said they feel they've been able to come closer in projecting and budgeting the district's revenue in both 2009-10 and 2010-11 budgets.

Five-year goals adopted

Five five-year goals of the Holyoke Board of Education, all complete with specific strategies, were adopted by the board at last week's meeting. Goals include:

—Increase student achievement for all students through appropriate levels of accountability and support.

—Foster a work environment most conducive to meeting needs of all students.

—Keep district financially strong by developing and monitoring a budget that meets both short and long-term goals.

—Establish reputation with employees, students, community and surrounding districts as having the premiere facilities in the region.

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—Increase opportunities for, and effectiveness of, the district's internal and external communications.

Other business

In other business Aug. 17, the Re-1J board:

—hired Daniel Burge as family and consumer science teacher and Wyvonna Hoffman as elementary special education teacher aide for 2010-11.

—approved Pat Wiebers as musical director and Kyle Bules as teacher on special assignments for 2010-11.

—admitted nonresident students Caleb Deaver from the Haxtun School District and Wendy Favela from Wray. A transportation request was also approved for Favela.

—received homeschool notification for Katelyn Gerk for the 2010-11 school year.

—granted a facility use request from Steve Young to hold a fifth and sixth grade girls' basketball tournament in the new gym Jan. 22, 2011.

—approved Type V substitute teaching authorization applications for Brittany Farnes, Laura Roll and Joseph Bailey.