

**Board of Education Meeting
January 26, 2009**

The Board of Education of the Findlay City Schools met in regular session at 7:00 p.m. in the Gymnasium at Glenwood Middle School.

President Dysinger called the meeting to order. Present were: Mrs. Dysinger, Mr. Hoffman, Mrs. Lockard, Mr. Pochard, Mr. Shrader (arrived at 7:01 p.m. and left at 8:06 p.m.), Superintendent Wittwer and Treasurer Barnhart.

CELEBRATIONS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Congratulations to three Glenwood wrestlers who placed 3rd and two placed 4th in the GLL. "We the People" placed 1st and are on their way to nationals. Thanks to FFE for all the hard work they put into their shows. Thanks to Craig Kupferberg for all the alumni updates. Gratitude was expressed to all those in attendance. Welcome to the students from the University of Findlay who are observing the Community Forum.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Review of Goals and Ground Rules for the forum by Julie McIntosh

Review of issues that were addressed in the January 28, 2008 Community Forum

- Barbara Dysinger reviewed the Board Goals and Outcomes from the January 28, 2008 forum.
- Website has been expanded to meet community needs.
- Continue community forums.
- Community survey complete. The survey showed that buildings and safety were top priorities for community members.
- University of Findlay did an evaluation on the safety of Findlay City Schools.
- Washington Intermediate School has been moved to the old Ben Franklin building.
- All Day Every Day kindergarten in place throughout the school system.
- Technology issues addressed from the August 22, 2007 flood.
- Flood issues are still being dealt with today.
- Mrs. Dysinger stated that the community members do make a difference and the board strives to listen and take their concerns seriously.

Introduction of Board Members: Dr. Dean Wittwer, Superintendent; Bruce Miller, Garmann/ Miller; Jerry Murray, RCM Architects; and Dr. Julie McIntosh, facilitator.

Power Point Presentation

- Dr. Wittwer explained the ENP (Exceptional Needs Program) and how Findlay City Schools came to be accepted into the program. He explained that this was the time for the community to take advantage of the flood effects that still exist. Findlay City School board members and administration realize that these are tough economic times but this offer may not come around again. The question isn't...can we afford to take advantage of the Ohio School Facilities Commission's offer to pay for 32% of the cost for two new middle schools and a new Millstream Career and Technology Center, it is can we not afford to take this opportunity for the long term.
- First and most importantly, we need to address the need to greatly improve safety, security, and educational environment for our students!
- There are talks continuing with government officials and businesses in the downtown area as to the eventual use of Central Middle School. Central would no longer be used as a middle school but would continue to be a part of the Findlay City Schools and for our community for preserving the gym and auditorium, housing school administration offices, digital academy, and alternative school and the other space rented to private business office space. There would be ongoing efforts to secure private partnerships that could help restore and improve the auditorium for the community performances.
- Two scenarios were discussed. Both ideas include using the current Glenwood and Donnell sites for the new middle school buildings, one on the north side and one on the south side of town.
- One plan included collaborating with Owens Community College to get dual use out of their facility and the new Millstream Career and Technology Center, placing this building close to the Owens campus. The other idea is to add on to the current high school to house Millstream.
- Going from three middle school buildings to two larger buildings will be more cost effective in utilities, transportation, staffing, and programs and making sure all middle school students have the same educational opportunities in both new facilities.

Bruce Miller and Jerry Murray, District Architects

- Bruce Miller gave an overview of the OSFC program that Findlay City Schools has been accepted into. He stated it was a wonderful opportunity for the citizens of Findlay to receive \$18.4 million from the state. Mr. Miller also stated that he had advised the board to purchase the land beside Glenwood Middle School. Land in an urban area is hard to come by and even if it was not used at this time, later down the road it would prove to be very valuable.
- Jerry Murray is a Findlay resident and has children in the district. He is extremely mindful of the heritage of our older buildings. The design team will be sure that both new buildings fit in the community environment that currently exists. This wonderful opportunity will never happen again in his career and he is excited to move forward with community input on how to proceed. He applauded the board for their prudent balanced

program to create efficient spaces of which the community will be proud. He recommended that community members travel to see new schools. Findlay students deserve the same educational advantages as the other communities that have new facilities.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Bruce Miller was asked to give his credentials.
 - a. Mr. Miller stated that Garmann/Miller is from Minster, Ohio. The firm employs 32 employees. They are a group of engineers and architects that build three to four schools a year with the Ohio School Facilities Commission. The firm is strictly devoted to education.
2. Assuming we purchase the Trinity/Diffco property, has Garmann/Miller built on a contaminated site before?
 - a. Mr. Miller said without hesitation, yes, this is not uncommon in an urban area. They recommend cleaning up the brownfield and purchasing the land for further use, possibly a parking lot.
 - b. Rick Hoffman assured the community that nothing would be placed on the site until they have received a report that 100% of the contamination had been removed. The EPA would test the soil. An environmental firm was asked if this organic arsenic was hard to remove. They stated that it was not. There is grant money available for the clean up.
 - c. A community member stated she remembered when a gas station was on the corner of Trenton and Broad and the community thought there could never be anything but a gas station there and now a Subway sits there. She has complete confidence in the clean up of the brownfield.
 - d. Mr. Murray stated that if we don't purchase the property and clean it up for our children, the contamination will remain there. Our children will walk through it and by it daily. It is our responsibility to purchase the land, clean it, and make it safe for the students of Glenwood.

Note: The city received a grant for the phase I & II environmental assessment and it was performed by Malcolm Pirnie over the course of the year. They reported the property is clean for commercial/or industrial use now but would need more remediation to meet stricter residential requirements which Findlay City Schools is requiring if the property was used for a new school, ball field, safe bus drop off, parking lot, etc.

3. Why not one middle school instead of two?
 - a. Dr. Wittwer said that the Community Facilities Committee had many discussions regarding this issue. Should we build a new high school and move the middle school students to the current high school? This is not an option because of OSFC rules. After speaking with middle school staff members they believe it is educationally better for the students to have two middle schools of similar size with grades 6, 7, & 8 housed in them. The size will be approximately 640 students each. Middle school is a big transition time for students and the staff feels that moving to one big middle school of 1300 students after being at your neighborhood intermediate school would be too much for these young students. It may not be a good move educationally for them.
Note: The Board of Education decided at the September 2, 2008 meeting.
 - b. A community member was concerned with the stigma of the "haves" and the "have nots" still being an issue in the community. Dr. Wittwer stated for years it has been a community perception that Donnell in the south end has more than Glenwood in the north end. Since I have been here we have worked very hard to be sure this is not the truth. With the building of two new middle schools of similar size, the hope is that this perception will diminish. Both schools will be new and offer the same advantages to their students. The community is rapidly changing and our percentages of free/reduced lunches are growing in every location.
 - c. A community member suggested one middle school with a 6th grade wing, 7th grade wing, and an 8th grade wing and a new high school. Dr. Wittwer stated that when the middle schools are complete they will have grade level wings. Building a new high school is not an option. OSFC money is given because a middle school was affected by the flood. The dollars must be used to build new middle schools. The cost to the community would be too much to build a new high school and OSFC would require us to completely renovate the present high school for middle school students (approximately \$30,000,000).
4. What is wrong with the Glenwood building?
 - a. Mr. Miller replied everything. It is not ADA compliant. With the No Child Left Behind Act buildings must be ADA compliant. The state of Ohio declared it the worst middle school in Ohio. The electrical and mechanical are not up to code. The classroom size is too small. The teaching environment is not conducive to today's technology. A teacher can not use the tools that are available to him/her because the building is not designed to accommodate such things. Will the building fall down? No, but it will cost the taxpayers more to renovate it and bring it up to standards than to build a new school. OSFC has strict rules on how the money can be spent and it can not be spent on improving a school that will not meet the standards with any renovations that could be done.
5. How will the students be divided?
 - a. Dr. Wittwer stated that new boundaries will have to be put into place. Donnell has 488 students so it cannot possibly take all of Central's students. Therefore, many students from out east will go to the new north middle school. The boundaries will be drawn so that each school will have similar numbers and both facilities will be new. There should not be the division that currently exists. Both schools will be equally as nice with the same curriculum and extra curricular facilities. More students will definitely come north than go south. Mr.

Pochard stated that his mother taught at Glenwood and he attended Glenwood and he would be happy to have his son attend Glenwood.

6. What is the life of a new school?
 - a. Mr. Miller estimated the life of a new building is 75 to 100 years. The reason for this is the codes are much stricter and today the buildings are built of steel and cement. The buildings such as Glenwood have very little steel in them. Glenwood and Donnell buildings would stand for another 50 years if kept up but they do not meet educational delivery for today's student. They are not the best environments for the teachers to teach and the students to learn. Mrs. Lockard said that studies show that children learn better with proper lighting and air flow. The current middle schools can not provide this environment for our students.
7. Why are the buildings in such disrepair? Why not renovate?
 - a. Mr. Murray stated every attempt to keep these buildings as safe and useful for our children has been done. The buildings themselves do not meet standards for today's students. Just technology alone has surpassed the capacity of which this building can handle.
 - b. OFSC has 24 points they look at when it comes to renovation of an existing school. Safety, systems, structure, roofs, etc. If the cost is more than 66% of the cost to build a new structure, then it is more prudent to build new.
8. Will this create a transportation problem by increasing the need for more buses?
 - a. Dr. Wittwer said that we reduced the buses by four last year. We continue to work with the transportation department to decrease the amount of buses needed for the system. We will work closely to be as efficient in bussing our students as we possibly can.
9. Are the middle schools safe now?
 - a. Mrs. Lockard and Dr. Wittwer stated that the principals and staff of our middle schools do an excellent job of keeping our buildings safe. The way they are designed it is difficult to find the offices. You can enter the front door and the office is down the hallway so you can enter unseen. In today's environment this is a concern for all of us. Washington is safer now that they are housed in the old Ben Franklin building. When you enter our elementary buildings the secretary and office is right up front. You must go past them to enter the building. Mr. Murray indicated the way that these schools are designed if there would be a fire the return air flow is in hallways and they would fill up with smoke immediately. New construction has ventilation that does not allow this to happen immediately. This is a much bigger concern than someone entering the building without anyone seeing them. We have to have a safer environment for our students. It is the board's responsibility to be sure our children have a safe and secure environment in which to learn.
10. Why are we focusing on Millstream Career and Technology Center?
 - a. Dr. Wittwer referenced the community survey showed that most community members think we do a good job preparing our students for college but for the students that do not go to college we need to do a better job preparing them for the work force.
 - b. Dr. Wittwer explained that Millstream South was displaced with the movement of Washington Intermediate School to 1100 Broad Ave. formerly Ben Franklin. Millstream Tech is now located in a rented space at 1200 Commerce Parkway.
11. Can we keep the façade of Donnell?
 - a. Jerry Murray replied the Donnell site will be a challenge. It seems the community loves the terra cotta part of the front door. They will work very hard to emulate the building so it fits well in the neighborhood. He realizes the importance of this building in the community.
12. With more students in each school will this be a better environment for special education students.
 - a. Dr. Wittwer stated that each building will have similar programs. They can not be identical due to the population. Currently, students are bused to different buildings because of space or handicap accessibility, such as Donnell is the only middle school with an elevator. This will not be the case with new buildings.
13. What is the current enrollment at the middle schools?
 - a. Glenwood 370
Central 470
Donnell 488
 - b. OSFC does a 10 year student enrollment to make the projection of how many students per building. The highest enrollment is what you design for. Findlay City Schools has had a declining enrollment.
14. We need new buildings now!
 - a. A community member stated that he travels to several different school districts for sporting events and other activities. Findlay's schools are an embarrassment. We need new schools if we want our children to have a fighting chance. They are at an educational disadvantage with the facilities we currently have. If we would have only one middle school, he is certain that the neighborhoods would not want all the traffic that would take place. At events, all parents would be attending and the traffic and parking needs would not be desirable for a neighborhood school.

15. Are we locked into this funding?
- a. Dr. Wittwer said we have one year to vote for the bond issue to receive 32% through the ENP program. This funding is locked in from the highest need district to the lowest need district state wide and is based on your district wealth. The \$4 billion in tobacco money is there for us right now and it may not be there for us in the future. We have no idea what President Obama's plans are for the future of education. If we do not use the money that came from the tobacco settlement now the state may use it for something else.
 - b. The question is how much can we afford to spend? We are looking for your feedback. What is important to you? We hope we can come together because whatever we build will be better than what we currently have.
16. How much will this cost a homeowner per \$100,000?
- a. Mr. Barnhart stated that the plan is not finished and estimates on millage rates are not set as of yet. However, a levy of 4 -4.5 mills will be approximately \$120-\$135 per \$100,000.
 - b. Mr. Hoffman stated that Williams County currently voted 7.7, 8.6, 9.9, and 10.2 mills for 28 years to fund new schools. That is really reaching deep into their pockets and he applauds them. We are very lucky to be getting two new middle schools and a career technology center for 4 - 4.5 mills with OFSC paying for over a third of the cost. This is quite an opportunity for Findlay City Schools!

2009-01-015 Executive Session

It was moved by Mrs. Dysinger, seconded by Mrs. Lockard to go into executive session to discuss employment of personnel at 8:40 p.m.

Roll call: Mrs. Dysinger, aye; Mrs. Lockard, aye; Mr. Hoffman, aye; Mr. Pochard, aye. President Dysinger declared the motion carried.

The Board of Education returned to regular session at 9:34 p.m.

2009-01-016 ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mrs. Dysinger, seconded by Mr. Hoffman to adjourn at 9:35 p.m.

Roll call: Mrs. Dysinger, aye; Mr. Hoffman, aye; Mrs. Lockard, aye; Mr. Pochard, aye. President Dysinger declared the motion carried.

President

Treasurer

Read and approved February 23, 2009.