

**September 19, 2019 - Wasatch County School District Board of Education Public Hearing (Thursday, September 19, 2019)**

Generated by Stacey Moore on Tuesday, October 22, 2019

A. Call To Order

Procedural: 1. Roll Call of Members

Procedural: 2. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Public Hearing

Action, Discussion, Information: 1. Public Comment on District's General Obligation Bonds

Welcome President Blaik Baird

Pledge of Allegiance - Tom Hansen

Purpose of Meeting by Board President Blaik Baird

As written in pursuant of provision of Local Government Bonding Act, Title 11, Chapter 14, for the issuance of the District's General Obligation Bonds (the 'Bonds') and called a public hearing to receive input from the public with respect to (a) the issuance of the Bonds, and (b) any potential economic impact that the improvements, facilities or properties financed in whole or in part with the proceeds of the Bonds may have on the private sector.

Public Comment Format Explained - 2.5 minutes to speak. No one is able to take another persons time. After 5-6 comments the board may respond. If you would like additional time for comments you are encouraged to meet with a board member

Brad Wagstaff, 1261 S 900 W, Midway - Thanks to the board, supt for what you are doing. I think that we need it. I have had 5 kids go through the district. You do a great job. I am grateful that we are doing this now. As a developer I see prices increase. The need is there now and the price is going to go up. The need isn't going away. We need to solve this as a solution. My initial reaction was that I wish someone else could pay for it. It is our citizens responsibility to get it built.

Justin Kelly - 143 S - Thanks. We did a bond a few years ago with RMMS. It has been interesting to see how much more involvement I have with less students. When I had more students I had to beg parents to be on my council and PTA. To go with smaller schools gives kids more opportunities and parents the idea that this is "our school". When I had 1200 students I didn't know all of my students. Now I can go down the hallway and I know their story. That is the most important thing that we can do. The split can be a healthy competition. A new high school can have that too. We can collaborate to make sure kids are more involved.

Tom Stone - I moved here 34 years ago. I spent my freshman and sophomore year at Alta. I didn't do very good there. I showed up to Wasatch and started two a day football practice then I went to a movie with them. I had friends immediately. The dramatic difference of myself and my siblings, all of which have stayed here and love it. Because of our personal situation in a smaller high school. To have a claim that we will be the largest high school in the next 4 years is not something we should aspire to. Every student should have the opportunity for this. Citizens Building Education is fighting to get facts out. We hope the influence is for a YES vote, 1 student at a time. The new MES - I love the idea of having a school just as good as DCE.

Melissa Brown 2300 S 400 E. I teach at WHS Alternative. I am surprised at how many kids can't handle the population at the main campus. Many cant handle the crowded hallways at the school. I am always surprised by how crowded it is. I am uncomfortable with it. Our kids need a new campus.

Tracy Taylor 451 N 1300 E - I am going to talk numbers. Talk about the fiscal impacts of the bond. We filed a GRAMA request. We were denied the appraisal and the survey for the new HS that we spent \$33,000 on. We asked for the results of the survey and focus groups. You denied us that information that is public information to the tax payers on whether they can afford this bond. Your reason for denying is tht it is private information because it is in negotiation. YOU are paying 6.2 million on 50 acres. That is triple the recent sales in the North Fields. You said it was private. Your reasons in the state code do not line up. There is nothing private about the land but you are denying the public to see it. We have every right to see it. We are disappointed that you are playing this waiting game. For us to appeal it will take 30 days past the election.

Supt. Sweat - This is handled by Mr. Johansen. I would share that these 6 pieces of ground all have varying prices depending on where they are located. This was complex deal to create this school site. The appraisal will not be made public because the deal is in progress. We are within the law to hold on to the information until the property is closed. It is logical that anyone who buys property, you don't share facts of the purchase before executing the closing. They are held confidnet for a reason. The survey is also in process and will be finalized and presented in a public meeting for the board. While in draft form we are within the law to not release it by the company that created it.

Board Member Tom Hansen - Property Annex details (unable to hear audio for minutes)

Keith Johansen - Statutes in denial are protected. Until rights of ownership the appraisals are protected. Until the report is final it is protected - on the advice of council.

Board Member Tom Hansen - We are transparent. Anything you want to see we will let you see. If you want to have a discussion, we will have a discussion. We are excited to have a conversation that people are willing to engage in.

Marylyn Crittenden, 52 W Farm StrpinI appreciate the comment about cost. It hasn't happened yet. The annexation has not been approved yet. I have concern still and what that has done to the values around that area. It is considered 1 house per 20 acres. When you purchase raw land it is really high. I am concerned about the school spending that much money.

James Judd - We talk a lot about affording to invest in education. When we chose no to education there is a consequence the ripples through communities. Smaller schools will build better citizens. There is an actual cost when that doesn't happen. I will always support taxes for education citizens. It benefits the entire nation.

Anisa Wardell, 289 Millbrook Rd - I somewhat agree. There is a cost to educate. There is also personal responsibility. Per capita, we are spending more than any other district in the state. We have representatives that mean well but at the expense of the citizens you represent you are spending money absorbantly. People are trying to reduce their taxes. There is no reason to bulldoze Midway Elementary or add on to the high school. There are other ways to do this and spend our money wisely. I am one of many that didn't vote last time and wont vote this time. Your surveys should include people who are not primarily wanting to spend their money on schools.

Ryan Bishop - 414 515 S Heber, I am fortunate to work at WHS every day. I appreciate what you are doing in making sure that we are competitive with teacher pay. Along with that I have the luxury of being at 3 other district. When your population grows you have to build schools. Weber SD was in our building and said, "you guys are building schools, right? Your tripling in size". We have 11 more teachers, 56 staff members this year. 163 employees that come to work every day and 2400 students, 150 more than last year. We are getting 2 or 3 every week.

Linda Rio - 2425 E - Why wasn't the bond broken into two bonds because of the price? It doesn't seem to me that the school board has worked with the city and county. We are putting a school where there will be traffic. Why aren't we building on to the school we currently have to fix the immediate problem. We have a problem today. The bond should have been for helping the current school and midway. It is in a flood plane and wet land - it doesn't make sense.

Board Member Blaik Baird - regarding the per capita spending. We are the 3rd fastest growing in the nation. We cannot control the growth, we have to react to it. That is why we are bonding for a new HS and Midway because it is at capacity. We want to give students opportunity in all aspects at a school. My family moved to Heber and it gave me the opportunity to be someone. It is a reaction to the growth. We are at capacity at the high school.

Board Member Mark Davis - Regarding the annexation. One of the first meetings we had with the planner of the city. He showed us a plat of the future plan that showed what the future annex would be. Mayor Potter also shared that it was in the plan. In meeting with the city and county, we have done that. We met with UDOT on the bypass. They told us to proceed. These things have happened. We believe that this is the most vetted plan considering everything,.

Board Member Tyler Bluth - We have looked very closely at the safety of the spot. It is not on a flood plane. This is an effort from a lot of people to acquire this spot.

Board Member Blaik Baird - Berg Engineering did study on the land. There will not be flooding in the school if there were a dam failure (worse case scenario).

Superintendent Sweat - The dam is build to withstand an earthquake (7) that has never happened in this area. There would be a 50 ft wall come down the Provo River, that wall would end 3/4 mile away from the new high school. We can evacuate schools quickly. If there was an incident it would be almost one full hour before it would reach that area. We can evacuate the school in 6-10 minutes.

Board Member Tom Hansen - it is important to clarify the difference between a flood plane and a dam breaking. The site is not in a FEMA flood plane. You need a 7.4 earthquake to brake the dam. We will be dealing with the earth quake then water coming an hour later. The health dept is concerned about the sewer. This site is appealing for that reason. With growth you also have infrastructure and increased fire, police, schools, utilities. No one is spending money just to spend money. We take our responsibilities very seriously. We have the most employees in the county. It is important to know that in our capital funds - 90% goes to salary and benefits. The remaining goes to infrastructure, schools. We also understand that the culture of the school district is important. A lot of people are counting on us and we are making a lot of hard decisions to do the best with what we have.

Board President Blaik Baird - We have a developer who has offered 70 acres. The location is not the best site at this time with growth (Midway and East side of Heber). There will be growth from the north. Another high school will be on the north side. The cost of excavating for a high school would be 6 million plus. The developer is looking at changing the location to eliminate some excavation costs.

Supt Sweat - West side of Heber and Midway students would attend the new high school. We know that the Jordanell Basin

will grow at some time. Soon there will be more stop lights and a school off of hwy 40, but now is not the time.

Jerry Duke - There will not be a flood threat to life but to property. I manage Day's market from 1975-79 in Park City. They had the increase of home values that we are having. Those people were forced out of PC because of prices. There are other options to be considered to buy us some time and not put it all on an older population. Its going to hurt some people really bad.

Cody Clyde - 99 S 960 E. We live in a place that costs a lot. Saving the Midway school is not possible because it is a problem. Costs are not going to go down for construction or land. We can't afford to late. High cost is going to be on the students and teachers. Opportunity costs will be greater than financial costs. I had a graduation class of 150, I was able to have FFA opportunities because of that small class. Now we have 2300 kids and I have to tell kids no. More schools mean more opportunities.

Danny Labrum - Thank you. I have had meetings with all of you. I think my tax will go up about 10 grand. I have all the confidence in these men. I challenge you no voters to meet with each of these men.

Principal Brian Thorne, Huckleberry Lane - We are living every day with a lot of kids. I have been there for 9 years. We use a reading program that assess 399 kids, this year we are over 600 almost 700 kids assessed. We have 5 classrooms in portables. When we had the lockdown it was uncomfortable to have them out there. I feel like the board has been responsive to the public and needs of the schools. As a father I don't want my kids to go to the largest high school in the state. A kid that spends more than a year in a program and involved is much more likely to go to college. Thanks for taking this on.

Kim Dickerson, 1240 S - 2 of my kids went through the system and 2 in the system. My first to graduate was with a class size of 300-400. They had great opportunities. I have a freshmen and a 7th grader. The freshman class is in the 600's - sadly when we build the new schools I don't think they will ever get the experience of a smaller school. I appreciate and support the bond. I know you have looked at the safety for our kids. I appreciate that as a parent. 40 is not a road I want my kids traveling on. I have been involved with helping the school district for 10 years. I trust you all and I appreciate you.

Board Member Cory Holmes - To Mr. Duke, we have been talking about this for 2 year. I know what this will do to retired people. There is not a solution to that. I have family here who are retired and others who are home-owners. I feel at the end of the day this decision is the best for the whole. The decisions have been with a lot of effort.

Rachel Labrum - 1865 Wall street, Heber - I grew up in Scottsdale AZ. I felt like a number there. My two girls have had good experiences. My girls won't get the new schools benefits, but I still am in support. There is no better place to put our money.

Brook Mair - 1970S 440 E - Since we are talking about numbers I would ask that you remember when your kids started kindergarten. One of those kids are mine. Especially for all day kindergarten. I have a little boy, class of 2022. I am a homeowner and I understand the cost that it will effect homeowners like myself. My kids not worth cutting corners for. My child will benefit and your neighborhood kids. I want nothing but the best for them. My kid is worth it and so are his classmates.

District Director Shawn Kelly - Midway - I can tell you that I have a unique situation as a former principal to MES and WHS. In my time at WHS it grew 1000 kids. As a principal I wanted to know all kids. What price do we put on a kids mental health or suicide. I will give you \$200 to save a kids life right now. We cannot wait. If we wait it will cost more. There will always be an older population. I still will vote for it because I know how small schools effect kids. Now is the time.

Kemo Paulson - 1760 Lost Colt - Not only are you the largest employers you are one of the largest land owners. How are funds from property sales used. Are they used to pay down bonds? If MES goes away and is sold or repurposed, is there a mechanism to draw down the bond cost. Can you put a number on the dollar increase and percentage for starting a new high school and how that will affect the tax payers. WHS is currently 2400. When the school is built what will be the population of those two schools? What is the projected growth? What will it cost me? You might move the graph to start at a realistic demonstration of the cost for homes. I appreciate the work you are doing.

Principal Tod Johnson 4485 Lake Creek Farms - I am principal at WHS. I want to communicate my support for the vision for the layout of the building. As you can see the floor plan is the same as we are in right now. I participated in meeting with the architect as a teacher. He wanted optimal design for teachers. It has since been replicated. This floor plan is inclusive to students and their education. It is the best to provide students opportunities. 11 years ago we opened the current school. Participation and opportunity decline with student growth. This is a well-thought-out plan. Following the model of what we have found in Utah for a 1300 student school. I am in favor of that.

Board Member Blaik Baird - Regarding the capital and M&O funds. Capital for building and purchasing site or equipment. When we sell school sites that money goes into capital funds. M & O is for teachers, salary, benefits - 90% goes towards salaries and benefits for employees.

Supt. Sweat - There is concern that the school district isn't being frugal with the tax dollars. Utah is dead last on their per pupil spending for education. Wasatch per pupil spending is right in the middle in Utah. Alpine SD that has 80,000 students comes in at a lower per pupil than the smaller districts. Alpine is near the \$8000/pp for M&O and capital. Daggett has 173 students, they spend about \$24000 per students. We spend about \$11,000 per students. There is a chart that ranks school district by per pupil that goes directly to classroom instruction. 72% of our. I will stand behind the decisions that have been made in spending the tax payer dollars.

Board Member Tom Hansen - If we split the school now there would be 2 4 A schools with 1300 kids, with boundaries you would have half teacher go to the new school. Our target is to have two 4A schools with 1200-1300 students.

Cameron Brown - 2300 S 400 E - I moved to Heber from CA was because of the school district and a good place for my kids to grow up. As elected officials we trust you. I admire your open dialogue with the public. Today's construction costs will be lower to day than later. I don't see a reason to delay this need. Portables and add-ons cost money too. I stand behind you.

Michell Kendall - 7100 W Farms Springs Rd. - We moved here not for the education. Wasatch is ranked 57th in the state. There are small town politics even in education. Building smaller schools is not always the answer. My son had only 15 people in statics class. If you want to have better education you need AP classes. The last meeting I went to you talked about the ACT score. The average at Wasatch won't even get a kid into BYU.

Kathlene Dall - 551 W Nolewood Dr, Heber - I am retired from the govt handling contracts. Today I saw information about the current high school. Experts do the work of contracting not the people. WHS had 5 teachers were responsible and mishandled. They waisted our money and the school is not able to hold the kids in just 10 years. We can't have our tax dollars pay for another group of people build and not know what they are doing. I paid \$4 last year, this year it is almost \$1000. You need to build on to the current high school on the north-east side.

Cindy Eggerts - 520 Dutchfiels - I am part of a group or moms in Midway. I am pro bond. It smells like a toilet. The questions I hear are 1) Why are we not adding on to MES 2) Why can't we keep MES and build another with a small population 3) Why is the cost of the new school so high?

Dave McNaughtan - 2787 S 1040 E - I was at Park City, they rebuilt that building in 2006 because it was a mess. It doesn't get half the growth that we get. My dad graduated from Wasatch. He could tell me who everyone was in his yearbook. I graduated in Clearfield and I didn't know the kids who were sitting next to me at the ceremony. I want my kids to be able to know who is in their school. TIS, in the last year was tough. We couldn't fit. We don't want to lose class time to passing in the hall time because of over crowding. I applaud you for the work.

Tom Hansen - We are not building on to MES is because it is an old building. To add onto the infrastructure doesn't give us confidence that we can prepare for the growth. The board feels that we can build a new building that can hold the community of Midway. It was build for 300 and now there are more than 800. We can't expand on the building due to the lot size. We believe in keeping the schools small. That is what we believe in and what is best for kids.

Board Member Mark Davis - Charleston and Wallsburg were taken out of Midway to allow for the growth in Midway.

Board Member Tom Hansen - To find property in Midway that are 13+ is difficult. 1 acre in Midway just sold for 7M. We found a seller that was willing to swap land. To build an empty school and hope it fills up is something that we can't responsibly do.

Mark Davis - The swap allows us to rent the school for \$1 a year while we are building. The new land is 12 acres. The impact will be less since it is close to the current school.

Superintendent Sweat - Our schools come in price per sq ft the same as any other school in the state. The schools being built today will last well over 100 years. Components are being used to last. It will be 14 years total in our current high school if we pass the bond. Walk in the school when it is full of students, it looks brand new. The components will last and stand up to the 1000 of kids using it. We have the technology to build to last over 100 years and we intend to do that. Midway School is not built to that standard. It is the last of our schools that is not. The tax code is written to spread taxes as people move in. This will be a 20 year bond. Each year those people will help pay for the schools. It will not be stuck on the people who live here now. The WHS costs us in the low \$50 now because more people are paying it off. The two schools and the pool are costing citizens, by refinance, has gone from \$60 to the \$40. We are doing the best we can to help tax payers. The OME bond was retired last year.

Tom Hansen - The design of the new high school is being built all over Utah. It is best to fit our students needs and the teachers.

Suzanne Prince - Midway - I am an educator. My heart is with Wasatch. My concern is adding on to the current high school. They can't add on to the cafeteria, we can add classrooms on but it is already huge. My youngest was accepted into BYU and she took advantage of all of the AP classes she could. The school is so big that when my class has 37 in it is hard to let every student know that you love them all of the time.

Eric Campbell 1110 E 850 S - I appreciate all that you have done. Your decisions are always student focused. I have a special needs son that attends the Middle school. It is important for him to have friends and teachers who know his name. I have worked in large districts, it is not like that in those schools. There are academic benefits of a small school and social emotion benefits. There is a safety that comes with that, we can put a price tag that we can put on that.

Randy Larsen - 4050 Greener Hills Dr. - I am bond council to this district. As a parent I would like to thank the board for their efforts. It is the American way to have debates and conversation. I hope that there hasn't been information lost along the way. The school board cannot impose the bond upon the public. Everyone has a chance to vote. The tax impact is in the ballot. You can decide what is acceptable. You should note, that in 20 years, I have never had the tax impact be what is proposed. It is conservative for a reason. If you think of borrowing for 3% but costs are 6% you won't get out of the hole.

The growth in the county is greater than most in the country. It is atypical for a second high school to be built while the other is being paid, particularly with this growth.

Thank you for your comments. We will move to the regular meeting after a 5 min break.

Discussion: 2. Public Comment on Boundary Change Proposal

No discussion by the public.

C. Adjournment

Procedural: 1. Adjourn Meeting