

Shullsburg School District Referendum

In a continuing presentation of information regarding the school district's decision to proceed with a referendum, I would like to briefly discuss the purposes and use of the referendum requested levy. A comparison that I have used several times with the School Board, and I believe is very relevant to this situation is simply this: Compare the school to your own home. What expenses do you incur for the upkeep and maintenance of your home on a regular, yearly basis and what necessary expenses do you incur on a more long-term basis?

The school district has been very fortunate for many years because of the referendum passed in 1994 to remodel and update the building. At that time basically everything related to the infrastructure was redone and replaced. New heating and cooling units, new windows and doors, flooring, restrooms, vehicles, furniture, phones, intercom, fire alarm, painting, and many other types of systems and equipment were included and put in brand new.....22 years ago! The addition and renovation of the school in the mid 1990's made our school a modern source of community pride, and not only for the residents of the Shullsburg district, as our facilities were the envy of many schools throughout the county and athletic conference.

So that brings us to where we are today. Our maintenance and custodial staff over the years have done a fabulous job keeping this building looking good. Our students and staff over the years have also shown pride in what our school represents by being respectful and responsible in maintaining and keeping up the physical appearance of our school. On a regular basis, money has been budgeted for the normal, yearly maintenance and upkeep of the physical facilities. Floors get stripped and waxed, classrooms get cleaned, interior painting gets done in areas that need a fresh coat. We have not had a need to replace a significant part of the major systems because they were new.... 22 years ago!

So as to not beat this horse too much, let me give you an example of the significance of the necessity to become more proactive in our approach to maintenance issues. The building's heating and cooling system is provided by a varied system of roof top units, heat pumps, thermostats and a steam boiler. Most of these systems were installed 22 years ago. We have maintained them yearly and have gotten remarkable results. The issue is that the life expectancy of these units is 15 years. One of the roof top units quit earlier this winter and had to be replaced. During this time school was in session and the areas that unit provided heat for were cold for several days while a new unit was ordered, a crane came to put the unit on the roof, and the installers worked to get us up and running again. One roof top unit replaced. Eleven more to go. Since they were all installed at the same time, we are hoping they don't all decide to stop functioning at the same time. One may say we are truly living on borrowed time. A cost estimate to upgrade the heating and cooling system with what are now more energy efficient units ranges between 1.8 to 2.2 million dollars. While most of the units are still working, we want to establish a replacement cycle so we can budget and replace this system on a step by step approach. This is just one of many examples of how we propose to develop a more strategic plan to replace and update the systems and facilities without the need to borrow millions of dollars to accomplish necessary improvements.

To conclude, I'll bring this back to where I started. If the furnace in your home has surpassed its' life expectancy and quits working, you replace it. If the carpet or tile in your house is worn or cracked, you install new flooring so it can be maintained properly and looks appropriate. If you still have asbestos in your home, you get it removed.

I'm sure you get the idea of how the referendum dollars will be used. The Administration, or any of the School Board members will be more than happy to discuss with you the list of many other projects, technology, and curriculum enhancements that we want to provide to keep our school a source of pride and a great home for the students and residents of the Shullsburg School District.

