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**Minutes of the Board of Education
Unified School District No. 435
Dickinson County**

Abilene, Kansas

October 16, 2013

The Board of Education of Abilene Unified School District No. 435 met for a **special meeting** at the District Office at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 16, 2013.

The meeting was **Called to Order** at 7:31 p.m. by President Dr. Kari Porter-Murray with the following members in attendance:

Barb Brittan	Randy Gassman	Gregg Noel
Debby Barbur	Jeff Bathurst	Mark Wilson

Others attending all or part of the meeting were Superintendent-Dr. Denise Guy, Assistant Superintendent-Chris Cooper, Board Clerk-Angie Schneider, George K. Baum & Company representatives-Steve Shogren and Bret Shogren, Reflector Chronicle representative-Greg Doering, Dennis Weishaar, Torey Berndt, Mark Anguiano and Bruce Dale.

It was moved by Gregg Noel to approve the **Agenda**. Barb Brittan seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Randy Gassman moved to approve the **Consent Agenda**

Approval of minutes for the October 14, 2013 regular meeting
Approval of Personnel Update - resignations, employment and vacancies
Approval of Out of District Attendance & Transportation Requests

The motion was seconded by Mark Wilson and the motion carried unanimously.

Facility Study - The Facility Advisory Committee's proposal and HTK Architect's project/price list were summarized by Denise and then the floor was opened for discussion. One board member asked for clarification on the percentage of state aid that is received for bond and interest. Steve answered, saying that the percentage is subject to change based on a district's wealth per student. Bond and interest state aid initially began as an equalization tool by the state. This means that a lot of the funds come from more populated counties/districts. Historically, Abilene's has received between 33% and 39%. This aid is received on both the bond and interest amounts. For the last several years, the legislature has talked about discontinuing this aid for the duration of the bonds. Steve said that if a bond issue is passed prior to the possible removal of the aid, we would most likely lock in the state aid. However, locking in the aid does not lock in percentage. It would still vary with the wealth per student. One board member pointed out that this aid is still a tax. No state aid is received on capital outlay.

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Steve then explained a handout detailing the numbers of a 23 million dollar and a 27 million dollar bond issue. The duration of the bonds were discussed. Twenty years is the most common. Twenty five years sometimes happens, especially when interest rates are low like they are now. Thirty years rarely happens.

Discussion ensued regarding the priority list assembled by the Facility Advisory Committee. Board members asked if all of the window air conditioner units would be gone if the mechanical systems (HVAC) updates are made. Yes was the answer.

The next concern was whether the gym at the proposed new 4-5 grade building would be a practice or competition gym. At this point, it is just a practice gym in the plans. Denise will talk to HTK Architect's Keith Blackburn to see how much it would cost to add seating, but not lockers, to the gym. This size and use of the gym is a concern as other league schools have told Denise that we are the only district in the league that can't play all of the middle school games at the same time causing late nights for student athletes. Denise explained that we can, however it would involve displacing all of the other teams that are practicing during that time. The new 4-5 building would be built so that the common areas of it could be expanded if future boards choose to move K-3 students over as their buildings age.

Financial weightings are received via state aid for the first 3 years of new construction. Denise explained the process involved.

Board members next turned to the proposed auditorium and some wonder if it is worth the cost. Other comments were that if it is removed from the list, it would rearrange a lot of the current plan. For instance, on the priority list, the old auditorium was slated to become a multipurpose room that wouldn't get done.

Patrons in attendance were allowed to voice their opinion to the board. The first to speak was a member of the Facility Advisory Committee who said he was initially not in favor of doing much but once he'd toured the buildings, he changed his mind. He also stated that he felt past bond issues should have targeted more needs. The costs associated with upgrading our facilities aren't getting any cheaper and the buildings aren't getting any younger. This patron described himself as very conservative, but sees the need and supports the pursuit of a large bond issue. He also feels that cutting the auditorium while leaving the gyms would send a bad message.

The next patron to speak is also a city commissioner. Some of his thoughts are: don't go more than 20 years, a bond issue this size would help the district for years to come, cost can't be the only factor, items taken off of the list now can't be addressed for 20 more years and that the board would be remiss if they didn't try to take advantage of the low interest rates. He has had numerous conversations with fellow patrons of various ages and backgrounds and feels that the community will support the bond issue if it is presented in the right light. We need to be able to answer their questions. They need to know that this is a 20 year fix, not a 5 year fix. We can't just kick our facility issues on to the next board to solve.

Rallying students and the community to attend informational meetings about a bond issue was the roll of the next patron when her hometown pursued and passed one. She feels like these meetings really helped garner support.

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A down payment on the future is how the next patron looked at a bond issue. He also asked what the next step is if the board doesn't go for the whole priority list? Where will we be in 10 years.

A possible dedicated or general sales tax to take some of the burden off of property tax was discussed next. Steve stressed that this is just an idea as no formal meetings have been had with the city of Abilene. A general sales tax has no time limit and can't all be used for one project. It could be shared for district and city projects. A dedicated sales tax has a 10 year limit. Steve said that most people see property tax as a burden. Pursuing some sales tax to relieve some of that burden is seen as a fairer option. Especially in towns like Abilene that have a high tourist rate.

The district has been invited to present to the city council at a study session on Tuesday, October 22, 2013 at 7:00 a.m. to see if they have any interest in partnering on sales tax. The findings of the Facility Study Committee support pursuing the sales tax option as does the board of education. Jeff Bathurst moved to initiate discussions with the city of Abilene regarding this option. Gregg Noel seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Those representing the district at the study session will be Randy Gassman, Jeff Bathurst, Kari Porter-Murray, Denise Guy, Chris Cooper, Mike Whitehair, Steve Shogren and Bret Shogren.

Talk returned to the auditorium. Board members asked if any research has been done as to how much it would be used. Denise believes that just the district alone would use it a minimum of 3-4 times per month. All elementary programs would be moved to it as there is never enough seating at them. Research on community use has not been conducted. General consensus of the board is that it would be utilized by the community and that it would be big enough to handle league competitions. One board member stated that no matter where education goes in 20 years, auditoriums and gyms will still be needed.

A concern brought up is the seating space in the high school cafeteria. The current priority list includes closing in the canopy on the north side of the high school and using it as additional seating. There are currently 30-35 students that sit in the hall to eat their lunch. Board members are concerned that the planned enclosure won't be enough and would like Denise to ask Keith to provide a price to expand the cafeteria.

Steve recommends a special election in April 2014, prior to the close of the legislative session. A resolution adoption by the board is the first step. In order to make the April special election, the resolution would need to happen by early January 2014 at the latest and would include generic projects and a dollar amount. This step is followed by filing with the state, setting the special election date with the county and planning informational community meetings. Steve's services will be available to help with the legal process. Board members would like to try and shoot for a decision by early December 2013. The dollar amount they would like their representatives to take to the city council study session is 27-29 million dollars. This number should cover all of the bond fees and possible increases for a competition gym at the new 4-5 building and cafeteria addition at the high school.

Items in limbo include: whether the city will partner with the district on sales tax and price estimates on the gym and cafeteria from HTK. Board members would like Keith to present his prices at a future meeting.

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Board members thanked patrons for their view points and candor and hope for their continued support in this endeavor. The patrons thanked board members for their efforts to update our facilities.

Board-Administrator Communication - Denise announced that the city's public forum that was scheduled for September 29, 2013 has been postponed until November 5, 2013. Randy Gassman will be the representative from the school board. Questions for the forum will be provided in advance, but there will also be a question and answer session.

Chris informed board members that Lights On Afterschool will be on October 17, 2013 at Kennedy at 4:00 p.m. if any of them are interested in attending. Lights on Afterschool is celebrated nationwide to call attention to the importance of afterschool programs for our children, families and communities.

Executive Session - None.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Barb Brittan to **Adjourn** the meeting. Randy Gassman seconded and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

CLERK

PRESIDENT