

DUBUQUE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Board Work Session
January 27, 2021

President Ryan called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. at the Forum with the following members present: Bradley, Donohue, Prochaska, Parks, Ryan, Sainci, Wittman. Additional officers of the Board present: Kelleher, Lucas, Rheingans.

Moved (Prochaska) and seconded (Wittman) to approve the agenda as submitted. Motion carried 7-0.

Superintendent Rheingans provided an overview of the goal of the work session. The Board will look at financial projections that were previously shared, brain storm building operations, efficiency, budget, etc. The Board is not asked to make decisions today, but to begin to formalize a framework for the future.

ESSER II allocation for the district is \$6,505,712 from the federal government. This does not impact Supplemental State Aid (SSA). These funds recognize the work that has been done and work that needs to be done as districts move through the COVID pandemic. This is a reimbursement program after expenditures have been made.

Planned Expenditures:

FY 21 unspent balance relief \$2,300,000

FY 22 unspent balance relief \$2,455,712

Remediation/enrichment services for students \$1,000,000

Brain health services for students \$250,000

Nutrition fund relief \$500,000

Mr. Kelleher reviewed the unspent balance projection with the inclusion of ESSER funds. It pushes the extremely low unspent balance out by one year. Increases to SSA would change the trajectory of the unspent balance, but this is not expected so the district will need to look at other solutions, including building efficiencies.

Middle school and elementary Building Expense Comparisons were shared. Currently, Jefferson and Washington costs \$3,800,000 more to operate annually than Roosevelt. Smaller buildings cost more to operate. If there were two middle schools, the boundaries would align with the Hempstead and Senior boundaries. For elementary, the difference between a two-section school and a four-section school is \$986,000 annually (not including Title I funds). Mr. Kelleher indicated that the district could issue sales tax bonds in 2026-27, borrowing up to \$60 million to construct or remodel building/s.

Superintendent Rheingans said the Board could direct the district to: find a way to exist (including staff cuts), general obligation bond vote, or reorganize current facilities in the short term until we get to 2026-27. One possibility would be to transition to a two middle school model and think differently about what a middle school looks like. Could we absorb students from one elementary into another elementary that will open up a building that could house sixth grade only until such a time all grade 6-8 school students could be housed in two middle schools?

It was also suggested that the Board meet a second time each month as a budget strategy work session to continue brainstorming cost saving measures.

The Board was reminded that the district currently owns two properties that are not being used for district purposes. 1) soccer complex (approximately 50 acres) leased to the Soccer Alliance. The lease is up in a couple of years so the district needs to decide what to do with that piece of land. The Soccer Alliance would need to be notified now of the district's intent to sell so maybe they can fundraise to purchase it. We are required to give a two-year notice to end the lease. 2) Valentine Park – currently used by the City. The district may be able to trade that land with the City for other property to be used for new construction.

President Ryan declared the meeting adjourned at 5:24 p.m.

Joni Lucas, Secretary
Board of Education