

Spring Independent School District Bond Steering Committee Minutes Thursday, June 23, 2016

The initial meeting of the Bond Steering Committee was held on Thursday, June 23, 2016, in the Boardroom at the Gordon M. Anderson Leadership Center, located at 16717 Ella Blvd, Houston, TX 77090. The purpose of the initial meeting was to welcome participants and to give them an overview of the bond consideration process, as well as an introduction to the work the committee would be doing over the upcoming weeks.

Attendees

Bond Steering Committee Members Present: 63

Call to Order

At approximately 6:05 p.m., Spring ISD Chief Communications Officer Tiffany Dávila-Dunne began the meeting.

Agenda

- **Welcome and Introductions**
 - Ms. Dávila-Dunne welcomed the group and introduced some of the district leaders present, including Board of Trustees President Dr. Deborah Jensen, Chief Operations Officer Mr. Mark Miranda, Chief Financial Officer Ms. Ann Westbrooks, and Chief Academic Officer Dr. Lupita Hinojosa. Greetings were also extended on behalf of Superintendent Dr. Rodney Watson, who was unable to attend the meeting.
 - The evening's agenda was briefly outlined.

- **Background and Overview (presented by Tiffany Dávila-Dunne)**
 - The district last took a bond measure to voters almost a decade ago.
 - While the potential need for a bond had already been under consideration for some time, specific needs were discussed throughout the district's strategic planning process (in 2014-15) that would fall outside the realm of general operating funds and would therefore require separate funding.
 - A variety of potential bond elements that could be included in a referendum will be addressed by the steering committee, including needs in the following primary categories:
 - Facilities
 - Safety and Security
 - Technology
 - Steering Committee members will have the opportunity to attend their choice of upcoming meetings.

- **Capital Needs (presented by Mark Miranda)**

- At approximately 6:22 p.m., Chief Operations Officer Mark Miranda took the floor to speak to attendees about the district's capital needs, including a review of recent demographic studies and facility assessments.
- He shared that while Spring ISD enrollment is projected to be relatively flat over the next few years, many district facilities are already facing capacity issues, with higher-than-ideal facility utilization rates.
- In addition, he discussed that although the average age of Spring ISD school buildings is not high when compared to districts nationwide, facility assessments in recent years reveal deficient items and systems that are categorized as "Beyond Service Life," as well as deferred maintenance needs that must be addressed (e.g., HVAC, plumbing, roofing, electrical, etc.).
- A number of potential technology needs were also highlighted, including improved phone and security systems, enhanced infrastructure for classroom connectivity, etc.
- Based on Facility Condition Index (FCI) ratings, several potential facility needs were introduced; in particular, the relatively poor ratings of George Stadium and the district's police department headquarters were discussed as areas that required attention.

- **Debt Position (presented by First Southwest)**

- At approximately 6:53 p.m., Chief Financial Officer Ann Westbrook briefly took the floor to introduce Terrell Palmer, Sr. VP of First Southwest, to speak to the group about the district's current debt position and the tax impact of a potential bond.
- The tax impact of various proposed bond amounts was presented to the group.
- Palmer also shared that, with interest rates relatively low, 2016 could be an especially good time for the district to refinance current debt and/or issue bonds.
- Mr. Palmer fielded several questions from attendees about the tax impact under different bond-level scenarios, as well as a question about homestead exemptions.
- The Chief Communications Officer briefly introduced the next agenda item before announcing a short break so that technical setup for the Voter Survey presentation could be completed.

- **Voter Survey (presented by Basalice & Associates, Inc.)**

- At approximately 7:31 p.m., Matt Gamble of Basalice & Associates, Inc. joined the meeting via webinar to present attendees with the details and results of a recent voter survey conducted in the district.
- The survey, in which 400 registered voters from across the district were contacted, was designed to gauge current voter perceptions, knowledge, and sentiment about a potential bond measure, including levels of support or opposition for a bond.
- The survey involved both an "initial" and an "informed" ballot scenario, gauging respondents' first reactions to a bond as well as their further reactions after being provided with information about the potential bond and why it was being considered.
- While some potential bond elements received higher levels of support in the survey than others, the overall levels of support among survey participants were promising, especially

on the “informed ballot” (after participants received information about why a bond might be needed at this time).

- It was also mentioned that voter turnout this November is expected to be relatively high for the presidential election, making it a potentially good time to put a bond referendum on the ballot.

- **Wrap-up and Questions**

- At approximately 7:56, Ms. Dávila-Dunne and Ms. Westbrook took the floor to wrap up the meeting and to field questions from attendees.
- It was re-iterated that it has been nearly a decade since the last bond election for Spring ISD, and that the committee will be tasked with determining whether or not the timing is right to move forward with a bond referendum, especially since the upcoming November election could be an optimal time for a large portion of the community to participate in the process due to higher expected voter turnout.
- Depending on the results of the Exxon property valuation proceedings, a bond amount between \$288M and \$330M would be proposed.
- The “wish list” of district needs will always exceed the available funds, so one of the important tasks of the steering committee over the coming weeks will be to prioritize those needs, while also considering the recurring costs associated with bond projects.
- A few questions were asked by committee members, including:
 - Could a bond measure be voted on that would not raise property taxes at all?
Answer: Yes, but doing so would severely limit the district’s ability to address the enumerated needs.
 - A question about building new middle schools vs. establishing a 9th-grade academy.
Answer: This is a topic that will receive more discussion in upcoming weeks.
 - A question about when the Exxon property valuation process will be resolved.
Answer: We do not know at this time.
 - A question about how information would be shared with committee members who aren’t able to attend all meetings.
Answer: Bond Steering Committee minutes and the presentation will be posted online. Additionally, the district’s “Elevate” communication tool provides committee members (as well as the public) a means of sharing their thoughts, questions, and concerns about the process with district leadership.
- The schedule of upcoming steering committee meetings was discussed, and attendees were reminded that they could choose to attend some meetings without needing to be present at all meetings.
- Attendees were thanked for their time, and for their willingness to get involved and help out with this important process.

Adjournment

After final thanks were offered to attendees, the meeting ended at 8:12 p.m.