

KINGSWOOD COMPLEX RENOVATION/EXPANSION PROJECT

Frequently Asked Questions #1

Q: Why do we need this project now? This really isn't a good time to spend all that money.

A: *We need this project now for a number of reasons.*

- 1. The Kingswood Regional High School is approaching its half-century mark. The average life of a building (like a school) is 40 years. While our custodial and maintenance departments do an excellent job of housekeeping, there are problems with the building bigger than cleaning and/or cosmetic work. The building is heated by electric panels in the ceilings of the rooms. The system is inefficient and costly. Other systems need upgrading as well. The school was put on warning by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges in part because of the infrastructure problems at KRHS.*
- 2. The Region 9 Vocational-Technical Center's turn has come in the state's renovation cycle. Building aid on Voc projects is up to 75%. It would be ridiculous to try to renovate some of the complex and leave other parts intact. How does one install half of a heating system? The present auditorium is scheduled to become a large instruction room and the multi-media classroom and lab. That cannot happen without building a new auditorium.*
- 3. This project might be thought of as a local stimulus plan. Local contractors would be encouraged to bid on work. A project of this size creates many jobs, which in turn benefit other areas of the local economy. Additionally, contractors are hungry for work and are bidding projects with a very low profit margin.*

Q: I'm a senior citizen on a fixed income. Why should I support this project?

A: *The School Board fully appreciates the burden that any increase in taxes causes those on fixed incomes. That is one reason for a thirty-year bond – it creates a pay-as-you-go scenario. While senior citizens are concerned with spending, they are also concerned with protecting their assets. Generally, a home is the largest asset one has. Home values are closely tied to the quality of local schools. Additionally, the expansion project will allow the Vocational Center to expand its offering of programs. Many seniors currently enjoy an excellent lunch (at a very reasonable price) at the Skylight Dining Room. Among other things, the Voc trains our students for careers in the health field, something that is especially important to our senior population. If you are approaching retirement, now (while you are still employed) is the time to pay any increase in taxes.*

Q: What's all this I hear about a sale?

A: *The "sale" refers to the net capital cost of the project. The proposed building plan cost estimates total \$67,242,614 for three schools. The work on the Vocational Center is eligible for up to 75% building aid. The remainder of that project, along with the work on the high school and middle school is eligible for 55% building aid. Therefore, on portions that entail the Vocational Center, voters would be responsible for \$11.25 of every \$100 spent. The \$11.25 would be divided according to the cooperative formula. Taxpayers in Wolfeboro, bearing the heaviest burden would pay \$4.02 for the \$100 worth of goods. Other work is eligible for 55% aid, meaning voters pay \$45.00 for the \$100 of construction. There have been rumors floating around about the Governor cutting building aid in order to balance the state budget. The District has been assured by the New Hampshire Department of Education that no such cut is planned.*

KINGSWOOD COMPLEX RENOVATION/EXPANSION PROJECT

Frequently Asked Questions #2

Q: I have heard that education funding has been cut from the stimulus package. Does that mean we'll lose our money?

A: That's a very good question because there is a lot of confusion about the stimulus package. There is a great deal of misinformation floating around about the stimulus package. Since the plan has not even been fully approved (Senate and House), it is difficult to know what it really contains. Many people have seen "wish lists" posted on the Internet and printed in newspapers. Certainly, everyone wants a piece of the pie. While it appears that school construction may be cut (by how much no one really knows) from the compromise plan, no one is sure that this project would have qualified. The SAU did submit two construction projects (the Kingswood Complex and the Ossipee School Roof) to state officials more than a month ago. The GWRSD projects were added to those from other school districts throughout the state and sent to Senator Sheehan's office in Washington. The District later learned that one requirement of projects is that they be "shovel ready." This term means that construction could start as soon as money was made available. While the Ossipee Roof Project could be ready soon, neither that nor the Kingswood Complex has received voter approval. Additionally, the district has repeatedly been told that the stimulus money could not be used for new construction. While the District is not counting on the money, SAU officials have made it clear that if the District were to receive money, it would quickly be earmarked for any applicable project.

It is also important to remember that the Economic Recovery Act is a national program and not a state one. While monies will flow to the states, it is different than state building aid. State building aid is governed according to the rules of NH RSA 198:15. The state has been providing building aid since 1955, including those years when budgets were cuts and funds were tight. While the funds for a given year may have been prorated, they were made up in future appropriations. There is no reason to believe this practice will change. The SAU has been reassured by NH Department of Education officials that there are no plans to eliminate state building aid.

Q: I have seen drawings of the proposed Kingswood Complex. Are these the final plans?

A: CMK Architects have prepared "renderings" for us of the expansion and renovation of the Kingswood Complex. Renderings are very different from blueprints. Renderings are overviews – they allow us to see that the project is possible and what it could look like. They are not meant to have the detail of a blueprint. In other words, windows could be added, rooms reconfigured or relocated, and details changed in the final plans. What would not change is the commitment to the energy conservation and efficiency, the best use of the site, changing the façade of the high school, and hiring local contractors and using local products whenever possible.

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Frequently Asked Questions #3

Q: What will the new renovation/expansion project mean for the athletic programs at the middle and high schools?

A: While the primary function of any school is academic, extracurricular activities (including athletics) often play an important role in the comprehensive education of any student. Students who are involved in sports develop skills in leadership and interpersonal relationships that are important in the workplace. Additionally, involvement in physical activities benefits the mind as well as the body.

The architects have been able to redesign the entire athletic area of the Complex in order to increase the number of playing fields. This was made possible by eliminating the existing old cinder track. The District is not eliminating track and field by any means. In fact, the District has entered into an agreement with the NICK for use of their track and field space so that citizens will not be asked to duplicate existing assets. The school is now able to host meets, something it has not been able to do with the present outdated facilities. The Complex will also contain a turf field. This field will become the venue for lacrosse, soccer, field hockey, and football games. Because of the nature of a turf field, students will even be able to play wearing standard athletic footwear. No special footwear will be required. Locker rooms will be adjacent to the game field along with restroom facilities for spectators.

The current middle school gym will be expanded to the size of a regulation high school gym. The new gym will be large enough to be divided into two practice gyms. There will also be a practice gym constructed at the high school, enabling more teams to have gym space at the same time. At the present time, some teams are required to begin practice at 8 P.M.

The new facilities will provide all District voters with athletic venues for which we can be proud!

Q: This is a big project and it will obviously take time. Will that mean double sessions for the middle and high school?

A: You are right, this is a big project and it will necessitate some disruptions at the Complex. The first order of business will be the construction of new space. This means the multi-purpose building and additions will be built first. This allows administrators to use new space and move classes around during the renovation phase of the project. This is not unlike what happened at Carpenter School. Once Crescent Lake opened, space was created at Carpenter and the renovation project could begin.

The District will make every effort to minimize disruptions to the daily schedules at the middle school, high school, and vocational center. There are currently no plans to have double sessions.

Construction requires a "staging area." Such an area can be seen at Huggins Hospital as they work on their addition. The staging area at the Complex will probably mean a change in traffic patterns and parking. This will be a temporary measure.

"One of the greatest dignities of humankind is that each successive generation is invested in the welfare of each new generation." ...**Mister Rogers**

KINGSWOOD COMPLEX EXPANSION/RENOVATION PROJECT

FAQ 4

Q: I have heard that there is no money for the Vocational Renovation. Is that true?

A: District officials were informed late on Friday, February 13, 2009 that the money for Vocational Renovations was omitted from the Governor's proposed budget. This came as a surprise to the New Hampshire Department of Education officials who reported the news to GWRSD, since the Governor did not mention this when he delivered his budget to the people of New Hampshire. The last information officials had received was that the money was in the capital budget portion of the state budget. Money for building aid remains in the proposed budget. It is important to remember that the proposed state budget is not the final budget and lines can still be changed.

The Governor Wentworth Regional School Board held an emergency meeting on Monday, February 16, 2009 to discuss the situation. The first decision the Board made was to inform voters of this latest situation. Chair Jim Rines had made the statement at the 2009 Deliberative Session that the Board would have failed in its mission if voters went into the voting booth on March 10th without all the information they needed to make an informed decision. In its typical forthright style, the Board made the information public that night at a Building and Bond presentation in New Durham.

The Board and Administration are obviously upset with the news. They believe that there is great momentum for the project and disappointed with this last minute situation. The decision was made at the February 16th Board meeting to move ahead with the project with the promise to build only that portion of the project for which building aid is available. Since school building aid is in the state budget, renovations and expansion of the Kingswood Regional High School and Middle School could proceed according to plan. That portion of the project that deals with the Vocational Center would be completed if and when money is restored to the state budget. The total cost of the high school and middle school portions of the project is \$56,860,545 with a net capital cost of \$25,587,245. District officials are eager to move forward on this aspect and hope that the funding for the vocational center becomes available when the state budget is finally set (generally in mid to late June).

Additionally, District officials have made it clear that they intend to contact elected officials and lobby for the restoration of these funds. Two Vocational Centers have been funded in each of the last eight biennia budgets. That means the people of GWRSD are paying for restoration to centers in Nashua, Manchester, Concord and Exeter. District officials believe that eliminating these funds puts smaller districts, like Littleton and GWRSD who are both scheduled to receive funds in the next biennium, at an unfair disadvantage.

The Governor recently signed legislation raising the age of compulsory attendance to 18. The original Kingswood Complex renovation plans expand the Region 9 Vocational Technical Center and allow for the addition of programs in auto body repair and machine tool. While students of all academic abilities enroll in vocational programs, many students in danger of dropping out tell officials that vocational programs keep them interested in school.

The District is posting contact information on the web for elected officials in the event that voters would like to contact these representatives and express an opinion about the loss of funding.

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FAQ 5

Q: As the date for voting rapidly approaches, we have some last “what if” questions. What if building aid is cut?

A: There is a difference between school building aid and vocational renovation aid. School building aid (55%) has not been cut from the Governor’s proposed budget. The vocational renovation money was not included in the proposed state budget, as it has been in the last eight biennia budgets. Many large projects (Manchester, Nashua, and Exeter) have received funding. The voters of GWRSD are paying for those projects and now it is our turn.

District officials have been working hard to contact elected officials and lobby for the restoration of these funds. There have been some very positive responses to these efforts and the District is hopeful that vocational renovation money will appear in the final budget. The challenge is that the budget will not be finalized until June, long after the vote on our bond. If our voters do not support the bond, we validate the Governor’s proposal. After all, if GWRSD doesn’t want the project, why should the state?

At the last Board meeting (March 3, 2009), the Governor Wentworth Regional School Board pledged that they would not authorize the construction of any portion of the project for which aid was not received. So, if the voters pass the bond, the question is not IF but WHEN.

Q: What if the bond does not pass? What will happen?

A: It is impossible to predict the future and say for certain what will happen, but many things are likely to happen should the bond fail.

- 1. The problems at the Kingswood Complex will not just disappear. In fact, the problems with the heating, electrical and mechanical systems will only get worse. Taxpayers are paying a lot of money to heat the high school. Most of this money is wasted because of the obsolete electrical heating system. No one has money to burn in these hard times. A delay in the project will mean additional costs in the future. Should the state put a moratorium on all building aid, the taxpayers would be forced to pay 100% of the costs of any renovation. District officials believe it is imperative to pass this bond now and show the state we have a commitment from our taxpayers.*
- 2. Kingswood Regional High School could well lose its accreditation with NEAS&C. At the present time, the school has a “warning” status because of problems with the facilities. A loss of accreditation would hurt our seniors as they apply to colleges and universities.*
- 3. The New Hampshire State Board of Education issued a stern warning to the residents of Lebanon last year to fix the problems at one of their facilities or risk the state closing the building for safety purposes.*
- 4. Should the bond fail, money for repairs of systems at the Kingswood Complex would need to be diverted from the District’s regular budget. The current budget is very tight. Funds would have to be taken from programs and/or materials. This would only hurt the students.*
- 5. The greatest investment most individuals make is the purchase of a home. Real estate values are closely aligned to the quality of local schools. In 2007, the market value of all property in the district was \$4,612,852,708. Should the market lose only 1% of its value, the cost to taxpayers would be \$46,128,527 or more than the taxpayers’ share of the proposed building project!*
- 6. There are a fair number of retired people living in the area. Generally an older population requires more health care. Additional professional health care workers will not relocate to the area if the school system is not in excellent shape. Furthermore, an expansion/renovation of the Region 9 Vocational-*

Technical Center could result in more students enrolling in the Health Occupations Programs. Students enrolled in that program can earn an LPN license.

- 7. The opportunity for local businesses and individual workers to benefit from the project will be lost. In addition to direct involvement of laborers, there is a ripple effect to the local economy when a project of this size is being completed in a town. It has been dubbed our own stimulus package!*

