

## **Island school board attends capital project workshop**

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The Grand Island Board of Education got into the nuts and bolts of the next process for the district's \$51.4 million capital project at a special facility workshop Saturday. It was the first board meeting since the Dec. 20 referendum, when voters overwhelmingly approved two propositions that include major renovations and improvements to the district's five schools and building a state-of-the-art athletic field that can host sectional competition.

Proposition One totaling \$46.8 million will not affect the school property tax rate with funding coming from state aid and district reserves. The second proposition for \$4.6 million will be partly financed by a tax increase of 0.2 percent.

During a three-hour session in the Middle School Little Theater, representatives of Campus Construction, construction managers; Cannon Design, architects; and Capital Markets Advisors LLC, financial advisers, detailed what's next in the roughly 30-month project.

The workshop was designed to assist in "understanding the main milestones ahead and how the board will be involved in analyzing information" as the project progresses," board President David Goris said.

The project is now in the schematic design phase, which will include a "courtesy review" by the state Education Department, according to two Cannon Design officials, project manager William K. Zografos, a firm vice president, and educational planner Kimberly Williams, a firm associate in architecture.

Williams said they would like to have "user groups" for each school building that would include the principal and department heads involved in that phase. She agreed with Goris that the board should be informed when the user groups are meeting and what's taking place. She and Zografos also suggested that the board designate one person

knowledgeable about the district buildings “to shepherd this through” and attend all user group meetings.

Two more design phases follow — development and preparation of the construction documents needed for the bidding process. All three phases are expected to be completed by September, followed by the SED review and approval that is estimated to take about six months.

Zografos also said that Cannon plans to hire a firm to do a digitized scan of buildings as part of updating older drawings that will assist in the project’s final design. That expense falls under incidental costs already included in the project.

Bids tentatively would be advertised by February-March 2013 with awards in May and construction starting in July, according to Campus Construction’s John M. Ticco Jr., executive vice president, and Thomas R. Caruso, vice president. The entire project is expected to be completed by July 2015.

There is not yet any schedule on the “sequencing” of the project’s work. A recently published report that the new athletic field would be ready for the 2013 football season was premature, district officials noted.

Williams also suggested that a district official be designated as the “eyes and ears of this project . . . someone who can make decisions on a certain level” to provide “a thread of continuity.”

Superintendent Robert W. Christmann asked if someone has part-time responsibility for that, could part of that person’s salary be paid under the capital project?

The answer was yes. There is a line item under incidental costs.

Both Cannon Design and Campus Construction fielded questions about change orders, explaining the two main types are “project-directed” in which something unknown is discovered like the need to remove asbestos from a pipe enclosed in a wall and “owner-directed” in which the district may change its mind about something it wants done. Every project encounters change orders, including some due to “inconsistencies and omissions,” emphasized Mark A. T. Voorhees, senior project manager with Campus Construction.

Caruso urged the district to designate a district official with authority to OK change orders up to a certain amount “to keep the work going on schedule.”

The board will receive regular updates on the design process. Once construction starts, there will be monthly updates on work progress, change orders and finances. It is probable that a representative of Campus Construction will attend board meetings to give the updates and answer questions.