

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE VERMILION LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2024**

The Regular Meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM.

This is a meeting of the Vermilion Board of Education in public for the purpose of conducting the School District's business, and is not to be considered a public community meeting. There is a time for public participation during the meeting as indicated on the agenda. Vermilion Board Bylaw 0165.1.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Habermehl, present; Mrs. Innes, present; Mrs. Russell, present; Mrs. Stepp, present; Mr. Benson, present

Mr. Habermehl led the Pledge of Allegiance

Public Participation on Agenda Items - None

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT AND/OR RECOMMENDATIONS - None

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

TREASURER'S REPORT AND/OR RECOMMENDATIONS

103.24 Mr. Habermehl motioned for the Board to approve declaring a necessity of submitting to electors of the school District the question of the issuance of school improvement Bonds, in the aggregate principal amount of \$47,000,000, pursuant to section 133.18 of the revised code, and requesting consents of the state tax commissioner and Director of Education and Workforce. Mrs. Innes seconded.

Mr. Klingshirn explained that a bond levy is a ballot measure to fund the building or renovation of existing buildings. Revenue from the sale of bonds cannot be used for operating expenses such as salaries, health insurance, or buying school buses. Mr. Klingshirn stated Vermilion High School was built in 1968, and our middle school was built in 1976 and both had minimal changes to the footprint of each building. Mr. Klingshirn shared the entire roof and HVAC systems have been replaced at the middle school for a cost of just under \$2 million. The district has spent \$15.6 million in the last four years, all of which comes from the district operating fund. Vermilion schools are unique. Vermilion has four current expense levies which were originally passed in 1976, 1989, 1992 and 1993 which collect the same amount of revenue now as when they were passed. Mr. Klingshirn stated that these four levies collected the same revenue without an increase in 31 years. In 2008, Vermilion passed an emergency levy which generates \$4.25 million annually. Mr. Klingshirn stated Vermilion is unique because it uses its operating revenue to fix and replace its capital assets and it has been doing that for the last 17 years. By comparison, out of the 611 school districts in Ohio 211 districts have an income tax, 410 districts have a bond levy, 507 districts, or 83 percent have a permanent improvement levy. Vermilion is one of 43 schools in Ohio that only has operating levies. Mr. Klingshirn stated the reason the Board has a recommendation for a bond levy is because the district's finances can no longer keep up with the cost to fix and repair its infrastructure and buildings. The Districts significant capital needs which were included in the November 2024 five-year forecast and because these capital needs bring our available cash from \$16.2 million to \$1.7 million by the end of fiscal year 2029, and because of board policy 6235 which states if the General fund cash balance falls below 25 percent of the annual General fund expenditures, the Treasurer must bring this to the attention of the Board and which time, the Board must request the administration create a plan to reduce expenditures, increase revenue or a combination of both.

Mr. Habermehl stated it has been nearly 20 years since the district has asked for any new money of any kind. The district has been fiscally responsible with taxpayer money and has managed the district in a way that is responsible and at the same time our demographics have changed. Our class sizes are

smaller, and our enrollment has gone down, which has allowed the district to not ask for additional money longer than we thought we could. Because of that, we are still in a decent place financially, but when we look at our buildings and look at our facilities, it is time to start fixing things and start upgrading things so that we are able to make a move. Mr. Habermehl stated with this levy, with funds that are specific to building improvements or renovations is important. Much like our safety and security funds, which can only be spent on safety, these funds will have to be used toward our facilities and that will allow us to maintain our operating funds and continue to run the district in a responsible way. Because of this, we are going to go to the voters with this request and we do not want to make any decision that our voting public does not agree with but we want everyone to understand how important this is, and how much it means to the district for us to be able to continue operating and to provide the best education and the best facilities for our students.

Mrs. Stepp stated that she agreed with Mr. Habermehl. Everyone knows that our district's main goal is to educate our students in the best possible way, with the best teachers. Besides the education aspect, they need to be able to have safe buildings and facilities to roam the halls in and they must be able to feel proud of where they are at. Our facilities are in desperate need of some upgrades to come into the future. Currently, our buildings are stuck in the past. We do not have ports for their computers to be charged, just little things like that, that really make a difference for these kids to make them feel proud of where they are at, which makes them want to do better as well. Mrs. Stepp stated that besides computers and teachers and the curriculum, we must make sure the students' surroundings are to the standard.

Mrs. Innes stated that she believes we are at the tipping point now where the General fund cannot support all of these renovations and upgrades that need to be done so we will need to reach out to the public for help.

Mrs. Russell stated as old as these buildings are, I think it says a lot that we have maintained it for as long as we have before needing to ask for a bond. Our buildings just for functionality purposes we have to do these big things and our operating budget cannot afford to do it.

Mr. Habermehl stated that it is our goal between now and when this language goes onto the ballot is to educate and inform as many people as possible so that hopefully, everyone agrees that it is the right thing to do. It is important that we are as open and transparent about it and that everyone knows where this money would go and why we need to do it is important.

Mrs. Innes stated that Mr. Hile and Mr. Klingshirn are open to anybody that has questions. So if anyone has any questions, feel free to reach out to either of them.

Mr. Habermehl stated that we had to call a special meeting to get the resolution completed on time.

Dr. Hile stated some of the bigger ticket items, so people know why we are asking for this money. Starting with our High School, we do not have adequate science rooms for our students, and this has been true for a long time. We only have one fully equipped science lab, and we need additional labs. To renovate the science wing and to provide science labs, the estimate is \$2.2 million. Our roof is at the end of its useful life and the estimate to replace the roof is somewhere between \$4 and \$7 million. We don't know where that price will land because they will need to get up there and tear some of the roof off to see what is needed before they can give us a firm quote. We have asphalt and paving that will need to happen for almost \$300,000 which is something you need to stay ahead of, because if you get behind on that then it gets even more expensive. We have five HVAC on the rooftop and the estimate to replace those are \$150,000. Our bathrooms are in desperate need of renovation not only in this building but in SMS. The current estimate we have for the high school renovation is \$225,000 and that does not include

plumbing. Over at SMS we have an elevator that needs to be completely replaced. That estimate is \$125,000. We have a lot of sidewalks, because of the age of the sidewalks that are heaving which causes a trip hazard. That estimate is \$120,000. We have a water main at SMS and VHS that needs replaced and each are estimated to cost between \$35,000 and \$40,000. It is simply because they have aged out, they break from time to time, and someone has to come out, dig them up and patch it which has gone on for a long time. We also need the bathrooms renovated at SMS which has twice as many bathrooms as VHS. That renovation is estimated at \$500,000. Moving on to our bus garage, anybody that has been to our bus garage knows what kind of condition it is in. It really needs to be completely replaced, there is really no upgrading it or renovating it and the parking lot needs to be paved. The parking lot estimate is \$220,000 and the bus garage was estimated to be around \$2 million, which would be in the same place it is now. On the athletic side of things, the tennis courts is the big one. The tennis courts base is failing and cracking and its almost unplayable. In the next year, we will not be able to have tennis matches there and that estimate is \$1.1 million. Those are just some examples of things that must be done, these are not wish list things, or things we are doing for aesthetic value, they need to be done to maintain the integrity of our facilities. Again, these are just a few examples, and I would be happy to share other things with you if you have questions about our facilities.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Habermehl, aye; Mrs. Innes, aye; Mrs. Russell, aye; Mrs. Stepp, aye; Mr. Benson, aye

Mr. Read Wakefield stated he is the Treasurer for the School Levy Committee and that the committee is standing by and ready to raise funds and put together a citizens' committee to support and promote this bond issue. One of the things of being involved with schools is we have been proud of the buildings we have. You cannot see school systems like HVAC systems, but they too need to be fixed and replaced and made more efficient. Mr. Wakefield stated he keeps thinking that our buildings from 1968 and 1976, we are proud of these buildings, lets protect, preserve and upgrade them and make them good spaces for students. Technology has sped way ahead of us and we need to provide that kind of resources and infrastructure for students and the teachers so that we can provide a great education here in Vermilion.

104.24 Mrs. Stepp motioned to the Board for the meeting to be adjourned. Mr. Benson seconded. **ROLL CALL:** Mr. Habermehl, aye; Mrs. Innes, aye; Mrs. Russell, aye; Mrs. Stepp, aye; Mr. Benson, aye
Time adjourned 5:17 pm

ATTEST:

Board President

Treasurer

