

School District Pushes for New Bonds

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Erik Wander/KMXT

The Kodiak Island Borough School District presented possible funding options for projects at the Kodiak Island Borough Assembly's work session Thursday. Included were proposed bonds for Kodiak High School at a total cost of 80-million dollars and a less expensive list of renewal and replacement projects to be completed over the next four years.

After the fall 2008 election, in which a proposed 115-million dollar bond to fund construction of a new high school was defeated, the school district worked with the borough to respond to the concerns of community members. Speaking at Thursday's Borough Assembly work session, Superintendent Stewart McDonald spoke of the continued need for a significantly upgraded high school.

-- (School
1 30 sec. "We're talking about ... expand our vocational program.")

McDonald said that after a thorough examination of the existing structure, the district found a way to substantially re-model it with the addition of some new space. He said that in addition to expanding the school's vocational program, increased school enrollment is the primary reason for the need to expand upon the existing facilities.

-- (School
2 42 sec. "In 1989 to 1991, when ... that can house those students.")

McDonald said the proposed plans are based on projected future needs of the school district.

-- (School
3 33 sec. "When we identified our ... sustainability of maintenance.")

The

district's list of renewal and replacement projects identifies and prioritizes the district's fire, safety and life upgrade and replacement needs to be completed over the next four years. It includes fire alarm system upgrades, parking lot paving and painting and flooring projects borough-wide, among many other priorities, and comes at a total cost of about 12-million dollars. If approved as a bond, it would increase the mill rate by about a half mill as opposed to the 2-point-8 mill increase the new high school bond would bring with it.

Assembly

members agreed on the need for the renewal and replacement projects to be approved as soon as possible, but they weren't as comfortable introducing a bond proposal for a new high school at this time, suggesting instead that it would be better to put it off for at least another year. Assemblywoman Chris Lynch explained that line of thinking.

-- (School
4 20 sec. "Because we don't have any ... so,
renewal and replacement.")

Borough Manager Rick

Gifford said that if either or both project is to be included as a bond issue in the fall election, it would need to be introduced at the assembly's July 16th regular meeting. McDonald said the school district will make its final presentation to the Kodiak Island Borough School Board at its meeting on June 22nd and present a more detailed price estimate to the assembly at its July 9th work session.

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