

New KHS Comes With \$115-Million Price Tag

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

There are some mighty big numbers associated with building a new high school in Kodiak, but they don't all have to do with its cost. Some of them have to do with savings — like 125-thousand dollars — which is how much money can be saved every year with a new energy efficient school. Jay Barrett has more.

Kodiak schools Superintendent Stewart McDonald, with several school board members backing him up, told the Kodiak Island Borough Assembly last night that there is some sticker shock associated with the cost of a new high school here in the city. But it wasn't until well into a half-hour presentation that he revealed the bottom line. Instead, he started with a Power-Point presentation and a binder of questions and answers an inch thick. He said the high school and the borough building, which houses the district offices, were so energy inefficient, it costs over a million dollars per year for heating fuel and electricity. Tearing down the borough building and incorporating the offices in the new high school would save 125-thousand dollars a year at current prices. dollars that could go into a new school instead of being spent on continuously upgrading and repairing the current high school. And he spoke of why a new school was necessary:

He also spoke about the millions of

-- (School
1 Aug 1 54 sec “… and there are more reasons than
that.”)

So, what is the bottom line? Well, a new Kodiak High School, with renovations to an older portion to house the school, borough and city administrations, would cost 115-million, 366-thousand and 583-dollars. After McDonald dropped that number, he let it sink in for a few moments without saying anything. He then reminded everyone in the packed conference room that the state of Alaska would pick up 60-percent of the costs for the new portion, and 70-percent of the costs for the remodeled portions that are kept.

One of the other big numbers in this story is the mill rate increase needed to pay for a 115-million dollar bond. It would take a 4-point-1-mill increase in property taxes, borough-wide over 20 years to pay for the school. That's 409-dollars more per year for every 100-thousand dollars of assessed property value.

Assemblyman Tom Abell was one of the first people to make a concerted push for a new high school, and though the costs will be high, he says the borough will be saving money in the long run:

-- (School
2 Aug 1 50 sec "district and borough should be doing.")

The most attention getting of all the numbers associate with the new school was the costs of delaying it. With inflation, rising energy costs and the maintenance burden, the cost of a new school increases by over 8-and-a-half-million dollars per year. To put that in perspective, that's nearly 24-thousand dollars a day.

The assembly members present seemed favorably inclined to put the bond to the voters this fall, and will bring up an ordinance to do so at its regular meetings later this month.

"m Jay Barrett.

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