

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Mary Whitrock, Superintendent

WhitrockM@ripon.k12.wi.us

(920) 748-4600

Ripon School Board Holds Facilities Update Session

Ripon, WI – The Ripon School Board and District Administration hosted the first of two Facilities Update Sessions as part of the **facility design process** on **Monday, January 26th** at **6:00 p.m.** at **Ripon High School**. The Facilities Update Session was intended to provide the community with the opportunity to hear about the steps that have been taken since the passing of the referendum in November, see the most recent facilities design, and learn about the next steps in the planning process. Community members were encouraged to attend to ask questions regarding the facilities plan. The final design of the combined 6-12 facility will be approved at the February 16th School Board Meeting with construction set to begin in April.

The Facilities Update Session followed a second round of staff interviews with the architects. The consultants have worked closely with the administration to refine the design with input from teachers and staff. Additions and renovations to the existing high school building include STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) spaces; an Agriculture room; a community room; a MS/HS music suite; separate middle and high school entrances, commons, administrative offices, and classrooms; a new high school gymnasium; upgrades to the existing auditorium and pool; and additional parking. The School Board held a work session at 5:00 p.m. just prior to the Facilities Update Session to review the design for the combined high school and middle school on the high school site.

At the Monday night session, community members reviewed the most recent updates to the design, provided input on the exterior appearance of the facility, and gained an understanding of the timeline and process moving forward. District administration answered questions regarding project financing. “The District worked in December 2014 and January 2015 to secure 20 million of the 29.1 million of funding at an interest rate less than 2.9%,” said Dr. Mary Whitrock, Superintendent. “Over the last year, community members heard that the timing was right for this project. The low interest rates will save the community approximately 4 million dollars in interest over the lifetime of the referendum which will reduce the overall levy impact in future years.” The final phase of borrowing for the remaining \$9.1 million will occur early in 2016. The funding was intentionally spread over three calendar years so the district could utilize bank-qualified bonds. This allowed more investors to participate ensuring more competitive bids.

As the process continues, district administration and the consultants will meet with city officials and conduct a traffic survey. A second Facilities Update Session will be held on March 2 at 6:00 p.m. in RHS

room 167 to provide community members with an opportunity to review the final plans and elevations as well as learn about the detailed construction timeline. The Board thanked community members for their participation and feedback during this exciting process. Any comments or suggestions, please contact Dr. Mary Whitrock at (920) 748-4600.

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