

Frederic School Board Discusses Possible Referendum

The Frederic School Board held a special meeting on November 28th to consider a potential spring referendum. Representatives from Baird, Market & Johnson, and SDS Architects were on hand during the planning session to answer questions and provide insight to the facility projects and operational needs being discussed. Carl Eklof, Building and Grounds Director, and Josh Robinson, Superintendent, walked the school board through 23 items being considered for removal from last year's facility referendum. Some of the items include the consolidation of existing athletic fields, a fitness center accessible by students and the community, and various replacement or repair of items identified from the facility study.

Lisa Voisin, Managing Director with Baird, presented information regarding the district's forecasted deficit budgets in upcoming years. The board discussed the need for an operational referendum to maintain the current level of staffing, programming and infrastructure. Projections indicate the district will have to continue to deplete its fund balance in order to maintain its current level of operations. Further discussion identified the need to have adequate student support services in place to meet the diverse and growing needs of students.

Considerable consideration was given to the community survey results during the planning session. Survey results indicate the largest amount of voter support for a referendum would be for a five-year, \$500,000 non-recurring operations question and a \$7 million facilities project question. Voisin explained the estimated impact to the school portion of property taxes would be a \$40 increase over the 2017-18 taxes, per \$100,000 of property value.

No formal action was taken at the special meeting. The board agreed to continue discussions at the December 19th regular board meeting and consider possible referendum question language that may be used in a spring referendum. Final questions for a spring referendum need to be determined by the school board in January.