

**SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**ILLINI WEST HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT #307**  
**Special Meeting**

Date: Wednesday, January 8, 2020  
Time: 7:00 PM  
Location: 600 Miller Street, Carthage, IL 62321

- 1) The Special Meeting of the Illini West High School District 307 of Hancock County, IL was called to order at 7:00 PM.
- 2) Roll Call:
  1. Tracy Anders
  2. John Huston
  3. Beth Pence – Absent
  4. Shannon Pence
  5. Darrell Sutton - Absent
  6. Betsy Wujek
  7. Holly Wilde
- 3) Recognition of Visitors: Carla & Scott Mudd, Tom Hartzell, Mark Harrison, Joel Neally, Sherry Harris, Chris Talley, Lee Wibbel, Cindy Logan
- 4) Public Comment –

This meeting was requested by the board as a preliminary meeting to assist in planning. John explained that during the IW board meeting the audience does not have a chance to talk/interrupt as their chance to speak is during the public comment. Each member of the audience was given a copy of the Russel report, so they have that info.

Carla Mudd - concerns - purchase of the farm ground, how/why/why they didn't get a chance to weigh in, location of the school – because a new building deals with insurance the insurance is an issue because of its location, declining enrollment, cost of school 34 million - matching and concerned that the state won't follow through, local taxes that will increase, dangerous for kids driving to and from if located out in the middle of nowhere, concerned with how to maintain their teacher salary- how do we keep this going? Will this be put back on the local taxpayers. 2 kids - 1 here and 1 coming and what the future holds. Kim explained the difference between education and building fund. Kim also addressed the concern with declining enrollment until 2029 because IW investigated this. John stated that it will cost roughly 34 million - with 1.3 million to build outside the city limits. IW doesn't have a design yet as we are the first step discussing money. Shared that if we don't have our money then the state won't even talk with us. IW is a fire hazard; student safety is a concern.

Scott Mudd - not for building out in the middle of nowhere. Mrs. Schilson was at Warsaw when they built the new gym, his parents still live there, and enrollment has gone down and yet their taxes rise. Concern about the enrollment and then the cost of property taxes. Let's just build a K-12 building - one school? Issue is that we are high school district and we cannot/will not be able to impact the 3 elementary districts. There are many other entities that come into play and it is not just solely IW that will cause tax increases. If IW built out on the farm yes, all new facilities would come with this.

Tom Hartzel - public meeting for the elected representatives to come and visit - Tom would like to be contacted with every agenda for every board meeting moving forward; what is the mission statement, safety - how/where are our staff/students going to feel safe; 34 million add 10% for the cost, utilities are costly - 10.8 million is the debt limit - why does each agency have a debt limit - to not burden the tax payers - CIDC - what do they have? majority of the students are living here in Carthage and if school is on the farm, then the majority of the students will need transportation unlike where IW is currently located, raising taxes because of the EAV - raising taxes none the less; going back to a unit district 3 elementary and 1 high school - each district would have to vote yes to this - Tom said that we always do our truth and taxation in December when everyone is very busy. Like to see the truth and taxation posting from December because he is sure we are over 5%. We are not obligated to have a hearing, but we have posting in October, November and December. Areas needed: Kim said ISBE requires 20 acres - ag program requires 14 acres etc.

Mark Harrison - 22 million to fix what we already have, which would include the additional spaces - why outside the city? Shannon said that we are all here for the kids. Renters lived within the district who don't pay taxes when they do through their rent. Mark agrees that something needs to be done. Mark wants to know what percent of the enrollment the board members are deciding to give to the voters to vote yes or no. 2013 - rank and order Kim discussed how we are making money off of the farm and we have options moving forward. Student safety came in 2nd on the survey after the last failed referendum. Discussion on the investment that IW has already put into the school. Reason for that financial commitment is to spruce up the place and to give the students and staff something to be proud of.

Sherry Harris - the farm is 11 miles from Carthage - concern is the safety of the children from police/fire/hospital protection.

Joel Neally - He thanked all of us for our commitment to IW as a board member because it is a thankless job. safety issue - because it is the option - but it is not safer than this current school. We don't want to put money into this school that we don't own - R. Menn and A. Jones said they would be open to talking about IW purchasing what we have. They are willing to talk. Would we take this school if Carthage Elementary gave it to us? Maybe we need to start a conversation with them? 34 million - without a design from an architect figure (estimates) IF the referendum fails where are we? We are where we are right now. Joel agrees that this is also not a safe school. Shannon stated that Fort Madison and Burlington are also trauma centers. Joel asked about if we would have an issue/concern with air quality of a hog confinement. Transportation will go up if we build out on the farm.

Chris Talley - thanked us for our service - concerned with the fact that maybe IW is not doing enough to get information out to all communities - allows for better open communication to be more forth coming. wants to see this being safe and a success as we all want. Do we have more information on the funding - was there a SWAT analysis - any sort of formal report; what was prioritized/ weighted etc. Chris said the purchase of the land is a great investment - trade with CIDC? Access/safety - 4 lane highway - location vs population center - Carthage has about 150 more registered voters than La Harpe/Dallas City combine - so Carthage has the majority. Was wanting to know about student population.

Lee Wibbel - no real concerns - express concern from what he hears as a Dallas City board member - centralized location he said that if we were to renovate this building, it would cost more tax dollars in DC and wouldn't pass either. There are firefighters/EMS in La Harpe & DC. Transportation from Lomax is

challenging. Location of the school will be on the ballot. If the referendum passed and the state doesn't come through with their money within the 5-year window, then the school would not be built. LEE INDICATED THAT HE WOULD ALSO BE INTERESTED IN HELPING WITH THE STEERING COMMITTEE. Offered information about DC using solar to run their school and in 15 years they will own that equipment. This would be a great cost benefit for the meeting.

Cindy Logan - suggests a flyer with the tax example in laymen terms; how can I help?

8:27 the public comment session ended

5) Discussion

- a. Building for the Future - School construction task force webinar - no decision was truly made regarding who should get the money first - 2 concerns at the state level were safety and if you had modular classrooms; if you had local fund - could potentially have 9 month - 2 years to secure local funding - Kim indicated she didn't feel that the group determining the new rules for the state money most likely will not have a decision ready by March 1, which is by governor's order. No 50/50 funding was discussed it is by a priority need. No rural school representation on this committee only large school. Talking about spending money down, the money you have which could be a problem. Forced consolidation was also discussed as well. The school board and school staff can only provide facts. John read to everyone #10 of the rules to everyone to educate us. If more than 2 board members are on a committee, then the board rules apply which means we cannot persuade. We all just need to be cautious. Mrs. Schilson said that as the superintendent she can only provide facts! As board members we need to provide facts and answer questions for the communities.

Cindy is going to organize the steering committee. She may need some additional names etc.

Facebook is a positive means that we could use to get more information out. Something that we didn't discuss was if enrollment goes up and/or we absorb another district. The walls would-be open-ended walls to allow for growth. Suggestion that the steering committee might want to consider involving clergy from all communities as they could be influential.

- 6) Motion by Wilde, seconded by Anders to adjourn at 8:56 p.m. Roll Call: Sutton/absent; Huston/yes; Wujek/yes; Anders/yes; S. Pence/yes; Wilde/yes; B. Pence/absent. Motion carried.

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John Huston, School Board President

2/19/2020

Date

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Betsy Wujek, School Board Secretary

2/19/2020

Date