

Schoharie

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWSLETTER



DECEMBER 2010 • CAPITAL PROJECT ISSUE • LEARNING IS THE MISSION



CAPITAL PROJECT VOTE

Tuesday, December 14

Polls are open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the High School library lobby.

District proposes capital project with 0% tax increase

A quality education lasts a lifetime, but school facilities tend not to have the same longevity. That's why district officials are proposing a \$2.255 million capital project designed to extend the life and usefulness of Schoharie's school buildings.

On Tuesday, Dec. 14, Schoharie residents will vote on a \$2.255 million

capital project proposal that carries a 0% tax increase.

"The funding for this project will come from two sources—New York State building aid and our voter-approved capital reserve fund," says Superintendent Brian Sherman.

Keeping our schools safe

Every five years, state law requires school districts to conduct a "buildings condition survey" to help district officials identify areas in their buildings that need to be updated for health and safety reasons, items that need to be repaired or replaced, and/or areas or items that should be upgraded and improved in order to deliver a quality

education.

The results of Schoharie's survey, which was conducted by an architecture and engineering firm—MOSAIC Associates Architects—revealed that the district needs to address various maintenance and safety concerns within its school buildings. For example, the district needs to abate asbestos in the basement boiler room at the high school; update its antiquated fire alarm system; upgrade its electrical wiring and network infrastructure to accommodate computer technology; replace the leaking bus garage roof; and repair broken skylights and doors. (See complete list on pages 2 and 3.)

"Much like a homeowner who keeps on top of important repairs before they become expensive problems, a school district must do the same to protect the community's investment in its buildings and facilities," says School Business Administrator Robert Bonaker.

Building aid, reserve fund supports capital project

The estimated cost of the project is \$2,255,000. There will be no additional property tax increase for taxpayers that would be attributed to this project. The reason for this is because the current New York State building aid for Schoharie is 83.3% or \$1,878,455 of the proposed capital project. The remaining 16.7% or \$376,593 of the project would



At A Glance: Capital Project

NO TAX INCREASE FOR RESIDENTS

FUNDING TO COME FROM STATE BUILDING AID AND CAPITAL RESERVE FUNDS

HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATES

TECHNOLOGY-BASED UPGRADES

BUILDING REPAIRS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is it, specifically, that voters are considering when voting on the capital project proposition?

Voters are authorizing the total dollar amount of expenditures for the project; an amount not to exceed \$2,255,000. If the project is approved by voters, architect and engineering plans must be designed and then submitted for approval by the State Education Department.

Q: What impact does the capital project have on tax rates?

There would be no additional impact on the tax rates for any of the items being considered by the voters on December 14. The project will be entirely funded by the capital reserve fund (that was approved by voters in May 2008) and state building aid that the district is entitled to.

Q: What about my state taxes? Will those increase?

State building aid consists of funds that the state has previously appropriated and set aside so that state income taxes will not be impacted. If the voters approve the project, Schoharie Central School District will receive its fair share of these available funds. If the project is not approved, the money will be given to other school districts for their capital projects.

Capital Project Details

Asbestos Abatement in High School Boiler Room: Research has shown that prolonged exposure to asbestos can result in various health ailments. Many older buildings undergo asbestos abatement in order to meet state health and safety standards and codes.

Cost: \$455,000 State Aid: \$379,015 Reserve Fund: \$75,985 Tax Levy: \$0

Fire Alarm System Upgrade: This district's current fire alarm system is made up of several different units, which means the main alarm panel can't communicate with all of the alarms. This poses a safety risk since the district can't always determine which alarm was pulled. Additionally, faulty connections frequently set off false alarms in the high school. Upgrading the system and repairing the connection will allow all of the alarms to communicate with each of the command panels in the main offices and at the main entrances to the building. It will also assist the fire department in its response to alarms and put an end to wire-triggered false alarms.

Cost: \$227,500 State Aid: \$189,508 Reserve Fund: \$37,993 Tax Levy: \$0



Repair High School Library Skylights: Conserving energy is a priority for the district. However, the existing skylights waste energy due to cracked and broken seals as well as broken glass. Additionally, the glass laminate is so eroded (see photo at left) that heat from the sun fully penetrates through the glass panes causing the rooms below to overheat and forcing the air conditioners to work overtime. Repairing the skylights will save energy and money.

Cost: \$130,000 State Aid: \$108,290 Reserve Fund: \$21,710 Tax Levy: \$0

Upgrade Technology Wiring Infrastructure: Several of the district's circuit panels are outdated and no longer approved for installation in schools, and therefore need to be replaced. Additionally, there are not enough network wires, switches, or A/C outlets to handle anymore computers or equipment in classrooms or work areas. Currently, most of the computer labs house units running through slow speed hubs, making it impossible to handle the data traffic flow. How does this impact students? Imagine waiting 15 to 30 seconds for a single web page to load when everyone in a lab is working at the same time. Or, picture a student going to the National Geographic website and trying to watch a video clip that pauses every 10 seconds due to low bandwidth. "The district is severely limited when it comes to video or audio streaming," says Sherman. "We need to move forward with the times and upgrade our technology infrastructure."

Cost: \$639,600 State Aid: \$532,787 Reserve Fund: \$106,813 Tax Levy: \$0

District proposed capital project - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

be paid for with the capital reserve fund.

"In May 2008, residents approved a referendum allowing the district to create a capital reserve fund that holds up to \$500,000," says Sherman. "We will only use \$376,593 from the fund for the proposed capital project."

Project time line

If the proposed capital project is approved, the asbestos abatement would

begin this spring (there will be no disruptions to students and staff) with the remainder of the work getting underway in the spring of 2012.

"This project will enable us to finish the health and safety improvements that we began four years ago," says Sherman. "It will also allow our students to use the technology they need to master in order to enter the workforce of the future."

Capital Project Details

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Why do the buildings need this additional work?

Our schools, just like our homes, have areas that need to be repaired, renovated, and upgraded from time to time. Also, it is important to make sure that our buildings are safe, for example, by keeping our emergency systems up to date and removing harmful substances from the property such as the proposed abatement of asbestos from the boiler room in the high school.

Q: Who assessed the needs for the project work and how were the items prioritized?

The Board of Education authorized a study of the capital needs that was conducted by MOSAIC Associates Architects—an architecture and engineering firm. This study is conducted every five years as a “building conditions survey,” as is required by state law. In concert with professional firms, the Board and the Superintendent of Schools established the project priorities within the limits of the budget of \$2,255,000.

Q: What if voters do not approve this project?

If voters do not approve this project, Schoharie’s state building aid will be awarded to other districts for their capital projects. Also, the district will have to propose a separate abatement vote because it is required to remediate the asbestos within a specific time frame or be fined by the State Health Department.

Clock System Rehabilitation: The current clock system doesn’t keep time properly and frequently needs to be repaired. Because of this, the clocks can’t be correctly synchronized with each other resulting in conflicting times (and bell schedules) in the classrooms.

Cost: \$39,000 State Aid: \$32,487 Reserve Fund: \$6,513 Tax Levy: \$0



Replace High School Exterior Doors: If it rains or snows outside, it’s a guarantee that rain or snow will get into the school through the exterior doors—most of which are the originals from 1932 when the school was built. The doors and some handles are rusty and eroding around the edges, the seals are wearing away, and the frames are crumbling. Furthermore, the district is required by regulation to maintain the historic look and feel of the building by purchasing replacement doors that look like the originals.

Cost: \$156,000 State Aid: \$129,948 Reserve Fund: \$26,052 Tax Levy: \$0

High School Bathroom Renovations: There are six bathrooms that are still equipped with the original fixtures, tiles, and plumbing and heating units from 1932. Some items do not work, others are falling apart and need to be replaced. Moreover, the ventilation in the bathrooms is poor and needs to be improved, and all of the bathrooms need to be made handicap accessible.

Cost: \$286,000 State Aid: \$238,238 Reserve Fund: \$47,762 Tax Levy: \$0

Tennis Court Resurfacing and Parking Lot Paving: The surface of the tennis court is cracked and uneven, which makes playing on it difficult. Additionally, the net posts are no longer straight. Resurfacing the court would fix these problems. The parking area near the boys’ soccer field is currently a gravel lot. During the winter months it takes twice as much time and manpower to remove snow because of the gravel surface. Additionally, this lot is prone to pot holes and excessive amounts of mud. Paving the lot and designating parking spaces would save time and money, as well as increase the district’s parking area for community and athletic events.

Cost: \$97,500 State Aid: \$81,218 Reserve Fund: \$16,283 Tax Levy: \$0

Bus Garage Roof: The roof is leaking in four locations, and the repetitive water damage has started to compromise the integrity of the structure. The roof needs to be replaced before the building becomes too damaged and requires additional, more costly repairs.

Cost: \$182,000 State Aid: \$151,606 Reserve Fund: \$30,394 Tax Levy: \$0

Improve Elementary Gym Acoustics: The gym is the original from 1952 when the school was built, and thus does not absorb noise well. In fact, when the community was asked for school improvement ideas, the number one recommendation was to improve the acoustics in the elementary school gym. Acoustic panels need to be installed in the gym in order to stifle the noise from physical education classes and activities. Additionally, the panels would almost completely eliminate the unwanted echo effect produced during assemblies and musical performances on the stage.

Cost: \$21,212 State Aid: \$17,670 Reserve Fund: \$3,542 Tax Levy: \$0

Replace High School Gym and Athletic Field Scoreboards: If you’ve ever attended a sporting event, you know how difficult it is to determine the score of the game—partly because many of the scoreboard bulbs are blown out and partly because the controller unit frequently breaks down. This can result in game interruptions because the clock malfunctions. Since the scoreboard units were made in the 1970s replacement bulbs and parts are no longer available, and repairs are expensive.

Cost: \$21,236 State Aid: \$17,690 Reserve Fund: \$3,546 Tax Levy: \$0



Schoharie

Central School District

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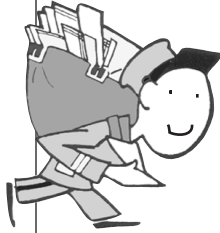
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A PUBLICATION OF THE SCHOHARIE CENTRAL SCHOOLS

Cost Summary

Total Cost: \$2,255,000

State Aid: \$1,878,455
Capital Reserve: \$376,593

Total Revenue Offset:
\$2,255,000

Local Tax Levy: \$0

Photo: Nearly all of the exterior doors at the high school need replacing due to decaying and rotting door frames, crumbling concrete, and rusty and misshapen doors. Unsafe entries and exits at the school pose safety and security risks.



Take the time to vote December 14

What am I voting on?

A \$2,255,000 capital building project that will be paid for through New York State building aid and pre-approved capital reserve funds, resulting in a 0% tax increase for residents.

When and where do I vote?

The vote is Tuesday, December 14 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the lobby of the Schoharie High School library.

How do I know if I'm eligible to vote?

You are eligible to vote if you are a: U.S. citizen, 18 years of age or older, and have been a resident of the Schoharie Central School District for at least 30 days prior to the vote.

What if I am not registered to vote?

No pre-registration is necessary to vote on December 14—just bring personal identification with you (such as a current driver's license) and you can vote.

What if I am out of town on December 14?

Eligible district residents can still vote even if they will be out of town on December 14. Call the District Clerk at (518) 295-6652 to request an application or stop in at the elementary school main office. **PLEASE NOTE:** If the absentee ballot will be mailed, the application for the ballot must be received by December 7. If the ballot will be delivered in person, the application must be received by December 13. All completed ballots must be received by the district clerk no later than 5 p.m. on December 14.