

**SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART**  
**BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES**  
**WORK SESSION MEETING**  
**June 20, 2024**

The Board of School Trustees of the School City of Hobart met in regular session on June 20, 2024, in the Board Room at Hobart High School, 2211 East Tenth Street, Hobart, Indiana.

**ROLL CALL:** President Terry Butler asked Board Members to log in. The following Board Members and administrators were present or absent as noted:

Board Members Present:

Terry D. Butler  
Rikki A. Guthrie  
Sandra J. Hillan  
Frank Porras  
Karen J. Robbins  
Donald H. Rogers

Board Member Absent:

Stuart B. Schultz

Administrators Present:

Peggy Buffington  
Christopher N. King  
William J. Longer

Administrators Absent:

Bob Glover  
Jonathan Mock  
Tim Krieg

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** President Butler indicated that no executive session meeting was scheduled.

**CALL TO ORDER:** President Butler called the meeting to order around 6:07 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** President Butler deferred the Pledge of Allegiance to the regular session meeting.

**LONG-RANGE PLANNING FOR THE SCHOOL DISTRICT:** Dr. Peggy Buffington recapped information from Stifel, the School City of Hobart's financial planner, for long-range planning of operations and capital improvements that was presented and discussed at a work session in May.

Below are some of the comments from this meeting's presentation and/or discussion:

- A goal would be to do a non-exempt bond issue for Capital Projects.
  - The bond issue would not have to appear on a ballot but would be subject to a petition-remonstrance.
  - A bond issue for petition-remonstrance has to be under \$20,000,000. If over that amount, it would have to be approved by a referendum.
  - Mentioned the best years for the consideration of potential bond issues.
- Renewing the Operating Referendum in 2025.
  - Would fund the transportation department.
  - Not feasible to include the purchase of new buses so that was not included.
  - Would not increase the tax rate.
  - A suggested slogan was "Renew to Ride."
  - Mentioned that after the last referendum, people were upset about the increase in their taxes, but that happened because the value of their property increased, not because of the referendum.
- Keeping a level tax rate for taxpayers when considering a referendum and/or bond issue.
- When the Debt Service Fund rate drops below 80 cents in 2025, possibly doing a \$19.050 million facility improvement bond issue. It could be done on a petition-remonstrance basis, rather than a referendum.
- Enrollment was "pretty much at capacity."
  - Veterans' enrollment was almost 600 students, and when the school opened, it was around 450 students.
  - Joan Martin School had extra rooms until the Merrillville school district withdrew from the special education cooperative. There are four rooms being used for special needs students from Hobart with a few from Lake Station and River Forest School districts.
  - The middle school would be seriously affected and class sizes would increase.
  - The high school has one spare room available, and possibly, one more classroom could be freed up. Infrastructure accommodations were made when the school was built so that

additions could be added off of each academic wing. Also, if necessary, classrooms could be rotated during prep periods.

- The high school would be paid off in 2028.
  - As a last resort, art and music rooms could be converted to classrooms. (Art and music teachers would travel to classrooms.)
  - The district was not seeing growth and enrollment had dropped below 4,000 students.
  - The district has lost 148 students due to the state's voucher program.
  - Birth rates are down.
  - Grade level enrollments are down. Cohorts used to be 300 or so, and now are in the area of 260 students.
  - Do not have the enrollment to support building a school at this time.
- Information pertaining to an intermediate school if student growth would warrant the need and a 26-acre parcel of land was mentioned across from St. Mary Medical Center on Wisconsin Street and 61st Avenue was to be an agenda item at the regular session meeting. Monies were put aside for a possible land purchase from a previous bond issue.
  - The tax rate would drop again in 2028 and to keep the rate the same, a capital bond issue could be considered at that time.
  - The importance of keeping the district's facilities updated.
    - Facilities, technology and transportation departments
      - Highlighted two different spreadsheets by school year from 2025-2026 to 2028-2029 and 2025-2026 to 2035-2036 for these departments.
      - The total amount of funds needed for 2025-2026 to 2028-2029 was \$18,901,191.78 and the total for 2025-2026 to 2035-2036 was \$58,609,610.45.
        - ▶ Budgets figures for each department were itemized by subject and included the amount designated for each item by year in both sets of figures.
    - Do not want 18 or 19 year old buses because of repair costs.
    - Told the district was the recipient of a grant to be used towards the purchase of two propane buses.
    - Roofs on the schools are around the same age.
    - Need to maintain parking lots.
    - Important for all areas of technology to be kept up-to-date.

It was mentioned that the renewal referenda in Lake Station and Hammond were not approved, and both districts have had to make major cuts. In addition, it was noted that state funding for the upcoming school year would be \$250,000, and it was noted that would not even pay for the anticipated increase for insurance.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no other business designated for the work session, President Butler adjourned the meeting around 6:52 p.m.

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES  
SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART

---

Terry D. Butler, President

ATTEST:

---

Sandra J. Hillan, Secretary

Submitted for Approval: July 3, 2024