



Putting “it” in Front of the Public

When the Nemaha Valley and Tecumseh school districts merged in 2007, there was a lot of uncertainty. What will our new school name be? What about school colors? What will the mascot be? Now, fourteen years later, the uncertainty of how to address facility needs gets longer with each passing year and never goes away. The JCC board and administration will often be asked variations of the following questions:

- When will we build something?
- When will we get everyone to one site?
- What will happen to the old facilities if you do build something?

The process forward is somewhat of a “What comes first; the chicken or the egg?” scenario. Only in our case, it has more to do with “What comes first; the community input or the building design and plans?”

Rewind a few years and you might recall a series of community input meetings led by Dr. Boldt. This was the beginning of trying to figure out what our public wanted. During these meetings, people wanted to know what a new facility would cost. They wanted to know what exactly would be done. These questions were hard to answer because we had yet to consult with architects, engineers and financial advisers. Here is what we learned:

- Most people are in favor of all JCC students being at one site.
- Most people agree that some form of new, or upgraded, facilities are needed.

In response to this information, the school board has taken direction from the following:

- Russ Koch – Educational Facilities Consultant
- Clark & Enerson - Architects
- D.A. Davidson – Public Finance
- KSB School Law – JCC’s Legal Counsel
- Boyd Jones – Construction Manager At-Risk
- Hausmann Construction – Construction Manager At-Risk

Although we have been advised by all the above, we have no binding contracts with any of these. Depending on the direction the school board and I receive from our constituents (you), one of the next steps would be to secure contracts for bonding, architecture and construction services.



Jon Rother,
JCC Superintendent

In consulting with the aforementioned parties, we have seen renderings of what a new facility might look like, different building phase options that could be financed, very rough cost estimates and bond impact.

We also learned that one of our best options might be to start new. Therefore, the school district entered into an Option Agreement to Purchase Real Estate. The terms of this agreement gives JCC five (5) years to purchase the property North of the Tecumseh Site football field (52.3 acres) at a set agreed upon price as a potential site for new facilities.

This property would give JCC a nice platform from which to build a one-site campus with plenty of room for expansion. If nothing else happens, at least JCC would have the land secured for a future project.



In looking at preliminary renderings for a future PK-12 facility, then considering the needs of a district the size of JCC; we are looking at roughly \$56 million for the whole thing.

We know our tax base cannot support that number. Even with some trimming of “un-needed spaces”, we just cannot afford the whole PK-12 right now. However, there are some factors that could affect this:

- Nebraska legislature passing a new school funding formula. Unfortunately, this is

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talked about every year, but we are yet to see a change.

- Should Niocorp break ground and begin construction of a mining facility near Elk Creek, their presence would add valuation that could give property owners a bit of relief allowing JCC to more readily pass a bond for construction.

These are both factors that are out of our control and we are not able to count on them changing our financial situation right now. We hope this changes, but right now they are both unknowns. Here is what we do know about right now:

- We have land available we could build on.
- Interest rates are very low. When we talk of financing a building project over 20 years, the interest rate is a large part of our cost.
- Relatively speaking, the agricultural economy is strong.
- Valuations have remained steady with a slight upward trend.



So, what are the next steps?

1. Work with Clark-Enerson to put together a few options of building phases for our constituents to think about and give feedback on.
2. Work with Clark-Enerson to provide some estimates on what construction of the different options would cost our district.
3. With the help of D.A. Davidson, provide the public with the levy and financial impact of each of the proposed phases.
4. Meet with and survey our public to find out what they want and what they will support financially.

These steps will then give the board and I further direction on how to move forward. So, here are a few questions for you to start thinking about, talking about and giving feedback on:



- What do you want?
 - Significant upgrades of existing facilities?
 - If so, to what buildings?
 - New construction?
 - An elementary school?
 - An elementary/middle school?
 - A high school?
 - A high/middle school?
 - A new competition gym with fitness facilities to include a walking track?
 - An elementary and a competition gym?
 - A high school and a competition gym?
 - Some other combination not mentioned?
- What will you support financially?
 - This is all dependent on how much real property (fixed land and buildings) you own and what it is valued at. This will be different for everyone.

And, you may have many more questions. But, we want people talking about this as we want your feedback. Look for future communications in regards to community meetings and surveys. In the meantime; think, talk, share ideas and please reach out to any of our school board members or myself! While there is no “right answer”, preparing for the future is always better than reacting to our circumstances.

- Jon Rother, JCC Superintendent