

COTTAGE GROVE CITY COUNCIL

June 5, 2024

**12800 RAVINE PARKWAY SOUTH
COTTAGE GROVE, MN 55016**

SPECIAL MEETING - TRAINING ROOM - 5:45 P.M

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Bailey called the Special Meeting/Workshop to order.

2. AGENDA

A. Independent School District 833 Project Review.

Mayor Bailey stated he was excited and looking forward to seeing and hearing the District 833 Project overview. He stated Julie Nielsen, Superintendent, and Dan Pyan, Executive Director of Finance & Operations, would start us off on this.

Julie stated thank you for having us here. We shared it on our last day of students, not our last day because we work all year. While Dan is retiring, I'm getting older, too, and I'll be the most senior person. We are excited to be here just to share a little update.

We'd like to go through our overall slides, I think it gives the community a reminder of who we are as South Washington County Schools: We're the second-largest employer in Washington County, behind Andersen Windows. We're the 6th largest district: Anoka-Hennepin remains 1st, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan moved into 3rd, Minneapolis is 4th, and Osseo Public Schools is 5th. We're still holding tight on close to nearly 4,000 employees. Across the district, there are 1,800 K-12 students. If we factor in our little pre-K students, we're talking about another 1,000 students; so, we have that many students who are in our early learning pre-K. You are aware that we provide programming really from birth all the way up to people getting their GEDs, sometimes at the age of 90.

I think the last time I was here, we were sitting at about 51%-52%, and really, as we look over the years and having been in the district since 1991, this pie chart of demographics gives you an idea of who we serve and what our students and families bring to our communities, what they bring to our schools. This just really highlights the diversity that we have in terms of student backgrounds. Of course, many of our students are born here in the United States, but we do have a number of students that come in with 3M, with Medtronic, and are part of our school district.

This shows our projected enrollment; if you look at the bottom left-hand corner, you're going to see that this was done by Hazel Reinhardt as part of our demographic study, which led to the bond question. Something to note when we look at 2024 into 2025, while these were projections, what we heard as part of that demographic study, nationally and certainly across Minnesota, we are seeing smaller classes of kindergarteners coming in; we're graduating a large class, we have smaller numbers of kids coming in, and that is because of fertility rates and overall birth rates. So, it means that nationally we're seeing a trend of lower enrollment. We have been holding steady, and we look at next year's enrollment, depending on the day it can go up and down slightly, we look at it every week. We're talking about 150 students that we're down, as I said graduating a large class; so, we're still continuing to hold our own. We have a lot of families who are interested in open enrollment, which is great, as Minnetonka and some of the west side really do a lot of recruiting with the open enrollment. We would do the same if we had a lot of extra space, but we don't have that extra space; we want to make sure that we have space for our own students first.

This is just to give you a little idea of enrollment. The school district, while we passed our first portion of a bond referendum, it doesn't take away some of the inefficiencies when we take a look at our elementary schools. So, you're going to see those elementary schools in the 200s and the 300s; some of them are located right next to each other, we have Hillside and Armstrong that are like basically almost on the same property, but not quite. Just looking at the sizes of our schools, you'll see they range from 260 all the way up to Liberty Ridge at 821. So, when we do our staffing, when we talk about students, it's all done from a district perspective, looking at the number of students at each school.

This just highlights for Council just the numbers of secondary students; you'll see on the left-hand side in bold are the Cottage Grove schools, Cottage Grove Middle and Oltman Middle School. On the right-hand side are high schools, so you'll see where Park High School is sitting as well as South Washington County Alternative High School.

Mayor Bailey asked between Cottage Grove Middle and Oltman Middle School, what's our capacity at?

Dan replied Oltman has a capacity of 990; Mayor Bailey stated so you're over a little bit, which Dan confirmed. Dan stated Cottage Grove Middle is about 1,200. Julie stated Lake and Cottage Grove are that same prototype in terms of schools.

Julie stated so, let's just take a quick look back. I know you want to get to the project and take a look at where we're at; but if you remember, Question 1 was the highest priority. That dealt with making space in our high schools, as well as the remodels at our secondary, and the safety and security at our secondary schools. Question 2, when we focus over there, it will be on safety and security at the elementary level addition, along with bathrooms. So, if you look at Question 1, Dan is going to be sharing a little bit of Cottage Grove Middle School; we're actually just beginning that project, and they will be doing a secured entryway. Oltman Middle School, if you remember, they're going to have another wing added on, and that was all planned for as part of the last referendum. East Ridge High School is going to have a whole addition as well, so construction of new classrooms: CTE, computer and technology classrooms, biomed, science technology, and engineering. Park is going to have a new cafeteria, kitchen, and expansion of various areas, and then, of course, that secured entryway. When we look at East Ridge and Park, East Ridge right now has that secured entryway whereas at Park, you kind of go into the vestibule and once you step in, it's just wide open to the learning space.

Elementary Schools for Cottage Grove: Grey Cloud Elementary School because of its size, you saw kind of a higher enrollment and just overall growth in that particular school, construction of classroom additions, a long list of the need for a bigger cafeteria and kitchen. Pine Hill is the same, you all are aware of the growth over in that area. If you haven't noticed, there's some kids coming out of the cracks, I think every space in that school is utilized for something; closets are offices, sometimes working with kids one on one. Finally, Crestview, Hillside, Pullman, and Royal Oaks, in Woodbury, they will all have the construction of the bathrooms as well; those are planned for later, but Dan will talk about that.

Julie stated I'm going to let Dan talk about the construction phasing and then where we are with each of the projects. Please, as we go through, if you have questions, stop us. Some of the information that we have prepped for our Board, we wanted to make sure that our Board saw it before we brought it here, so we continue to move every week as we go through these plans.

Dan stated as we're talking, the design and planning process is underway for the first tier of our projects. We will be eventually working on 15 different construction projects across the district over the next three years. The first tier projects are the highest-priority items, and that's focusing on safety and security and overcrowding in the secondary schools. We will start designing the elementary addition, the elementary school restrooms in January 2025; so, we're really at a cycle where we'll get these projects designed, we'll get the bids out, and get the construction schedule, then we'll start designing the next. Our architects have been meeting with groups of staff to gather input, feedback, and to start the design work for all these additions. We hope that by 2027, all 15 projects will be done.

This is more of a graphic way to look at the construction plans and phasing it; it's subject to a little bit of change, but certainly my eyes already flirted with the end for each project. You can see that we're looking at high growth in Lake Middle and Oltman Middle, being done by the fall of 2026; Woodbury Middle School will actually be the first thing done in April 2026. We're scheduled to have East Ridge done

by 2026, and then Park High School and Woodbury High School done by the fall of 2027. This is on our website; this is just an easy way to look at it.

Julie stated and if I can just interrupt, keep in mind we passed the bond in 2023, and so the work isn't going to be done until 2027. One of the first things we heard was, well, why do we have these delays, it's going to be so long. I think that's the difference between our school district having a five-year plan and a ten-year plan, because when approved, it still takes five years to actually get the building done. So, we've heard some of that, why it takes so long, and that is part of the statement.

Administrator Levitt stated I don't think people recognize that you're not going to spend money on design services without a referendum passed; so, why would you spend all of that money financially, I don't think they understand that dollar use.

Council Member Khambata asked when you guys put out a Request for Proposal when you bid any of these projects, how many firms normally respond?

Dan replied these projects will have to be bid based on the year for them, when they're contracted, so, they don't actually get bid before that.

Council Member Khambata stated I'm just curious, like how many firms are out there that are trying to like compete in this space.

Administrator Levitt stated you use Kraus-Anderson.

Dan stated yes, we do, so we use them as our construction manager, so they'll act as the general; so, say electrical, we'll probably get three or four general construction. There are some big players, we're hoping to get a lot more, but it depends on what else is going on. Generally, for each one, three or four.

Council Member Khambata asked have you guys witnessed or kind of seen any kind of downward trend in what the estimated bids were vs. like what actual costs are? I know we've been seeing some of that with our capital improvement projects where for a long time, things were coming in a little bit above the engineer's estimate, and now we're starting to see bids come in a little bit below, which is a nice surprise.

Dan stated our current experience has lots of, let's call it long-term facility maintenance, which we work on every year, about \$20M worth; usually, it's the real boring stuff, roofs, parking lots, HVAC equipment. Yes, we've definitely seen it flatten and we're pleased with some of that, but it has flattened out, knock on wood. Like you said, so we can see after the first of the year, the first month, and it will be interesting to see how it goes after that.

Council Member Khambata stated very cool, thank you.

Oltman Middle School

Dan stated the scope of this project is to create capacity for about 400 more students, so they'll be at almost 1,400. People may ask why do you have to expand; I don't think philosophically we want to have any middle schools with more than 1,400 students. If we get to that point, we're going to have so many middle schools, that we'll have to look at start building in a different area. The space includes STEM classrooms, multipurpose classrooms, science classrooms, general classrooms. We will expand the cafeteria and the kitchen. We now need to comply with storm shelter requirements, meaning that we'd need to have an area there that would withstand certain parameters for storms, which is new, based on the last time we built this, and that adds about \$2M to each project we're doing.

Our guiding principles in designing this building is that the additions will look and feel like they match the rest of the building; the pod layouts will vary from existing with updated learning opportunities, and we'll plan additional opportunities for flexible learning in the pod areas and the science and general areas.

Council Member Garza asked are any of their bathrooms going to multigender bathrooms?

Julie replied yes, across our secondary projects, we have a couple different templates of bathrooms, and depending upon where its located, we're really looking in places like theater area, gymnasium, but locations where large groups gather to have single-user stalls. So, we actually have two different prototype bathrooms for the secondary that we're looking at, depending upon the location.

Council Member Garza stated that's good. I've gotten a lot of feedback from some of the St. Paul schools; the ones that boys and girls are both using that in the lower schools is not as nice for girls because little boys and little girls are using them.

Julie stated I think the one thing that we just have to think about is at any level is if someone identifies as transgender, then by law they need to have access to the bathroom they identify with. So, typically,

with an elementary we work with families closely on that, but I think at the secondary level, we really are trying to look at the spaces and where large groups gather to make sure we have some options.

Dan stated so here's the overall floorplan that we've come up with so far. You remember we're expanding the cafeteria and the kitchen, you can see that in the yellow. We'll be pushing that cafeteria out and then adding actually this is a little branch, adding a little bit more to that kitchen because of the original design and we're feeding more and more students.

Then the actual addition of the classrooms was fairly simple on this one, same design and putting it on the end that we had planned on, and then make that some storm shelter security, to fit the requirements of the storm shelters.

Here is an illustration of what it will look like; as you can see, being its such a new building, adding the same type of classroom that you can see on that slide. Here's the other slide of the cafeteria; you can see where the old walls are now, we'll bump that out; right now it's the courtyard out there, and this will be beyond that when we expand the kitchen. You can also see that on the other side.

Dan stated the schedule for this one, we'll be designing up until September, and we'll put together the best possible bid in the fall, the bond and the bid documents. We hope we can start construction in the spring of 2025.

Administrator Levitt stated and the nice thing, as Dan pointed out, the project on its original approval had already contemplated those additions; so, you won't see it go through Planning Commission or City Council because it was already approved originally. That will help expedite them directly to a building permit.

Cottage Grove Middle School

Dan stated this is one where we would like to establish a better secured entrance. So, we're looking at putting a secured private entrance and moving the office basically to the front of the building, and we'll remodel existing portions of the front-office area.

Council Member Olsen asked don't you have an entry/exit on both sides at Cottage Grove Middle School? One in the front and one in the back? Julie asked the pool area? Council Member Olsen replied yes. Julie said yes, the pool area during the school day, though, is not used. Council Member Olsen stated I see. Dan stated it's secured, as well as the back. Julie stated the exterior doors are locked and they come in, just to the left, that will be the main area. Council Member Olsen stated okay, perfect, thank you.

Dan stated that is not an exciting change, but you can see where we'd like to put that, and this actually makes it the easiest and most useful place to put the offices, and we're really not taking away much green space because this is just your entryway right now.

Dan stated hopefully this will be designed by the end of February 2025, we'll bid in the spring of 2025, and start construction between January and the summer of 2026.

Park High School

Dan stated now remember, with Park we're not adding capacity, as Park has the capacity of about 2,100; it should be okay, as there are about 1,900 students right now. Based on the way the classes are flowing through, we should be good for at least three-to-five more years.

We probably do need to expand the cafeteria and the kitchen, as they were built too small for that in the first place. We also want to expand our Career Tech Education department and modernize those classrooms. This one has a secured entrance, but it's one, like Julie said, that opens up into the main school building; so, we'll move the offices and the secured entrance to that portion and reconfigure all of that. Of course, the site traffic and the safety improvements, as you're all very familiar with the traffic around there. We're hoping to come up with a plan now to improve it; we keep looking at it, and you'll be able to see that in a second.

Dan stated I kind of already touched on the scope, but we are looking at a new entry and roadway to address traffic on 80th Street; we'll have to do some more new stormwater management, relocate the athletic field, a new building and grounds athletic storage building, relocate staff parking. Of course, inside we talked about the cafeteria and some of the classrooms. It'll probably be easier to see it than to talk about it. Here's an example of the draft Site Plan. As you can see, the spot in here is 80th Street, and the idea at this point is to enter down by Crestview. The Crestview people would just go around, back into their lot, and drop off the kids and pick them up. Park students will follow a new road that goes in, around

back, to where you see the student drop off is going to be back where that cafeteria and kitchen are, the new cafeteria is in the back there. Just for reference, you can see the football field, you know what part of the building we're talking about. We've been kind of going over these Site Plans a lot and coming up with different types. The athletic fields aren't for sure in there because as we looked at some of the budgets, we may not be able to take out that big hill behind Crestview, but we'll just figure that part out.

Julie stated this one isn't as exciting. When you look at this, it doesn't look like very much for \$38M or whatever it is, but I think as you go through now, you're going to see a little bit more detail. What we're planning to do with these large buildings, though, is to have two spaces where we have secured entryways. It's really difficult with student parking because what kids start doing is they start opening doors for each other. So, on the back end, where the cafeteria is, will be an entryway in the morning that will be staffed. So, then, if kids go out for lunch, seniors, then when they come back, they'd have a door on that side. Otherwise, they're not going to walk around the whole school to get in the front. So, we really tried to make sure that we could set it up that way.

Mayor Bailey asked so, where it says staff parking with that little arrow, that's the Ice Arena, right? Julie replied yes.

Council Member Olsen stated so this is slated for completion in 2027. So, I assume you'll do the planning and bidding and all the rest of that for this building in 2025 vs. 2024, is that right?

Julie replied stated we have the bidding on here, it's all phased in. So, the bidding will have to happen in 12/2024, so about a month. The bid cap, too, I think the first bid cap will be the cafeteria; the first thing we have to do is move that new cafeteria because it's new, and that's in the back. Then, where the existing cafeteria is, then that will be remodeled with offices, etc.

Council Member Olsen stated okay, I'm about to ask you a question that probably isn't part of your presentation, and I don't want to get off on a tangent; I just want to know have you had any dialogue with any of the users of the Ice Arena with respect to connecting the two in some way for kids who are crossing from Park to the Ice Arena, Ice Arena to Park, pick up, drop off, or games, tournaments, etc.? Just wondering specifically maybe Coach Corkish or some of those folks, have they had any input into this or will they at some point?

Dan replied they approached us about adding a locker room. Council Member Olsen stated well, that's another part of this conversation. Dan replied there have not been any conversations that I have heard about that we've had with them. So, then we looked at it and decided to leave room, we found the places where we could do it and do the HVAC and things like that. So, as far as I know, and I can do some research and reevaluate. I don't know that we've had any conversations. When you talk about connecting, do you mean?

Council Member Olsen stated again, I don't want to get off on a tangent; I'll just tell you that they have had conversations with our Park and Recreation department, with the mayor and myself, about some different thoughts that they have relative to the Ice Arena and its adjacency to the school and how that could work better, etc. So, I just wanted to know if they had approached you. Because if they haven't, I mean, at some point they should so that at least they can be heard.

Dan stated I'll check back with Kyle and see if he's had any conversations. We have talked about the locker room. Dan stated I'll find out.

Council Member Olsen stated sure, understood. Okay, thank you.

Mayor Bailey stated so, I think I heard you say, I'm just making sure I catch this; so, Crestview's down in the left corner there, and you have your visitors' parking. So, if I heard what you said, at least at this point if you're picking up or dropping off, either at Crestview or at Park, you're going to come in down there, correct, vs. up on the other lot?

Julie replied yes.

Mayor Bailey stated so, if there's a student who's going to park, they're going to go up there, and then the drop off and such is going to be in the back, what will now be the back of the school.

Julie replied yes, that will be where the traffic of cars will come in, then the buses will stay in the front.

Mayor Bailey stated so, the only question I have is not, I don't know if this is so much for you but with our staff, too, is as we've been challenged, and so have you with the whole parking between the Ice Arena and the schools, in this conversation are we having discussions about where we can expand

parking opportunities? I mean, I see the one where it says staff parking, that's kind of an existing lot, though, is that staying that size, or?

Dan replied I might be wrong, and I brought it up because we had conversations, I think that is just additional parking there now, but I'm not quite sure.

Mayor Bailey stated yes, because to me it looks like it's closer to the Ice Arena, which right now there's that old white, it used to be a warming house.

Dan stated yes, and that was that building I was talking about, if we can get rid of that. Mayor Bailey stated yes.

Council Member Olsen asked and you're talking about that hill behind there, too, right? About doing something with the hill. So, I mean, is that going to enable you to add ballfields and maybe change?

Dan replied oh, you mean behind there? Yeah, that might. I might have to take that up with engineering.

Council Member Olsen stated I'll take it down myself, if you want me to, because I had to run it under Coach Ekmark more times than he did, so.

Mayor Bailey stated that's the only reason you want the hill gone. Council Member Olsen stated I will happily come by and do that. Mayor Bailey stated kids will be mad at you for that, though, if they're not sledding.

Dan stated that might not be true value engineering. We had the schematic design, composite numbers, and then we had to go back to the drawing board to take some dollars off.

Administrator Levitt stated the one thing, too, is they have designed all those pull-in spots off of the driveway, to the north. So, those are all added parking stalls as well. I think our biggest comment is then we need sidewalks and lighting to provide safety navigation to the Ice Arena, but they're adding a tremendous amount of parking stalls on that pull in.

Mayor Bailey stated I'm just interested, as you get further along, what the difference of parking is going to be for the grand scheme of things. Administrator Levitt asked kind of a site totality? Mayor Bailey stated yes, and how we're part of that, too, obviously.

Council Member Khambata asked so the egress onto 80th Street from the student parking lot, does that become like an exit only? Or how do you navigate that traffic signal then if you've got this new drop-off lane that goes around the back of the school?

Julie asked oh, the stoplight that's directly on this student exit? Council Member Khambata replied yes.

Dan stated well, at this point, I believe we can come up with all kinds of ideas, too, and I know our guys have been working the City, too. So, I think those will remain; I think the hope is that we're going to take so much of the drop-off traffic down to there that you'll have a lot less traffic flow up on top.

Council Member Khambata stated when I drop my kids off in the morning, I'm impressed at the amount of animosity that parents throw at each other in the drop-off line. I just park my car and walk my kid up, I don't mess with the line. But on the off chance that I am trying to get in or out of the line, I have been in less tense traffic in like Chicago than I have experienced in the drop-off line. My question is if you give somebody two options, like how do you incentivize them to use the one that you want and not just create like a bigger mess with two options?

Julie replied you show them.

Council Member Khambata stated well, at Hillside, they put cones out in front, so all the nasty parents that want to skip in line and go the short way, they can't, they have to go all the way around the back.

Julie stated so does the superintendent when she visits Hillside, they just want you to know.

Council Member Khambata stated but on more than one occasion, somebody's like trying to run over the cone to get in. So, I'm just curious how you manage that because I know that's a big problem, both at Crestview and at Park with the like stacking during pick up and drop off.

Dan stated there are various ways; there's not a uniform way we can do that because we look at the different schools and the different drivers. We go to Oltnan, and they set up a system that not only works, but it took a lot of push and pull to get there.

Julie stated Red Rock is another one of those schools that sits right there.

Dan stated the building manager is the one who usually comes up with the plan. It all depends on what kind of parents you're dealing with, things like that, the ages. Because if you go to Liberty Ridge, and

theirs is totally different, the way they do theirs. So, there's no answer yet, but the hope is get that traffic down there and take it away from up at the stoplight.

Mayor Bailey stated the only other thing for our staff, as you guys were working through this, is obviously is it next year or the year after we're doing 80th Street? Administrator Levitt replied 2026.

Mayor Bailey stated so we're doing 80th in 2026. One of the things I was going to say when we got to that point is when you go by Crestview or those areas now, the lanes are stopped because traffic is backed up so bad; is our goal then from a staff perspective that turn lanes are going to be, like whether you're going west or east, is there going to be longer turn lanes?

Administrator Levitt replied well, engineering is working directly with the school district to design and figure out how we can make those things more efficient. They're looking at that queuing space, the timing of the signals because there can be gaps. So, it's still numbers, and we're still in schematic design to figure out all of those solutions, but we're working in tandem.

Mayor Bailey stated I figured you were.

Julie stated the City engineers have been great, working with and even talking about this, and how much of a line can we have to keep traffic flowing.

Mayor Bailey stated the only reason I bring it up, and I 100% agree with what you're trying to do, but I also worry that if we're going to put all the Park kids and the Park parents are doing drop off, along with Crestview, and they're all going in one entrance, what's already a backup at Crestview is going to multiply. And I'm not sure this has happened, but I'm just going to say you could have traffic that's backed through the intersection on Hinton.

Julie stated well, we have different start times.

Mayor Bailey stated okay, so, you're going to make sure of that.

Julie stated Crestview is an early start school, and of course our high schools are on second tier. So, the times are different and the same with the dismissal times then, of course. So, we thought about that, the dismissal times are different, so there may be some traffic coming in there from like elementary when it's high school time, but most of it would be high school. There has also been some conversations about having gates and when might this area be gated off so that now kids don't have access to that and they have to go to the student parking. I think the exciting thing, and you don't get to see it with the images we have here, is when we take a closer deep dive into that cafeteria and kitchen if you can imagine that by the football field; having a brand-new addition with an area that has glass and windows and not lower ceilings than this, with 1,000 kids trying to eat lunch in there, it's designed beautifully.

Dan stated this is the specific schedule: Right now, we just finished up schematic design, and we went through our first budget cut, and now we're into design and development. Construction documents at the end of this calendar year, bidding first pack in November, bidding the second pack in February, and construction hopefully starting in June 2025, finally ending in August 2027. As Julie pointed out, we have to build the new cafeteria before we can remodel the old one, so that makes it a little tougher. We'll run into the same issues at Woodbury High School.

East Ridge High School

Dan stated this is where a lot of Cottage Grove students go; the overall schedule on that is we're in schematic design, we're almost done with that, and we're in design and development. These documents will be done by October 2024, bidding at the end of this year. Construction starting in April 2025, which really isn't that far away now, and ending in August 2026.

The scope on East Ridge High School is to put new parking in, to replace the removed parking that this new building section will take up. Reconfigure the staff parking and pick up and drop off. Building wise, classroom addition to increase the capacity to 2,300. Also, do an addition to the career type education area to enhance our curricular offerings, and then, of course, expand the cafeteria, the kitchen, and renovate so we can handle that number of students in the cafeteria. Online learning, office of special education, and renovations.

At this point, this is the way this one looks: Oltman and East Ridge kind of have the same look, and at Oltman, we were able to add our new addition to the old sawtooth. We had a sawtooth plan at East Ridge where the building goes like this; Julie said that's down in the left-hand area if you want to show them where that would be. Dan said the original plan, we were able to expand down here, but as we looked at doing that, the designers and the school leaders found that this made the school so long that it would take

you a half hour to go from one end to the other. So, they moved the addition to the front area; if you know how to go up there, it used to be the activities entrance where you walk in the glass doors and you go straight to the cafeteria; otherwise, you take a right to the gymnasium.

Council Member Olsen asked are you going to have to reconfigure the access to the football field, etc.?

Dan replied no, we should be okay on the football field. We're going to push that out there, right now it's just a big graveyard tank area. Then they're going to sweep it for more parking, but the flow of the drop offs is still a work in progress there.

The exciting part is the ability to handle up to 2,300 students in the classroom additions; all the additions were going to the front of the building, meaning that they're getting so long that it's hard to manage.

Mayor Bailey stated so basically what you're saying is that courtyard area and the stuff in front of that will become part of the new?

Julie replied a new classroom pod, yes. If you think about the pod, it's similar to the upper level and lower level, similar to Oltman where they added it on at the end. This one is now going by the athletic entrance so it will be an upper level and a lower level, a learning space, and then increasing the capacity of the cafeteria. Mayor Bailey stated that makes sense.

Dan stated the CTE right now, where they do robotics and stuff, that's back in the one corner, by the gymnastics room, and that's going to be expanding to handle more students and just to upgrade the whole thing. That's why that one looks like it's far away, but that's just the original building between there.

Dan stated we're planning on doing the demolition, as they looked ahead at the activities entrance, because basically we're taking that out and moving the whole building out in spring break of 2025; once again, that's not that far away. We'll have to do all the bids and stuff to get all that in. We're looking a new classroom, a cafeteria addition from April 2025 to August 2026, and the CTE addition from June 2025 to December 2025.

Our Next Steps

Dan stated we'll continue to collaborate with the cities to work through planning. There's a School Board Business Meeting on July 18 where the architects will share the high school designs with the Board. It will be much more detailed than this, and you're encouraged to come down or tune in and watch it. You can always look online for updates on construction.

Julie stated we certainly have updated iterations of our plans, but in lieu of putting them out there when they haven't been costed out, we just want to make sure that we give the costings so that we're not showing something that we can't afford. So, just know that week after week of meeting with teachers and groups that our architects are updating and updating. July 18 will probably be our most up-to-date iteration that will go to the Board. We'd be happy to share the presentation back, and then you can share it with the Council Members.

Mayor Bailey said thank you.

Julie asked what other questions do you have about any of the projects in Cottage Grove?

Council Member Khambata stated it's not specific to Cottage Grove, but can you remind me what the term is on those bonds that were issued?

Dan replied 18 to 20, depending on what works best for us overall, debts and assets.

Council Member Olsen stated first of all, going back to the grade schools, I know you guys have been really working to understand how to reconfigure busing and different things and where to put kids, schools that are over vs. under, etc. So, I'm just curious, do you feel like you've come up with the grand plan, or is it still a work in progress? Because some of those schools are really, really tight and some of them, obviously, are not, and busing isn't free. So, I'm just wondering where you're at with all that.

Julie replied I think that it is always a plan in motion, and I think that while we asked the community for \$463M and I'm grateful for \$200M, it means that in the next years we have to take a look at other efficiencies. We have really prided ourselves on making sure that we could pay our staff; obviously, our teachers are our largest bargaining group, but if we want to be a place where the best teachers want to be, then we have to make sure that we're efficient everywhere else. And, so, we will continue to address that.

You may have heard at our last Board Meeting, Light the Way Church, we put in a request to purchase that; we put in a review and comment to the State to purchase that for Next Step and Pathways, keeping mind that's for our 18-to-22-year-olds with disabilities. Now, that was originally on the bond, and so, we're already beginning to take steps and take a look at what's available to us to go back and say we still have these needs and how can they best be addressed. But, Justin, you're right; in the future, I don't know if that means 5 years, 8 years, 4 years, we're going to have to relook at things in terms of attendance boundaries. Because, and I know that you will understand this, but in every one of those schools, whether you're 260 or 800, you have a principal, you have a nurse, you have custodian, you have nutrition services backing up office staff. And, so, at some point you know we say our ideal size of an elementary school is about 550 to 600 students; that's where you're running an efficiency. When we do staffing and a school has 30 kids in first grade, do we give them one teacher or two teachers? Well, everybody else has 24 kids in a first-grade classroom because they would have 15. And, so, we run into that, and it's really difficult to understand because the sentiment in our school district is not favorable to repurposing but we have to begin to take a look at the sites that we own and say how can we do this better and more efficiently?

Council Member Olsen stated I appreciate you talking about the boundaries, that was going to be my next question; and you're talking to a kid who lived north of 70th Street, back in the day, and went to Woodbury Junior High as a result, so, I know how it used to work. And one of the things that I saw there that surprised me was the enrollment of Cottage Grove Elementary, when my kids went to CGE, it was packed. But that just shows you that as the area that school serves age, you're not getting the little kids anymore, now they're either middle schoolers or high schoolers. I just wondered what you're going to have to do with boundaries because as we continue to develop, and I know you also work with Woodbury, but as we continue to develop, Pine Hill's just not going to make it, it's just not; and there's no other land there unless you go up, right?

Julie stated so we know that on that particular side, we have some options; we have Pullman and Crestview there. So, we have some other options, but I think Cottage Grove since our last boundary changed has surprised us; that's one of the schools that has surprised us the most. With some of that new construction, we thought for sure that it was going to bring in more kids. It just happens, but again, kids don't come in special packages; we never know who's going to move in until fall, so, Cottage Grove has surprised us. But with Middleton, that sits between Liberty and Red Rock, it's the same thing. They're falling into the 400s or the lower 500s. So, I think when we get to a certain point, it's going to begin to warm the conversation around attendance boundaries. You don't want to bring up attendance boundaries unless you're certain that this is the direction you have to.

Council Member Olsen stated understood. I just don't see how you can avoid it, based on at least what I saw.

Julie stated but with Pine Hill, you are exactly right, that one is.

Dan stated and the Pine Hill one is interesting, too, because as we get word oh, they're developing here and here, we've been proactive and we've already changed those boundaries down there, in Mississippi Dunes, over to Pullman. We've already moved some over to Armstrong, and knowing that there will be plenty of houses still coming into the Pine Hill boundary.

Council Member Olsen stated sure, fair enough, thank you.

Council Member Garza stated I'll say in the private sector, too, in Washington County, the schools are getting packed. I've heard regularly, in our school, we went from 15 in a class to 21 in a class. And, so, you're really seeing that it's going up, and not able to staff to two teachers or whatnot. So, it's getting interesting.

Council Member Olsen stated now with the Light the Way project, if it happens, would be massive, it would be great.

Julie stated we just are really excited, Dan and I went and took a look at it, and there is just so much potential, the location, the kind of dip; when you think about the students and what their needs are, to be able to have, because there's still a multipurpose space where they can be active. Then there's a garden there, I mean, what a great skill. There's an opportunity to do something with a trail with bikes; you know, something where they can learn independence and life skills.

Council Member Olsen stated my kid was a Next Step kid. Julie stated and we think that location is beautiful. Council Member Olsen stated yes, it is, but it was tough and really tight spaces, so it's good.

Mayor Bailey stated so part of Next Step, just to refresh my memory, is that the one that's behind the hotel? Council Member Olsen replied yes, and then there's a Woodbury site, too.

Mayor Bailey stated it would be nice for you for that, for us, too, by the way, as we look for redevelopment opportunities.

Julie stated yes, we were very excited. Council Member Olsen stated yes, that's a perfect opportunity. Mayor Bailey asked if Council had any more questions, none were asked.

Mayor Bailey stated I think it will be interesting, as you really, like you said, get honed in; for me, obviously, you mentioned Pine Hill because I hear about that a lot. That was my school many, many years ago, and how that all pans out. It totally makes sense what you're planning to do with like the Mississippi Dunes neighborhood going to Pullman and some of those places, especially with trying to keep those schools filled. You and I have talked many times about what that optimal size is, so I know that's a challenge for some, because I don't think anybody ever wants to have their kid bussed across the City to a different school; I get that, and they all want them in their neighborhoods, but obviously, that's not always an option.

I would be very much interested to see how all the traffic, I love the idea what you're doing with Park, I didn't envision that, how we can get all that traffic in there and staff as you continue to work, just making sure that it will.

Julie stated for communities that are growing, that's a good thing. It prevents that bussing challenge and that in and out of our schools. It's not just here, I mean, we did a traffic study at Woodbury High School, and we allowed the traffic to come into Woodbury High School and just keep going. The number of emails and phone calls we got from people were like, well, I don't know why you're doing that study because you know people drop off kids at Ojibway, and they drop off over here. Julie stated I was like, I know, but we can't do anything about that. We just wanted to watch the flow of what the traffic looked like. We're really zoning in on traffic patterns across as we do these projects.

Mayor Bailey stated good, and I guess for the future, you kind of alluded to it, too, Council Member Olsen, that like it or not, Woodbury's getting to capacity, and they would even say that to us, too, with the amount of property and housing that they can put in, unless they do redevelopment. But that's why I think you're seeing everybody's starting to come down this direction, to Cottage Grove, is because it's capped; they're pretty much going to be border to border. So, as they near that or stop certain parts from being developed, I think that's what is forcing some of those developers to come here.

Council Member Olsen stated you guys were looking at some land on the north side at one point; is that still a conversation?

Dan replied no, we just don't have the funds available.

Council Member Olsen stated fair enough.

Dan stated we put it in our plans, and we were trying to establish where we were looking at, land across County 19, where the crops are, right across County 19, and then also some land out of town further.

Council Member Olsen stated all right, thank you for that.

Julie stated I think for the Council Members to know that we have greatly appreciated our work with the City of Cottage Grove. I think as we have continued working together, I think we've gotten stronger. Even as our architects talk, they're working with your engineers, and so that feels really good. So, we appreciate the good relationship with our City of Cottage Grove. So, thank you.

Mayor Bailey replied sounds good.

Council Member Olsen said thanks, you guys, we appreciate it.

Julie stated you're welcome. We'll go celebrate our last day of school now. Administrator Levitt stated we're supposed to have severe weather; Mayor Bailey stated yes, so be careful, hail and 60 MPH winds, they're saying.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Judy Graf and reviewed by Tamara Anderson, City Clerk.