



Wall school bond details issued at BOE meeting

Referendum on \$53M project to be held on Dec. 13

BY COREY RTHAUSER
THE COAST STAR

WALL TOWNSHIP— Superintendent Tracy Handerhan on Tuesday offered the Wall Township Public Schools community a preview of the upcoming Dec. 13 bond referendum, which will ask voters two questions targeted at district-wide capital improvement projects.

A bond referendum asks voters to approve specific funding through the sale of bonds that can provide the school district with the upfront money needed to make long-lasting improvements

and investments in infrastructure that directly impact students in the classroom.

According to the presentation, Question One will ask the voters to approve \$53,078,733, with a contribution in state aid of 34 percent, or \$18,046,792. The true cost to Wall residents through property taxes would be \$35,031,941 considering the 34 percent state aid coverage, according to the presentation.

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Proposed bond issue to cover work at seven Wall Township schools

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Question Two will ask approval of \$13,520,475, with the state contribution of 34 percent at \$2,009,806. With this option, according to the BOE presentation, the impact on an average assessed home in Wall Township [estimated at \$483,357] will be approximately \$60 per year or \$5 per month.

During the Oct. 18 school board meeting, Ms. Handerhan referred to Question One as the option that “keeps our school community warm and dry.” She said this option is not only desirable for the school community, considering it comes with the most state aid, but it also has no impact on taxes.

“You might be thinking to yourself, how can question one be accomplished without an increase in taxes? Well, Wall Township Public Schools have debt coming off of the books from the last referendum. All right, so the referendum is very shortly going to be paid off. So we’re looking at that as an opportunity. It’s an opportunity to reinvest in our schools,” said Ms. Handerhan.

According to district Business Administrator Brian

Smyth, the dollar estimates provided in determining the questions came from professional architects that calculated the actual cost of those statements and the cost for all the projects included in each of the two questions.

“We are trying to do right by this community. We are trying to do right by the students. We are trying to do right by the staff, and to do so, we have to provide facilities that will enable them to grow and enable them to flourish,” said Ms. Handerhan.

The BOE’s referendum information page on its website states that the board worked with district staff and outside professionals in 2019 to review all district facilities inside and out. The process identified \$236 million in potential projects throughout all seven schools.

Furthermore, the district’s vision of a tax-neutral proposal called for trimming that list to a little over \$50 million, since costs beyond that line require a tax increase.

Ms. Handerhan continued to outline the improvements for each of the seven schools in the WTPS district, but the BOE wouldn’t provide a breakdown of the specific costs associated with each improvement.

However, a special BOE meeting scheduled for Nov. 1 will include the architects and other professionals the district used to formulate the referendum to answer questions from the public and present a much more detailed analysis of the cost breakdown.

Ms. Handerhan’s presentation is available as an attachment to the Oct. 18 BOE meeting, which can be accessed online through the district’s Board Docs website.

For all the information the district currently offers regarding the Dec. 13 bond referendum, visit wallpublicschools.org under the ‘Referendum’ tab.

ALLENWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Projects listed on the bond referendum for Allenwood include the replacement of roofing, replacement and improvement of the HVAC system, modernized restrooms, upgraded fire alarms, improved ADA accessibility, a new parking area and the installation of LED parking lot lighting.

CENTRAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Projects listed on the bond referendum for Central Elementary School include the replacement of roofing, replacement and improvement of the HVAC system, modernized restrooms, upgraded fire alarms and electrical systems.

ernized restrooms, upgraded fire alarms and electrical systems.

WEST BELMAR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Projects listed on the bond referendum for West Belmar Elementary include the replacement of roofing, replacement and improvement of the HVAC system, modernized restrooms, upgraded fire alarms and electrical systems, upgraded mechanicals and asphalt replacement.

OLD MILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Projects listed on the bond referendum for Old Mill Elementary include the replacement of lower-level class-

room HVAC, the replacement and improvements to the existing HVAC system and the modernization of restrooms.

PRIMARY SCHOOL
Projects listed on the bond referendum for the Primary School include the modernization of restrooms and the replacement of low-efficiency windows.

WALL INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL
Projects listed on the bond referendum for the Intermediate School include replacing and improving the HVAC system, upgrading electrical system, replacing low-efficiency windows, classroom renovations, including the art

room and technology lab, and renovating the boys and girls locker rooms.

WALL HIGH SCHOOL
Finally, for Wall High School, projects listed on the bond referendum include the replacement of roofing, replacement and improvement of the HVAC system, modernized restrooms, upgraded electrical systems, renovation of the auditorium, renovation of the graphics and digital art area, the renovation of the art room and enhanced athletic facilities.

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