



Plain Talk

about the November 4, 2014 Referendum II

Introduction

The Woodstown-Pilesgrove Regional School District has prepared a Bond Referendum that is scheduled to go before registered voters on November 4, 2014, the same day as the General Election. To provide facts about the Referendum, the District has developed this Q&A document. As the need arises, **Plain Talk** will be updated to ensure that residents' concerns are addressed in a timely manner. If there is a specific question that is not addressed, please contact:

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Description of the aging buildings projects included in the proposed Referendum II.

4. Construction Cost and Safety

Dealing with safety and security during construction, and determining and controlling construction costs.

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The cost of the project, the \$11.9 million that will be voted on, impact on local property tax, and tax relief for senior citizens.

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To the Voters in the Woodstown-Pilesgrove Regional School District:

The Woodstown-Pilesgrove Regional Board of Education has authorized an election to consider a Bond Referendum necessary to implement much needed facility improvements. This 2014 Referendum II follows close on the heels of the November 2012 Referendum I. While Referendum I was all about curriculum, this Referendum II is about aging building systems, code compliance, energy efficiency and weather protection of the building investments. An opportunity for preservation, restoration and improvement.

We spoke of these additional needs two years ago and promised that we would not move ahead with them until such time as state support was available. That time is now. The state reinstituted ROD Grants and has offered the District **40% of the costs** in a one-time off-the-top grant of **\$7.9 million**. Since our proposed total scope is for \$19.8 million, our Local Share, the amount we need to raise by selling bonds and the amount we will vote on, is just \$11.9 million.

Specific needs include new roofs at the High/Middle School and Shoemaker, along with new exterior doors and windows. These improvements will protect our investments from the elements, improve security and vastly improve interior environment. Code Compliance with the ADA codes including renovated bathrooms, elevator and auditorium. The biggest part of the proposal is for extensive replacement of the heating, ventilating and air-conditioning system (HVAC) in the High/Middle School and specific partial replacements of Boilers and rooftop units at Shoemaker. Yes, there will be A/C in all classrooms! Finally, electrical, security systems and fire alarm systems will be improved or replaced. *None of this is glamorous work, but all of it is necessary.*

We urge each and every citizen to familiarize themselves with the Referendum and come out and vote on November 4th. Support your local schools, community, and the future of our most valuable asset, our children.

Board of Education
Woodstown-Pilesgrove Regional School District

1. General Information

What is the Woodstown-Pilesgrove Bond Referendum II about?

The Bond Referendum is an opportunity for voters to decide whether the school district will be authorized to raise \$11.9 million through the sale of bonds to make specific exterior, interior and critical systems improvements at the High/Middle School and at Shoemaker School.

When will the proposed Bond Referendum take place?

Voters will be asked to come to the polls for this special election, at no extra cost to the taxpayer, on the general election day on Tuesday, November 4, 2014. Polling places will be open from **6:00 AM to 8:00 PM**.

Why is the proposed Referendum being held now?

The need to address current inadequacies in our buildings has not changed. As promised in Referendum I, we have waited for significant State Funding before moving on with this Referendum II. Also, Construction costs and interest rates are at historic lows and will result in savings to the taxpayers. By holding the Special Election on the General Election day we are saving election costs and anticipating strong voter turnout.

Who was involved in developing this plan?

This Referendum plan has been under study since 2010 by an ad hoc committee of the Board of Education and their architectural, engineering and financial advisors. It is a natural outgrowth of the original 2010 Long Range Facilities Master Plan and includes the work not in the 2012 Referendum. Several alternate plans were proposed and analyzed. Referendum I was curriculum driven, and Referendum II is driven by aging buildings and critical systems.

What alternatives were considered in developing this plan?

In the past, multiple facilities plans have been advanced that included replacement schools associated with budgets surpassing \$85 million. They have been rejected by the community as too costly and lacking in vision for reuse of our existing historic schools. This Referendum I and II with community aspirations in mind, offers a combined budget plan under \$22 million in local share and meets all current facility improvement needs.

What happens if the Referendum doesn't pass?

The Board could call for an additional Referendum on this plan, or the Board could schedule a Referendum for an alternate plan. The Grant of \$7.9M is offered toward the current, approved plan.

Will the State mandate building the improvements in the event the referendum fails?

If three, identical referendums are unsuccessful, the matter could be referred to the Commissioner of Education, who has the authority to mandate how the education needs of the district will be resolved. However, it is rare that the Commissioner would consider imposing construction and unlikely that the district would be mandated to build if voters do not approve construction through the bond referendum.

2. Aging Buildings and Critical Systems

What projects or spaces are included in the proposed Referendum?

There are no new spaces in this proposal. This proposed preservation and restoration Referendum calls for the following renovations to building elements and critical systems:

	Shoemaker School	High/Middle School
Protecting our investment	New Roofs, 34,000 Square Feet 10 New Exterior Doors	New Roofs; 60,154 Sq. Ft. Coating; 6,690 Sq. Ft. to extend warrantee Replace all exterior windows Replace 20 Exterior Doors Hardware and frames
Updating Interiors for ADA Code Compliance	Renovate 4 Hall Bathrooms	Renovate 4 Hall Bathrooms on the 1st Floor Modernize Elevator Replace Auditorium Seating
Restoring Critical Systems	HVAC Renovation: -Boiler Room -New rooftop units in Cafeteria Expand Security System: -Cameras, Keyless entry	HVAC Renovations; -Replace 3 Boilers, Controls, Valves -New Rooftop Units , Gym, Café, IMC, Auditorium, Band Room -A/C in all classrooms -DDC Controls Electrical System Upgrades: -Cameras & Keyless entry; -Service panels, feeders, distribution; -New Fire Alarm System

Roof System: Will be designed per the district standard and products used in Summer 2013 Roofing Systems that have a proven record of performance. The roofing includes total tear-off to the structural deck, new thermal insulation to exceed minimum code standards and at least ¼ inch per foot slope to roof drains; replacement of all roof drains. SBS multiple ply built-up roof with a labor and material warranty for 20 years. The roof system will also include new metal copings, fascias, soffits, wall panels, etc. for a complete system. Existing roof areas currently still under warranty (less than 20 years old) will be coated with a restorative product that is provided by the roof system manufacturer and extends the warranty.

Exterior Windows: (248) Thermally insulated aluminum commercial grade fixed windows that have a similar aesthetic look as the original windows with full height glass no panels. The glass will be two panes of ¼ inch tempered thermally separate with low E coating for state-of-the-art performance, to protect against glare and heat gain. Window shades will be provided to match the historic photos of the original building.

Exterior Doors: (20) Thermally insulated, with colonial aesthetic fiberglass raised panel including insulated tempered glass.

Bathroom: Touch free fixtures with minimal water usage designed in conformance with all of the Handicap codes and standards.

Heating, ventilation, air conditioning system: Replace existing boilers with new Aerco Condensing Units, controls, valves, etc. New rooftop air conditioning units and ductwork in the Gymnasium, Locker Rooms and Auditorium. New air conditioning in the Auxiliary Gym. Replace units with new air conditioning rooftop units in the Cafeteria. Replace existing rooftop units in the IMC and Band Room. Replace split system units for Ground and First Floor air conditioning. New DDC Controls, hot water piping, and heating and air conditioning for classrooms.

Electrical System Upgrades: Modern electrical equipment to meet current National Electric Code and Life Safety Systems. Includes new wiring to support a new HVAC System. Relocate original main service transformer outside of the building per current codes.

Fire Alarm System: Replacement of existing antiquated devices and wiring with a new analog addressable system that is “smart”. The individual devices self test and are located or addressable so that first responders can identify the exact location of the fire.

Security System: Expansion of the existing system, cameras, keyless entry, etc.

3. Construction Cost and Safety

How were Construction and Project costs determined?

Costs for renovation, retro-fit, and rehabilitation are estimated based upon the building element or system type and scope of the specific project. Non-building costs for site improvements must then be added in. Finally, the other project costs including architect and engineer fees, legal fees, construction manager fee, and a contingency are factored in. A summary of the Woodstown-Pilesgrove costs by school and category are as follows;

	High/Middle Sch	Shoemaker	TOTAL
Exterior Renovation	\$3,942,228	\$1,125,000	\$5,067,228
Interior Renovations	1,093,750	375,000	\$1,468,750
HVAC Improvements	8,958,320	437,500	\$9,395,820
Electrical Upgrades	3,882,500	31,250	\$3,913,750
TOTAL	\$17,876,798	\$1,968,750	\$19,845,548

...but with a \$7.9M
Grant, we vote on
and finance only \$11.9M

How will the Board of Education keep costs under control?

The Board of Education will be managing costs in several ways:

Our architects have extensive experience managing projects like ours in a multitude of NJ school districts.

Our architect produces highly detailed specifications enabling contractors to better understand the work on which they are bidding. Because of the quality of their plans, the District will receive a higher than normal number of construction bidders which leads to more competitive pricing.

Our architects, as required by law, use an open bidding process with full access to the bidders list. This way, the contractors can get the lowest prices from all interested manufacturers and suppliers.

The Board will be contracting with a construction manager to provide additional observation and mitigation services during construction. The construction manager becomes the owner's representative, managing issues that arise on the site.

What happens if bids are not received within the budget?

The budget is established by law by the question put before the voters in the Referendum. That published Referendum budget **cannot be exceeded**. If construction bids are not under budget, the project would be redesigned by the architect at no cost to the District and rebid at another date in the near future. The Architects will include multiple bidding alternates for each of the major contraction divisions in the original bid requests that allow for adding to or subtracting from the scope of the work. Acceptance of any alternate or combination of alternates may be used to bring the project under budget.

What happens if there is a cost overrun during construction for the project?

A contingency figure has been built into the budgeted cost to deal with any unforeseen construction problems, as required by the New Jersey Department of Education.

How will the schools deal with safety and security issues?

The safety and welfare of our students is paramount. Before the onset of construction, we will hold meetings with our faculty, administrators, the Police Department, our architect and our project's construction manager. Together we will develop a safety action plan that will ensure the children's safety as it relates to non-school personnel having access to the building. We will have the benefit of working with a construction manager who specializes in school construction and understands the importance of protecting our children.

4. Financial: Bond and Tax Impact

What is the total dollar amount we will be asked to vote on for the proposed Bond Referendum?

The estimated total cost of the Local Share of all projects is the Bond Amount of **\$11,907,000**. The voters must approve the amount of \$11,907,000 at the special election in order for the Board of Education to move forward with the project(s). By law, this amount includes all building and site construction costs, professional fees and contingencies, and cannot be exceeded by the Board in the execution of the project.

Is the District eligible for state funds for this proposed building project?

Yes. There are Regular Operating District (ROD) grants that have recently become available and the District submitted applications for Grants and was offered 40% of our costs. If the Referendum is approved, we can complete \$19.8 million of work and pay only a Local Share of \$11.9 million.

	TOTAL	State Grant	State %	Local Share
High School/ Middle School	\$17.8M	\$7.1M	40%	\$11.9M
Mary Shoemaker School	\$ 1.9M	\$.7M	40%	\$1.1M
TOTAL	\$19.8M	\$7.9M	40%	\$11.9M

How will my property taxes be impacted if the proposed Referendum is approved?

Below is a breakdown of the estimated annual impact on taxes that the proposed Referendum will have for residents of the constituent municipalities.

Municipality	Average Assessed Value	Average Annual Tax Impact
Woodstown	\$216,600	\$214.54
Pilesgrove	\$281,110	\$272.67

What is the difference between Assessed Value and Market Value?

Market Value is how much you or a realtor could sell your house for in today's market. The Assessed Value is the value given to your land and improvements for property tax purposes by your municipality and appears on your tax bill.

Can you be specific about the Tax Impact on my residential property?

Yes. On the Referendum page of our web site, you will find a **Tax Impact Calculator** for each of the municipalities. Simply enter the Assessed Value of your property in the appropriate space and click on the Calculate button, and you will obtain your specific estimated annual Tax Impact.

How will the proposed Referendum affect taxes for senior citizens?

Senior citizens and disabled persons may be protected from tax increases. Since 1998 the Property Tax Reimbursement Program (Senior Freeze) has reimbursed eligible senior citizens for property tax increases. You must meet eligibility requirements regarding age, residency and income which can be found on the NJ Division of Taxation web site. *Upon application to the state, you may receive a rebate for any increase in your real estate taxes.* Eligible applicants must file the Property Tax Reimbursement Application on or before a specified due date. For more information, or to confirm eligibility, call the NJ Division of Taxation at 1-800-882-6597 or consult the agency's web site at, <http://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/ptr/index.shtml>

5. Voting Information

When and where do I vote?

Polling places will be open from 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM, on Tuesday, November 4, 2014.

Woodstown Borough

Reliance Fire Company

25 Broad St., Woodstown, NJ 08089
All Districts

Pilesgrove Township

Sharptown Methodist Church Hall

24 Church St, Pilesgrove NJ 08098
District 1

Pilesgrove Municipal Building

1180 Route 40, Pilesgrove NJ 08098
Districts 2 & 3

How do I find out what voting district I am in?

Contact your local municipal clerk or visit the municipal web site. You can also visit the NJ Poll Place Search on line at <https://voter.njsvrs.com/PublicAccess/jsp/PollPlace/PollPlaceSearch.jsp>

How do I register to Vote?

To register to vote you must contact the Salem County Board of Elections at **856-384-4500**. You may also fill out a voter registration application online and print and mail it to the Board of Elections. A NJ Voter Registration form, addressed to the Salem County Clerk, can be found online at

http://www.state.nj.us/state/elections/form_pdf/voter-regis-forms/salem-voter-reg-form-062212.pdf

You can register to vote if

- You are a United States citizen
- You will be 18 years of age by the next election
- You will be a resident of the State and County 30 days before the election
- You are NOT currently serving a sentence probation or parole because of a felony conviction

***Registration Deadline is 21 days before an election,
... that is Tuesday, October 14th for the Woodstown-Pilesgrove Referendum election***

Can I Vote by mail?

Yes, in New Jersey, any qualified and registered voter can now vote by Absentee Ballot for any election, for any reason. Don't feel like going to the polls? Simply vote by mail. Now there is "no excuse" not to vote! You do not have to be absent from the area on November 4 to vote by mail.

If you are a qualified and registered voter, then you may apply for a Vote By Mail ballot by completing the application and mailing it to the County Clerk. The deadline for such requests by mail is 7 days before any and all elections (Primary, General, School, etc). A Vote By Mail voter may also apply in person at the County Clerk's Office on any working day until 3:00 p.m. on the day before the election.

Vote By Mail Ballot Applications can be found by following the District web site link or online at:

<http://salemcountyclerk.org/Forms/default.asp>

On the County webpage, click on either Spanish or English format.

6. Getting More Information

How can I get more information about the proposed Referendum?

Citizens who want more information about the upcoming proposed Referendum or budget should:

- Look for information that will be sent home through the **mail**.
- Attend **Board of Education meetings** and/or **Board of Education presentations** throughout the community.
- **Email** us at referendum@woodstown.org with questions about the proposed Referendum. These questions will be answered as quickly as possible, and used to update this document.
- Request a **presentation** for your group, organization or neighborhood by calling the District/Superintendent's offices at 769-0144 ext. 252
- Visit the District's web site at www.woodstown.org
- Check for local newspaper coverage.