

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING THE CONSTRUCTION OF A BAND HALL, GYMNASIUM, AND GIRLS ATHLETIC FACILITY, AND THE CALLED BOND ELECTION FOR GARRISON ISD:

What exactly will be built if the bond election is successful? The proposed construction would include: a 4,400 sq. ft. band hall; a 7,700 sq. ft. girls athletic facility and locker rooms, complete with a training room, weight room and offices, to house both high school and middle school girl athletes; a gymnasium with a seating capacity of 1000; additional paving and parking area; removal of the old field house; relocation of the elementary playground with new equipment; new elementary/middle school bus loading and unloading area. This does not include the renovation of the existing band hall, gym, or dressing rooms.

What will the existing band hall and gym be used for? Possible plans would include renovating the band hall into 2 classrooms, thus eliminating the need of portable buildings and the sharing of classrooms at the high school. The dressing/locker room area would include a boys' and girls' locker room for visiting teams, public restrooms, and an additional classroom to house the computer lab, thus freeing up the multi-purpose room. The gym would be used more for physical education classes, along with sub-varsity games, and little dribbler events. The renovation of the existing facilities is not currently included as part of the bond package; however, any money saved from the bond proposal could be used to offset the cost of renovating these facilities.

Is there a need for these new facilities? Since 1996, GISD has spent over \$8 million on new and existing facilities. Except for yearly maintenance, the band hall, gym, and dressing rooms are essentially unchanged since they were constructed in 1970. The band hall does not have adequate storage; relocation of the band hall will eliminate noise and distractions from adjoining classrooms. The girl's athletic program has grown in numbers and the current facilities are not large enough to accommodate the athletes; the restrooms and showers are outdated and difficult to clean and maintain. Expansion or renovation of the gym would require an upgrade in ADA, thus reducing seating capacity. Security of fans, players, and coaches during games is an issue. The gym floor is in need of repair; the concession stand needs updating, and the gym has no HVAC system.

What will the project cost? The estimated cost of the 33,000 + square foot facility is \$4.7 million. The school board ordered a bond election in the amount of \$5 million payable over a 30 year term.

How much will my taxes increase? A \$5 million bond will increase current taxes an estimated \$.12 per \$100 valuation. Taxes will increase \$32.00 per year on a home valued at \$52,000. On a home valued at \$100,000, the estimated tax increase would be \$78 per year as compared to the '07-'08 tax rate. Property taxes on homesteads of persons over the age of 65 are frozen and cannot be raised; therefore, there is no tax increase if you qualify for the senior citizen property exemption.

Can we pay for the project without a bond election? No. GISD has \$3.4 million in the fund balance. Removing 4 months of operating cost would leave only \$1.3 million available to fund the project. GISD would have to average saving \$367,000 per year for 10 years to have enough money to build the facility at the current amount; however, in 10 years the estimated cost of the project would have increased to \$12 million.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (CONT.)

Why not pass a lesser bond and use the \$1.3 million to offset the additional cost? Every school finance expert agrees that it will be necessary for schools to keep a strong, healthy fund balance for future financial stability. House Bill 1 capped school districts revenue at the '05-'06 property value, therefore making it difficult to add money to future fund balances. GISD could actually draw a higher interest rate on the money in the fund balance than what would be paid on the bonds. Maintaining a fund balance in excess of the 4 months operating enables the district to maintain its current facilities, make improvements as needed, and make small scale capital outlays without incurring additional debt (buses, band and athletic equipment, classroom technology, emergency repairs to equipment and buildings, etc.) It would also help the district, on a short-term basis, maintain current academic programs and services should a decrease in revenue occur. A \$4 million bond would increase property taxes an estimated \$.09; this would be a \$7 per year decrease on a \$52,000 home and a \$17 per year decrease on a \$100,000 home as compared to a \$5 million bond at \$.12.

Does Garrison really need 3 gyms? GISD is in need of another indoor facility to house PE classes in order to meet state curriculum guidelines. All elementary and middle school students are expected to participate in at least 30 minutes of structured physical activity per day. There are times, especially when the weather is bad, that classes cannot meet due to the lack of indoor facilities. The existing high school gym would be available to house additional PE classes since it would not be the only gym in which competitive games would be played. The middle school gym was originally built for elementary and middle school activities and is currently being used for Pre-K through 8th grade PE classes, athletic classes, and indoor practices during inclement weather. Middle school basketball games are now being played in the high school gym. Having a new facility to host competitive athletic contests would allow for more PE classes to take place in the existing high school gym, thus lessening the amount of traffic through the middle school gym and providing a more flexible class schedule for PE and other activities.

How did the school board and administration come to the conclusion that this project is needed? In the fall of 2006, the board toured the high school gym dressing rooms/lockers because of parental concerns regarding the lack of space and overall poor condition of the dressing facilities. Once the field house was completed this past summer, the board turned its attention to the high school gym, dressing rooms, and band hall. Other than yearly maintenance, these facilities are unchanged since they were constructed 38 years ago. Over the last 5 months, the board has discussed different ways to improve these facilities, such as renovation versus new construction. They consulted with an architect/engineer on the feasibility of renovating. The initial cost estimates of renovating the existing dressing rooms/lockers, extending the band hall, and building a girl's athletic facility on to the north side of the gym ranged from \$1.5 to \$2 million. This did not include any work on the high school gym. When renovating did not appear to be feasible, they then began to consider new construction and discussed at least 2 different plans. A bond official met with the board during a board workshop to discuss the aspects of financing the project. Ultimately, the board felt the best scenario was to build the facility as proposed, order a bond election to pay for the facility, and have the voters decide the fate of the project.

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