

**Meeting Minutes:** Planning Committee – District Office Board Room

**Date/Time:** October 17, 2023 – 7:30 a.m.

**Start:** 7:30 a.m.

**End:** 8:40 a.m.

**Committee Members Present:** Jim Johnson, Greg Clark, Melissa Burkland, Seth Holden, and Tracie Newman

**Committee Members Absent:**

**Board Members Present:**

**Staff Members Present:** Missy Eidsness, Dr. Rupak Gandhi, Jackie Gapp, Dr. Robert Grosz, Dr. Jeff McCanna (Remote), and Bill Westrick

**Guests:** Kathy Anderson, James Hand

**Recorder:** Amy Patterson

Agenda Item	Discussion – Conclusion	Recommendations/Actions
Approval of Meeting Minutes	The Committee reviewed and approved the minutes of the September 19, 2023, meeting.	Minutes will be posted on the Board’s section of the public website.
Trollwood and Explorer Academy Facility Utilization	<p><b><u>Trollwood:</u></b> Dr. Rupak Gandhi reported on the finances and revenue streams of the Bluestem Facility and the Trollwood Performing Arts School Summer Program. Kathy Anderson, Executive Director of Trollwood, was present to answer questions. Dr. Gandhi discussed the variable revenue and the concern that tickets sales and donations are not consistent. Discussion was had about possibly keeping the summer concert series but phasing out wedding rentals and eliminating weekday rentals.</p> <p>Dr. Gandhi presented a potential new program model for Trollwood Performing Arts Year-Round School. It would be a unique, educational initiative that combines academic instruction with specialized performing arts training, a collaborative effort between Trollwood Performing Arts School and Fargo Public Schools Virtual Academy. The program would provide a comprehensive educational experience that allows students to excel both academically and artistically. The students would take all of their classes online at Trollwood through the Virtual Academy and there would be someone to oversee students, a cohort leader.</p> <p>Discussion was had about the possibility of repurposing the Bluestem Facility into a Choice Fine Arts Program. This would be more aligned to the District’s mission and would give flexibility. Discussion was also had on the need to better understand how much interest there is for a program like this and the need for some further polling for more concrete numbers.</p> <p>Discussion was had on EL-16 and whether or not this request requires Board approval or whether it is operational. It was agreed that Board approval was not needed but that the Board should be informed.</p> <p><b><u>Explorer Academy:</u></b> Explorer Academy was designed as a school for students on an IEP. Discussion was had about the overidentification of students on IEPs because they have behaviors that manifest in the classroom. Discussion was had around the fact that an IEP is an educational service vs. treatment that you might need from a healthcare service provider. Traditional schools have limited time and have time constraints. They do not have the ability to deal with mental and behavioral health issues.</p>	

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	<p>A suggestion was made to close Explorer Academy as a traditional school and have a therapeutic center/day treatment program. It could have the structure of a virtual academy with individual teachers there or have the indication of a special school without the traditional accountabilities. It could be an alternative setting in which treatment takes priority and academics are secondary. Chair Jim Johnson believes that this does require Board approval and that it would have to be confirmed that there is a provider that would be interested in doing this.</p> <p>Chair Jim Johnson moved the Committee to the next agenda item since this will require further planning and Board approval.</p>	
<b>Energy Audit Next Steps</b>	<p>James Hand introduced Kent Wolf of Ameresco to discuss the Energy Audit and Next Steps. Kent Wolf presented the District-wide Preliminary Energy Assessment and reviewed the options briefly. He presented options for improving facilities and how to move the project forward to the next step if the District chooses. The assessment included an energy audit across all buildings in the District and identified opportunities within each building which will create sustainable, annual reduction from implementation and moving forward. It identified the potential for \$630-770k worth of savings. This would be reinvested into improvements across the District, repurposing what the District would pay the utility companies--using those cost savings to pay for new items. There is a construction potential of \$9.3-\$11.4M. These captured savings can be put back into the bottom line. There is opportunity for energy savings and some unique options.</p> <p>Jim Johnson opened it up for questions. It was noted that Tara Brandner would need to weigh in on whether we can use the cooperative process vs. the RFP process. James Hand discussed the massive issue of some of the proprietary systems, older legacy systems, and the importance of making smart, long-term decisions. If we are bonding for this, we need to wait and see what the entire picture for all of this is going look like. We need to work on this in totality and look at the full, long-range plan. We do not want to upgrade a building that will be taken offline.</p>	
<b>Update on 415 4th St Property*</b>	<p>Seth Holden moved that the Planning Committee enter executive session for the purpose of strategy as permitted under NDCC §44-04-19.1, subsection 9. Melissa Burkland seconded the motion. The motion passed (Yes: Melissa Burkland, Greg Clark, Seth Holden, Jim Johnson, and Tracie Newman). The executive session was held in the District Office Board Room on the lower level of the District Office. The Committee entered executive session at 8:30 a.m. Board members Melissa Burkland, Greg Clark, Seth Holden, Jim Johnson, and Tracie Newman were present in the room. Missy Eidsness, Jackie Gapp, Dr. Rupak Gandhi, Dr. Robert Grosz, and Bill Westrick were present in the room. Dr. Jeff McCanna was present remotely. During the session, discussion was held on the potential sale of the property at 415 4<sup>th</sup> Street. The executive session ended at 8:40 a.m. and the meeting was adjourned.</p>	
<b>Next Meeting: November 21, 2023 at 7:30 a.m.</b>		