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White Lake school planning for project

Nov. 16, 2011

Seven days after a successful referendum vote, the White Lake board of education was planning for ground-breaking.

At its regular monthly session, the board heard a report from Doc Smith of EDS Builders, who guided the board through the preliminary planning for its new school/community recreation center and will now serve as the construction manager.

"We're moving right along on it," District Administrator Bill Fisher said.

Smith's timetable calls for the project to be put out for bids on Feb. 13, with ground-breaking in mid-April. The building should be ready for use by students and the community by the middle of October, in advance of the 2012-13 basketball season.

The board will receive a financial timetable for the project at its Dec. 20 meeting and will ink the resolutions approving the bonding in January.

On Nov. 8, voters easily backed a proposal to spend \$3 million to construct a central recreational center, similar to a commons, an exercise room that could be used as a community space, men's and women's locker rooms and restrooms, team locker rooms and an expansive new gymnasium. There will also be a concession area and remodeling to the existing shop and locker rooms.

A second question, to authorize the district to spend \$200,000 annually above state-imposed limits for the next three years to cover operational expenses also won easy approval. The revenue limit replaces a \$250,000 exemption approved by voters in 2006 that is expiring.

The plan was heralded as a no-tax-increase proposal, due in part to the expiration of the previous referendum and tight state controls that forced the district to substantially slash spending. District property owners will pay an estimated mill rate of \$11.85 per \$1,000 of equalized valuation, which is less than the \$12 per \$1,000 they are paying now.

In a related matter, the board formally dissolved the ad hoc committee established to help develop the referendum plan.

"They obviously completed their work," Fisher said.

Instead, the board authorized Fisher to appoint a six-member building advisory committee, which will offer recommendations as the project advances.

In other business, the board heard what Fisher termed "an impressive report" by second grade teacher Heather Paul on differentiated instruction.

Paul uses the method in her classroom to create individual activities for each student, reflecting their varied learning styles.

The board also approved several cached changes.

Shawn Wickersheim will become the head boys basketball coach with Mike Wickersheim as assistant. Ellie Kanke will take over as assistant girls' basketball coach.