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White Lake school victory celebrated

Nov. 9, 2011

The mood was exuberant, bordering on giddy, in White Lake Tuesday, where a referendum to construct a new school/community recreation center cruised to an easy win.

By a 60 percent to 40 percent margin, voters 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.

"The plan now is to play the 2012 basketball season in that new gymnasium," District Administrator Bill Fisher said. "That's the plan and we're going to do it."

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 by a 65 percent to 35 percent margin. 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.

"I'm really happy for the community and the children of the White Lake school district," Fisher said. "This vote starts a new chapter in the rich history of this area and I'm humbled by the uncompromising commitment, support and pride of the community."

With only two questions on the ballot, the results were cheered as they trickled in to an awaiting group of school officials and White Lake area residents who were assembled for the tally at the home of board member Sandy Gallagher.

"I am really proud and commend the community in how everyone rallied to come together," said Chris Berry, who served on the referendum committee.

The referendum question won easily in all four voting precincts, with a final numerical tally of 404 in favor to 260 opposed. Vote by ward includes:

—Langlade: 0 yes, 3 no.

—Wolf River: 192 yes, 149 no.

—Evergreen: 121 yes, 63 no.

—Village of White Lake: 91 yes, 45 no.

The second question, to exceed the revenue limit, won with a final vote of 424 in favor to 231 opposed. Vote by ward follows:

—Langlade: 0 yes, 3 no.



Members of the White Lake Referendum Committee celebrated following the final tally in Tuesday's election to construct a new school/community recreation facility. From left are Al Schmidt, Chris Berry, Mike Wild, Duff Leaver, Sandy Gallagher, Cap Buettner and Dan Wickersheim.

—Wolf River: 201 yes, 139 no.

—Evergreen: 133 yes, 46 no.

—Village of White Lake: 90 yes, 43 no.

A final canvassing is scheduled for later today.

In anticipation of the vote, the board has scheduled a special meeting for this afternoon to begin making budget adjustments and plan for construction.

Fisher said the district will work with engineer Doc Smith and EDS Builders to prepare documents for bidding and he is hoping for an early spring groundbreaking.

"I was no excited last night that I couldn't sleep," Fisher said. "I'm got to settle down and refocus today because we've got to get to work."