

The buildings and grounds committee met in the District Office conference room on March 5, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. with the following present: Tommy Sablan, Laura Lee and Barb Neprud. Jamie Skjeveland and Bill Tollefson were also present.

Daycare Facility Planning – The committee reviewed daycare facilities options and potential financing:

Current Planning Options - Several potential daycare facility options were discussed. These options ranged from remodeling the junior high band room, which would need to include outdoor facilities including playground; to an attached “stick build” addition attached to CRES; to a stand-alone building not attached to CRES but on the CRES campus; to a concept that involved infilling the triangular area at the CRES front entry to make a new front entry/daycare facility. Using 3,000 square feet as a base facility, very preliminary cost estimates ranged from \$825,000 to \$1.1 million. A planning estimate of \$1 million seems likely, but more planning needs to take place regarding the square footage that would be required. Costs will go up as the size of the building footprint expands.

Financing Strategies – There are several financing strategies that could be utilized, with each funding strategy dependent on specific circumstances regarding the facility option selected. Development of a team of financing partners was discussed, including partnering with the City of Crosby, Crow Wing County, Cuyuna Regional Medical Center (CRMC) or others. Each partner may bring differing funding options to the table, including access to grants or their own ability to contribute to the project financially. For example, a recent early childhood and daycare addition to an elementary school in Little Falls was financed through a lease purchase financing option where the Little Falls School District would issue Certificates of Participation with annual payments made from the lease levy and the City of Little Falls providing funding through a HUD grant which may otherwise not be available to the school district. Other financing options, again contingent upon type of construction, could include use of school district Operating Capital or issuance of Capital Facilities Bonds. Use of remaining proceeds from the school building bonds was also discussed as an option, but the amount available would not be known until after Phase VI scheduled over the summer of 2025 after the CRES roof replacement and decisions on the balance of projects on the south end of the high school, including athletic and music spaces.

The committee recommendation was that the school district engage with stakeholders about looking at daycare options for the community, which may or may not include the school district. Because students needing daycare were centered at CRES, it made less sense to continue to pursue remodeling the junior high band room at the high school for this purpose. The committee recommended capping the school district contribution to the facility work at \$100,000 if Operating Capital is the funding stream. The committee was clear that they were suggesting only that discussions and further planning continue to move forward and were not asked to approve permission to proceed with building a daycare facility on school property. The focus is on conversations, which are at the ground level. Buildings and grounds committee members will be invited to any future stakeholder meetings that are held.

Outdoor Field Planning – The committee discussed plans for the field area north of the CRES playground. There are currently one softball field used by the high school softball program and one baseball/softball field used by youth baseball/softball. There had previously been two other baseball/softball fields which had not been used and have disappeared due to growth of grass. The area immediately north of the playground has also received a change in contouring of the land to attempt to provide better drainage from the playground area to the drainage ditch. The committee discussed other field use options in the community, including Stark Field at the Hallett Community Center and the fields at the park near Crosby City Hall and other locations and felt that use of those fields should be explored more thoroughly. The preference was that no fields be added to the field space north of the CRES playground. The committee was clear that no modifications should be made to any school district property by private parties or without construction plans flowing through the normal process and that maintain or enhance facility improvements that have already been completed in earlier construction phases.

The meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

Respectfully prepared and submitted by William Tollefson