

Special School Board Meeting

Monday, July 15, 2024 6:00 PM

Falls Elementary Gym, 1414 15th Ave, International Falls, MN 56649

The School Board meeting will be available to view by selecting the following link or going to the Falls High Journalism youtube page.

CALL TO ORDER

1. Roll Call:

___ Jessica Crosby, Director	___ Dale
Johnson, Director	
___ Toni Korpi, Director	___
Bruce Raboin, Treasurer	
___ Tina Sather, Clerk	___
Roxanne Skogstad-Ditsch, Board Chair	___ JoAnn
Smith, Vice Board Chair	

Non-Voting Members:

___ Beth Shermoen, Superintendent

Approval of Agenda

1. Approve agenda as presented. Motion by __, second by __. Motion carried / failed.
- 1.a. Commissioner of the Department of Education Review and Comment on the School Construction - Proposal of International Falls Public School District, ISD #0361-01

Adjournment

1. Motion by __, second by __ to adjourn meeting at ___ p.m. Motion carried / failed.



June 17, 2024

Kevin Grover, Superintendent
International Falls Public School District, ISD #0361-01
1515 11th Street
International Falls, MN 56649-2488

Dear Superintendent Grover:

Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.71, requires a review and comment statement on the educational and economic advisability of your proposed school construction project. Information supplied by your school district and from Minnesota Department of Education sources is the basis of this review and comment. With this positive review and comment, voter and school board approval is required for International Falls Public School District, Independent School District #0361-01, to proceed with the proposed projects.

The district shall publish a summary of the review and comment statement (the final two pages) in the legal newspaper of the district at least 48 days, but not more than 60 days, prior to holding a referendum for bonds or soliciting any bids for the construction, expansion, or remodeling of an educational facility. The department may request a statement certifying the publication, and require the submission, review, and approval of preliminary and final construction plans.

Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.71, requires the commissioner to include comments from residents of the school district in the review and comment. As of the date of this letter, no public comments have been received. In addition, Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.71, ***requires the school board hold a public meeting to discuss the review and comment prior to the date of the bond referendum election.***

Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.71, ***requires that a school district, prior to occupying a new or renovated facility after July 1, 2002, must submit a certification prepared by a system inspector to the commissioner and the building code official that will provide an occupancy permit.*** The certification must verify that the facility's installed or modified heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system operates according to design specifications and code, a system for monitoring outdoor airflow and total airflow of ventilation systems has been installed, and any installed or modified heating, ventilation, or air conditioning system provides an indoor air quality filtration system that meets ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers) Standard 52.1.

If you have any questions, please contact Chris Kubesh, Education Finance specialist, at 651-582-8319 or chris.kubesh@state.mn.us. Thank you for working with us to improve school facilities for Minnesota students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Willie L. Jett II'.

Willie L. Jett II
Commissioner

cc: Roxanne Skogstad-Ditsch, School Board Chair

Enclosure

**The Commissioner of the Department of Education
Review and Comment on the School Construction
Proposal of International Falls Public School District, ISD #0361-01**

A review and comment must be provided on a school district construction project proposal before the district conducts a referendum, solicits bids, or issues bonds for the project. A project proposal has been submitted for review and comment according to requirements set forth in Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.71, subdivisions 9 and 10, and Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.72. The district provides the following information:

1. The geographic area and population to be served:
 - a. preschool through grade 12 student enrollment for the past five years, and
 - b. student enrollment projections for the next five years.
2. A list of existing school facilities:
 - a. by year constructed,
 - b. their uses, and
 - c. an assessment of the extent to which alternate facilities are available within school district boundaries and in adjacent school districts.
3. A list of specific deficiencies of the facility:
 - a. demonstrating the need for a new or renovated facility to be provided,
 - b. the process used to determine the deficiencies,
 - c. a list of those deficiencies that will and will not be addressed by the proposed projects,
 - d. a list of specific benefits that the new or renovated facility will provide to students, teachers, and community users served by the facility.
4. A description of the project, including:
 - a. specifications of site and outdoor space acreage,
 - b. square footage allocations for classrooms, laboratories and support spaces,
 - c. estimated expenditures for major portions of the project,
 - d. estimated changes in facility operating costs, and
 - e. dates the project will begin and be completed.
5. A specification of the source of project financing, including:
 - a. applicable statutory citations,
 - b. the scheduled date for a bond issue or school board action,
 - c. a schedule of payments, including debt service equalization aid, and
 - d. the effect of a bond issue on local property taxes by property class and valuation.
6. Documentation obligating the school district and contractors to comply with the following items:
 - a. Minnesota Statutes, section 471.345 governing municipal contracts,
 - b. sustainable design,
 - c. school facility commissioning under Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.72, certifying the plans and designs for heating, ventilating, air conditioning and air filtration for an extensively renovated or new facility meet or exceed current code standards, including ASHRAE air filtration Standard 52.1,
 - d. American National Standards Institute (ANSI) acoustical performance criteria, design requirements and guidelines for schools on maximum background noise levels and reverberation times,
 - e. state fire code,
 - f. chapter 326B governing building codes, and
 - g. consultation with affected government units about the impact of the project on utilities, roads, sewers, sidewalks, retention ponds, school bus and automobile traffic, access to mass transit and safe access for pedestrians and cyclists.

Description of Proposed School Construction Project

International Falls Public School District, ISD #0361-01 is proposing a two-question bond referendum on August 13, 2024. The first ballot question would authorize \$13.95 million in bonding authority to finance facility improvements at the middle/high school and elementary school. At the middle/high school, proposed projects include: HVAC upgrades, a building addition to house Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming, interior renovations and deferred maintenance projects. For the elementary school, projects include: a building addition to house administrative offices/a secure entrance, interior renovations, playground upgrades and deferred maintenance projects. The second ballot question would authorize \$4.48 million in bonding authority to finance athletic facility upgrades, including a building addition at Bronco Ice Arena to house locker rooms/restrooms and minor improvements to Bronco Stadium.

The proposed projects would be scheduled for completion in calendar years 2025 and 2026. Cost estimates by ballot question/location/project type are as follows:

Ballot Question #1			
Middle / High School		Elementary School	
HVAC Upgrades - Steam to Hot Water Conversion	3,176,165	HVAC Upgrades	39,247
Other HVAC Upgrades	744,193	LED Lighting Upgrades	163,308
Sewer Upgrades	166,644	Technology Upgrades	122,393
Deferred Maintenance	437,068	Building Envelope Repairs	135,827
Restroom Upgrades	252,952	Playground Upgrades	175,512
Building Addition - CTE Space	1,208,128	Deferred Maintenance	189,999
Lounge / Common Area Renovations	265,858	Addition - Admin Offices / Secure Entrance	2,822,770
LED Lighting Upgrades	300,978	Interior Renovations	858,664
Technology Upgrades	350,293		4,507,720
	6,902,280		
Other Project Costs			
Contingencies	650,000	Total Project Cost Estimate - Question #1	14,029,453
Fees, Permits & Testing	1,640,000		
Bond Issuance	329,453		
	2,619,453		
Ballot Question #2			
Bronco Ice Area		Bronco Stadium	
Building Addition - Lockers/Restrooms	3,256,475	Update Locker Rooms	256,735
		Electrical Upgrades	9,459
Other Project Costs		Concrete Repair	122,331
Contingencies	250,000		388,525
Fees, Permits & Testing	530,000		
Bond Issuance	80,663		
	860,663	Total Project Cost Estimate - Question #2	4,505,663

The district is projecting a reduction in total student enrollment from 878 in the 2022-2023 school year to 829 in the 2027-2028 school year; a reduction of approximately 6%. The district has supplied cost estimates to operate and staff the additional building spaces. It appears that the operational cost savings from the proposed HVAC and lighting upgrades will mitigate and likely exceed any operational cost increases associated with the proposed building additions. The proposed projects appear to be in the long-term interest of the school district.

If the bond referendum is successful and bonds are sold, the debt service on the bonds will be eligible for debt service equalization under Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.53, subdivision 3, if the bond schedule is approved. The amount of debt service equalization aid, if any, the district receives is determined annually and is dependent upon property wealth, student population, and other statutory requirements.

Review and Comment Statement

Based on the department's analysis of the school district's required documentation and other pertinent information from sources of the Minnesota Department of Education, the Commissioner of Education provides a positive review and comment.

Additional Information is Available

Persons desiring additional information regarding this proposal should contact the school district superintendent's office.



Willie L. Jett II
Commissioner

June 17, 2024