

Observer-Reporter

Trinity Discusses Possible Renovation Projects with QZAB Funds

January 19, 2017

By: Karen Mansfield/Observer-Reporter

Trinity Area School District held a presentation Thursday to discuss renovation projects the district is considering using zero-interest Qualified Zone Academy Bond funds.

The district is mulling several projects with the \$5 million QZAB it received through Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Among them are security vestibules at Trinity North and Trinity West elementary schools and Trinity Middle School; renovation of Trinity Middle School restrooms; replacement of the Trinity Middle School swimming pool HVAC; installation of new field turf and lighting at Trinity Stadium and replacement of the grass field at the adjacent softball/multi-use field with artificial turf field and installation of lighting.

Ed McLiney, of McLiney and Company of Kansas City, Mo., which specializes in helping school districts secure QZAB funding, told the audience by using a 15-year, \$5 million Qualified Zone Academy Bond instead of tax-exempt general obligation bonds with an average interest rate of 2.4 percent, the district will save \$67,154 annually – more than \$1 million overall – in interest.

McLiney said the school district will make 15 annual payments of \$333,334, which will be placed in a sinking fund established at Washington Financial. The bank will pay the school district interest on the sinking fund account, McLiney said, which means the school district will pay back less money than it originally borrowed.

The QZAB agreement, said McLiney, is “something that has never been done in the state” and is “the finest QZAB issued in the state in the last eight to 10 years.”

Public schools in which 35 percent or more of the student body receives free or reduced lunches qualify for QZAB funding. Funds can be used for renovation and rehabilitation projects and equipment purchases.

Facilities/transportation director Aaron Scott and athletic director Ricci Rich explained the necessity of the renovation projects. For example, said Scott, the restroom fixtures and toilets at the middle school date back to 1972. Ceramic tile on the floors and walls are in need of replacement and new partitions need to be installed. The restroom renovation will cost an estimated \$515,256.

The swimming pool HVAC, installed in 2004, has exceeded its 10-year life expectancy and the school district has spent more than \$60,000 on repairs in recent years, said Scott.

Rich said the upgrades to the softball/multiuse field will eliminate weather and maintenance issues; allow an additional 330 hours of practice time for fall and spring teams; enable 19 of the 35 fall and spring sports teams and the band to use the field and generate revenue through rentals and playoffs.

Superintendent Michael Lucas said residents can attend monthly finance meetings for project updates and all projects will be voted on at upcoming school board meetings.

At the school board meeting that preceded the QZAB presentation; directors approved proceeding with installation of the field turf at the stadium at a cost not to exceed \$761,273, pending the approval of the agreement between the school district, Field Turf and Musco Lighting. Directors also approved proceeding with the softball/multi-use field at a cost not to exceed \$1,604,061. Both projects will be completely funded with QZAB funds.