Board Sets Bond Election
Proposal Would Not Increase Taxes

Board approval of two resolutions Monday night means Putnam City voters will vote on Tuesday, Oct. 10, on a $22 million bond proposal that if approved will allow the district to continue to invest in ongoing projects related to classroom instruction at every school, student and staff health and safety, completion of a new middle school and new school buses to replace some of the aging buses in the district’s fleet.

There is no tax increase associated with the proposal.

Voters on Oct. 10 will see a ballot with two propositions. State law requires that bond proposals for school buses be voted on separately from proposals for school building and instructional improvements. That means Proposition 1 will be a vote on all but one item in the bond proposal, leaving Proposition 2 as a vote on the other item: funding to purchase about 20 new school buses.

Proposition 1

If approved by voters, Proposition 1 would provide funding in three areas:

1) The use of technology for teaching and learning is a big item in the bond proposal. Putnam City is already a leader in the state in the use of technology in classrooms but is ready to take the next step. If voters approve the bond proposal in October, funds will be available to purchase additional devices so that every student in every classroom in the district will have one to use at school. District teachers already use iPads in innovative ways that help students master concepts and material, but going to a one-to-one ratio of students and devices opens the door to widespread adoption of digital textbooks and the significant cost savings they bring with them. Over time, savings from moving to digital textbooks savings will outweigh the cost of devices themselves, freeing funds for other instructional needs.

2) The district is early in the process of creating a new Capps Middle School to replace the aging, inefficient building now in use. There are parts of the existing school that go back to the 1940s, by far the oldest learning spaces still used in the district. Classrooms are small and the building is not energy efficient in roofing, walls, windows or doors. The building is constructed with wood framing and joists, which are more susceptible to fire than modern buildings. In addition, the building requires the addition of three elevators and two stair lifts along with major renovation of the existing restrooms to meet requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A new building would provide a safer, healthier, more accessible and better learning environment in a more energy-efficient structure. Additional funding to complete the school is needed because the initial cost estimate was too low.

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SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT by Dr. Fred Rhodes

- Benton Shriver, a biology teacher at Putnam City High School, has been named Oklahoma’s Outstanding Biology Teacher by the Oklahoma Biology Teachers Association. He will be honored at an awards luncheon in November during the 2017 National Association of Biology Teachers conference.
- The district would like to thank Senior Aerospace Science Instructor Lieutenant Colonel (retired) Dane Christensen of the Putnam City High School Air Force JROTC program for recently using the organization’s drone to shoot video and photos of the property where the new Capps Middle School will be built. During the school year the drone is primarily part of the JROTC curriculum for discussion about the principles of flight. It’s also used for special events. Cadets also launch rockets, fly a remote-controlled model airplane and make use of a flight simulator as part of their studies.

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3) Health and safety would be addressed in two ways.

The first is through purchase of automated external defibrillators (AEDs), which are used in cases of sudden cardiac arrest. Each year more than 300,000 Americans succumb to sudden cardiac death, making it one of the leading causes of death in the U.S. While it’s most common in adults, it can happen to people at any age. Defibrillation, which can be provided by AED, delivers an electric shock to the heart to restore a normal heartbeat. An Oklahoma law passed in April 2008 requires that every school have AEDs if federal funds or donations from private organizations make it possible. The district purchased AEDs at that time using MAPS for Kids funds. (MAPS for Kids funds are no longer available.) The warranty on those AEDs has now expired, and all of them have an expected out-of-warranty life of three to five years. To assure this lifesaving technology is always available in district schools, bond funds are needed to purchase new AEDs.

Bond funding would also be used to add safety features on buses, with funds providing GPS capability so that administrators can pinpoint the exact location of all buses at all times, a feature that could be crucial in an emergency.

Proposition 2

Each day about 7,000 to 8,000 students ride school buses to Putnam City schools, and another 400 to 500 students travel to various activities across the city and state. This item calls funds to replace some district buses as old as 15 years old, at or near the end of their expected life span. If voters approve this proposition, the district will be able to purchase about 20 new buses. Seventy-one-passenger regular buses currently cost about $90,000 each while special needs buses cost about $110,000 each. At the time of purchase the district would assess needs and purchase the kinds and numbers of buses that would meet those needs.

New Way to Pay Will Be A Revenue Source

The board on Monday night approved an agreement for a new way of paying vendors that in a continued time of tight budgets will actually make money for the school district beginning in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

The new procedure simply replaces paper checks with electronic payments. For schools and district departments, nothing changes. The entry of invoices and processing of checks will continue as before. However, no check will be printed for those vendors participating in the program.

Instead, the district will provide a list of vendors and payment amounts to a bank, which will then notify the vendor the payment is available for drawdown. The district will submit weekly electronic payments to the bank as vendors claim the funds.

The bank is responsible for recruiting and maintaining the pool of participating vendors.

In return for participation, the district will receive a revenue share. Annual revenue for the district is estimated at $52,000.
**Principal Appointed at Western Oaks Middle School**

The board on Monday night appointed Isaac McCord as the principal at Western Oaks Middle School for the 2017-2018 school year.

McCord has served as an assistant principal for the past four years at Mayfield Middle School. Before becoming an assistant at Mayfield, McCord worked as an administrative intern at Western Oaks Elementary for two years, taught at Mayfield for five years and taught at Jefferson Middle School for one year. He holds a master’s degree in educational leadership from Southern Nazarene University and a bachelor’s degree in forensic science from the University of Central Oklahoma.

At the April 17 board meeting it was announced that McCord would become an assistant principal at Putnam City West High School next year, but tonight’s action instead installs him as principal at Western Oaks.

McCord will replace Meggan Wilson, who has accepted a position with Shawnee Public Schools.

**Intern Positions Announced**

Superintendent Dr. Fred Rhodes announced two changes in secondary administrative intern positions for the 2017-2018 school year.

Holly Fike, a band teacher for the past decade at Monroney Middle School in Mid-Del Public Schools, will serve both Cooper Middle School and Western Oaks Middle School as an administrative intern next year.

Barbara Rose, a teacher at Hefner Middle School who was previously announced as an administrative intern at Cooper and Western Oaks, has instead been asked to serve next year as an intern at Putnam City North High School.

**Board Approves Insurance**

The board on Monday night approved a package of insurance coverage for the 2017-2018 school year at a cost of $1,997,679, a decrease of about $112,000 from what the district paid last year.

The biggest savings were in costs of workers compensation insurance, down by close to $32,000, and property, inland marine, boiler and machinery insurance, down by more than $36,000.

To find the best insurance coverage and rates, the district solicits and receives multiple quotes from competing companies. The types of Putnam City’s insurance, the insurance providers and costs approved by the board were:

- Workers Compensation/Oklahoma School Assurance Group, $1,131,332
- Property, Inland Marine, Boiler and Machinery/Property Insurance Company, $595,576
- Automobile/Oklahoma Schools Insurance Group, $117,787
- General Liability/Oklahoma Schools Insurance Group, $80,972
- Professional Liability/Western World Insurance, $53,850
- Umbrella Auto/Oklahoma Schools Insurance Group, $20,223
- Cyber Liability/Western World Insurance, $10,671
- Bonds and Crime/Ohio Casualty Company, $7,160

The property insurance premium will be paid from the district’s building fund. The other premiums will be paid out of the district’s general fund.

**Board Renews Agreement with Foundation**

The board on Monday night approved renewal of an agreement with the Putnam City Schools Foundation for the 2017-2018 school year.

Established in 1987, the Foundation has worked to focus public attention on academic excellence within Putnam City Schools by investing more than $3 million in programs that enhance and enrich education.

Some of the efforts the foundation has supported in its 30-year history include programs that honor teachers and students for their outstanding work, offer thousands of dollars each year for training and curriculum to building leaders, provide ways for parents to become true partners with teachers through Early Birds and English language classes, and challenge children to be more creative and career-ready in STEM labs all across the district. Last year alone, the Putnam City Schools Foundation donated more than $110,000 back into the district for a variety of projects, including a MakerSpace Lab at Putnam City West High School, a bus to the Lego competition regional tournament for Northridge Elementary, and substitutes for students and teachers to attend an all-female STEM panel.
Architect Hired to Design New Capps Middle School

The board on Monday night approved the hiring of LWPB Architecture to provide architectural and design services for a new Capps Middle School.

According to LWPB’s Facebook page, the company is a leading provider of architectural and interior design services for education, government and healthcare clients across the country since 1962. In the past 50 years LWPB has successfully completed 2,000-plus projects in Oklahoma and the surrounding region. The company website lists more than 80 K-12 jobs they’ve undertaken, including designs for Prairie View Elementary School in Mustang, the Bill Wallace Early Childhood Center in Chickasha, Noble Middle School, Shawnee Middle School, Douglass High School and Perkins High School. The firm presently has a practice that extends to 22 states and three foreign countries.

The basic architectural fee, not to exceed 6 percent of the contracted construction amount, will be covered by bond funds.

American Sign Language Training Approved

The board on Monday night approved a contract with Accent on Interpreting, a Tulsa-based business, to provide a six-hour workshop to Putnam City American Sign Language interpreters. The workshop, Conceptual Accuracy in American Sign Language Interpreters, will take place on Aug. 15. Conceptual accuracy consists of making choices that convey the correct meaning of the text as opposed to conveying a word-by-word equivalence.

The cost of the training, $517.72, will be paid for with federal funds.

Transfers Approved

The board on Monday night approved open transfers that will allow 135 new students to leave their home districts and attend Putnam City schools next year.

One hundred three additional students requested a transfer into the district for the 2017-2018 school year but were denied by the administration.

According to district officials, 469 students are already in district schools on a transfer and put in requests to return; 356 were approved to return, 61 were seniors not returning and 52 were denied re-enrollment.