

Editorial

Fruitport School's Bond Issue

The responsibility of this paper is to facilitate both sides or opinions of issues that the taxpayers need to vote on. In regard to the \$83 million school bond issue, it's especially important that we make an effort in that regard.

The school administration has a budget of over \$30,000,000 that they can take funds from to help get their views to the voters. School board member Dave Hazekamp voiced his opinion years ago that Fruitport should have a new high school before the bond issues we are now paying for were even voted on.

Our new superintendent has acknowledged that he had previous experience in successful bond millage elections, and that was a consideration in his being hired.

The school administration has been paying a consulting firm for years at taxpayer expense to sell the idea for a new high school to our community's citizens. Numerous strategies have been used. One strategy, weekly focus meetings over lunch with a professional salesperson talking while the guests are eating, has probably convinced over 2,000 voters that a new high school is a necessity. Combine these votes with the block of votes the school administration can usually count on; with an election in May, (which usually has a small turnout) and it will be difficult for any opposing viewpoint to prevail. How is a small citizen's group, using their own money, going to effectively compete with the above, and how many people are willing to sacrifice their assets to do it?

In view of the above, we have encouraged all other views to be published in this paper. When you spend \$83,000,000 and probably more in the future to complete and facilitate the project, all sides of the issue need to be considered. Usually, good decisions require examining more than one opinion on an issue.

Ron Cooper
Editor

Vote No on Fruitport schools bond proposal

Letter to the Editor

1. On May 5, you will be asked to approve a tax increase of 4 mills. We do not need to covet other school systems; we just need to maintain what we have. The projected student count is NOT going up; it has been staying flat (www.city-data.com). If we wanted to pay higher taxes and send our kids to a newer school, we would not have bought a home in the Fruitport district. A lower tax is one of the "perks" for choosing this community.

2. The location is wrong! Sheridan is a dead end road and the high school will NOT be on the corner of Mt. Garfield. The school property does not even start until 700 feet from the intersection. This is a major safety issue to have only ONE road entrance for such a high traffic facility. All it takes is one deranged person with a gun to block the intersection. How do you evacuate the school in case of an emergency? Even our local fire department has issues with this location.

3. Can the dead end be open to Pontaluna Road? No, it cannot. The new intersection would come out at the bottom of the hill on Pontaluna and an entrance at that location would create a dangerous intersection. The DNR has determined that the creek area at the bottom of the hill needs to be protected and cannot be developed. Also, the Muskegon County Road Commission has no money to even consider opening up this road. Are the neighbors on Walker willing to have their road opened up as an entrance?

4. There is currently no water or sewer on Sheridan. Are the costs to install these services included in the bond measure, or will they ask you for more money? Or will your water and sewer rates be increased to help pay for this project?

5. What about the neighbors on Sheridan? If water and sewer lines are installed, they will be forced to hook up to these utilities. Approximate costs are \$9,000 for each service, so all the neighbors will get hit with an \$18,000 bill in addition to higher taxes. Will the board of education and study committee be a good neighbor and pay for the hookup for all these neighbors? If not, do you think they will even host a bake sale to help defray the additional costs that the neighbors will incur?

FAN want ads

\$10 for the first 15 words
20¢ each additional word

Send your ad and payment to FAN
420 N. Third • Fruitport, MI 49415
(There is an additional charge of \$2 if we need to send you a bill.)

FOR RENT: Word of Hope Community Center. Seats 80 comfortably. For more information, call (231) 865-3419.

FOR RENT: Fruitport duplex. Two bedroom, 1 1/2 baths. Newly updated. In quiet neighborhood. Close to schools and park. Garage, full basement. \$700 plus utilities. No smoking, no pets. Call Greg (616) 850-0729.

6. How do you feel about shuttling students back and forth to the football fields and baseball diamonds for after-school sports practice? There will be NO sporting fields with the new high school. Therefore, will the kids get shuttled by bus or do parents need to take care of this? Will there be a sidewalk on Pontaluna so students can walk to the sports fields? Which Pontaluna Road neighbors are willing to give up their front yards for a new sidewalk?

7. Since the sporting fields are not included in this bond, will we get soaked with another bond in the future to construct a new football field, track, and baseball diamond at the new location? This is a future expense that will hit you later.

8. As for the all-day kindergarten program expenses, Fruitport is expected to receive \$3 million from the stimulus fund (*Muskegon Chronicle* article, February 20, 2009) so this problem should be solved.

Do you really want our taxes to go up in such a bad economy? If this bond passes, we will pay an additional 4 mills for the school and face more bonds for a new sports facility and other add-ons that we don't even know about yet.

By voting NO on May 5, you will force the committee to address the problems listed above and come up with a more economical second plan. They are asking for too much money and this is NOT the time to raise our taxes. Show us a new plan!

W. Schmidt
Fruitport Township resident

What are they thinking? Letter to the Editor

I have a comment and question for Fruitport Community Schools parents.

February 8, 2009 *NOW - North Ottawa Weekly* newspaper front page: "Delinquencies, pending foreclosures up in county. Ottawa County Treasurer Bradley Slagh reported last week the county has seen a 36 percent increase in property taxes that are delinquent and nearly a 100 percent increase in the number of properties facing tax foreclosure."

WZZM TV 13 evening news on February 7 stated that Michigan's unemployment rate has now reached 10.6 percent.

The *Muskegon Chronicle*, February 5, 2009 headline: "Hard times stall jail plan." It states the Muskegon County Commissioners want to "fund a new county jail and juvenile detention facility." The project carried a price tag of \$23 million. "The Commissioners said voters were unlikely to approve a tax increase during one of the nation's worst recessions since the Great Depression."

There are two things I want to point out here: First and most obvious, people don't have as much money as they used to. They are losing their jobs, houses, and even the Muskegon County Commissioners realize there is a recession and "voters were unlikely to approve a tax increase." Even in my own household, we lost over 25 percent of our normal annual income when my wife was laid off this spring. And in a few weeks it will be down to 50 percent if she can't find a job before her unemployment runs out. I don't know what it will be in a few months when I lose my job. It's going to Mexico in August of this year. I'm afraid that my priorities have become very focused on my family's basic welfare of food and shelter. No way at this time will I have extra money to waste on frivolous spending for the "culinary arts" kitchen proposed for the new high school. Don't get me wrong, I strongly agree that our kids deserve the best education available, but now isn't the time to spend that much money. I have no problem with responsible spending on updating, renovation, and new equipment. But just to build a new school at this time, I strongly feel, is fiscally irresponsible.

Second, the cost for not only just a whole new jail, but also a brand new juvenile detention facility for Muskegon County, would cost \$23 million.

So here is my question. What were the Fruitport Community Schools' hand-picked "community panel" thinking when they decided it's now time to ask for an \$82 million bond issue? And what kind of "school" is Fruitport planning on building? They said \$52 million for a new high school, which leaves \$30 million for other "renovations." With that kind of money, \$82 million, Muskegon County could build 3 brand new jails and 3 brand new juvenile detention centers, and still have \$13 million left over! Grand Rapids just built a five-story hospital for \$26 million!

On top of that, the proposed core curriculum is to be "culinary arts!" GET REAL! That isn't what our kids need! I have always heard of a country being referred to by its "industrial strength," but have yet to hear of one referred to by their "culinary strength." If Culinary Arts is what you think your child needs, there are already a lot of schools, including colleges, in this area who teach it and just where has that helped West Michigan? We need strong math, science, and a technology-based curriculum if we want our children to be prepared to help Michigan lead in the industrial future. But if Fruitport has their way, they all would learn to be good cooks in their new \$52 million kitchen.

Pat Matthews
18827 130th

Fruitport Lions Club
Old Fashioned Days
May 19-25, 2009
INFORMATION
www.fruitportlions.com

Bob & Matt Kriger
BARBER SHOP
Airline Rd. Next to Fruitport Hair Design
Mon. - Tues. - Wed. - Thur. - Fri.
Hours: 9:00 am - 5:45 pm
Saturday 9:00 - 2:00

Herby's **Repair**
798-1655
LICENSED AND INSURED
Washers, Dryers, & Refrigerators

Groenink's Elevator & Hardware
11260 Michigan Ave. Nunica
837-7391 • 1-800-682-3142

Baxter's LP Gas
865-3731 865-6100
5333 Airline Rd.

*Thank you to all who are involved
in bringing the Second Harvest
Food Trucks to the Fruitport Area!
May God bless you!*
--The Holtrop Family

CLARK'S CARPET
3020 S. Mill Iron Rd. • Muskegon, MI 49444
231-777-2658
• Carpet • Vinyl • Laminate • Commercial Tile
• Installation • Boat Rugs • Carpet Binding



But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word. - Is 66:2b

Hope's Outlet
Donations accepted daily
Mon. - Sat.

All Clothing 99¢

2424 Glade St. Muskegon Hts., MI 49444 (231) 737-9707

1100 Washington Grand Haven, MI 49417 (616) 842-1080

CUDDLY CRITTERS

LOOKING FOR GIFTS...
...TO GIVE YOUR CHILDREN, GRANDCHILDREN, OR THE SPECIAL LITTLE ONES IN YOUR LIFE...?

WE SELL CUDDLY CRITTERS™ CUTE CARTOON ANIMAL DESIGNS ON A VARIETY OF PRODUCTS & GIFT ITEMS*:

BIBS	7.99
INFANT T-SHIRTS.....	10.99
INFANT BODYSUITS.....	11.99
KID'S SHIRTS	FROM 15.99
CARDS	3.49
MAGNETS	3.49
CALENDAR PRINTS.....	5.99
JOURNALS.....	10.99
TOTE BAGS	14.99
THROW PILLOWS.....	17.99

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED!
SECURE ONLINE ORDERING!

VISIT US ONLINE: www.cuddlycritters.net

Need A Professional Newsletter?

- Design & Print Packages
- Includes all Ad designs in newsletter or try our

new **DVD Photo Slideshows**

616.844.5327
231.343.9989

Anchor Your Ads at
Ads by Adkins

Online Newsletters.
www.adsbyadkins.com