

Local school watchdog group will not oppose millage request

(Submitted by the Fruitport Citizens for Better School Management)

A spokesperson for the Fruitport Citizens for Better School Management has announced that her group will not oppose the Fruitport school district's February 23rd bond proposal. The spokesperson stated that the February proposal was discussed at the group's last meeting, and after considerable discussion, it was decided that no official position regarding the ballot proposal would be taken. Some members were opposed to the millage request for various reasons, and some members were in favor of the millage, again for various reasons.

She further stated that many of the negatives concerning the proposal were related to the maintenance issues (a door and window replacement, roofing projects, etc.), with members of the group saying that these issues should be addressed through the general fund. These members believe that funds for these types of expenditures should be included in the annual budget process and saved for future needs. The Fruitport school district has a fund balance of almost four million dollars. Surely some of that fund balance could be used to fund some of the lower cost projects the district is requesting in the February 23 bond proposal. But apparently, those funds are going to be used for something else. For what, higher pension and health benefits? Technology, safety and electrical upgrades in the millage request received mostly favorable comments from the group.

The spokesperson also stated that her group believes that the Fruitport school district is not doing enough to maximize the tax dollars the district receives. She stated that circumstances in Michigan have changed greatly since the Fruitport Citizens for Better School Management group was organized almost 20 years ago. Her group believes that the leaders of the Fruitport school district, particularly some members of the school board, (some of whom have been on the board for over 20 years), have not adjusted to the changing financial reality in the state of Michigan. Gone are the days when school districts could continually overspend by not seeking the best competitive options for their employees and students, and expect the taxpayers to bail them out by raising taxes.

The spokesperson ended her statement by saying that, although her group will not oppose the millage request, this does not imply that they are totally satisfied with the bond proposal. However, her group believes that there are some positives, which should be considered by voters, particularly the technology and safety upgrades for our children and grandchildren. She urges all voters of the Fruitport school district to exercise their right and privilege and vote on February 23rd.

Thanks, Ben Gillette Letter to the Editor:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ben Gillette, a candidate for the 91st district state house seat, for all his hours and devotion to the success of a charity event he hosted this past weekend.

Ben Gillette organized an event that raised \$530 for the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund. How awesome that he would take time out of his busy schedule to help others in need!

Wouldn't it be nice to see other politicians organizing charity events that help support their community?

Great job, Ben Gillette!

Donna Heafey
2027 Judson

Fruitport voters: Don't be complascent Letter to the Editor:

Please mark Tuesday, February 23rd on your calendar. That is the day the Fruitport Board of Education is asking voters to support an \$8.6 million bond proposal.

A Yes vote would allow us to maintain the current millage rate as well as the current length of payoff, with no change in your tax bill. The passage of the proposal would also enable us to pursue the possibility of acquiring ARRA — QSCB program funds, also known as stimulus dollars. This is based on Federal criteria and funds are issued on a first-come, first-served basis. Therefore, the sooner we vote, the better our chances of being awarded funds.

This bond will allow our aging schools to be upgraded with technology and computer education, address infrastructure needs, and provide safety and security system improvements. These critical areas will impact all students.

When the quality of our education deteriorates, we all lose. Quality educational facilities help attract and maintain quality growth in our community.

Please vote YES...you can make a difference.

Betty Kinney
President, Fruitport Board of Education

Here's to common sense Letter to the Editor:

I'd like to talk to everyone about the meat and potatoes of the new school bond vote in February. How is the school going to generate \$8.6 million without it costing me anything? Doesn't sound possible, right? Well, it's simple. Because of the commercial/mall area and the housing boom of the last decade, the school pulled in more money and paid down their loan faster. Now it is set to roll back. What does this mean in dollars that the taxpayer will save?

If your home is worth an average \$100,000, you would save about \$40 a year from the roll back. The big corporate businesses in our school district pay a lot of tax dollars because of the very high values on their buildings. If the citizens vote this bond down, we're giving thousands of dollars back to corporate America and that money will leave this township, and probably even the state. That doesn't make much sense to me!

The bottom line is, here is what the Fruitport Community Schools need: Technology based classrooms, new computers (Anyone who has a computer older than 8 years old completely understands this one!), repairing roofs, security doors and systems, electrical upgrades to support new technology, etc. No new buildings. This is a huge band aid for our schools!

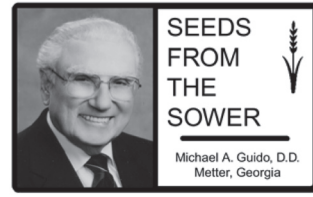
The state and township have lots of problems. To name a few: Schools of choice, state revenue cuts, aging buildings, etc. I often find myself thinking of ways to help. "Out of the box thinking," I guess you call it. The main way to help is by getting involved. That's why I ran for trustee and also why I am running for school board in May.

If I am elected, here are just a few of my main concerns. If this bond is passed, someone needs to keep a very close eye on how the money is spent. Zero tolerance for waste! Schools of choice issue? Why are parents deciding to send their sons and daughters to other schools when they live here in Fruitport? This question is very personal to me because it happened in my family. I will be talking about this a lot. More later on. Last but not least, budget control. Back to common sense. You can't spend more money than you take in!

I appreciate all the community support. Semper Fi!
David Markgraf
Fruitport Township Trustee

The *Communist Manifesto* (was) written by two bright and articulate young men without responsibility even for their own livelihoods — much less for the social consequences of their vision.

Thomas Sowell, *Marxism*



It was a bad season for a football team, and a friend was trying to cheer up the coach.

"You've taught your boys good sportsmanship," he said. "They're good losers."

"Good losers?" growled the coach. "They're perfect!"

While some are good losers in sports, they're not in losing self. Forget your rights, but remember your responsibilities.

Forget your obstacles, but remember your opportunities.

Lose yourself, not into self-indulgence, but service; not into immorality, but immortality.

Our Lord said, "Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me and for the gospel will save it."

Vote "Yes" for Fruitport bond proposal Letter to the Editor:

On February 23, 2010, Fruitport Community Schools will be asking the community to maintain the current millage rate. This will mean No increase in school taxes that we are currently paying.

I, like many other citizens on a fixed income, dread the thought of any increase in taxes. I went to great lengths to research this proposal and found out it would not increase the amount of taxes that I am currently paying to support Fruitport schools. I then said, "Why not?" Let's give our children the same opportunities that children in other school districts have. They deserve it. After all, someone looked after us when we were their age.

In these economic times, I commend the Fruitport School Board for listening to the community. To their credit, they scaled down the last bond proposal to include just the bare essentials to run a quality school district. They listened to the community and came back with a proposal that really makes "cents."

So on February 23, 2010, vote "Yes" to continue the great education Fruitport Community Schools has to offer. I am voting "Yes" and recommend that you do, also.

Jeff Holden
3745 W. Fuller

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