

Questions/Comments – March 23, 2009, Community Meeting at Barnum

Speakers

1. Sheri Gangestad – Wanted to give a hand to you people (board, facilities use committee, admin.) for the work done and for doing what is best for kids. Led a round of applause.
2. Danielle Essing – Will extra-curriculars like football and basketball still be in Manson?

We will make use of all gyms available to us. Junior high volleyball, wrestling and basketball will be in Barnum regardless, junior high football and track in Manson.

3. Tom Anderson – Don't feel politics of location should be a factor – just what is best for kids. With the predicted future decline in numbers, couldn't we stand overcrowding today in favor of tomorrow? Let go of the day care idea.

Choosing the smaller site requires immediate projections for down-sizing. Anyone who attended Monday night's meeting should have been able to sense the zeal of those folks in the old Northwest Webster district regarding this decision. When their director district holds a better building that provides expanded opportunities for kids, their expectation is that the best educational decision is going to be made. If time proves that we cannot support two large buildings, then further adaptations will have to be made. However, the initial attempt should probably not be aiming for a district of 550 students, which is probably what we would end up with if the Barnum site is closed.

4. Tricia Larson – Best educational setting for teachers to teach and for kids to learn is to have enough space. She cited the crowding of proposed specials areas.
5. Ray Fiedler – open enroll-in parent. Ray commented on space, situation with teachers and rooms. Felt with the research done and possible expenses to fix the older elementary, Barnum is the obvious choice.
6. Scott Franke – What will be the costs incurred to combine the buildings?

Classroom equipment and materials will be moved using student hired help. This should not be an excessive amount. A greater expense would probably be partitioning off that part of the elementary not used until such time as a decision would be made relative to its disposal.

7. Janet Johnson – As a very concerned mother of a special needs child, she is worried her child will lose services at the high school.

Seventh and eighth grade students will have the same special needs teachers they would have had at the middle school.

8. Jeremy McColley - Concerned about kids and teachers losing space. Regarding open enrollments, questioned where the most kids could come in from, suggested Fort Dodge would have the most potential.

Fort Dodge addresses remain our number one source for open enrollment. Pomeroy Palmer moved up considerably, but many of those are 7-12 students.

9. Rebecca Foster – She commented on her experience of traveling back and forth taking her younger kids to school in Manson, and said a day care would be an awesome benefit, especially for working parents. Commented that we have an awesome school.

The reasons for a daycare are to supplement the school and provide a benefit to parents. You'd like for it to make a profit, but if it adds students, it is making money.

10. Danielle Essing – Questioned how some of the specials will work, would they be on a rotation or all be at the same time at the elementary school.

Mrs. Davis answered this question, stating that P.E. and music would have to take place at the same time. Other specials would have to move to the dining area or into the hallways.

11. Anne Condon – thanked the committee and board. She sees this as an easy decision. Commented that MNW has great administration, teachers, personnel and great kids. Said the kids don't care –if parents accept the change, kids will do well.
12. Jenny Schreier – Appreciates the teacher recommendations, they have the kids' best interests at heart.
13. Brian Foster – Politics have no part in this, only kids' best interest. Need to have a center conducive to learning. Appreciates and thanks all those who have taken their time to work on this. Good luck.
14. Gwynedd Vetter-Drusch – Commented on the space vs. learning. In her personal experience, she did have to have TAG at one point in a hallway but it worked. She also had to take AP online classes, sometimes in the car. In her experience, while space is important it is not absolutely critical. It is absolutely critical to have a good teacher.

15. Eric Dillon – Concerned if the elementary center is chosen and a consolidation with another school takes place, where would all go? In 5-10 years would enrollments cause a need for a new school to be built?

It is impossible to predict 5-10 years in today's rural environment. RCL will be making a move with one of its neighbors very soon. If we want to be involved with them, we will probably have to do it sooner than later. However, there is no guarantee they will work with us. It is obvious that there is little room to expand if more students do choose MNW if we are in the elementary building. More specials would have to move to the hallways or onto carts.

16. Eric Larson – If we consolidate with another school such as RC/L, we need to look at what we want first. MNW is where other schools would like to be.

Anonymous Notecards

1. With the savings from closing a building, will you roll back the surtax on property and income?

The one-penny is a state-wide tax now, not a local tax. We already rolled back our PPEL tax by 74 cents when the SILO came about. The instructional support levy is utilized by over $\frac{3}{4}$ of the schools in Iowa. Without it, we would have to cut instruction even more. As its name implies, it is an instructional support levy.

2. Are there any tax advantages for the Barnum building over the Manson building?

Taxes for MNW patrons have fallen each year as the enrollment drops. The school has to adjust to less revenue. We were 12.43 a couple years ago. We will tax at 10.99 this year.

3. Gas prices are increasing, can we afford so many shuttles?

The cost of keeping one building open over another has to be weighed against both the costs of the maintaining the other building, including shuttle costs, and the amount of lost revenue from closing one building over another. Although residents of Manson may not believe it, residents in the east side of the district and those who open enroll from the east side will assert that a great deal of revenue would be lost if the Barnum site is closed.

4. Would the Schoolnet 8 move the weather station to Manson

We would have to ask Channel 8 to move it or use it with our 5th and 6th grade science..

5. Why should we only keep half of the Manson building open? Barnum has a great gym. ..why not host basketball and wrestling here too!

The elementary gym would be kept open to be used by varsity teams as it is now. Junior high teams would use the Barnum center for wrestling, volleyball and basketball.

6. If we close Manson, could we reopen it to fit future plans with RC/L?

We would not necessarily tear down the unused portion immediately. However, the board may not envision that sharing with RCL means our elementary has to be in Manson.

7. The elementary currently has many volunteers working with the students, would they travel to Barnum and work the the kids?

Hopefully, we will still have volunteers if the elementary is in Barnum.

8. Currently the high school student help at elementary. How would it work in Barnum?

That is a for-credit class, just like auto and electronics, where students have to travel. They would probably car pool as those students do.

9. If both high school and elementary in Manson, could we share custodians?

The reduction of a building will allow a reduction in custodial costs.

10. What are the marketability of each building?

We have not actually tried to sell either building. Their locations and the state of the economy would not indicate that they are very marketable. The elementary has too many structural problems to be in demand.

11. Would the Barnum building be way too big in 5 years? 10 years? 15 years?

Hopefully, it would be just right if that is the building chosen by the board. No one can see very far down the road in today's economic climate.

12. Why was the Manson school big enough for 3 sections and 60 kids, and now too small with class sizes in the 30s?

Specials such as special ed, at risk, TAG, reading recovery and rooms for AEA consultants were not in place back then. We did not have computer labs. Things have changed a lot, and so have space requirements.

13. Have you considered using the space in the Manson elementary above the gymnasium area. Enclosing this area could provide 2-3 extra rooms.

It is being considered for storage or band.

14. Is there any way to leave 7th and 8th in Barnum, why do they have to go to the HS? I hate to see them lose the middle school concept. What will be done to help keep this concept for the 7th & 8th graders?

15.

The 7th and 8th graders have been self contained with their own teachers and shared thematic units at Barnum. They did not cross teach or study with the 5th and 6th grades there. Academically, we can maintain many of the same cross disciplinary concepts.

15. With moving 7th & 8th to the high school what will become of the homework policy?

The teachers and Mr. Holloway will have to decide if they wish to maintain the same homework policy in their new environment.

16. The communication between the HS and parents is awful now – how do you plan to open communication between the HS and 7th & 8th grade parents?

This is the first time I have been told the communication is awful. I have a lot of faith in Mr. Holloway to correct problems and address concerns. Our site visits and surveys suggest just the opposite.

17. It seems a shame to keep the Manson site. After spending all the money to upgrade it you still hurt the teachers and students by making the teachers' workroom so small and the vocal room split up. The Barnum site is the clear choice?

18. Is Rabiner going to use the Barnum building next year?

Rabiner has asked about coming around to the back and using the shop area. If this were an elementary center, we would have to make sure things were totally secure before we would do that.