

Garden City Public Schools

Inspiring Minds, Empowering Achievement, Building Community



Question of the Week:

In alignment with the Board of Education's Legislative Affairs Committee's goal of enhancing communication with the community, Garden City Public Schools has continued its "Question of the Week" feature. If you have a question you'd like answered about public or board policy, school district operations, or budget preparation and voting, please email: knightc@gcufsd.net.

March 6, 2017

Q: Is it true that on the May 16th ballot, the school district will be asking voters to approve several new projects under the voter-approved Capital Reserve Fund?

A: Yes, the Capital Reserve Fund that was established by community vote at the May 19, 2015 vote is designed to enable Garden City Public Schools to fund capital projects that are too large to be included in the district's annual budget. For example, roof replacements, which can cost upwards of \$1 million, or the replacement of large items such as the high school turf field and track.

Establishing a Capital Reserve Fund reduces the need to bond for large capital projects, thus reducing debt service to the district. The Capital Reserve Fund required a vote to establish it, and requires approval from the voters each time projects are proposed using monies from the fund. Proposed projects must be clearly defined in the voter proposal. The probable term of the Capital Reserve Fund is eight years with funding of \$10 million.

Last year, voters approved facilities improvements including the renovation of the high school turf field and track (anticipated cost: \$1,020,000), installation of an HVAC system in the high school auditorium (\$900,000), and renovation of the middle school breezeway windows (\$380,000). These projects are on track for proposed work beginning in the summer of 2017.

On May 16th, voters will be asked to approve additional projects using the Capital Reserve Fund. These projects are mechanical, day-to-day health and safety items needed to keep the buildings running in support of the district's educational program, including: High School - HVAC/Mechanical work including univents, hot water heater, refinish/replace some classroom doors; Middle School - HVAC/Mechanical including fresh air intakes and partial slate roof

replacement; Stewart - HVAC/Mechanical including fresh air intakes and masonry; Stratford – First floor bathroom renovation, masonry, roof replacement; Hemlock -HVAC/Mechanical including fresh air intake and univents; Homestead -HVAC/Mechanical including fresh air intake, univents, and roof replacement; and Locust - HVAC/Mechanical including fresh air intake and univents.

The total allocation for this group of Capital Reserve Fund projects is \$6.1 million.

Q: Will the Capital Reserve Fund raise my taxes?

No, the Capital Reserve Fund does NOT increase the tax burden and does not affect the proposed school budget. Funding sources include budgetary appropriations, unexpended balances, or legally appropriated funds from other reserves.

The fund is a resource utilized by the school district to fund projects that preserve and enhance its facilities, without placing undue additional burdens on the taxpayer. The fund also aids financial planning by avoiding tax spikes to provide funds for major projects. Considering that the school district's newest buildings date from the 1950s, having this reserve reduces the risk of having to make reductions in valued programs to fund capital improvements. Finally, interest earned on the account adds to the fund.

The next Board of Education budget public Work Session will take place on March 14, 2017, 8:15 p.m. in Garden City High School. To learn more about the proposed 2017-2018 budget, please visit the district website: www.gardencity.k12.ny.us .