

'Effective immediately'

Galion Board of Educati

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Time ran out for the old lady last night during a video taped Galion board of education meeting. The Galion Board of Education accepted a bid for the demolition of the old Galion High School, bringing an end to all negotiations for the reuse of the building.

Attorney Steven Friedman was on hand to attend the board's first executive session and to speak for the board about the letter from the Ohio School Facilities Commission regarding a possible escrow account.

In the demands from the board to the reuse committee, said Friedman, the funding for the demolition of the old high school, should the project fail, would be "at no cost to the taxpayer."

Friedman said his take on the letter was that the plan was not workable. "I read this letter as a rejection." He also said that the project close out time was not enough time for the reuse committee to come up with the money needed for demolition and that the OSFC rejected the idea for a number of reasons including the issue of the joint project (state and Galion) and the timing of when the maintenance funds are released.

Even if the OSFC would have accepted the \$600,000 escrow plan, said Friedman, the reuse committee still needed to come up with another \$300,000 which included \$100,000 cash for the purchase of the building and

an additional \$200,000 that the OSFC would not have held in escrow.

"Given the failure of the escrow idea," said Steven Friedman in a phone interview prior to the meeting, "it appears this closes the door." Friedman commented that he is sorry the idea didn't take. He thought it would have been a creative solution.

Barga disagrees. In a phone interview prior to the meeting

Barga said, "I don't think the letter closes the door on the escrow concept. Many of the issues raised by Mr. Kasai (Jerry Kasai, chief legal counsel for the OSFC) can easily be addressed in an escrow agreement.

"We have contacted the state as promised," Barga continued. "We asked them to participate in a planning project and they [the OSFC] have indicated they are willing to do

ation awards bid contracts for demo

and discussing how it would work."

A. J. Riley Inc. was awarded the contract for the demolition (\$371,500) of the old high school as well as the alternate (\$5,000) which includes saving portions of the facing decorations.

"The price [of the bid] is substantially lower than we thought," said board member Bob Zeisler. "I think we should go ahead with it."

Jenney followed with the fact that the board is saving tax payer dollars by accepting the low bids.

The elements of the old high school to be saved are ornamental pieces from the south roof peak, the east roof peak, the north roof peak and the east front entrance.

"We do think it is important to save those historic elements," said Jenney. She added that there is no guarantee the design elements will be saved in perfect condition, due to age.

Regarding the saving of the design elements of the old high school Marge McCumber said, "I think we've always known that we've wanted to do this."

In other business, the board approved a memorandum of understanding to the agreement between the Ohio Association of Public School employees Local no. 370 and the board of education of for the period August 9, 2007 through June 30, 2008. The changes included the issues of severance pay and lay-off and recall.

The board also approved a second memorandum of

understanding deleting articles 5C and 5D and substituting the bumping process. "This puts into words what we have always done historically," said Jenney.

In personnel, the board approved the retirement of Christine Donnett as food service supervisor, accepted Lynda Grage's resignation as head girls tennis coach, awarded a continuing contract to Angie Gimbel, and approved summer school personnel Cathy George, Donna Shipley and Rae Zara at \$17 per hour.

The board authorized the treasurer to pay committee members \$250 and the chairperson \$400. The Galion Education Association members are appointed by the association president with the approval of the executive committee. The superintendent appoints administrative members. The members for the 2008-2009 school year are Judy Roth, Krista McKibben and Chris Cletzer as GEA representatives and Andy Jolmson and Sandy Powell as administrative representatives. This group oversees the professional development by the rest of the staff.

The Galion Board of Education held a second executive session to consider the sale of property at competitive bidding and to consider the employment of a public employee. No action was taken.

The next regular meeting of the Galion Board of Education will be June 12 at 6:30 p.m. in the new high school cafeteria.

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"I feel there is still a possibility that the Galion school board, the Galion school district and the entire Galion community and the state of Ohio can save close to one million dollars. But we need the board's willingness to sit down with the OSFC and us to work out the details.

Two of the three are willing to try that ... no one has anything to lose by meeting

Former GHS *demolition contract resolution press release from the Galion Board of Education*

The Galion City School District Board of Education passed two resolutions tonight relating to demolition of the old Galion High School. First, it voted to enter into a contract with the lowest responsible bidder for \$371,500 to demolish the building. It also voted to accept Bid Alternate #1 for \$5,000 under which the contractor will salvage certain ornamental sandstone elements of the facade for the District's future use.

These resolutions conclude a long process started in October 2007 when the Board first voted to demolish the old high school. In January 2008, a group filed a lawsuit seeking to enjoin the Board from demolishing the building. In April 2008, the Court dismissed the claims in the lawsuit relating to the plaintiffs' request to enjoin the Board from demolishing

the building, but other claims remain pending. In May 2008, the Board re-affirmed its decision to demolish the building at a public meeting. Since the filing of the lawsuit, the Board has entertained proposals from the plaintiffs' group to purchase the building in order to renovate it for an adaptive reuse as a conference center. As part of these proposals, the Board has demanded that any group wishing to purchase the building provide a guarantee and security that if they are not successful in renovating the building and putting into productive use within a five-year period, there would be sufficient funds to demolish the building at no expense to the taxpayers of the District. This guarantee was important because the use of the State of Ohio's funds through the Ohio School Facilities Commission ("OSFC") for this demolition would only be available up to the time the overall project is complete, which generally is

a year from the completion of construction. After this one-year period, the funds would go back to the State of Ohio and would not be available to the District to demolish the building.

The plaintiffs' group has not been able to come up with sufficient funding to satisfy the guarantee and security demanded by the Board. In attempting to come up with a significant part of this funding, in May 2008, the plaintiffs requested that the OSFC agree to extend the time period under which the State's funds could be used to demolish the building for the five-year period. On June 3, 2008, the OSFC rejected the plaintiffs' request stating that it could not extend the period under which these funds could be used beyond the typical one-year period. The OSFC thus denied the request to use any portion of the project funds to satisfy the guarantee and security. Accordingly, because the

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plaintiffs were not able to secure funding of the guarantee through the OSFC and have not been able to come up with funding for this guarantee by other means, the Board has elected to move forward with the demolition of the old high school at this time.

In addition, the Board decided to move forward with the contract to demolish the building at this time because the bid is signifi-

cantly below the estimate and the Board's construction professionals have advised that re-bidding the contract in a few months or next year will likely lead to much less favorable bids. In addition, waiting any longer on this contract would cause the Board to incur substantial additional costs relating to its construction management and design services contracts. For further questions contact Kathy Jenney Superintendent at 419-468-3432 ext. 1001 or the Board's Legal Counsel Steven Friedman of Squire, Sanders & Dempsey LLP at 216-479-8327.