

Galion BOE: Just the facts

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The residents of Galion through the election process gave the Galion board of education the power to make decisions concerning all school building.

Fact: According to Rick Savors at the Ohio School Facilities Commission in Columbus, boards of education have the freedom to do what they want with old buildings owned by the district, including selling, leasing, donating or demolishing.

Fact: In its Sept. 24, 2007, meeting, the Galion board of education listened to a presentation by Matt Sagone of Squire, Sanders & Dempsey about the board's options concerning the old school buildings.

Fact: Once the board made the finding that the property was no longer needed for any school purposes, the board could divide the property and sell it as separate and smaller parcels. According to Ohio Revised Code 3313.41, the board of education must put the property up for auction before it can be sold on the open market.

Fact: Auctions are required for properties valued over \$10,000. The board can set conditions of the sale. Bids can be accepted or rejected by the board.

Fact: The proceeds from an auction can pay into the

bond retirement fund or into a special fund for the construction or acquisition of permanent improvements.

Fact: The board also has the option to lease the school property. The lease agreement must contain cancellation provisions if the property is needed for school purposes.

Fact: Appraisals, for the properties only, were approved at the July 12, 2007, meeting. Appraisals were ordered for lots "with buildings removed."

Fact: Public discussion about the possibility of sale or demolition of old school buildings took place Sept. 24, 2007, in open session.

Fact: The Galion Board of Education in its Oct. 11, 2007, meeting, had on its agenda a motion to declare the former Galion High School no longer needed for any school purpose and authorized the sale of the real property (with building). That resolution died for lack of a motion. The board then continued by passing the resolution to approve construction documents for the demolition of Dawsett, Renschville, Galion Middle School (Walnut Street) and Galion High School (Church Street) in connection with the district's Ohio School Facilities Commission project.

Fact: Bids for the abatement/demolition packages of those four buildings were approved near the close of the Dec. 13 board meeting.

Fact: Should the board

choose to halt demolition on any one of those buildings, the state money that would have been used for the demolition would go back to the state and the local money would go back to the building fund.

Fact: The board could decide to end the demolition process.

In an e-mail dated Oct. 10, 2007, 10:31 a.m., from Matt Sagone, bond council for the board, to Supt. Kathy Jenney:

Jenney: "If the board votes at the October meeting to demolish a building, can they reverse that decision at a later time? I recognize that this may cost us money in that the preparation of bid documents will be underway."

Sagone: "Short answer is 'Yes; Theoretically, the board could reverse the decision even after a contract is awarded (assuming the wrecking ball has not already been used on the building), but as you recognized, the further you go down the road, the higher costs you incur are likely to be."

Fact: Much public discussion and brainstorming sessions were held concerning the new school buildings, how they should look, what kinds of furnishings they should have, colors, decor, where they should be.

Fact: The first public discussion held concerning the fate of the old buildings was Sept. 24, 2007.