

?North Harrison board proceeding with Morgan Elementary renovation

Written by Administrator

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?? The North Harrison Board of School Trustees learned Thursday night that the construction and renovation project at Morgan Elementary School in Central Barren is proceeding smoothly. The Department of Local Government Finance in Indianapolis recently approved the project, which is the final legal hurdle to moving ahead with the project.

Architect Hal Kovert of Kovert-Hawkins of Jeffersonville, Indiana, presented the board and new interim Supt. Dr. Fihe with the latest developments in the Morgan project.

A topographical survey of the building site at Morgan was completed, and it has been determined that the soil will support a building foundation with a normal load bearing footing.

An architectural survey of the existing buildings at Morgan will be done, in great detail, to give contractors information on all existing structures, down to the smallest detail.

The board also learned that asbestos will need to be removed from the middle building, which will be demolished after all asbestos is removed. The new wing will be constructed on the east side of the 1975 section before any asbestos removal or demolition.

Kovert said that the biggest hurdle in the project at Morgan is trying to phase it so school can still continue without a hitch while construction is going on.

"Everybody is going to have to get along," noted Kovert.

Kovert pointed out that the present design concept is based on the initial meeting with the Morgan administration and staff in May 2008, but that he will meet with the people at Morgan again to fine tune the design process. A meeting with the public is also planned.

A few changes that Kovert said they are considering for the project is a larger parking lot on the north side of the building, where the present playground exists, and a loading dock for the entire building, not just a cafeteria loading dock.

Kovert's partner, John Hawkins, lives near Morgan Elementary, and Kovert anticipated either Hawkins or himself would be at the site at least once a week.

Bids for the project are anticipated to come in during upcoming months, and construction is anticipated to start this summer.

The hiring of the firm to be the construction manager at Morgan was a close vote (3-2). Board president Gary Byrne and board member Jerry Renneker voted against the hiring of James L. Shireman as the construction manager. Supt. Dr. Fihe and Assistant Supt. Dr. Ken Oppel interviewed both Shireman and representatives of the other firm, Construction Resource and Management (CRM). They spoke with both firms for around two hours each, and tried to ask the same questions, to make the process as balanced as possible.

Dr. Fihe said that he and Dr. Oppel thought that Shireman had more experience (they have been in business 51 years), a larger staff to take care of clients as needed. The main advantage that CRM had was in the price area. CRM's bid was for \$210,000 and Shireman's was for \$339,444, with both bids covering the entirety of the project, from start to finish.

Byrne and Renneker both voted against the hiring of Shireman as the construction manager. Byrne explained, "I haven't heard anything bad about either. I think they're both reputable companies. In my opinion, that's \$130,000 we can save."

In other business, the board:

1.) Appointed Nicole Cockerham as a voluntary 5th and 6th grade cheer coach at the middle school effective with the 2008-09 school year.

2.) Appointed John Harter as jayvee baseball coach (lay) at the high school during the 2009 season.

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3.) Appointed Randy Brightman as varsity assistant baseball coach at the high school during the 2009 school year.

4.) Tabled approval of a pre-school special education fence for the east side of North Harrison Elementary. The bid for \$20,750 from Down Home Fencing had been up for approval.

5.) Appointed Jon Howerton to the Harrison County Library Board.

6.) Moved the February 2009 meeting date to Monday, February 9, at 7:30 p.m. in the Morgan Elementary School cafeteria. The board has had their February meetings at Morgan for several years.

7.) Accepted a 2008-09 High Ability Grant from the Indiana Department of Education, for \$35,254. North Harrison Elementary principal Lisa Jones applied for the grant.