



Battle Ground Public Schools

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BG Board, Briefly

Board discusses razing district's vacant, Depression-era downtown buildings



The possibility of demolishing the deteriorating and long-vacant Central Building (both photos) and the old "500 Building" on Main Street was discussed at the Sept. 18 Battle Ground School Board meeting.

The School Board Saturday, Sept. 18, opened the discussion about the future of two vacant, eyesore school district buildings in downtown Battle Ground and some old, deteriorating portables. It was a "communications" item on the agenda, with no action recommended or requested of Board members Steve Pagel, Sam Kim, Monty Anderson and John Idsinga. Member Karen Lehman's absence was excused.

Kevin Jolma, the school district's director of facilities and operations, reported to the Board that it would cost roughly \$250,000 to remove asbestos then raze and remove the old Central Building, which was the school home for generations of Battle Ground students for about 60 years. It has been basically vacant, except for some storage uses, since 2001. Now it sits, deteriorating, behind a chain-link fence just north of Battle Ground High, fronting on Parkway.

Jolma said razing the old "500 Building," which is the old bus barn on Main Street across from

Burgerville USA, would cost about \$66,000. It has been mostly unused since about 1997. The structure has far less asbestos than the Central Building, Jolma said. He also discussed removal of nine aged portables on the old Lewisville campus northwest of Battle Ground High School. That would cost about \$53,000, he said, although the district would first try to find buyers for any or all of them.

Superintendent Shonny Bria said, “The time has come to seriously look at razing these structures and making better use of that property. They are an eyesore and are clearly beyond salvaging.”

The Board indicated interest in pursuing the discussion. Jolma will gather additional information about costs and possible demolition scenarios, including possible cost-sharing partnerships with the fire department, and report back to the Board.

The Board also heard from Bruce Kelley, director of research and assessment for the district, regarding recently released state-standardized test scores and how Battle Ground compares with other schools in Clark and Cowlitz counties. This was a follow-up to Kelley’s presentation to the Board at the August meeting. As part of continuing efforts to improve instruction, Kelley said, the district will send contingents to visit certain schools in other districts that had particularly good scores.

The Board also approved use of the “Math Connects” materials at River HomeLink and Battle Ground HomeLink schools.

The starting time of the Nov. 13 School Board meeting was changed from the regular 9 a.m. to 8 a.m. at the district office. However, the next Board meeting will be at the regular 9 a.m. starting time on Oct. 23 at Amboy Middle School.

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