

DURANT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMMUNITY MEETING
OCTOBER 28, 2019
Unofficial Minutes

Superintendent Joe Burnett brought the meeting to order at 5:05 pm with introductions and welcomed 19 community members, elected officials and business representatives along with board members Julie Rivera, Barb Reasner, Katy Oberlander, Russ Paustian and Phil Nietfeldt.

Mr. Burnett explained that the purpose of the meeting was to talk about the needs of the school and community and how to grow the community and draw new people to Durant.

Mr. Burnett discussed surrounding school districts and looked at district boundaries. Enrollment is the main driver of a school district budget and Durant has been experiencing declining enrollment. Projections, based on a five-year average, indicate that the trend in enrollment will continue to decline if nothing is done to turn it around.

The question was asked if Wilton is also experiencing declining enrollment. Mr. Burnett confirmed that when he started as Superintendent in Wilton they lost over 100 students in a two-year period. After doing a needs study, holding community meetings and passing a bond issue for a new elementary building, along with other capital projects, the enrollment numbers have been increasing and are projected to continue upward. Educating the public is key in passing a bond referendum.

Mr. Burnett discussed the need to take advantage of every opportunity to share with neighboring districts as this results in a cost savings to each district. Wilton and Durant work closely on class schedules and calendars to maximize student opportunities and course offerings.

Last year Durant's bond referendum failed and the board started over with a facility needs assessment. The board has been working on needed repairs to the building and discussing how to proceed.

Gary Paper spoke about his construction business and new builds haven't picked up as expected, even with the available tax abatements.

Scott Spengler, Mayor of Durant, discussed sidewalks and lighting improvements that the city will be working on to help improve safety and curb appeal in Durant.

Mike Hein, Durant Development Corp. representative, discussed the need for affordable and diversified housing and the lack of available space for housing. Mr. Hein stated that new housing additions are costly to start and re-iterated the lack of available space. New businesses coming to town has also slowed due to lack of space.

Ben Huston inquired about the timing of trying to pass another bond referendum. Mr. Burnett stated that it would be a board decision and the board will have at least two new members after the November

election. The new board will be provided information to help in the decision-making process. At this time there is no definitive time-line for a bond referendum.

Mr. Burnett thanked everyone for attending and hopes to continue collaborating with community members in the coming months. The meeting ended at 6:05 pm.

Attest _____
Secretary, Board of Directors