

Citizens Bond Committee Meeting
The State of Texas
Unite Independent School District
The County of Webb

June 18, 2013

A Public Meeting of the Citizens Bond Committee of United ISD was held on Tuesday, June 18, 2013, at the United ISD – Student Activity Center, Fine Arts Building, Room #1, located at 5208 Santa Claudia Lane, Laredo, TX 78046.

I. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER – CO-CHAIR SYLVIA BRUNI

Announced was made by the Vice Chair of the Citizens Bond Committee, Ms. Sylvia Bruni, calling the meeting to order at 6:07pm.

Ms. Patty San Miguel Tijerina called roll of the Steering Committee

Richard Morales, Chair – arrived at 6:50pm

Sylvia Bruni, Vice Chair

Patty San Miguel Tijerina

Joey Diaz De Leon

Laura Montemayor

Pete Arredondo

Adelaido “Lalo” Uribe

Mrs. Bruni announced that a quorum of members was present and that the meeting had been duly called and the notice of the meeting had been posted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act.

Sylvia Bruni asked the audience to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and the Texas Pledge,

II. Approval of Minutes of the Citizens Bond Committee Meeting of June 12, 2013

Sylvia Bruni made a motion to approve the minutes of June 12, 2013.

Motion: So moved

Moved by: Adelaido "Lalo" Uribe

Seconded by: Patty San Miguel Tijerina

Discussion:

In Favor: Unanimous

Opposed:

III. Opening Comments by Committee Members

Persons who are committee members wishing to comment publicly must do so in the "public comment" portion of the meeting, which will be designated at the beginning and end of each meeting. To comment publicly, a committee member must sign up with the presiding officer or designee before the meeting begins and shall indicate the agenda item for the present Committee meeting about which they wish to speak. Comments shall be limited to current Committee agenda items.

No presentation shall exceed three (3) persons per any side of an issue, nor shall the time per subject exceed ten (10) minutes. Delegations of more than three (3) personal shall appoint one person to present their views before the Committee.

No comments were made

IV. Presentation/Discussion:

Presentation by Mr. Roberto J. Santos and District Staff

I want to thank all of you for being here with us today. I know that the Spurs are playing tonight and I want to be as precise and to the point.

Today is strictly a meeting with more information. As you recall next week we will be meeting at United Middle School on Del Mar. We will be breaking down into smaller committees so we will be able to dive into specifics of the different areas. One of the items on the last board meeting Ms. Bruni, Julio Garcia and Ms. Ortiz from Alexander had shared with us that they would like to see if we could come up with an additional committee, this committee would be able to handle PR or speakers

bureau. We want to activate that sixth committee. In that committee probably the second to the last meeting we will ask people to sign up for that committee. This way in that point in time we will be able to go to the Board with a recommendation to be able to call for a Bond Election. Then we will have a group of citizens from different committees and staff to be able to volunteer for that. We are always opened for any recommendations. I think it is important that we get your input as to what you hear and what are the things we will be able to address in these areas.

The other item, Mr. Gilpin made a comment last time that we really don't know what kind of numbers we are looking at. What is it that we are going to look at for the Bond Election? This is what your job and your roll will be. As you get into specific committees then you will begin to see what the needs of the district are. I need to share this with you, we don't have an amount and we don't have specifics.

The last item I want to share with you is, if you look at the last page of your handouts we have a form that we would like for you to fill out so we can identify which of the committees you would like to be in. Please identify by filling in 1-5 in order of preference. This way we would be able to balance all the committees and we would be able to tell you what committee you will be assigned to.

Next week we will meet at United Middle School auditorium from there we will identify the committees and break down into the different committees/areas and give you all the data.

Again, I want to thank you for being here. We need your support.

The other item is that we need to remind everyone that is 65 and older, parents, and grandparents that really does not have an effect on their taxes. We are going to need the support of our senior citizens. With that I am going to pass it to Laida Benavides she will talk to you a little bit about the Finance.

Laida Benavides - Good evening, I promise I will speak really fast. I would like to introduce Roberto Tijerina, he is with Estrada Hinojosa & Associates he is part of our Financial Advising team. Last week the Board of Trustees chose the firm to help us with our financial advising needs for the next five years. Estrada Hinojosa has been with us since 2003, they helped us with our 2003 Bond proceeds selling over 142 million in bonds. They helped us do about 102 Million in refunding of those bonds of existing debt to bring our tax payers savings. We also issued some other debt to be able to borrow for portables, buses probably in the tune of over 25 million dollars. They have been very active they are an extension of our Finance staff they are always

at our call. They will be there answering questions when we meet with the Finance Committee.

Laida Benavides went on to a quick presentation. Presentation is available upon request.

Please don't hesitate to e-mail us on any questions you would like us to answer.

Mike Garza – Right around 2007 Mr. Santos and Mr. Zuniga had the vision of creating a planning department and these are the individuals that are responsible for a lot of the data you will see tonight. I want to recognize these people Mike Barron, District Planner, Mrs. Claudia Cavazos, District Planning Technician Nubia Castillo, District Planning Technician. They do a lot of hard work and a lot of hours are put in to create this data that will be presented here today and was presented last week.

Mr. Garza presented his presentation which is attached to the minutes.

BREAK – The time is 6:45pm and will call for a 10 minute break.
We will reconvene in 10 minutes.

Sylvia Bruni – The time is now 6:59 pm and the Citizens Bond Committee is now called back to order. I will turn the floor back to district administration.

Mr. Santos – I want to share a couple things, I know Mr. Garza talked about the different properties that we have. We are always looking for properties. If you know of someone that has property in any area, obviously at a discount price not at full price you can get a hold of Mr. Garza, Mr. Rangel, and Mr. Zuniga, Board Members or myself. We are always looking for property even closer because not only for this Bond Election, but for the future of United. As you know every year we grow. Ten/fifteen years from now we will have properties thru out the district our tax payers don't have to worry about having a buy. Anybody has any leads please feel free to call us and we would look into those leads.

Mr. Hector Perez, Ex. Director of Technology will present.

Mr. Perez – I promise I will be brief. I am here to talk about technology one of the things that we do with our Bond is to continue to upgrade our technology and of course all of our buildings include the latest technology that is out there. As you know kids now a day cannot live without the internet or a lot of the resources that are out there. Our curriculum, lesson plans are fully integrated with internet district

resources. These are some of the applications that we support with our network. The most important one at the top is instructional technology programs. Those are crucial to the operation of a school district.

Mr. Perez explained the web-site on the United Bond and step by step on the information being presented.

Mr. Santos – I think the intent here is really the input you all asked us last time. How can we look at having more data out there for our taxpayers and our parents? We are working on this web-site and by next week we should be online for everyone to access the information. Every meeting that we have and all the handouts that we give you will be able to access them on the web-site. We had a couple of members that were not here last week. Every meeting we will give you handouts that you take with you. If anyone would like for us to e-mail the full presentation we would be able to. Booklets are yours.

It is important to all of us that we have a very good idea as to where we've been and where we are going, what size and what are the concerns that we have district wide. The next couple of meetings will be the key meetings. I need to remind you to fill out the form as to what committee you would like to serve on. It is your input as to what we bring and what we present to the board and to the whole committee.

Mt. Gilpin would you like to address the group.

Mr. Gilpin - As I was watching the presentation this evening, I was contemplating on what I really wanted to emphasize. One key word is Efficient. I would like for everyone to come back reflecting from this meeting as what we talked about tonight. I, as a person that got involved with the school district really did not have any involvement there before other than being a parent and having to go to school there. Like other people they get motivated and run for an office thinking I knew a thing or two, but I found out a lot more after I was already in office. What surprised me a lot is that I really do consider UISD pretty darn efficient. There is a little room there for some improvement. Reflecting back on particular statistic that was shown here and the amount of money we spend I want to emphasize that we spend a little bit less than 10% under the state average. That is pretty incredible when you think of the quality of life in our community and everything we got going for us in Laredo. We have a lot of advantages here most communities don't have, and to be spending less than 10% of the state average is kind of amazing. I was surprised in that statistic. Certainly that is not a statistic we want to be at in the top rank either. But I think of where we are in that statistic is a bit lower than what it should be. I think that another

interesting stat there was the tax rate. The only thing certain in life is that taxes go up in July, right. I was very surprised there, where we experienced a period where our tax rate came down, but granted our basis has gone up. We had virtually no increase in tax revenue plus or minus a little bit, but if you compare it to other school districts within the same time period we have been very flat. I found that very interesting, and I think that contributes a lot that we are 10 % below the state average. We have a little room to do something good here. I think we should not be scared to go ahead and go for it. We have to hustle up and get this thing done and get it done well. If you reflect back on the history that the school district on passing bonds and being good custodians and good stewards of the tax payers' money, and having the authority by vote to increase your taxes by .16 cents and not doing that tells you a lot about the mindset of the work of the school district. I did not know that when I came to the school district and I would not ever, ever, ever believe that I would be talking about efficiency at UISD just because that's out there, people say that. I ask you right now for a show of hands what you really believed about that. I am going to say if you are an administrator or school board member your hands cannot go up on this one. How many of you would raise your hand right now and say you thought that before this? I don't think anybody in the community can honestly say they are pretty efficient over there. And actually we are. We might be a little too efficient if you think about it. That is the big thing I want to stress this evening. As a school district and a community we have been very efficient on how we educate our kids and we need to get on with the show. You see a lot of data here that supports this and everything goes together. You can't do extremely good at building schools and not do well in academics and not do well in extracurricular. By the same token you won't do well as a school district if you don't succeed in academics or succeed anywhere else. It all balances out. Everybody is a beneficiary of it. Business community benefits from it, our children benefit from it and that's most obvious the whole community benefits from this. We have to do all of these things to the best of our ability. Those are my closing thoughts this evening. On behalf of the school board I really want to thank you guys for putting the time in here and going back to that word efficiency you can see that we are almost thru this evening. We really worked on that, we spend a lot of time looking at the amount of minutes it takes. We know it was important for this meeting. We know where you all want to be. Thank you all for being here.

Sylvia Bruni – Thank you very much Mr. Gilpin and Mr. Santos, District Staff very informative.

Moving on to agenda item #5.

V. Closing Comments by Committee Members

Persons who are committee members wishing to comment publicly must do so in the "public comment" portion of the meeting, which will be designated at the beginning and end of each meeting. To comment publicly, a committee member must sign up with the presiding officer or designee before the meeting begins and shall indicate the agenda item for the present Committee meeting about which they wish to speak. Comments shall be limited to current Committee agenda items.

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The Board will have a standing item on their agenda for the next several meetings.

For now if any committee member has a comment, please come to the podium and identify yourself. We are reminded to keep comments and questions to three minutes.

- Mr. Orlando Navarro just wanted to compliment the District on the website. Great job! I don't know if there is the ability to post questions, other than that awesome job.

Sylvia Bruni - I would like to take this time to conclude our second meeting Citizens Bond Committee. Thanking those of you in attendance and especially Mr. Santos and District Staff. We want to thank you in advance, because the committee meetings to follow will be absolutely crucial. I want to compliment our District again for having been so careful in planning what's to come. A reminder next time we meet we will be meeting at United Middle School. Mrs. Cordy Jackson is reminding me that the last page in the handout where you were asked to fill out your preference for the committees we have five choices #1 being your preferred choice. We will convene at the UMS auditorium and break up into different committee rooms.

Judd Gilpin - There are six committees, the blanks that got passed out had 5 committees just fill in the blank for the sixth committee.

Sylvia Bruni – Which one is the 6th committee?

Mr. Roberto J. Santos – It was the speaker's bureau.

Sylvia Bruni – Is that one going to start from the beginning?

My understanding was that the 5 committees would meet and once a decision was made the speaker bureau committee would start.

Roberto J. Santos – For the next couple of meetings, the 5 committees will meet, and after we meet then we will come back as a group and add that 6th committee for the Speakers Bureau and PR. It makes it easier this way and this will be a key committee for us.

VI. Adjournment

Sylvia Bruni made a motion to adjourn at 7:22p.m. on June 18, 2013

Motion: So moved

Moved by: Richard E. Morales

Seconded by: Joey Diaz De Leon

Discussion:

In Favor: Unanimous

Opposed:



Richard E. Morales



Sylvia Bruni