

August 25, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## **Board approves October 17 Capital Referendum**

### ***Voters to decide on district-wide building project and elect one to the Board of Education***

At their meeting Thursday (August 24), the Horseheads Board of Education approved a capital referendum to be offered to voters October 17. The \$94.5 million project to improve district facilities is the result of a year of work including seven public meetings, meetings with school and department staff, newsletters to the community, work with architects and financial planners. The project would include improvements and upgrades at all district schools and the transportation department.

If approved by voters, the project would be funded primarily through state building aid, capital reserve funds, retired debt, with a minimal local share of a 1.87% tax increase over the course of four years, which is a conservative estimate by the district's financial advisors. On a house assessed at \$100,000, this would mean an increase of \$0.66 in the first year, \$11.04 in the second, \$11.21 in year three, and \$10.17 in year four, for a total four-year increase estimated at \$32.78/\$100,000 of assessed value. It is important to note that the tax rate in the district has decreased more than 3% in the last two years alone and over 12% over the past decade.

The High School portion of the project would include upgrading and enlarging classrooms to meet state recommendations (roughly 75% of the building), security upgrades, constructing a new library and hall connection for student flow in the building, and creating a unified secured entrance for the school.

Work at the Middle/Intermediate School complex would include traffic flow improvements at the complex on Sing Sing Road; security enhancements; art, technology, and science classroom upgrades; physical education space improvements; and cafeteria and kitchen upgrades at both the Intermediate and Middle schools.

At the elementary schools, work would include replacing original mechanical systems at all schools to more energy-efficient systems, replacing roofs that have met or passed their life expectancy, security upgrades, upgrading the district-wide phone system to improve security and communication, improving traffic flow and parking lots, playgrounds, as well as specific improvements for each individual school.

In addition, the project would include a district-wide multi-purpose facility behind the High School for educational classes, field band, athletic competitions, and other district and community-wide events.

This project is the first of several designed to upgrade the entire district for our student and our community use, guided by the Building Condition Survey (BCS), a state-required survey of facilities to determine the state of the district's infrastructure and identify items that need to be addressed to maintain safe and up to date every five years by law.

"It is time for the district to avail ourselves of the state's resources to upgrade our facilities and improve the education we offer our children here in Horseheads," said Superintendent Thomas J. Douglas. "Our Board of Education has worked diligently and transparently to present a project that improves facilities across the district with a conservative estimate of a 1.87% tax increase over the course of four years."

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“As a Board of Education, our goal has been to improve the education we offer our community’s children,” said Board President Pam Strollo. “For many years, our taxpayers have paid state taxes, and those funds have gone to building projects in other districts. It is time for those funds to come back to Horseheads for the benefit of our children and our community.”

Voters will also be asked to elect one member to the Board of Education on October 17. A board member resigned at the end of last school year to take a position out of state. The highest vote-getter will win the seat. The term of this seat begins immediately and expires June 30, 2019.

A district resident is eligible to run for the board if he/she is at least 18 years of age, has been a resident of the district for at least one year prior to the vote, and can read and write. District residents interested in running for the open Board of Education seat may pick up petitions in the Business Office weekdays from 8am to 3pm. Completed petitions are due by 5 p.m. September 18.

The vote October 17 will be from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. All voters will vote at Horseheads High School.

Information on the project will continue to be shared through meetings with various community and district organizations, as well as through a public forum and newsletter mailing to residents. Information on the project including presentations and videos of previous meetings is on the district website at [www.horseheadsdistrict.com](http://www.horseheadsdistrict.com).

Residents with questions can email [hcsdinfo@horseheadsdistrict.com](mailto:hcsdinfo@horseheadsdistrict.com) or call (607) 739-5601, x4295. Questions on board candidacy can be directed to (607) 739-5601, x4260.

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