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School Board Involvement in a School Building Program at Flora Junior High School

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SCHOOL BOARD INVOLVEMENT IN A SCHOOL BUILDING PROGRAM

AT FLORA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

(TITLE)

BY

HARLAN C. NEWBOLD

· THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

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IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1974

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
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SCHOOL BOARD INVOLVEMENT
IN A SCHOOL BUILDING PROGRAM AT
FLORA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

A Paper By

Harlan C. Newbold

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements For
EDUCATION 601 and 602
(Field Experience)

EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

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FOREWORD

The decision to build a new school building is one of the major long term commitments made by a school board and the community it represents. New opportunities to expand and enhance the educational program are created. However, changing circumstances over which the school board has limited control can alter the ultimate utilization of a school plant and the total impact of such a decision may have implications for the future which are not predictable in advance.

This paper describes the participation of the school board from the inception of the planning procedure, through the construction phases, and into the eventual operation of a new physical plant for the Flora Junior High School in Flora, Illinois.

By law, and as a matter of public record, the Official Minutes of the Board of Education must show a record of action taken on specific issues. This transcript does not include references to the deliberative processes involved, the compromises which are frequently necessary, nor the intent of the various motions which precede the simple statement of a recorded vote.

The author has provided interpretive comments and supplemental background information for the sake of clarity and continuity in the

sequence of events. These comments are based upon his knowledge of or his participation in the various events as they transpired. During the early stages outlined in the paper, the author was employed as a teacher in the District and then as an Elementary Principal. For the past five years, the author has served the District as Principal of the Flora Junior High School. In this capacity, he has worked as a co-ordinator, consultant, complainer, and in whatever role the situation seemed to require. Frequent contacts with the Superintendent of Schools, regular attendance at School Board meetings, and involvement on various committees related to the building and the educational program were vehicles through which decisions were made.

Certain aspects of the program are regulated by law or routine. Other problems are unique to this particular situation, although they are indicative of unforeseen circumstances which influence to some extent any building program, and finally some errors were made which perhaps could have been avoided when viewed in retrospect although they were conscientiously evaluated and acted upon in good faith at an earlier time.

CHAPTER I

THE COMMUNITY AND THE SCHOOLS

THE COMMUNITY

The present community of Flora was originally settled in 1818, the year Illinois was admitted to statehood. By the 1830's Flora had become a trade center and one of the first communities to develop along the Vincennes to St. Louis Road. In the 1850's the first railway was constructed through Clay County and by the turn of the century, Flora was the busiest rail center in the area. During the 1920's US Route 50 was completed. The construction of US Route 45 then provided Flora with good highway and rail transportation. Subsequently, the discovery of oil in nearby areas in the late 1930's produced quite an increase in population and business activity. Since that time a significant trend has been a shifting of the population base from the rural to the urban areas. This transition has resulted from changes in agricultural production methods, consolidation of farms, the lagging oil economy, diminishing railroad activity, and the availability of better services in residential areas.

Flora has been able to maintain a competitive position in south-central Illinois and has recently attracted several new industries.

This has bolstered the economic base of the area and also provided a more substantial base for local property taxes.

Flora is experiencing "growing pains" as requests for services are increasing and financial limitations require a priority treatment in providing for additional extension of services.

Population growth and characteristics reflect an out-migration of the community's young people and a predominance in the older groups indicating a substantial number of retired people.

The median family income is somewhat below the state and national levels although this figure compares favorably with other communities in the surrounding area.¹

The community has generally responded favorably toward proposed capital improvements and building programs.

PREVAILING SOCIETAL CONDITIONS

The decade of the Sixties was a period of social transition and turbulence. Many factors contributed to the apprehension and discontent which was registered throughout our social structures during the latter years of the decade.

Continuing inflation and an expanding economy were contributing to increased prices for materials and services. The cost of living was climbing rapidly, and rising interest rates were pushing upward the cost which the consumer had to assume on long term purchases. The tax

¹General Planning and Resource Consultants, "A Comprehensive Community Plan, Flora, Illinois" 730 De Mun Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri, 1969.

burden on individuals was also rising sharply, and the competition for tax monies at all levels of government was more intense as additional services were being demanded by constituents.

Unprecedented changes were also being experienced in educational endeavors. Changing concepts and values were rendering unstable many practices which had been accepted without challenge. Confrontations between regulatory agencies and teachers as well as students were intensifying in frequency and scope.

Technological changes, new techniques for presentation of materials, and the use of computers in educational applications brought the "Knowledge Explosion" to rest on the doorstep of the educational profession with a thrust that could no longer be denied.

Newly enacted legislation, interpretations by the courts, and problems in the enforcement of existing laws in various areas were of critical concern to those involved in public education.

School closings due to inadequate financial support were increasing; yet the local resident often felt justified in voting down an increase in local taxes for educational purposes. This was not because he thought the local request for additional funds was unjustified but because this seemed his only recourse to register his general disapproval of increased taxation at all levels of government.

While it is true that the major portion of support for education is gradually being shifted from the traditional dependence on local tax sources to increased funding through state and federal programs, the provision of physical facilities for educational purposes remains

in most instances subject to ratification by and support of the local citizenry.

In 1968, when plans for the Flora Junior High School were being formulated, the picture was not encouraging. Interest costs for public elementary and secondary school bonds set new records and proposed bond issues were meeting increased voter resistance.

The average net interest cost in 1967-1968 rose to 4.55%. This represented a 46.3% increase in new interest costs since 1963. Monthly approvals were ranging from only 39.0% of the dollar value of bonds voted on to 77.1% of the dollar value, an average of only 62.5% of the dollar value proposed was reported approved. This compared with an approval of 69.2% in 1967.²

Many school bond issues within the State of Illinois and in nearby communities were turned down by the voters during this period of time.

THE FLORA SCHOOLS

During the time plans for the new Junior High School were being formulated, the high school program and the elementary program were operated as independent units under separate school boards and administrators. The boundaries were not contiguous. Consolidation had been discussed but there was no indication that this was a real possibility within the near future.

²Barr, Richard S., Bonds Build New Schools; American Education, United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Office of Education, January, 1969. p. 29.

FLORA TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 99

The High School district comprised a land area of 171 square miles. The assessed valuation in 1968 was \$25,025,283.³ The assessed valuation per pupil in 1968-1969 was \$39,960. The educational tax rate for 1968-1969 was .9050 and the total tax rate extended in 1968-1969 was 1.4790.⁴

The first building in the High School complex was erected in 1912. Additions were completed in 1939 and 1956. A total of thirty classrooms and various specialized educational facilities including shops, laboratories, gymnasiums, auditorium, cafeteria, and library were provided. A portion of the twenty five acres owned by the district was utilized for a football field, track and field facilities, and a baseball diamond.

The school staff included thirty-two teachers, cafeteria workers, maintenance staff, office personnel, and two administrators. Beginning enrollment in September 1969 was 634 students and the average daily attendance during the 1968-1969 school year was 611.4 students.

Graduates of Lincoln Community Consolidated District #30 and Xenia Community Consolidated District #3 are included in the Flora High School enrollment figures in addition to those graduating from the Flora Grade School.

³Educational Directory, Clay County, 1969-1970. Virgil D. Shafer, County Superintendent of Schools. Louisville, Illinois, 1969.

⁴1968 Assessed Valuations and 1969 Tax Rates in Descending Order, Division of Finance and Statistics, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Circular Series A, Number 258. 1968.

FLORA COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATED DISTRICT 133

The elementary district comprised an area of 40.50 square miles. The assessed valuation in 1968 was \$14,068,630.⁵ The average valuation per pupil in 1968-1969 was \$14,793. The tax rate for the educational fund in 1968-1969 was .90 and the total tax rate extended in 1968-1969 was 1.5680.⁶

The staff included the superintendent, four building principal-teachers, forty-one full time teachers, and two part-time teachers. The supporting staff included a part-time school nurse, secretaries, cooks, and custodians. The beginning enrollment in 1969 was 997 and the average daily attendance during 1968-1969 was 951.

The Flora Grade Schools have followed a concept of neighborhood elementary attendance centers (K-6) and a central facility for grades seven and eight.

A brief description of each of these attendance centers follows:

Washington School

The building was constructed in 1940 on a two acre site in the south part of town. It housed six classrooms (1-6), office space, storage, and a small gymnasium with a stage. Enrollment in September 1969 was 148 students.

Expanding educational programs caused the gymnasium to be converted for use on alternate days and varying time intervals for

⁵Educational Directory, Clay County, op. cit.

⁶1968 Assessed Valuations and 1969 Tax Rates in Descending Order, op. cit.

instruction in art, music, band, and use as a library. The stage was utilized as a teachers' room and remedial reading classes were taught in a renovated storage room.

Seminary School

This building was constructed in 1951 on a three acre site in the west part of town. It housed seven classrooms (K-6), office space, storage areas, and a small gymnasium with a stage. Student enrollment at this center in September, 1969, was 238 pupils.

The gymnasium had been converted to provide classroom space for two Educable Mentally Handicapped classes and an additional first grade class. The stage area was utilized for vocal music, audio-visual projection room, and a teachers' room. Art classes walked one block to a renovated dwelling located on a part of the school site.

McEndree School

Constructed in 1957, this building was the newest of the elementary attendance centers. It was located on a two and one half acre site in the east part of town. The one story building housed twelve classrooms, Kindergarten, nurse's office, central administrative offices for the district, cafeteria, band room, storage areas, teachers' room, and rest rooms. A gymnasium on this site was used exclusively for Junior High classes.

Students in the surrounding rural area were transported by bus to this attendance center. In September 1969 the student enrollment was 387 students (K-6).

Junior High School

The Junior High School was situated on the same site as the McEndree building. This two story building was built in 1917. It contained eleven classrooms (including three basement rooms), a small office, an inadequate library, basement rest rooms, and limited storage space. Student enrollment was 224 students in September 1969.

Asphalt play areas, basketball courts, small softball diamond, and very limited track facilities on the site were shared with students in the upper elementary grades.

The school population remained relatively constant, but the initiation of several new programs had usurped space in each of the attendance centers thereby creating undue limitations on their educational programs. Further expansion in the academic offerings and the supportive services to students were desired but were not feasible due to space restrictions.

The old Junior High building had reached a state of obsolescence aptly described by the following statement:

This term is used to designate buildings that structurally are in such condition that they would probably stand for another fifty years or more, but from the viewpoint of housing an educational program are generally unsatisfactory. These buildings usually have good foundations, good walls, and good roofs, but lack many of the requirements for accommodating a good educational program. They are generally of non-fire proof construction, with poor lighting; have no special rooms for art, music, shops, and cafeteria, library, offices, clinics, gymnasiums, and the like;

and have inadequate heating plants, toilets in basement rooms, and poor plumbing. Moreover, these buildings are usually rectangular in shape with windows on all four sides so that additions cannot be made without cutting off light from some of the classrooms. Then again, these buildings generally have small sites and are set in the center of the site so that such playground as exists is badly cut up by the placement of the building.

⁷AASA Yearbook, American School Buildings. National Education Association, Washington D. C., 1949, p. 267.

CHAPTER II

DEVELOPING PLANS FOR A NEW BUILDING

PRELIMINARY ACTIONS BY THE SCHOOL BOARD

The first indication of interest by the School Board in advance planning for a new facility appeared in the March 1964 Board minutes. Various available properties were discussed, and Mr. Floyd Henson, the Superintendent, was instructed by the Board to make contact with consultants for additional assistance in selecting a suitable site.

After consulting with Mr. Virgil Shafer, the Clay County Superintendent of Schools, the General Telephone Company was asked for a projection of their population figures. Their information indicated that the community would experience a small but steady growth in the surrounding rural area as well as within the municipality proper continuing into the turn of the century.

Contact was also made with Dr. Victor Randolph, an educational consultant from Southern Illinois University, and he made a report at the May meeting of the Board of Education. He advised against building on any of the present sites since they were below minimum recommendations for space and cautioned that adding rooms on to existing buildings would be inadvisable since the buildings were not planned

for expansion without wasting excessive space. He suggested that buying land for a needed facility in advance was a good business practice since the value of land for a suitable school site continues to rise. If plans did not develop, any land so acquired could be sold at a later time. He also proposed that the Junior High School should have separate facilities. At the June meeting, the Board tabled any further action on securing a new building site. This precluded any further action for several months.

In January 1965 a letter to the Board extended an opportunity to purchase a tract of land in the northeast section of town. This tract was adjacent to a new road to be built around Flora, had good elevation and drainage, and was partially within the corporate limits with additional acreage available outside the city limits but within the school district boundaries.

This letter again prompted consideration on a building proposal. A committee was appointed to examine this tract of land and work out arrangements for purchase if it appeared feasible. In March 1965 the Board did purchase a twelve acre tract with the option of purchasing the adjacent acreage at a later date.

The School Board granted permission to the City of Flora to obtain an easement across the property for a primary electric power line to supply new industrial sites which were being developed. This would also assure an adequate electrical supply for a new school should future needs require it.

No further record of any discussion regarding a new building was entered for a period of two years. In June 1967 the Board voted to purchase the additional acreage. This action would provide a site of approximately 18 acres for use if and when it became feasible to build a new facility. The intensity of the informal deliberations began to increase as indebtedness of the district on existing bond issues began to be paid off. The site would now be debt free by the time plans for a new structure could be culminated.

A question arose regarding the possibility of consolidation with the adjoining elementary districts and the Flora High School combining to form a Unit District. The Board felt that this should be investigated before building plans were submitted to the voters.

A special meeting was called in January 1968 to further examine the prospects for consolidation. Administrators and Board members from Lincoln Elementary School (District 30), Xenia Elementary School (District 3), Flora High School (District 99), and the Flora Grade School (District 133) were in attendance. Mr. Virgil Shafer, the County Superintendent of Schools, discussed formation of a Community Unit District from an educational and a financial perspective. He presented what he felt were the advantages and the disadvantages of such a move and its implications for the future. Representatives of the various districts were asked for their reactions. Few opinions were expressed so they were asked to get responses from patrons in their respective districts and report back at a later meeting.

When the representatives reported back, it appeared that the Flora Elementary District and the Flora High School District were interested in further investigations but the outlying districts (Lincoln and Xenia) rejected any further consideration. Consolidation within the foreseeable future appeared doubtful.

Momentum for a new building continued during the next few months although no formal entry was made in the official Board Minutes. Another easement was requested by the City Council to permit utility lines to be laid on the south sixteen feet of the school property. This appeared mutually beneficial since it would permit the City of Flora to install utility hookups for a new residential area now developing west and south of the school site, and it would also extend water and gas mains to the west boundary of the school property and make them more readily accessible if construction were to begin on the site.

The next entries indicate a more serious interest on the part of the School Board to actually begin working toward a new building. In May 1968 a report was made on visits to Divernon, and O'Fallon, Illinois to inspect new buildings.

The June and July meetings of the Board indicate presentations were made by various architectural firms. A flurry of activity was becoming evident. Questions were being asked and answers sought regarding the educational needs of the district and the financial ability of the district to provide for these needs.

In September 1968 a motion was made to employ Engineering Services Corporation of Decatur for the purpose of planning and building a new

school building as per contract presented. The Board was now committed to get to work in earnest and develop a building proposal which could be submitted to the voters of the district.

PLANNING FOR A NEW JUNIOR HIGH BUILDING

In addition to visitations to new schools made by the Board of Education members, several of the teaching staff and administrators had been granted an opportunity to view new buildings and examine programs in area schools. The existing program was evaluated and possibilities for changes and improvements in the curricular offerings were discussed. Suggestions were solicited from the administration, the faculty, the student council, and interested laymen. The curriculum council conducted a survey of programs offered and facilities available in nearby communities.

The grade K-6 organization in the district was self-contained classrooms with the classroom teacher teaching all subjects except vocal music and art. These classes were taught by an itinerant teacher and each met twice weekly for one semester. Gymnasiums at all elementary sites were assigned for other uses making them inaccessible for physical education purposes in the respective schools.

The Junior High (grades 7 and 8) was departmentalized with students required to take all courses. The course offerings were quite basic with the exception of some Spanish instruction in grade eight. All students were scheduled for one period weekly in art and vocal music with band optional for interested students.

Mr. Lester Grant, educational consultant for Engineering Services Corporation, conducted a survey⁸ of the district and presented several alternatives regarding possible locations for a new building, suggestions for adding on and changing the present buildings to accommodate an expanded instructional program, a financial assessment, information regarding consolidation, and a suggested amortization schedule for issuance of a bond proposal.

An added impetus toward planning for the new building was an official visit by representatives of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction⁹ in January, 1968. An intensive investigation was conducted by specialists in each department. Although their findings did not specifically imply a new building, it was obvious that major alterations to the existing facilities would be required for the changes in the educational program they suggested. Specific mention was made for improving the library services and audio-visual instructional materials. It was suggested that the facilities for teaching science were very limited, and provision should be made for a science laboratory. The lack of gymnasiums and all purpose rooms in the elementary attendance centers was cited as undesirable. The report suggested that consideration should be given to improving the

⁸ A Study of Community Consolidated District No. 133, Flora, Illinois Engineering Services Corporation, Decatur, Illinois. 1969.

⁹ Visitation Report, Flora Community Consolidated Elementary School District No. 133. J. Clinton Taylor, Department of Recognition and Supervision, OSPI, Springfield, Illinois, January, 1968.

facilities for art and music classes. The report concluded with a statement that the Board should "start making some long range plans to provide the additional space needed".

As a result of these activities some rather basic decisions regarding the program to be offered in the new Junior High building were being formulated. A summary of the major objectives to be incorporated in the plans for a new building follows:

Library -- Should be larger and more accessible. It should be planned to include audio-visual materials, records, tapes, magazines, and resource materials. It should be considered a learning center and integrated with the total program for students and teachers.

Classrooms -- Should house 25-30 students comfortably and be large enough to accommodate larger groups when necessary.

Science -- A laboratory with modern equipment so that the focus of the program could shift from teacher lectures and demonstrations to a more student centered program of experimenting and reporting.

Music and Art -- Space and equipment should be available to expand the scope of the present program for students expressing a definite interest in these areas.

Industrial Arts and Home Economics -- Should be offered as a vocational orientation and also as an introductory and exploratory situation for all students to (1) learn basic fundamentals in these areas, (2) give an introduction which could lead to

profitable use of leisure time in the future, and (3) provide basic knowledge in grooming and child care for the girls and simple maintenance and repair for the boys since not all will graduate from an accredited high school course.

Guidance -- Should be included with emphasis on counseling individuals in the Junior High and establishing a more meaningful program of testing and personal records for all elementary students.

Health Services -- Should be expanded with an opportunity for the nurse to work more closely with students who exhibit evidence of personal problems.

Remedial Work -- Should be continued in reading and possibly extended into other areas where students have learning difficulties if this is feasible.

Speech Therapy -- Has been provided in the past and will be reinstated if a qualified instructor can be employed.

Physical Education -- Facilities for indoor sports should be provided, but equally as important, space for outside activities such as softball, touch football, and track and field events, should be planned. The present site is totally inadequate in this respect.

Cafeteria -- Since the new facility will be away from the central part of town and the McEndree cafeteria is currently feeding all students in the district who eat lunch at school, a cafeteria should be included to relieve the congestion in the existing facility.

Teachers' Room -- A planning room and work space for teachers should be available with necessary supplies and equipment provided.

Administrative Offices -- Space for administrative offices, secretarial service, record keeping, general storage of supplies, and storage of supplies for custodial and cafeteria services must be planned.

Flexible Design -- The building should be adaptable so it could be converted from the planned use for grades seven and eight to either a six, seven, and eight organizational pattern, or a seven, eight, and nine administrative unit. It should also be planned so that additions could be made to the original structure with a minimum disruption to the building.

Comfort -- The building should be designed and constructed so air-conditioning could be easily installed at a later date.

If the new facility could incorporate these possibilities as part of the Junior High program, this would help relieve the congestion in the elementary attendance centers by making the following available to them.

Additional Classrooms -- Enough classrooms of sufficient size to easily accommodate twenty-five students per class.

Instructional Materials Centers -- Housing library, audio-visual equipment, teaching aids, etc. in each building under the direction of a qualified librarian on a part-time or full-time basis to co-ordinate these activities unit wide.

Gymnasiums -- Make available an indoor area for physical education activities. This would also provide an assembly area for all students in each building.

Special Programs -- Adequate space would be available for programs such as special education, vocal and instrumental music, art, speech, remedial classes, and work areas for teachers to use in preparation of materials.

During September and October, much discussion and planning centered on various aspects of the building program. In November, the architectural firm submitted a plan which would use the maximum bonding power available by law to the district.

This plan was carefully reviewed by Mr. Henson and the administrative staff and was left on display in the central office. A meeting was held to obtain the reaction of the Junior High teachers and as a result some very significant changes were proposed. The design submitted had seven classrooms around a "pod", a central library, cafeteria space, office space, Industrial Arts and Home Economics areas, and a full sized gymnasium. It was agreed that more classroom space was definitely needed since eight home room classes were considered an organizational necessity. The plan for the gymnasium was about the same size as the existing McEndree Gym. and would seat about the same number of spectators.

A decision was made to make a change in the plans which it was believed might jeopardize the entire proposal when it came up for a vote but the staff was firm in their belief that the change was necessary.

Since the gymnasium at the McEndree building could continue in use for varsity ball games it was really not wise to duplicate an already inadequate facility in the new building. Therefore, the size of the gym was to be cut in half. This would provide space for physical education activities and an assembly area for students. It was to be designed so that another addition could be planned at which time a full playing floor, a stage, dressing rooms, and seating for about twelve hundred fans could be incorporated. It was believed that the community would respond better if an appeal were made later to complete the gymnasium than it would if a request for additional classroom area had to be advanced.

The reduction in the size of the gymnasium made possible two extra classrooms in the pod and increased the area of all classrooms to a much more "livable" size. The School Board endorsed the change and the plan was redesigned by the architect. In February 1969 a motion was entered in the Board minutes "to accept the final sketch drawing of the proposed new Junior High School building".

PREPARING FOR THE SCHOOL BOND ELECTION

In January 1969, Raymond Lewis, a representative of Benjamin, Lewis and Company of Mt. Vernon, a bonding company, was retained to begin getting the financial program in order to comply with legal requirements in advertising the sale of bonds if the bond issue passed. The preliminary work in preparing the schedule for bond retirement was also to be handled by this individual.

The February meeting of the Board was long and finally recessed and reconvened one week later. Financial arrangements were finalized, a copy of the resolutions calling for a Special Election was approved, and a motion to print a brochure with Election Information regarding the building proposal and mail it to parents and patrons of the district was approved.

The election was to call for a total bond issue in the amount of \$650,000.00 to build and equip the new Junior High. This amount would not all be available at one time, but this figure did represent the legal maximum bonding power of the district. There was some existing indebtedness on previous construction which would be paid off within three years. It was believed that \$520,000.00 would cover a major portion of the construction costs as the building progressed. As outstanding obligations were met, the ceiling of \$650,000.00 would permit additional funds for furniture, equipment, and final construction costs by allowing additional bonds to be issued at a later date to meet these needs.

This continued meeting was important in culminating the business responsibility of the Board for the first phase of the program. All legal aspects had to be completed, entered, and accepted as a part of the Board record. State regulations governing the notice for the special election had to be complied with and plans to arrange financing in the event the bond issue passed had now been formulated.

An important decision regarding the disposition of the old building had to be made before the advertising brochure could be compiled.

The Board concluded that it would be best to keep the old building in service to the district until it could be phased out at a later date rather than to abandon the structure completely when the new building was finished. Life Safety requirements on the structure were estimated¹⁰ at approximately \$21,000.00. This figure was not exorbitant in relation to the available space it provided. It was felt by the Board that several votes would be influenced by this decision since replacing the old building with the new one and removing it from service would not alleviate the crowded conditions in the elementary attendance centers.

The March meeting included a discussion of the impending election. Board members and the Superintendent had been active in meeting with community organizations, getting news releases out, and promoting passage of the bond issue in various ways. At this point there was considerable apprehension about the success of the election since a number of similar bond issues had been rejected at the polls in nearby communities, and on a state-wide and nation-wide scale building issues were meeting increased voter rejection.

The publicity campaign had to be carefully planned and timed to build support which would reach a peak in intensity just prior to election day. This involved not only the School Board, the administration and the staff but other elements of the total community contributed in

¹⁰Life Safety Code Survey for Community Consolidated District No. 133, Flora, Illinois. Rochester, Gooddell, Moldovan, and Spain Engineers, Inc. Salem, Illinois. April, 1968.

various ways. Representative of the many activities conducted on behalf of the bond election were:

1. Descriptive brochures were mailed to each parent in the district and each layman for whom an address could be obtained. These were also distributed at public meetings.
2. Representatives of the school made presentations at meetings of local Civic and Service Clubs and answered questions posed by members of these organizations.
3. A presentation was made to the faculty of the elementary and the high school and their co-operation was solicited.
4. Sixth grade students volunteered to prepare posters at their expense and on their own time. These were placed in various business establishments.
5. Volunteers called the parents of every child enrolled in school and urged them to vote.
6. The editor of the high school newspaper wrote an editorial which was reprinted in the daily newspaper.
7. The editor of the daily newspaper co-operated in every way and announced his support in favor of the bond issue.
8. A spot announcement on the public service channel on Cable TV was donated by the owner.
9. A local sorority volunteered assistance in any way they could be of service.
10. The local Education Association paid for advertising in support of the bond issue. They also provided transportation to and from the polls on election day to anyone requesting it.

11. School Board members sponsored and paid for advertising in support of the bond issue.

12. On election day poll-watchers (teachers) recorded the names of those who registered and compiled lists. These were distributed to volunteers who checked them against lists naming parents who had children enrolled in school. A final call was made to parents who had not yet voted to encourage them to vote before the polls closed.

Everyone watched with considerable apprehension on election day. While there was no apparent organized opposition, it was understood that there was a significant number of retired people and older residents who would probably vote against the bond issue as an economy measure rather than on the basis of any personal objections. Some antagonism had been encountered by Board members, but the scope of this was difficult to assess. Predictions on the outcome were not overly optimistic.

The final vote when it was tabulated was nearly two to one in favor of the bond issue. (652 in favor, 324 opposed, and 12 ballots spoiled)

CHAPTER III

CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW JUNIOR HIGH FACILITY

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS AND ADJUSTMENTS

IN THE EARLY PHASES OF CONSTRUCTION

Mr. Lewis, the representative of the bonding company, was present at the reconvened Board meeting on March 25, 1969 when the results of the election were canvassed. By the April Board meeting date, he and the school attorney had completed the legal aspects of advertising for bids and complying with regulations governing these activities. Bids were called for the May 20th meeting of the Board.

Four proposals were received at the May meeting and the Board moved to accept the bid submitted by Columbian Securities of Chicago (the low bid). The effective interest rate was 5.669529% and the interest cost was \$344,045.79. The repayment schedule was based on a period of twenty years and the bonds were to be issued serially.

Mr. Ernie Loehr, the architect, was present at this meeting and presented a revised floor plan for Board approval. The changes approved were minor: rearranging some of the rooms and offices, changing doors as required, and minor alterations to accommodate these changes.

The meeting was recessed until May 26 when a number of routine business activities for the end of school were finalized. A further recess until Wednesday, May 28th was called by the Board. By recessing the meeting until all formalities could be completed the way was cleared for the receipt of the bond funds in advance of the next regular Board meeting. On May 28th the legal agreement with Columbian Securities of Chicago "for issuance of \$520,000.00 in bonds in denominations of \$5,000.00 with a schedule for retirement of the bonds and a tax levy schedule to provide funds for payment of the bonds as they come due" was completed.

At the June meeting, several building related items were considered. The advance payment of some outstanding bonds on previous issues from tax monies on deposit was authorized. Mr. Don Weatherford, the engineer for the architectural firm, was present to discuss some of the problems expected in obtaining utility hook-ups, explain the technical details of the plumbing and heating systems, and answer questions relating to this aspect of the construction. Mr. Loehr, the architect, reported making final preparations in anticipation of providing materials to be used in obtaining bids from contractors. The position of the building was moved toward the back of the lot by forty feet for aesthetic reasons. This would also remove the front of the building a greater distance from the frontage road right of way and the electrical power supply lines. A petition to annex that portion of the land outside the city limits was to be presented to the city council and a request for sewer and gas hook-ups on the property was to be made. A motion to

invest Board monies as soon as they became available in securities or wherever the best rate of interest could be obtained within the limits of the law with mechanics to be handled by the Board Secretary and Treasurer was also passed.

A letter received June 26, 1969 from Chapman and Cutler, legal consultants with offices in Chicago, certified that their firm had "reviewed the Board proceedings, the schedule for repayment, and the form of bond certificate and that such proceedings showed lawful authority for said issue and that said issue is valid and legally binding upon the School District under the laws of the State of Illinois now in force".

On June 28th, 1969 a deposit of \$518,000.00 was made with the First National Bank of Flora, Illinois for investment purposes. Interest rates agreed upon were: 5% per annum on amounts left intact for a period up to six months, 5 1/2% per annum on amounts left intact for a period of six months and less than a year, and 5 3/4% per annum on amounts left intact for one year or more. Interest was to be calculated on a daily basis at the time of withdrawal. This arrangement was negotiated with officials of the bank and accessibility of funds, fair return on the invested monies, and local patronage were prime considerations.

In July, a report was made by the school attorney regarding negotiations with the City officials concerning utility hook-ups. No agreement was reached and a special committee of Board members was appointed to meet with City officials.

A special meeting of the Board was called on August 12, 1969. Mr. Fred McCollum, the school attorney, and Mr. Don Weatherford, the engineer for the new building, were present to participate in further deliberations regarding the problems encountered in obtaining utility hook-ups. The meeting lasted three and one-half hours. The major point of contention was a lift station which would be required to handle sewage from the building. City officials maintained that this should be the responsibility of the school. School officials countered that if residential occupancy in the adjoining area eventually reached anticipated levels, the lift station would be a requirement even if the school were not located on that site. They also felt that if school funds were used to construct this facility and later taps were made for residential or industrial uses that the school should receive a proportionate reimbursement on their investment.

At the regular Board meeting in August it was reported that soil borings to determine support for footings and foundations for the new building had been completed.

Another special meeting was held September 11, 1969 with Mr. Loehr, the architect, and Mr. Weatherford, the engineer, in attendance. Further discussion regarding the utilities problem was followed by a call for a confidence vote to determine whether or not the Board should continue with their plans to build on this site or consider a change to another location. Five members favored continuing as planned, one abstained, and one voted in opposition. Had this vote

avored a change to another location it could have invalidated the bond issue since the statement "on a site now owned by said district" was on the ballot.

The Board was now firmly committed to resolve the utilities problem and continue with plans to build on the designated site. Final building plans were submitted for Board approval and a motion was made to advertise for bids from contractors. These were to be opened at a special meeting to be held on October 7, 1969.

At the regular Board meeting in September, the Board announced that they would like proposed names for the new school submitted by students, parents, and the general public with the final decision on a name to be made by the Board. In theory this seemed a commendable procedure, but a number of unanticipated factors interceded and the selection of a name for the new building became a rather lengthy, time consuming, tedious project. Finally, the rather obvious name "Flora Junior High School" was agreed upon at a much later date.

A notice was sent announcing the special Board meeting called for the purpose of opening bids and awarding contracts for the construction of the new Junior High School and received by each Board member, as required by law, twenty four hours prior to the stated meeting.

On October 7th, 1969 at 8:00 p.m., the meeting was called to order. All due procedural regulations were noted. Bids were presented, opened, and read from seven contractors who bid on the base proposal, and from other contractors who bid on the electrical work, plumbing work, heating work, or combinations thereof. After the opening and

public reading of the bids, all bidders were advised that they would receive notification as to the results of the bidding. The Board retired to the regular meeting room where the various bids were discussed, analyzed, and combined. None of the bids were within the architect's estimate of the construction costs, and none were within the available funds for construction. The apparent low bids added up to a total amount of \$615,802.72 which was nearly \$100,000.00 more than was available in bond money. After discussion, a motion was made that the architect be directed to negotiate with the respective low bidders in each category to take deductible alternatives or other acceptable methods of reducing the costs of construction and make recommendations relative to the awarding of the contracts to the Board as soon as possible.

There remained three avenues in attempting to match the contractors' bids with available construction funds. These were: (1), Agreement on alternates listed as options in the bidding procedure; (2), Deletion of certain features incorporated in the building plans; (3), A careful recheck of the financial situation to see if any possibilities for additional funds may have been overlooked. Each of these possibilities were meticulously reviewed by the architectural firm, the school attorney, and Mr. Henson, the School Superintendent, prior to the next meeting of the Board.

At the regular Board meeting on October 21, 1969 the attorney, Mr. McCollum, the architect, Mr. Loehr, and the engineer, Mr. Weatherford, were in attendance. Alternate proposals from the low bidders were

reviewed and possible changes in construction which might result in a lower cost, a review of financial arrangements, and other matters relative to the building program were discussed. This meeting was recessed until one week later. On October 28, 1969 the meeting reconvened with all Board members, Mr. Loehr, the architect, Mr. Grant, the educational consultant, Mr. Hardcastle, the school auditor, and Mr. McCollum, the school attorney, in attendance. The Board approved a total of \$42,164.00 in deductions including \$20,000.00 in the General Contract, \$2,000.00 in the Electrical Contract, \$4,000.00 in the Plumbing Contract, and \$2,000.00 in the Heating Contract. The major revision in the General Contract called for a change in the elevation of the floor in the main part of the building which would add some steps leading into the bleacher areas and also necessitate some additional grading to remove an existing knoll and slope drainage away from the building. A wooden floor in the gymnasium was to be changed to a vinyl floor covering. (If an addition were to be constructed to the gym at a later date, a wood floor could then be installed.) Two moveable partitions were to be replaced with permanent walls in the classroom area.

These changes still left a total of \$573,042.72 in firm bids by the contractors plus the architects fee (6%) for a total financial obligation of \$608,061.28 to be met. According to state law, all revenues must be accounted for in an amount sufficient to meet all contractual obligations before the contracts are valid. Mr. Lester Grant, the educational consultant for the architect, presented some

suggested financial revisions. He stated that the manipulations of funds proposed had been submitted to the firm responsible for the School District's annual audit and to the legal advisor for the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and that both of these agencies had confirmed the legality of the transfers. The following actions were then taken to provide revenue to meet the required contractual amounts.

Bond Funds remaining	\$516,000.00
Anticipated Interest from investment of bond monies	\$ 25,750.00
Loan from the 1969-1970 Education Fund to the Building Fund. To be repaid 10/28/70 or before from the Building Fund. (\$26,000.00)	
Transfer \$40,000.00 (\$26,000.00 loan from Educational Fund plus \$14,000.00 in Building Fund money) from the Building Fund to the Junior High Construction Fund	\$ 40,000.00
Loan \$23,907.00 from the Bond and Interest Funds of issues prior to 6/1/69 to the Junior High Construction Fund to be repaid 6/30/74	\$ 23,907.00
Charge the bonding company fee to the Education Fund and transfer said amount to Junior High Construction Fund.	\$ 2,750.00
TOTAL AMOUNT AVAILABLE	\$608,407.00

This procedure would provide an amount of \$342.72 of revenue in excess of the contractual obligations. These maneuvers cleared the way financially for the Board to proceed in letting the contracts. After some additional discussion the following contracts were let:

- (1) General Construction Contract to Ray Gilbert Construction Company of Altamont in the amount of \$330,236.00.
- (2) Electrical Contract to McCulloch Electric Company of Fairfield in the amount of \$56,555.72.
- (3) Plumbing Contract to Boos Plumbing and Heating Company of Effingham in the amount of \$69,120.00.
- (4) Heating Contract to Industrial Roofing Company of Mattoon in the amount of \$117,131.00.

A question about restoring certain deleted items which were contained in the original plans and specifications was raised. The architect responded that a letter of intent to the contractor responsible for any specific item would accomplish this providing sufficient funds were available.

Mr. McCollum, the attorney, was directed to set up another meeting with City officials to negotiate further on the utilities problem. Another problem which was now introduced involved the access road. This road needed considerable improvement since it was narrow and had a bridge which needed to be replaced. There were special ramifications since the north portion (200 ft.) adjoining the state highway was the responsibility of an adjoining township while that portion within the corporate limits was the responsibility of the City. Annexation of the school site would transfer maintenance of that short stretch of road to the City. This technicality was a factor in negotiations with the City. The meeting was recessed until further negotiations could be held.

The meeting was reconvened on November 12th, 1969. A letter was read from the City Clerk requesting the Board of Education to submit a proposal describing the participation of the School District in extending municipal utilities to the school site. Previous negotiations and correspondence relative to the subject were considered, read, and discussed. The Board then moved to propose the following:

- (1) Pay one half of the actual cost of sewer service.
- (2) Pay the total actual cost of a water service connection.
- (3) Pay the actual cost for providing an extra fire hydrant.
- (4) Pay one half the actual cost of providing gas service.
- (5) Pay the actual cost of transclosure(s) required to provide electrical service.

The Board also stated that in the event the sewer should at a later date provide service for other property that the school should be reimbursed for one-half of such connection costs made to other users.

With reference to any street improvement, it was the judgment of the Board based upon legal counsel that it had no legal right to expend school funds for that purpose.

Construction work was begun in late October by the General Contractor. Preliminary grading was completed and footings and foundations were poured for part of the building before inclement weather forced a halt to all work in mid-December. Temporary hook-ups for water and electrical power were obtained so there was no delay in construction time resulting from the prolonged negotiations with the City Council.

At the November meeting no substantial change was indicated regarding negotiations with the City... Other considerations were now deemed of more immediate consequence and it was decided to wait a while before re-opening the discussion when perhaps more public interest could be aroused.

In December, the Board selected the brick to be used for facing on the new building. Builder's Risk Insurance was purchased to protect the District against loss or liability which might be incurred during the construction period.

Winter brought all construction activity to a halt and the Board had a temporary respite from the building program.

CONSTRUCTION PROGRESSES

A target date of mid-January 1971 was announced by the General Contractor and plans for the educational program, ancillary student services, and staffing for the new facility were being formulated.

Considerations for furniture and items of equipment needed for the new building were gaining momentum. The estimate on costs for these items including the architect's fee was \$58,500.00. An increase in the Educational Fund was anticipated for the coming year since a major new industry would be added to the tax rolls. It was anticipated that this would provide sufficient funds to provide the necessary furnishings even if there was not enough money available from the bond allocations.

Mr. McCollum, the school attorney, was present in January to report that no agreement had been reached with the City. The lift station was still the major item of contention. The Board voted to increase their contribution by \$2,000.00.

The February Board meeting began with a report by the attorney that the City officials had again rejected the proposal made by the Board for the sewer service. The Board moved to table further consideration on this item until a later date. The attorney also recommended that due to an increase in the District's assessed valuation an additional bond issue could now be made. He stated that there existed a definite probability that this figure would decrease the following year since new state laws would permit removal of certain properties from the tax roles and this bonding potential could be lost. The meeting was adjourned until March 3, 1970 when the new bond issue would be considered.

When the meeting reconvened, Mr. McCollum, the school attorney, and Mr. Dyer and Mr. McCowen, representatives for Dain, Kalman, and Quail Municipal Bonds, Inc., of Davenport, Iowa, were in attendance. They presented a proposal for the sale of \$45,000.00 in multiples of \$5,000.00 bearing interest at 6.75%. This was acceptable to the Board and instructions were given to proceed with the issuance of the additional bonds.

At the regular March meeting the attorney was present and reported on the progress for the new issue of building bonds. A motion was also made at this meeting to buy 250 student desks for the new Junior High building. The meeting adjourned until April 7, 1970 when arrangements on the additional building bonds were finalized.

A special meeting of the School Board was called for April 13th. The school attorney was again in attendance and the purpose of the

meeting was to try to develop a definite route to solve the water and sewer complications for the new building. A motion to stand firm on the present offer was defeated by a vote of four to three. A motion to increase the participation by the school in the amount of \$400.00 was then passed by the same margin of votes.

Three members of the School Board were returned to their seats at the regular school board election in April. Some discontent was implied in retaining the same law firm for another year since one of their members served as an attorney for the City. No action was taken on this matter. One additional mercury vapor light was authorized for the rear of the new building. This would assure all areas of the building were well lighted and the style of the fixtures would be identical. Installation costs would also be less if done while the contractor was on the job.

Mr. Loehr, the architect, was present at the May meeting and outlined several bids on Science and Laboratory equipment for the new building. The Board made a selection and authorized this expenditure. Various engineering plans were presented by the architect for further consideration. This was a discussion of installation and operating costs for various types of heating and air-conditioning equipment. This was largely informational to substantiate performance of the type equipment included in the plans.

Construction continued uninterrupted during this time with all contractors making satisfactory progress. All contractors' home offices were within a sixty mile radius of Flora and the general

foreman on the job was a local resident. No delay in obtaining materials had been encountered and no extremes in weather conditions had caused any extended shut down on the job.

In August 1970 a motion authorized removal of brush, bulldozing, and site improvements to be made. Lockers for the physical education dressing rooms were also purchased at this time. Mr. McCollum, the school attorney, and Mr. Weatherford, the architectural engineer, were in attendance and the matter of the utilities hook-ups was again deliberated. A motion was recorded to grant the City an easement for the sewer line and lift station on the recommendation of the attorney.

In September, a report was given on landscaping arrangements for the Junior High building. A motion made at this meeting also made possible the purchase of student lockers for the main corridor of the building.

In October, the necessary transfer of funds regarding the Construction Account was completed. The Board instructed their president to "pursue the sewer problem at the new school and arrange for installation thereof with the City Administration". This issue was still unresolved after almost a year of negotiations. It would soon hold up construction work on the building if it were not resolved.

At the November 11th Board meeting the attorney stated that another \$25,000.00 in building bonds could now be issued. This was authorized by the Board and Dain, Kalman and Quail again were chosen to handle this transaction. Interest rate on this issue was to be 7.0%.

The necessary legal work on the bond issue was ratified at the

December meeting. The Board also appointed a committee and granted them authority to purchase office furniture and teachers' desks for the new building.

The building was not ready for occupancy in January 1971 but work was progressing steadily. The only threat of an interruption due to labor difficulties occurred when the hall lockers arrived. The school custodians began assembling these units on the site and Mr. Henson, the School Superintendent, was informed that this would not be condoned by the Union Labor Representatives. This problem was discussed at the January meeting of the School Board. A decision was finally reached to have this work completed by employees of the manufacturer of the lockers.

Additional items of equipment were being purchased regularly to have ready when the move into the new building could be accomplished.

A bill for the installation of the sewer was presented for payment at the March meeting of the Board. The final cost was approximately \$3,000.00 more than the original proposal made by the Board. At this same meeting another conflict with the City officials was discussed again. A motion was made to withdraw the annexation proposal which had still not been acted upon. This motion was withdrawn. Another motion to table discussion on annexation and the road problem until after the upcoming election died for want of a second. Finally a motion to withdraw the proposal if positive action were not taken by April 6, 1971 was passed by the Board.

A committee from the Board and their attorney had met with the City Council two days preceding the March meeting. At this meeting they requested officially that improvements be made to the road. While the Mayor stated that it was his desire that such a road be furnished, the City Engineer displayed a cost study showing that the cost at the present time would be prohibitive in view of other needs the City had to meet. A committee from the Council was appointed to meet with the School Board for further negotiations relative to road improvement. These discussions tended to add fuel to the ongoing feud between the two agencies.

At the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board in April, a motion was passed to employ another law firm to represent the school for the 1971-1972 school year. This was the first outright action taken to get negotiations with the City moving in a different way.

The move to occupy the new building was made during April immediately after Easter vacation. The building proper was completed. Only the bare necessities in the way of furniture and equipment were available, but it was felt that the move would help in making any required adjustments in preparing for classes the next year. The teachers could get accustomed to the new surroundings and additional equipment, furnishings, and materials would be provided as the need became apparent and the funds became available.

At the Board meeting in May the Board approved the purchase of furniture for the Instructional Materials Center. This would allow time for these materials to arrive and have this part of the building

functional for the beginning of school in the Fall. A presentation of various items needed for the Home Economics area was also made by the Superintendent.

In July several items of business related to the new building were acted upon. A landscaping proposal not to exceed a specified figure was accepted. It was decided to use the City Garbage Service during the ensuing year. Typewriters and an adding machine were purchased for use in the new building. An expenditure was authorized for recommended equipment in the Industrial Arts Shop and the Home Economics department. A small combination refrigerator, cook top, and lavatory was authorized for the teachers' room. Approval for the sale of \$60,000.00 worth of additional building fund bonds was granted. A committee was appointed to handle the grading, seeding, and fertilizing of the Junior High School property. Another action taken at this meeting was to negotiate for purchase of a vacant lot which adjoined the south boundary of the school site. This would permit construction of a gravel walkway and bicycle path for student use and make available a second approach to the building. The dimensions of the lot were large enough that a strip fifteen or twenty feet wide could be retained, and the remainder of the lot could be sold at a later date.

The athletic director and the eighth grade coach were present at the August meeting to discuss the development of an athletic program to include baseball diamond, a softball diamond, outside basketball goals, and construction of a Junior High track. No action was taken to proceed at that time. Another decision which affected the Junior High

operation was made. The McEndree cafeteria was serving all students in the district and had initiated a satellite feeding program in two outlying elementary schools. Although all hook-ups for cafeteria equipment were available in the new building, it was decided to extend the satellite program rather than spend the money to equip and operate another cafeteria. This would make some extra money available for other needs and should additional enrollment or future expansion warrant it, the cafeteria could be equipped and operable in a short time.

CHAPTER IV

THE BUILDING IN OPERATION

The opening of school was eagerly anticipated in August of 1971. The new furnishings and equipment installed during the summer added significantly to the overall appearance of the building and students who attended briefly in the spring were pleasantly surprised at the changes which had occurred. New student folders were distributed to all students. These contained information about the operation of the new school. The revised class schedule altered the organization of their class day and allowed some new possibilities in the structure of the educational program.

The Board of Education continued to be involved in a number of important decisions regarding various aspects of the new building. Since the site was on the outside perimeter of town and adjacent to a major highway, it was decided to employ a night watchman to make periodic checks in addition to those made by local police officers.

At the September meeting of the Board plans were approved to sell the additional \$60,000.00 in building fund bonds previously discussed. These bonds went for an interest rate of 6 5/8% which was slightly less than the previous issue. The bonding company representative

from Dain, Kalman, and Quail attended the October meeting and presented the resolution outlining the sale of the bonds. This was accepted by the Board, and actions to finalize the transaction were approved.

A motion was made to purchase a used milkshake machine for the Junior High cafeteria. This would supplement the school lunches for those who wanted it, provide something to drink for students who brought sack lunches, and allow a refreshment for some students who didn't bring or purchase a lunch. This was well received by the students, and complaints regarding the lunches diminished noticeably. Since the nearest restaurant was more than a quarter mile away and the lunch period was rather short, most students stayed on campus.

The annual transfers required between the Education Fund, the Building Fund, and the Special Construction Fund were made in October. Mr. William Todd, the school attorney, was instructed to approach the City of Flora again regarding the annexation of that portion of the Junior High School grounds outside the City limits.

In November, Mr. Loehr, the architect, was present at the Board meeting. He presented a report on final inspection of the new Flora Junior High building and final bills. Included was a bill from the Heating Contractor. Considerable difficulty was being experienced with the heating units which the architect said was not unusual during the "breakin" period. Another motion was made at this meeting to construct two baseball backstops at the Junior High.

At the December meeting \$7,500.00 was granted for purchase of additional equipment for the new building.

The annexation issue was again discussed in January 1972 and another request was to be officially lodged with City officials.

Problems with the heating system continued, and a motion was made to retain a local man to maintain the system and pay him for the work performed. This proved to be an oversimplification of the circumstances. The controls on the system were quite complex and portions of the system were obtained from three separate companies. Since the system was still under warranty, work had to be done by company servicemen. At one point a specialist from each of the Companies involved checked his particular machinery. (Each had to be called from the St. Louis area.) They indicated that their equipment was operating properly and yet the system had frequent malfunctions. Finally it was decided that perhaps fluctuation in the City's gas pressure was affecting the operation, and this was checked out. During this period of time the problems experienced would probably have caused emergency closings had it not been for John McCullough, the man responsible for the Electrical Contract on the building. He lived within thirty miles and was finally placed on a retainer by Industrial Roofing Company, the company responsible for the Heating Contract, to provide emergency service as needed.

In February, the Board voted to purchase aluminum letters to be placed on the building which would identify it from the front approach.

The additional bond monies had been received and in March 1972 motions were made to transfer the \$40,000.00 from the Special Construction Fund to the Building Fund. This would repay the loan

of \$14,000.00 from the Building Fund. Another motion was then made to repay the \$26,000.00 loan from the Education Fund. This action would eliminate the need to make the annual transfers into and out of these funds.

Another very frustrating problem during the first year of operation involved the bell system in the building. The year began with the system functioning normally but as time passed the bells began ringing indiscriminately. The service representative (from St. Louis area) checked them over and asked that a record be kept of when they rang at unscheduled times. Finally, it was determined by the staff that it would be less disruptive to turn them off completely. The works from the master clock were removed and checked over completely. Later a panel in the control room was checked and eventually service was restored.

During April of 1972 some rather important local political events occurred. Two of the incumbent Board members were unseated in the Annual School Board election. The voter response was exceptionally heavy. Several factors contributed to this change. It could not be directly attributed to public reaction to the building program.

Another local election was also significant. When the results of the local City election were registered, the individual who had just completed his second term as president of the Flora Grade School Board had been duly elected Mayor of Flora. He had one year remaining on the School Board and did continue to serve it. During the next few months one of the experienced School Board members defeated in the

election was appointed to a vacated post as a City Commissioner. The incumbent Secretary of the School Board was also appointed as City Treasurer. This completely transformed the political relationship between the two governmental bodies.

After a year in operation, problems with the heating system were still unresolved. In April, a motion was passed to table a bill from the Heating Contractor until such time as the school was satisfied with the performance of the system. A question was raised as to the status of the warranty on this equipment since dissatisfaction with the system had been registered at regular intervals. One of the roof top units had "blown out" creating the need for major replacements on this unit. This had resulted in a conference with the architect, the engineer, a representative of the Heating Contractor, and specialists from the companies who provided the units and the control system. The blue prints were consulted, and a thorough recheck of the entire system was conducted.

At the May Board meeting a motion was made to pay the Heating Contractor. This had been a "hot" issue; funds had been withheld and at one point payment was stopped on a check in an attempt to draw attention to the problems.

Another item which accounted for considerable time in Board deliberations was the construction of a side walk. The proposed walkway would extend more than one eighth of a mile. Two property owners would have to give consent before the walk could be planned and a major drainage ditch had to be crossed. A question as to how much right of way would be required if the road were to be widened was a

factor in trying to locate a sidewalk. The cost of the project and how much money it would cost the school, how much participation would be forthcoming from the property owners, and what contribution might be made by the City (labor and/or materials) were factors in the deliberations. The result was that the proposed sidewalk was never constructed.

The change in the City Administration was reflected during the summer. Some grading was done, ditches were bladed out, some widening and temporary resurfacing of the road was accomplished. New mercury vapor lights were installed on the existing light poles along the road. These changes improved not only the appearance of the area but made travel for students much safer.

After some further negotiations, the school property was finally annexed by the City.

The widening of the road was not accomplished even though a major united effort was made by the School Board and the City Council. Acquisition of right of way from some of the adjacent land owners and the high cost of installing a storm sewer, moving utility lines and other requirements to bring it up to compliance for inclusion under a Motor Fuel Tax Program have apparently stopped such considerations for the immediate future. Some major repairs were made on the bridge which eliminated the concern for safety of the pupils transported over this route by school bus.

Some of the work on the Junior High track was accomplished. Preliminary grading and drainage work was done. Some used pipe was

anchored around the inside of the track and some cinders were hauled. It is now useable for practice but would still require a major expenditure of funds to complete it. Additional items of equipment, cabinets, and furniture have been added as the needs were expressed.

Direct Board involvement in problems directly related to the Special Construction Fund for the Junior High School building were generally completed during the 1972-1973 school year:

CHAPTER V

CONSOLIDATION

The new Flora Junior High building did handle the program it was planned to house in an admirable fashion. Circumstances changed rapidly, however, and even before the building was occupied the Board of Education was again approached with regard to further action toward consolidation.

Before final plans for the Flora Junior High School building program were finalized in 1968 the Board made a sincere attempt to determine the probability of a move toward consolidation. They were assured at a meeting called for that purpose that apparently, according to the views expressed by Board members and administrators of the districts involved, that this was a "dead" issue at least for the foreseeable future. The Board implemented plans at that time to provide for the educational needs of Flora Community Consolidated District #133.

Construction was well underway on the building when a motion appeared in the Board minutes to meet with the High School Board to discuss consolidation.

The Board members and administration of the Flora schools were basically favorable to such a move as individuals. They did feel,

however, that there was a distinct probability that it would have a divisive effect on the community at large. The business community was somewhat skeptical regarding the effect such a move would have on patrons in the outlying elementary districts.

A report on a joint meeting with the High School Board was made at the May 1970 meeting of the Grade School Board. This prompted a motion to participate in a feasibility study with the High School Board to further explore the formation of a unit district.

The record indicates that a report was made at the June 10th meeting of the Board regarding a June 4th meeting held with the High School Board. During this time interviews were held and a selection was made of a consultant to carry out the mechanics of the proposed study.

Official action slowed for a period of several months although research work was done, interviews held, and information gathered for inclusion in the study.

In early April 1971 the "Reorganizational Feasibility Study for Four Clay County School Districts"¹¹ was received and distributed to all Board members and administrators in the districts involved. The next entry in the official Board minutes relating to this subject was recorded on April 21, 1971 and simply stated the intention of the Board to "table further action on the Feasibility Study".

¹¹Reorganization Feasibility Study for Four Clay County School Districts, School Services Bureau, College of Education, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois. 1971.

During the spring of 1971 the Clay City High School and its underlying elementary districts approved a proposal to form a Unit District and began operations July 1, 1971. This area adjoined the eastern boundary of the Flora Grade School and Flora High School Districts. Momentum toward any further action to organize as a Unit in Flora again slowed appreciably although numerous discussions on both an informal and a formal level continued to be held.

In January, 1972, the Board went "on record as not to be a participant in financing or endorsing the Community Unit question at this time. AND FURTHER -- the intent of this motion is not to be interpreted as opposed to any actions that District 99 (Flora High School) may wish to initiate". This statement, although vague, reflected a consensus of the Grade School Board members that patrons of the Flora Elementary District were involved in more than their proportionate share of the cost of these proceedings. The Flora Grade School and the Flora High School had shared the cost on the Feasibility Study while the outlying elementary districts did not participate at all. It was the Board's belief at this point that if costs were born by the High School District all constituents regardless of which elementary district they resided in would be involved in the costs in a more equitable way. They did not intend that this should be an outright rejection of any further efforts toward consolidation on the part of the High School Board.

An attitude of "We'll wait and see what develops" continued during the early months of 1972. Operations in the Flora Elementary Schools

were going smoothly, and the new Junior High building had relieved the crowded conditions in the elementary attendance centers. The building program had accomplished what was necessary to accommodate the educational program needs of District No. 133.

The Louisville High School and the underlying elementary districts approved reorganization as a Unit District and began operating as such during the 1972-1973 school year. This was the area adjoining the boundary of the Flora Elementary and the Flora High School on the north.

Changes in the structure of State Regulatory Agencies, State laws, and the financial structure for schools were all indicating that another round of reorganization into larger, more efficient units which could provide more comprehensive educational opportunities and more extensive student health and personnel services was imminent.

The Cisne High School and Grade School Districts shared a common boundary with the Flora Schools on the south. They provided the needed impetus to get deliberations in the Flora districts "off center" and on the move again. Cisne filed a petition with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to call an election for the purpose of establishing a Community Unit District during the spring break in April 1972. In this petition they proposed to absorb some of the geographic area which was located within the Flora Elementary, Xenia Elementary, and Flora High School Districts into their new district. Objections to their proposal were filed immediately by Mr. Virgil Shafer, the Clay County Superintendent of the Educational Region. Another petition was presented which requested withdrawal of

the names of several signers of the original petition presented by Cisne Schools on the basis that it had been misrepresented to them and they were not aware that it would change the boundary lines between the Districts. This left the number of signers on the original petition less than the number required by law. Anxiety was expressed by the people living in the affected area whose high school age students were attending the Flora High School but would be required to attend the Cisne High School if the Cisne Unit became a reality. After a review of the situation was made by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction the Cisne petition was disallowed.

Meetings were again held unofficially in the Flora Schools to determine what action needed to be taken. The Feasibility Study was reviewed carefully. The recommended procedure by the survey team was to form a unit school district with boundaries co-terminous with those of Flora Township High School District No. 99. An alternate proposal presented was that the Flora High School District No. 99 and the Flora Elementary District No. 133 form a unit district contiguous with the boundaries of the Flora Elementary District. Lincoln and Xenia Districts would retain their position as elementary districts with tuition only privileges for 9-12 grade students. Existing laws would allow these districts two years to form a new high school or to annex to an adjacent district with grades 9-12. This was recognized as a possibility although it was believed that to follow this route would alienate and antagonize the two outlying districts unnecessarily.

The possibility of losing area to another district, the deteriorating financial condition of the smaller districts, and the belief that there were definite advantages to a unit district organization were factors in a decision to let the people decide. Petitions were filed and eventually approved and an election was called for December 2, 1972. Approval at the polls would create a Unit District with boundaries circumscribed by the existing High School boundary.

The election was well publicized and the views of proponents and opponents of the unit organization were made known by mail, radio interviews, newspaper articles, phone calls, and personal contacts. As anticipated, feelings were strong and dire predictions of what would happen if the election carried were circulated.

The designated polling places were busy all day on election day and the final count was extremely close. A total vote of 2,310 was recorded with 1,164 votes cast in favor and 1,146 votes in opposition.

Lawsuits were filed immediately by opponents to the unit organization alleging the use of unlawful procedures and naming individuals for specific violations of the rules governing such elections. Litigation extended over a period of several months, and there was speculation as to whether the court would invalidate the election or rule in favor of the formation of a Unit District and declare it a legal entity.

Finally in April 1973, an opinion was received which stated that in the opinion of the judge the Unit District was legally conceived and plans could proceed for its operation during the 1973-1974 school year.

The deadline for filing petitions for members of the new Unit Board was announced, petitions were received, and an election was held on April 14, 1973. There was considerable interest in this election and the new members were officially seated after a canvas of the votes was completed at an organizational meeting held on April 17, 1973.

The Board of Education of the Flora Community Consolidated District No. 133 functioned in harmony with the newly formed Unit Board until July 1, 1973 when all further obligations and responsibilities were assumed by the Flora Community Unit No. 35.

Primary attention of the new Board was focused on the equalization of educational opportunities within the elementary attendance centers. Vocal music, art, and foreign language instruction were extended by hiring additional personnel or allowing travel time and expense to teachers assigned duty in two or more buildings. Student health services were made available to all students by placing the nurse under full-time contractual service. Industrial Arts and Home Economics instruction was afforded to students from the Lincoln and Xenia attendance centers by busing their seventh and eighth grade students to the Junior High building for double period class sessions on alternate days of the week.

Temporarily, a solution has been reached. The first year of operation under the new Unit organizational structure was more

harmonious than anticipated, and although problems were encountered, the staff, administration, Board, and the community were tolerant of these situations until some accord could be reached.

The most serious objections to a merger of the Junior High age students from the three attendance centers appears to be the loss of the athletic programs, the band programs, and the resultant loss of community involvement in these areas. From a financial standpoint this needless duplication of personnel and equipment is also one of the most obvious inefficiencies in the total program. From a practical standpoint the physical facilities of the Junior High building would not house the inclusion of the classes from the outlying attendance centers without resorting to overcrowded classes, restricting current educational programs, and creating an excessive burden on all accommodations in the building.

Now, ten years after plans were inaugurated by the Board of Education of District No. 133 to provide space for an expanded educational program, the Board of Education of District No. 35 is faced with a similar set of circumstances.

The present site incorporates sufficient land area for a vastly expanded facility. It would seem that in the not too distant future the new Board will again need to assess the educational program and the available facilities and determine what course would be most beneficial to best provide for the educational requirements of the Junior High age population in District No. 35.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

This paper describes the involvement of the Board of Education of Flora Community Consolidated District Number 133 in the planning and construction of a new Junior High School facility in Flora, Illinois.

Chapter I gives a brief description of the community, some comments on the prevailing societal conditions during the planning period, and an overview of the educational program in the Flora Schools during the 1968-1969 school year when plans for a new Junior High School materialized.

The decisions made by the School Board relating to the planning process are included in Chapter II. These include the decision to build, selection of a site, acquisition of land, the evolution of the building plans, and the preparations for the special election necessary to vote on the bond issue needed for construction of the planned facility.

Decisions executed during the period of construction are outlined in Chapter III. The necessary financial arrangements, the sale of the building bonds, the letting of the construction contracts, negotiations

for utility hook-ups, authorization for purchase of various items of equipment, and the progress on the actual construction of the building are included in this section.

Chapter IV includes a discussion of some of the problems encountered and the Board involvement in their resolution after the building was occupied.

Chapter V reviews some changes which have occurred as a result of consolidation and how these affect the utilization of the Flora Junior High building.

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