

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE TO THE DEERFIELD INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER  
From Deerfield Community School District Citizen Advisory Committee  
For questions, please contact Superintendent Michelle Jensen

February 25, 2020

Citizen Advisory Committee Discuss the History of Referendums and Community Surveys

On February 25th, the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) met to learn about referenda, including those that have been passed in Deerfield. There are two types of referenda; one is used to exceed the revenue limit (the maximum funding schools receive per student from state and local taxes), and the other is to issue debt for capital improvements. In 2016, Deerfield passed one of each. A referendum was approved to continue exceeding the revenue limit by \$400,000 for four years for operational expenses, and another was approved to spend \$2.9 million on capital improvements that included building the fitness center and replacing the athletic stadium bleachers and buildings.

The Deerfield School District's current debt is \$6,010,000; this includes the \$2.9 million referendum passed in 2016 as well as the remaining debt from the construction of the Deerfield Elementary School in 2003. The current tax mill rate in Deerfield is \$11.00; about \$3.00 of that goes toward paying the debt.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction website shows results and information on all school referenda. We have 421 school districts in the state of Wisconsin. Over the last five years, there have been 195 non-recurring operating referenda, 72 recurring operating referenda, and 280 capital referenda. The data also shows that it is becoming more common for schools to ask for recurring operating referenda. In this type of referendum, the ability to exceed the revenue limit is permanent. The Marshall and Cambridge school districts have already passed recurring operating referenda. The Deerfield School District has been exceeding the revenue limit since 2008 passing non-recurring referenda in 2008, 2013, and 2016.

The CAC will be working with School Perceptions, Inc. to conduct a community survey to gather opinions on proposed capital projects as well as school expenditures for daily operations. At the meeting, the CAC reviewed the survey used in 2016, as well as a first draft of a new survey which will be mailed to district residents in April or May of this year. The survey results are reviewed carefully and are used to make a recommendation to the School Board for long term planning and potential referenda. Some points of discussion for the upcoming survey include the potential of including a recurring referendum and another capital referendum for facility needs.

The next CAC meetings are set for March 9th and March 30th at 6:30pm in the DHS FACE room. Members of the public are welcome and encouraged to attend. If you have questions or concerns you would like to share, please reach out to any of the committee members or email the committee at [cac@deerfield.k12.wi.us](mailto:cac@deerfield.k12.wi.us). In addition, updates will be shared in The Independent, WDEE, the Deerfield Schools website, and the Deerfield Community Schools Facebook Page.