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New Wasatch High School Design Remains Intact

BY JOHN MOSS

Wave Education Writer

"We are committed to the long range plan of building this high school and we need to get it done correctly," said Wasatch School Board member Alan Bluth at last week's school board meeting. Representatives from Layton Construction were present to discuss some of the changes that had been discussed on the project.

Matt Noyce, Project Manager for Layton Construction, talked of the process of value engineering that has been going on for the past few months. "We have taken the time and looked at how we could get the best value for the district," he said during his presentation. Chris Smith of Layton echoed these feelings. "We have valued engineered several hundred items and have squeezed several million dollars out of the cost of the project," he said.

Earlier, in an effort to combat the construction costs that have risen so dramatically in the past few months, the decision was made to look at the savings available if several cuts were made to the building, including removing one of the auxiliary gymnasiums and the little theater as well as removing four classrooms from one of the classroom wings.

"We decided that it would be a waste of taxpayer resources to cut the building like this," said School Board President Claudia Bradshaw. "The studies showed that the cost savings for eliminating those features did not amount to a significant reduction in the cost of the building."

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but reduced its functionality significantly."

The decision to add the three areas back into the building in a "shelled" format was made this week as progress on the building continues.

"As we have done our value engineering, we have been focused on finding savings in areas that would not negatively impact the building, either functionally or aesthetically," said

Mrs. Bradshaw.

"It is important to remember that by adding these sections of the school back into the project, we will still not surpass the "not to exceed" figures for the project," said Mr. Smith.

Even with the adding in of the three areas in question there has still been some size reduction on the school.

"We have not ignored the savings we can get by some reduction of square footage," said Mrs. Bradshaw. "We have chosen to use a combination of reducing square footage in some selected areas of the school and value engineering throughout the building in an effort to bring the cost in line with what we can afford. However, we felt that the savings recovered by eliminating these areas (which have been shelled in) was not sufficient to justify losing the areas."

"Shelling in" an area means

the structure of the areas will be completed, but none of the finish work will be done at this time. Electricity and plumbing will be brought to each of the areas and enough heat will be available to avoid weather damage, but the areas will not yet be finished for use.

Additional good news concerning a further reduction in the tax burden for county residents due to the growth of Wasatch County was announced at the board meeting. "New figures presented to us indicate that the assessed value of the county has grown beyond what we were earlier led to believe," said Superintendent Larry Shoemaker. "That will translate into a reduction of the total tax bill that will be assessed to residents to cover the cost of this (the new high school) as well as other school district bonds."