

Seismic retrofitting might save kids, but the bricks will still fall

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question, Gotchall said that sometimes, new elements of the design renovation may not become effective until the old element has failed. The new element in a reinforced wall will not actually hold the load of the roof until the old element has fallen away. For example, a new structural steel and concrete wall would not hold up the roof until the old unreinforced masonry (brick) wall had fallen away. In the event of an earthquake the brick exterior of the building is still going to fall, according to Gotchall.

Comprehensive plans require an architect

When board member Darrell Hamblet asked about the building being subject to other (than structural) upgrades to meet current code, Gotchall responded that an architect is needed to develop comprehensive plans that best meet the needs of the district. He also said that the WGS building could never be brought into total compliance with modern code requirements. When asked why the high school was not included in this study, Superintendent Mike Funderburg said that WGS is the building of concern now.

Marie Botchie said that, in her experience, just because a building doesn't meet code doesn't mean it is unsafe. Gotchall explained that the safety factor at WGS is related to the composition of the unreinforced masonry (URM) walls and the connections between the structural elements of the roof, the floor and the founda-

tion. Gotchall's report says that, "In terms of seismic risk, this type of building is found to be most hazardous." He described the construction as "very brittle" and having little strength to transfer loads, such as the shaking of an earthquake or heavy rain or snow, from the roof to the ground. Asked if there were some modifications that could be made for relatively low cost, Gotchall responded that anchors to attach the walls more securely to the roof and foundation would increase the factor of safety.

Methods same as prior engineering study

When asked about how he conducted his study, Gotchall answered that he had performed his work in the same way as the previous engineer. Since interior finishes hide nearly all of the structural elements, his conclusions are "statements of structural engineering judgments based solely on visual observation from a cursory walk-through of the existing facilities, information collected from existing drawings, and a simplistic seismic analysis." When asked about the recently discovered dry-rot, Gotchall said that determining the amount of dry-rot in an existing structure is extremely difficult without actually tearing the building apart.

The same information was in previous reports given to the board and the long-range facilities planning group, Michelle Blum noted, plus information about unsafe and inadequate buildings at the high school.

She said that, while the recently passed seismic safety measure for public buildings may eventually provide funds for this type of renovation, it is currently unfunded and likely to remain so in light of the state's budget crisis. Reading from a document she prepared and is circulating in the community, Blum said a first hand review of the facts in previous reports and the post-bond measure survey, indicate to her that the public did not have the information they needed to support the previous bond measure. Blum makes a passionate appeal to the public (See Letter to the Editor) that money spent on fixing a portion of the problem is wasted.

\$2 million would get job started, not finished

Gotchall's report includes an estimate of almost \$2 million as the cost of structural seismic renovation. He said the estimate does not include "any architectural items or finishes, mechanical or electrical improvements, and other items, which should be evaluated in conjunction with any structural improvements." Gotchall said that he is currently involved in the seismic rehabilitation and remodel of a junior high school in Estacada that is similar in size, layout and type of construction. The final cost for the project, including structural, architectural, mechanical and electrical improvements, will be \$5-6 million. According to Gotchall, Newburg is currently seeking bids for a new elementary of the same size as WGS

in the \$8 million range.

Without public support, nothing will be done

Following Gotchall's report, board chairman Carla Strand opened a general discussion with the audience and said that the board needed the consensus of the community to move forward. Blum pressed the board to answer the question, "What does consensus look like to you?" Strand directed Blum and Botchie to engage in discussion with board member Cari Levenseller, who recently attended a workshop on how to obtain and use community support for bond measures, but was unable to attend the November 21 meeting. Board member Leslie O'Leary said the board needs the community to say what is needed and

what they would support.

Hamblet said the previous bond didn't have much input or discussion at various churches, civic groups, etc., but teacher Ilene Grady questioned this, pointing out that she, and others, were out in the community working hard for passage of the bond. Hamblet responded that the board needed the confidence of the community, that the bond was the most reasonable solution. Isabelle McDaniel said that many people just didn't feel they had the money to support a bond with an added tax burden. She said that many senior citizens are especially inclined to think of the dollars first. Botchie also said that she had heard people say that they just didn't have the money for a bond.

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