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FAIRFIELD-SUISUN CITY, CALIFORNIA

The Tax Watchers: 2022 Measure J bond oversight report

By **Barbara Pisching**

The Fairfield-Suisun School District has been using the funds generated by Measure J, the \$249 million ballot measure passed by voters in 2016, to modernize, renovate and build school facilities and buildings.

As required by the state Education Code, a citizens' bond oversight committee was formed at the first sale of the bonds.

One of the responsibilities of the oversight committee is to advise the public with an annual report on the school district spending of the bond monies for construction of school facilities in accordance with the bond ballot measure. Another duty of the committee is to review and accept the annual performance audit and financial audit conducted by an appropriate agency hired by the school district.

During 2022, the oversight committee met five times to review and discuss expenditure reports generated by the district which identified projects and their costs. The Annual Report for 2022 is posted on the school district's website and copies are available at our local libraries.

To inform district taxpayers of how their tax dollars were spent, this is a summation of the project expenditures from the Measure J bond, as reported by the district, for the 2022 calendar year.

Starting in January 2022, the Measure J building fund had \$78,407,266 available from the \$249 million in bonds sold, which included \$6.1 million available interest.

The State Allocation Board awarded matching funds of \$5,533,642 for work on the Public Safety Academy Library and Gym. The board also identified five other projects eligible for funding grants and awarded \$14,593,787 for completed work at Grange Middle School, Fairview Elementary and Dan O. Root Elementary.

The most expensive projects completed to date were the Sheldon Middle School modifications and new classroom building construction at a cost of \$35.7 million, and the Fairview Elementary School modernization and new library costing \$29.9 million. Work on the Fairfield High School Performing Arts Center has begun and when completed will be the most expensive project yet paid by the bond at an estimated cost of \$47.6 million.

At the end of 2022, the Measure J fund balance was \$62,013,652. There were 17 completed projects and nine work-in-progress projects remaining.

As the mandated taxpayer association representative on the Measure J oversight committee, it is one of my responsibilities to provide the public with information on the facilities work being done at the district using the bond revenue paid by your tax dollars. From my perspective, and not that of the oversight committee, I found the project

facilities staff to be detailed, the construction work to be well-managed and the contractor rolled. I also considered a few projects to be overly expensive. The cost to taxpayers to repay principal and interest will likely be more than \$550 million, with the payback period to end in



Barbara Pisching: The Tax Watchers

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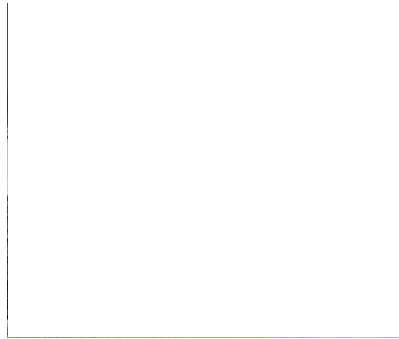
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The Central Solano Citizens Taxpayer Group meets monthly to review current government activities and school district bond project spending as it benefits or affects the community. Contact us at 707-771-5481 for meeting time and location, and for further information about what we are working on to improve government efficiencies and its use of tax money.

Barbara Pisching is a member of the Central Solano Citizen Taxpayer Group and of the Citizens Bond Oversight Committee for Measure J.

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