

Bond Fails

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Liberal's schools will have to wait for upgrades after Tuesday's results denied a \$61 million bond proposal.

The Blue Ribbon Committee had worked to pass the issue, but many believed the cost was too much for the current economic uncertainty.

School board candidates Cheryl Louderback and Reid Petty both made public stands that the bond issue should be reduced, and both won election to the USD No. 480 School Board. Incumbent Cliff Abbott and candidate Nick Hatcher both publicly showed support for the bond issue and were only separated by one vote for the third and final seat on the school board. Bart Stapleton also openly supported the bond issue and came in fifth.

School Board President Dan Diepenbrock supported the bond, but its defeat will force the board and the district to revisit the issue.

Though the school bond issue was defeated with 60 percent saying no and 40 percent approving, only 2,781 total votes were cast, and that's not a disaster, according to Diepenbrock.

"We just need to get 280 people to come to our side," Diepenbrock said early this morning.

Defeat or not, Diepenbrock said he was meeting with the DLR group, architects of the bond, and administration officials later today.

“We are having a meeting this morning to talk about reviewing the results and a plan to get input from the community on why this plan was rejected so we can revise our proposal – and, probably, be looking at resubmitting it as soon as we can,” Diepenbrock said.

Immediate concern for Diepenbrock is Liberal High School.

“The high school needs to be expanded,” he explained. “We need to get that off the drawing board and in the construction phase.

“That’s not to say the other projects that were included in this bond issue were frivolous,” Diepenbrock continued. “But it’s just the critical issue is the high school – we need to get that going.”