

Reasons to Vote YES on Nov. 7 Winslow School Bond #7:

GETTING MAXIMUM VALUE

Reasonable, responsible renovation means not wasting a crisis. Not passing up the chance to fix long-standing problems while the crisis response team is on site to deal with the actual crisis issue. Not passing up opportunities to add new or better amenities at the best price YOU WILL EVER GET.

The crisis is the Junior High. It must be closed. The students must be relocated, and it has been determined that additions to the high school and some renovation of the elementary school is the cheapest solution. An architect has already burned hours and money drawing the plans. Some Big Commercial Contractor with heavy machinery and an army of laborers is going to arrive on site. Tons of building materials are going to be transported to the site.

Is that something that is cheaper to do once, or twice? (In our excellent Winslow Schools, I think even a kindergartner can answer that.)

The cost of getting to the ready-to-build moment is enormous, and it is almost the same whether you call Big Commercial Contractor out to build 3 or 4 classrooms, or whether you add 13 classrooms, bathrooms, administrative space, expand the cafeteria, and - yes - expand a gym and build a larger theatre. The materials cost is larger since you have more materials, but I'll bet the cost per unit goes down if you bundle the additional materials into the same project.

Big Commercial Contractor will be on site for the crisis at hand - providing space for the Junior High students. There is NO BETTER TIME to correct past deficiencies like a poorly designed cafeteria, an inadequately sized and equipped theatre, and a gym too small to play any sport in, than when Big Commercial Contractor is already here. It is not only more convenient and economical, but it is justified by the fact that you are going to add to the building load two thirds of the Junior High students - and teachers! Some have suggested that the theatre or gym wait till later. Later will mean never, because the mobilization cost of having contractors return a second time would inflate the project by two or three times.

Let's make sure that Big Commercial Contractor doesn't do just a patch job while on site, but renovates our schools to serve our education needs properly for the next 20-30 years.

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Opinion by Tom McCowan

Who is this guy?

- Winslow homeowner since 2001; selected Winslow because of excellent schools
- Real estate lawyer in Waterville
- Father of one WHS graduate and one senior; husband of WHS teacher