

# TechniGraphics Seeks Enterprise Zone

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WOOSTER DISTRICT -- The board will consider an enterprise zone request from the city at its meeting Tuesday at 7 p.m. at Edgewood Middle School.

It discussed the proposal -- a building project on behalf of TechniGraphics Inc. -- at Tuesday evening's work session.

The \$6 million project is slated to create 150 jobs over three years, Treasurer Bonnie Weltlich West said.

"Basically doubling their facility," board member Bob Reynolds said.

"And \$4 million in new payroll," West said, noting a project of this size could create an opportunity for tax-sharing "we could take advantage of."

However, Wooster Mayor Bob Breneman stressed that the project should by no means be considered a done deal, as TechniGraphics is seeking competitive offers from other states where it has facilities located.

Breneman said the city and Wayne Economic Development Council are working with the Ohio Department of Development to put together a comprehensive financial package of incentives for TechniGraphics to compete with those other potential sites.

The local piece of the financial package would be a 10-year, 75-percent enterprise zone agreement that would abate taxes on all new construction.

TechniGraphics currently employs 180 people.

West also told the board she has been researching whether a PILOT, a payment-in-lieu-of-taxes, proposal from a company would negatively affect state funding to the district.

Initially, she said, it was considered something a district would be unwise to accept. But she has recently learned there is some credence to the possibility that districts, such as Wooster, under the state guarantee could possibly profit from a PILOT.

Based on changes in the state funding formula and fluctuating attendance, the guarantee "adds a cushion to bring us up to the amount we've received historically," West said.

"I do want to keep on top of how far we can go with that," she said. "I'll have further discussion with the city about businesses' willingness to do that."

The board also discussed how it will measure accountability on one part of its mission statement -- ensuring "learning environments are safe, supportive and healthy."

Board member Jim Barnard asked if policies now in place are being "executed flawlessly in every single building, every single day."

"We do have daily checklists for our custodians (as part of their) daily rounds and routines," said David Kocevar, director of business and community affairs for Wooster City Schools.

Asked by Barnard whether unannounced evaluations of security measures are made, Kocevar said, "Not yet, but there will be. It hasn't been put in place yet."

At this time, operations are addressed on an "as-needed basis ... as we see deficiencies," Kocevar said.

In terms of security policy implementation, the district is "99 percent there," he said. "We are moving through these lists, getting these things accomplished."

"We'd love to know more detail," board President Mike Baus said, concerning "where we're at safety-wise ... to show the public we are concerned with safety ... and are going to keep working toward it."

"I know you guys have been doing a lot," he told Kocevar.

Superintendent Dan Good reminded the board that much of school safety threats have "come from within schools." He said he would "hate to lend a false sense of security (to the public)" by advancing the notion physical security measures would completely solve the problem.

He suggested it is necessary to also monitor disciplinary incidents and implement "wrap-around (social) services" for families so that "they don't fall into the high-risk category."

The board also met in executive session following the work session to paper screen candidates for the position of superintendent.

"We went through our booklets and we picked seven to interview," Baus said.

At the end of the second day of scheduled interviews on Feb. 26, "If a couple of people really float to the top, we will bring them back on March 1 for a second interview," he said.

The board also retains the right "to open (the process) back up" if a suitable candidate is not identified.

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