

League of Women Voters of Scarsdale
Comments in Advance of the Proposed Capital Projects Bond Referendum
October 3, 2014

The League of Women Voters of Scarsdale (the “League”) thanks members of the Board of Education (the “Board”) and District Administration (the “Administration”) for addressing questions on the proposed capital projects bond referendum at the League’s general membership meeting held on September 29, 2014.

The League supports investment in Scarsdale school facilities in order to maintain and enhance the quality of our students’ education. The Board’s current list of publicly vetted projects for a bond referendum specifically aims to ensure appropriate, safe learning spaces, to provide enhanced programmatic opportunities, and to meet 21st century educational needs. Especially with interest rates now at historic lows, the Board’s plan to match long term assets with long term financing through a bond issue is fiscally prudent.

Understanding the Board will use the opportunity of retiring debt to ensure tax neutrality, the League supports the list of facilities projects recommended by the Administration and approved by the Board on September 8. We further support that the Board is considering “in addition, because interest rates are currently very low,”¹ other District and building-level facilities priorities for possible inclusion in the bond issue.

As the Board will decide the final list and scope of projects and the total bond issue amount on October 6, 2014, the League is not able to comment on the proposed bond referendum at this time; however, the League is prepared to reconvene to discuss the bond proposal once it is finalized.

The League appreciates that should a bond referendum be approved, the Board intends to form a construction management committee that will include community members with relevant expertise. We look forward to being informed throughout the process on the progress of the various facilities projects.

Prior to the community’s vote on the bond issue, the League encourages the Board to utilize a variety of opportunities and formats for outreach to the community in order to inform and engage as many voters as possible.

In closing, the League recognizes the Board’s willingness to listen to the public in determining the outlines of the bond referendum. We also would like to take this opportunity to commend the Administration and the Board for their commitment to improved communications with the community in general and, in particular, for their efforts to reach out to residents without children in the schools, including by providing them the opportunity to sign up to receive District email communications via the homepage of the District website.

¹ “Board of Education Meeting Highlights, September 22, 2014,
<http://www.scarsdaleschools.k12.ny.us/Page/11508>.