

Subject: Beachwood School Board's position on Hamptons Letter

April 24, 2018

Dear Hamptons Resident,

It has come to our attention that you recently received an email from the owner of The Hamptons urging you to vote against Issue 2, a combined levy placed on the ballot [May 8, 2018](#). The email sent to you is filled with misrepresentations and threatens an increase in your rent in order to influence your vote. Since your email address was not kept private in the email sent to you, we send you this message in an effort to communicate factual information to you about Issue 2.

OPERATING LEVY

Issue 2 contains a 5.9 mill operating levy that addresses the **district's need for additional operating revenue**. The last time Beachwood asked its voters for additional operating revenue was 13 years ago. In the years since, we have kept our expenditures below the rate of inflation and have continually sought ways to stretch our budget without negatively impacting the excellent programs and services for which our district is known. Now, **Beachwood faces \$3.5 million in annual losses** due to changes implemented by the Ohio legislature and the need for additional operating revenue is upon us again. In fact, more than 50% of the new operating dollars we are asking for will simply make up for what is being taken away. **Without approval of new operating revenue in May, the district will be forced to enter the 2018-2019 school year having made cuts to the programs and services we offer to our students.**

BOND LEVY

Issue 2 also contains a 2.8 mill bond levy that will raise \$39 million for the construction of a state-of-the-art, safe, secure and energy-efficient addition to [the Fairmount](#) School to replace the 62 year-old Bryden and Hilltop elementary buildings. Despite the claim of The Hamptons' owner, the Beachwood Board of Education has engaged in a **transparent public process over more than four years** with dozens of presentations and publications detailing its decision-making process. The Hamptons' owner baselessly suggests that minor maintenance is needed on Bryden and Hilltop. The fact is that our aging elementary schools' major building systems (heating, electric, plumbing, building envelope) are at the end of their lifespans. The school system faces the critical decision between embarking on massive renovations of these deteriorating facilities or opting for new construction.

Extensive study by architects, engineers, and construction cost estimators has demonstrated that the **price tag for renovations will be nearly equal to building new**. Renovating buildings of this age reveals hidden problems that complicate construction schedules and lead to increased costs. Also, the logistics of moving three grades of students elsewhere during renovations, one year at Hilltop and then another year at Bryden, is a disruptive and costly endeavor.

In order to be fiscally responsible and invest in facilities that support education for the next half century, **we have decided to build a new elementary building as an addition to the existing Fairmount preschool building.** This places PreK - Grade 5 inside one safe, energy-efficient, state-of-the-art school building and provides many educational benefits as well as a half million dollars in annual operational savings. These **savings amount to at least \$16-18 million in net present value to our taxpayers** (including The Hamptons' owner) -- an advantage of new construction at Fairmount that cannot be leveraged through renovations of Bryden and Hilltop.

By constructing a new elementary school, we are best able to design a building that is **adaptable and functional, prioritizes safety, security and accessibility, and offers the specialized spaces** for music, art and science education, as well as for varied community uses beyond the school day. Consolidating PreK - Grade 5 allows siblings to attend school together for a greater number of years with fewer transitions required of our youngest students. Parents will have one location to bring their kids to and from, and fewer school buses with shorter routes can be realized.

BEACHWOOD'S LOW TAXES

Beachwood is a healthy, vibrant city due to the strength of its city services, its business community, and its award-winning school system. **Taxes for Beachwood residents and businesses are among the lowest in the region.** The reputation of the Beachwood City Schools continues to attract families to Beachwood. Many of those families choose to live in The Hamptons. Its owner has signaled that **he will raise your rents** in response to paying additional taxes critical to our school system at this time. This, of course, is his right, but it is a choice he is making for his business. He is not compelled to do so.

Furthermore, he has claimed **The Hamptons property tax will increase \$300,000** because of the school levy. **This is false** -- with an assessed valuation of \$12,062,260, **the 651-unit apartment complex's taxes will increase by \$104,942, or \$161 per apartment, per year. Don't be fooled by exaggerations intended to scare you.**

MORE INFORMATION

Before making your decision on Issue 2, we urge you to learn more by attending one, or both of the following events:

- Bryden School Tour + Q&A Session: [April 30, 2018](#) -- [7:30 pm](#)
- Hilltop School Tour + Q&A Session: [May 1, 2018](#) -- [7:30 pm](#)

Additional information about our elementary consolidation plans, as well as the district's need for its first additional operating revenue since 2005, is also available on our website: www.beachwoodschoools.org/ElementaryConsolidation.aspx

Thank you for your support of our public schools,

Beachwood Board of Education

Michael Zawatsky, President

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