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# College eyes fine arts building

By **TIM RICHARD**

"Man does not live by voc-tech alone," said Trustee Leroy Bennett as the Schoolcraft College board met for its 27th regular session Monday night. The board gave its preliminary approval to a long-range dream—construction of a fine arts facility with a major auditorium.

Trustee Gerald Cox agreed: "It's in our master plan, and we're way over due in terms of having a fine arts center. It's very timely to give the go-ahead. The fine arts facility would be one project among six covered by a \$18 million bond issue."

THE BOARD of trustees Wednesday authorized the administration to begin working with legal counsel on the bond issue resolution. Formal consideration is scheduled for the March 26 meeting.

There are no individual price tags, but these projects would be covered during a five-year period.

- Completion of an addition to the culinary arts program.
- A new learning resource center and remodeling of the existing library.
- The fine arts facility—classrooms and an auditorium with seating capacity of 2,000 to 2,500. It would cost in the neighborhood of \$3 million, officials estimate.
- Preliminary engineering plan for the campus.
- An addition to the applied science building.
- A final addition to the Waterman Campus Center.

College officials are not counting on state or federal funding. But they will seek 30 per cent state funding on every part of the program. To the extent they receive it, they'll pay off the bonds early.

THERE WAS DEBATE from two corners. Trustee Ron Cowden favored the projects but felt the board should wait for voter approval. "The public doesn't understand we have this power to issue bonds without a vote. We should go to the public," Cowden declared.

He obtained, and the vote was 6-0. Trustee Arch Valter was absent.

Richard Arlen, a business instructor and president of the Faculty Forum (instructors' union), said "A plan of operating costs should accompany this plan. This could either drain our present budget or we'll have to go after more mileage. Let's not kid the public. We'll have to subsidize this," said Arlen of the fine arts project.

**BENNETT AND Trustee Mark McQueen** defended the fine arts plan.

"The instructional costs have been built into the budget," said Bennett, adding that the costs of operating the theater portion had not been calculated.

But McQueen said theater operations "are potentially self-supporting. I've talked to people who know about these things."

Dr. Cox said: "I recall students coming in and complaining about the noisy existing facilities for fine arts. I looked at it next day. It is noisy."

In the past, the City of Livonia talked about having an auditorium of this scope, but they didn't get it passed. Now we see it in western Wayne County," said Cox.

**THE KIND OF auditorium Schoolcraft** is considering is more than double the size of Cliversonville's Schmidt Auditorium, Garden City's O'Leary Auditorium and Plymouth Salem's auditorium.

Schoolcraft's would be smaller, however, than the University of Michigan's Hill Auditorium, Detroit's Ford Auditorium and the Masonic Temple which has more than 4,000 seats and can cope with the Metropolitan Opera Company.

There were plans for such a fine arts facility in 1968, but they were put on the

shelf as Schoolcraft moved into the vocational area.

At times, Bennett was the only board member who actively favored it.

Board members and administrators alike felt the 1968 plan would be set aside and new plans drawn.

THE BOARD drafted for a while of building the fine arts facility in two stages and floating only an \$8 million bond issue.

But Bennett argued: "With only an \$8 million bond issue, we'd have to drag it in two sections. It might be more efficient to build it all at once. It's generally cheaper to do it in one phase."

Board Chairman Paul Kadosh agreed.

"If it's the feeling of the board we should have a fine arts center, let's have a fine arts center, not half a fine arts center."

Kadosh added that \$10 million for the six projects is an outside figure.

"I have a gut feeling about \$10 million," said a worried Vice-Chairman Rouna Raymond. "Maybe I'm getting concerned in my old age."

**KADOSH ALSO** felt the auditorium would draw people to the campus. "Eighty per cent of the people in the district aren't aware we're here."

Bennett said all the projects in the bond issue are either vocationally oriented or adult oriented.

Board Treasurer Nance Blitt noted that regular classrooms aren't provided for in the bond issue—and shouldn't be—because "there are too many empty seats available throughout the district."

As a former Schoolcraft student, said McQueen, "I'm in touch with the aspirations of students. I'm for it. This area is culturally devoid."

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