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Decision time: **Virgil Carr** casts his vote at Precinct No. 5, Dunckel Middle School. Above right, a lone voter leaves the precinct.



STAFF PHOTOS BY IRYAN MITCHELL

Voters share their bond viewpoints

Following are some residents' views about the Farmington school district bond issue, collected at various precincts Tuesday.

■ Clarence Dye (William Grace School precinct): "We voted for it. We know there are a lot of needs. Kids have portable classrooms and those need updating. But I see a lot of older people here who might feel there is no need."

■ Frank Lafferty, with his wife Carolyn (Grace school, precinct): "We both voted no, on both of them. We don't think true capital improvements (are) what they're spending this money on."

■ George Kantor, with his wife Bobe (Warner Middle School precinct): "We both voted for it. We're both for a better education at all costs."

■ Unidentified resident (Warner precinct): "I think they asked for way too much money. I can understand an increase, but not that."

■ Foy DeVor (Forest School precinct): "They came down from the time before...and a lot of it is for basic repairs, and that's what's needed."

Vote from page A1

into the air. O'Malley is principal at O.E. Dunckel Middle School, one building that stands to receive a lot of needed attention from the bond dollars.

With 8,482 out of 56,868 registered voters (just under 15 percent) either going out to the polls or casting absentee ballots, the \$55 million Proposal I won by a 57.5 percent to 42.5 percent margin. Proposal II, featuring \$28.1 million worth of less-immediate building improvement needs, was approved by a 64-46 margin.

Only in the absentee ballots, traditionally the means of voting used by senior citizens, did the bond issue fail. With approximately 1,100 absentee ballots cast, Proposal I was defeated 673-421; Proposal II lost out by 705-391.

The biggest margin in favor of the bond proposals was at Forest Elementary School, with proposals I and II winning by respective counts of 852-366 and 810-403.

One of those yes voters was Foy DeVor, who has a daughter attending Dunckel.

"Yes and yes," DeVor said, leaving the busy sixth precinct about 7:15 p.m. "The schools are old and they need to be updated. A lot of it is for basic repairs, and that's what's needed."

Most of the people at the district's election headquarters credited hard work for the double bond win.

Some, such as parent Bonnie Murphy, praised the school board and administration for trying to learn from the public why the \$110 million proposal in March was defeated by nearly 200 votes.

"The board and the district did some major soul searching and went to the voters to find out what was lacking," Murphy said. One of those school board members, Kathy Webb, gave some kudos to those voters for taking the time to become informed.

"This is a very 'common sense' community," Webb said. "Once they truly understand the need for something they very graciously respond."

Webb said the fact the board "listened very carefully" to the public after the March attempt and made changes, such as paring down the proposals by some \$17 million, resulted in "a second round of proposals that was acceptable in their eyes."

Residents also did more homework, Webb said, and found out from Realtors that the Farmington district needed to keep its facilities on par with nearby districts that passed bond issues.

"We're hearing from Realtors that people are coming into the communities and are shopping around," Webb said. "And when you have Walled Lake, West Bloomfield, Novi and Northville all keeping their schools up-to-date, if we didn't pass these two bond issues then people'd be passing us by."

Besides, the Farmington area is virtually "land-locked, there's no more growth," Webb said. "So we'd better take care of what we've got."

Maxfield credited hard work from parent participants for playing a key role in the decision. But he concurred about the importance of giving residents an opportunity to be heard following the previous attempt.

"For some people who were on the line the last time, this time they were more comfortable," he said, bringing a steady stream of congratulatory handshakes.

One of those who worked hard on the campaign was Carl Christoph of Farmington Hills.

"In March, people weren't aware of the physical needs of the schools," said Christoph, before precinct totals starting rolling in to the headquarters. "They are 30 and 40 years old and need upgrading. That's not a function of bad management, that's a function of time."

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