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North Greenbush Common School District seeks voter approval on capital project, land purchase

North Greenbush, NY – On March 4, 2020, residents of the North Greenbush CSD community will vote on a proposition to authorize a \$3,705,000 capital project that includes a 3.2 acre land purchase (from LaSalle Institute), restoration of the Little Red School House and a building addition.

The proposed land purchase and capital project is designed to preserve the North Greenbush CSD at a time of rapid residential development and unprecedented enrollment growth projections. The Board of Trustees voted unanimously during its January 15th meeting to hold this special vote – the school district’s largest and most significant capital project proposal since the school was built in 1861.

As part of the proposition, residents will be asked to vote on the purchase of land from the LaSalle Institute, a long-time neighbor and partner. Last summer, the Board of Trustees entered into a contract with LaSalle for the land purchase, contingent on voter approval.

The proposed project would:

- Address needed repairs and restoration of the interior and exterior of the Little Red building (due to the building’s historic nature and aged infrastructure);
- Build a new 4,000 square foot addition with additional classroom and office space. This space would allow the district to return to K-2 operations and to deliver activities and added supports not possible in the current one room schoolhouse setting;
- Relocate the driveway entrance/exit away from Route 4 to South Road for safety and access purposes;
- Build a new dedicated parking lot and bus loop;
- Move the district office to the school site for convenience, safety and cost savings; and
- Create a new fenced-in playground and field area.

If approved by voters, the project would begin bidding and construction in the fall with the goal of occupancy in September 2021. The cost of this project would be financed through the establishment of a debt service fund and the issuing of bonds. The project would have no impact to the current tax rate as additional property taxes (collected on new residential units) would allow the district to use these funds to pay for entire project.

The Town of North Greenbush has approved a series of residential developments, including at least 248 additional town homes and 22 single-family homes. Board President Susan O'Connell said the school district has studied enrollment and financial trends and projections over the past several years. A comprehensive study convened by the North Greenbush CSD Board of Trustees projected an influx of new students over the next several years. "We realized that the town's residential growth posed new educational and financial challenges. The proposed project provides us with a window to create new space that better fits our growing needs while restoring and preserving a school originally built 159 years ago," O'Connell said.

A community advisory committee – comprised of parents, community members and staff – has provided the Board of Trustees with ongoing feedback since September 2019.

The school district has scheduled dates for a public information meeting on January 28 at LaSalle Institute at 7PM and a public hearing on February 25 at The Little Red School House at 6PM. Please visit www.northgreenbushcommon.org for more information.