



Request for a Building Reserve Levy

Voter Information

Whitefish School District

600 East Second Street

Whitefish, Montana 59937

Why do we need a Building Reserve levy?

Since 1987, Tax Increment Funds (TIF) have been used by our school district to provide maintenance to building facilities. Changes in state law last year now require Whitefish to have a voter-approved Building Reserve Levy in place in order for us to use the TIF funds for building projects. Our school system is a key building block of our community and we need to continue to provide our students and teachers with healthy learning environments.

What is TIF?

Tax Increment Funding (TIF) has been in effect in Whitefish since 1987 and will sunset in 2020. These taxes have not only been helpful for our downtown economic development, road construction, new parks, emergency services, and more, but TIF has also been used to maintain and renovate our school buildings.

How do other communities upkeep their schools?

Nearly all school districts in Montana have a building reserve levy that is approved by the public. We have not needed to request a building reserve levy to fund the maintenance of our buildings until now.

How much is being requested?

We are requesting \$400,000 annually for seven years (\$2.8 million) at the elementary school and \$300,000 annually for seven years (\$2.1 million) at the high school, which is a fiscally conservative figure. It will cost no more than \$36.50 each year for a home with a \$200,000 assessed market value. Approval of a new levy would allow us to use the City's TIF funds to reduce future property tax levies.

When will the high school gymnasium roof be complete?

Re-construction of the old gym roof at the high school was slated as a separate project from the construction of the new high school. A paint job on the old metal roof has been estimated to cost \$60,000, and would likely last less than a year. We are studying the best way to reconstruct the roof and would use TIF funds if the building reserve levy is approved.



What other needs are anticipated?

Experts recommend investing 3% annually in building maintenance. We must continually invest to keep our buildings in good standing so that our children can focus on learning. Beyond the deferred maintenance of the high school roof, our highest priorities include safety and security upgrades, technology enhancements to the classrooms, parking lot resurfacing, carpet replacements, roof repairs, painting, gym floor refinishing, maintenance to the playgrounds, and landscaping. These are just a few of the ongoing expenses to upkeep and maintain our schools.

What are the needs at Muldown Elementary?

Muldown is an aging facility with a 50-year old heating system, roofing needs, and traffic flow problems. We are studying the most cost effective way to address these significant deferred maintenance needs, while at the same time looking at how we can improve the learning environment.

What is the status of the Greenhouse project?

The Center for Applied Sustainability (the Greenhouse project) will be an experiential learning center for all grade levels. This is a privately funded project and we will not use building reserve funds or taxpayer dollars for the construction.

Why is this building reserve levy vote important?

Creating a comfortable learning environment for our students means that our teachers will be able to teach in the most effective way possible. Maintaining the academic development and future of our community is important—so we can continue to build and grow as a community.

When is the vote?

Whitefish schools will request a Building Reserve Levy in a May 3rd school election.

Need more information?

Please contact Danelle Reisch at the District Office if you have questions or need further information. Danelle is the District's Business Services Director and can be reached at (406) 862-8640.