

## ***Big Hollow School District #38***

**Contact:**

Jan Carsella, Board Member  
Big Hollow School District #38  
815-344-4869  
boycecar@oawl.net

# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

---

## **Big Hollow Authorizes Sale of Route 12 Campus; Proceeds Unlikely to Provide Long-Term Relief for Embattled School District**

INGLESIDE, IL – August 14, 2007 – Facing massive debt projections and the possibility of further, more severe, program and classroom cuts, the Big Hollow School Board last night authorized the sale of the now vacant Big Hollow school campus located at the corner of Routes 12 and 134. The property is no longer required by the District following the completion of the Fish Lake Road campus that now houses all of the District's students.

The proposed sale is the latest in a series of initiatives by the school board aimed at stemming the mounting deficit, which, according to recent projections, will surpass \$31 million within the next five years. This latest decision by the Board comes on the heels of the July vote to cut a number of classes for the 2007-08 school year and reduce expenditures.

The escalating deficit is a result of insufficient funding for the Big Hollow School District. School enrollment has tripled over the past five years and the cost to run the school has increased exponentially. Operational revenue, on the other hand, has remained stagnant as a result of tax-cap limitations and unfunded and underfunded state and federally mandated programs. Compounding the situation, voters defeated two recent operational referenda that would have alleviated or resolved the funding crisis. The most recent referendum, for instance, sought approval for a tax amendment that would have resulted in an increase of roughly \$50 a month on a \$250,000 home. Without the additional funds a successful referendum would have generated, the District has been forced to borrow more and more money.

According to Big Hollow School Board member Jan Carsella, the sale of the Route 12 campus has long been an objective of the Board. However, because of Governor Blagojevich's push for mandatory preschool and full-day kindergarten and the potential housing issues those programs would impose on the District, the Board wanted to be sure selling the property was indeed a viable move. She confirms the sale of the property has generated the most public discussion at recent school board meetings and helped influence the Board's decision.

"We've heard from a number of parents and concerned residents that we need to consider every option with regard to tackling this financial challenge. Most people understand that while further cuts may be inevitable, the sale will certainly provide some short-term relief for the District," says Carsella. "Unfortunately, the long-term situation is still critical and we are working diligently to come up with solutions for the school."

Carsella notes that the Board has set a minimum sale price of \$5 million. While the majority of the proceeds will go directly to the school, it's not yet clear how the money will be allocated. "All options will be considered. The Board will be working closely with a financial advisor to figure out what will be best for the school district," says Carsella.

According to Illinois laws governing the sale of school property, Big Hollow has 60 days to publicize the sale and solicit bids. At the culmination of the process, Big Hollow has the option of accepting an offer or rejecting all offers and leveraging broker expertise to facilitate a sale.

END