



City of Seven Hills, Ohio

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This is a follow-up to my previous letter regarding the Parma City School District.

I want to thank the Board of Education for calling a special working session on Saturday, August 19th at 1:30pm and allowing public comment. This is an important first step in having open public dialogue on the new information introduced in my August 14th letter.

I appreciate the Superintendent's acknowledgment that this is indeed new information that has just recently come to his attention and is now going to be discussed for the first time.

Some have asked "why now"? I read an article about Shaker Heights School District having a bond issue this November for the refurbishment of three schools. A few weeks later, I attended a party for the son of a close friend who recently graduated from Shaker Heights High School. At this party, I learned of the age and condition of their buildings. This made me curious as to how this was possible for Shaker Schools to secure refurbishment funding and not Parma Schools.

I then contacted state officials on July 16th asking for information related to Shaker's potential use of OFCC funds. I received responses on July 31st and reviewed them on Aug. 2nd. This information included details regarding the OFCC 2/3rd's waiver that went into effect in 2015.

I spent a few days fact checking and then made a few attempts at diplomacy. I published the letter on August 14th.

I had both a moral and ethical responsibility to do so. How can I, as Mayor, sit on relevant information that could potentially lessen the financial burden of my residents when irrevocable actions are about to be undertaken? Think of how devastating this new information would have been ahead of a future levy or bond issue, if not addressed now.

Additionally, the call to action in my original letter was for open and transparent dialogue on all available options, including those just brought to light, not for any specific long-term plan. Why is that a bad idea?

Note: After new construction bond issues have failed 4 times, there is currently no funding available to improve the building conditions or rebuild.

Therefore, we must work together to address this issue and the operating deficit by informing the public of new information and educating them on all possible solutions. I believe this is the only hope we have to get the buy-in from the whole community that is required to achieve what is best and what we all want for the children of this community.