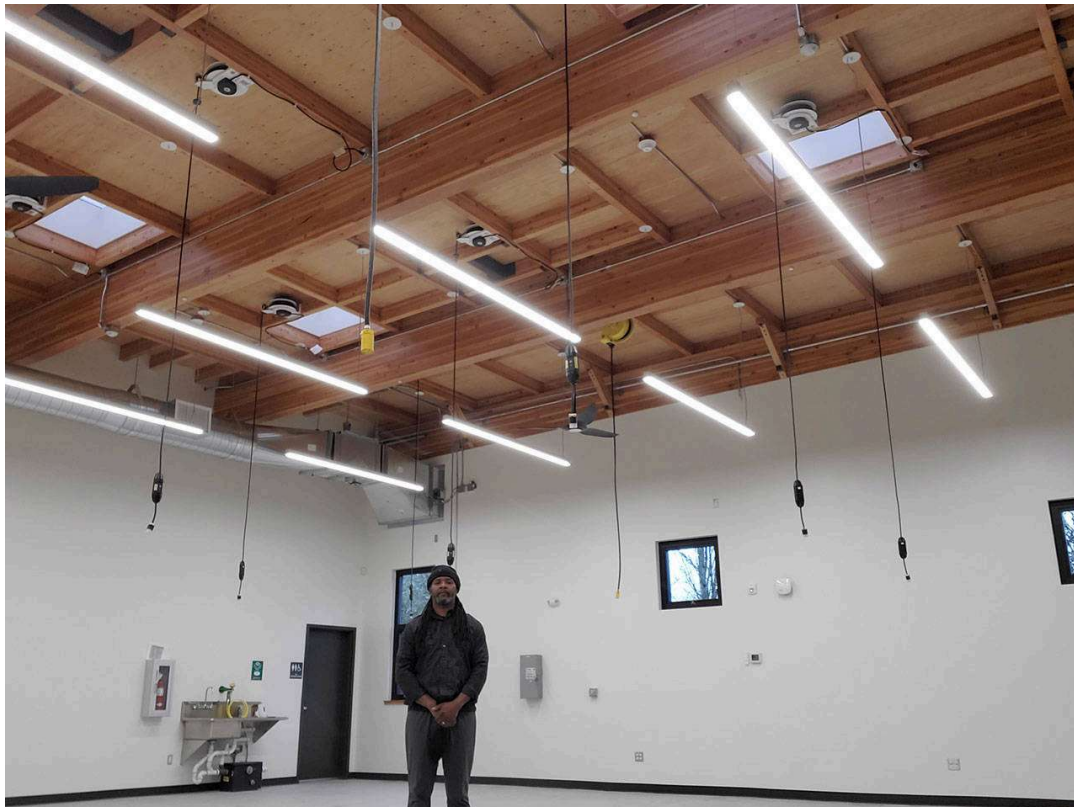


NEWS

Vashon Schools Get a Shiny New Maintenance Building

The new building replaces an old maintenance building constructed before 1910.

By Susan McCabe For Vashon Island School District • January 21, 2021 1:30 am



Kevin Dickerson, facilities director for Vashon Island School District, shows the scale of VISD's new maintenance building (Susan McCabe Photo).

By Susan McCabe

For Vashon Island School District

“On time and under budget” is an oft-used but sometimes fanciful phrase for people in the construction industry. But it’s really true for the Vashon Island School District team responsible for constructing its new maintenance building.

This newly-constructed building at the corner of Vashon Hwy. and 204th Street, which is now completed and open for business — wrapping up projects outlined in the \$10 million Capital Bond that Vashon voters passed in 2017. Coming in at \$2.2 million total project cost, including King County’s fluctuating permitting requirements and fees, the new building replaces the old maintenance building constructed before 1910.

Matt Sullivan, VISD’s Executive Director of Business & Operations, said that the old green building was not razed because many lifelong islanders attended classes in it. In fact, the district painted, caulked and re-roofed the old building so it can continue serving as a storage facility. Both buildings are around 2,800 square feet of space, but the new building offers design and utility improvements that will allow greater efficiencies in the district’s maintenance operations.

The new building provides adequate power to run all equipment at once, in addition to hosting sufficient office and storage space to allow a free flow of communication among the facilities department staff.

“When I watched the crew welding in the old building,” said Kevin Dickerson, facilities director for the district. “I was convinced that we needed the new one.”

The maintenance building is the last of fourteen significant projects that were included in the 2017 bond. For that \$10 million, the community got new classroom furniture, exterior paint and a new kindergarten play area at Chautauqua Elementary school.

McMurray Middle School got upgraded locker rooms, all new exterior windows, new flooring, and \$60,000 worth of new classroom furniture. The bond projects also gave Vashon a new synthetic turf field and rubberized running track at the High School, ADA accessibility and a seismic upgrade to the grandstands at the field.

The \$75 million 2009 bond that voters rejected called for a new high school gym.

But as part of the 2017 bond, the construction team gave the gym a nearly complete overhaul with new windows and exterior doors, a fresh coat of paint, a new secure access control system, LED lighting, caps on the splintering bleacher seats and a new roof.

Building K, home to Student Link and offices, was partially renovated with a new HVAC system, new roof and renovated restrooms.

The new maintenance shop is the final piece in that ambitious to-do list.

Fox is proud to say they finished all these projects with the \$10 million bond plus a small grant from King County.

“We will close the books about \$30,000 under the available budget,” she said. “And, that’s a lot to get done on a small island like this. It’s expensive to build here because every time a contractor comes to Vashon from off-island they charge for a full day to cover ferry fees and travel time no matter how long the actual work takes.”

“Our intention was to hold groundbreaking until May anyway, to take advantage of good weather,” said Fox.

The entire construction project took seven months from its start to its occupancy.

And, Sullivan says, almost 20-percent of the bond money spent on the projects went back to the community in the form of fees for island contractors.

“All the local contractors involved in this project showed tremendous commitment to the school district, and the quality of their work was outstanding,” he said.

VISD School Superintendent Slade McSheehy said he is grateful to the entire community for their support in passing the 2017 bond and their continued commitment to maintaining Vashon’s high-quality education system.

“Strong schools equal strong communities,” he said. “Our students, staff, families, and community can be proud of what we’ve accomplished.”
