

HUGO —Members of the Hugo board of education and the Hugo city council came to an agreement during a special meeting Thursday in regards to moving forward with a bond issue to fund school improvements.

Approximately \$5.4 million has been agreed upon, with \$4 million coming from city sales tax revenue and the remainder being decided by the public when the bond issue comes for vote during a September election date.

All involved are of the same opinion as far as informing the public. According to board president and new school committee chairman Brad Greer, a town hall meeting for the public's interest will be held. "We want them more involved than they've ever been before," Greer said. "We will also need to speak to local civic organizations to make sure everybody is on board."

Councilwoman Francine Morris also spoke on behalf of informing the public. "The main thing we need to address is educating the public and making them a part of the process," Morris said. "Because our children need and deserve a new school."

Rick Smith, with Municipal Finance Services, Inc., created a comparison of tax impacts based on average annual tax levy and 12% assessment rate in Choctaw County. The table shows property owners' monthly and annual tax increases for property valued from \$25,000 to \$100,000 to be approximately \$14.55 to \$80.01 a year.

Preliminary construction cost projections, along with other project related costs are estimated to be approximately \$5,300,000, including a safe room to be located within the new construction.

The bond issue will come up for election on Sept. 10, 2013. A date for the public hearing has yet to be announced.