Kansas legislative panel endorses KU's capital improvement plan

September 10, 2014

Topeka — A committee of the Kansas Legislature gave its endorsement Wednesday to Kansas University's plan for $92 million worth of capital improvement projects for the fiscal year that begins next July.

The Joint Committee on State Building and Construction has oversight of all construction and renovation projects on property owned or leased by the state.

Much of the funding for the projects is expected to come from private gifts or university funds, but some will require state funding and will need to be approved by the full Legislature in next year's budget.

The largest project on the list is $52.6 million for a new residence hall on the KU campus. That project is also subject to approval from the Kansas Board of Regents. University officials say projected growth in student enrollment is creating a need for more student housing.

KU said a new residence hall that can house 500 students and a major dining facility will be needed within the next five years. That project is expected to be funded with revenue bonds.

The university is also seeking more than $19 million for deferred maintenance projects for several buildings on the campus.

Those projects involve replacing outdated, inefficient or undersized mechanical and electrical systems in six different locations: Strong Hall; Bailey Hall; Lindley Hall; Summerfield Hall; and the Art and Design Building. Those projects were originally part of an earlier capital improvement plan but were deferred in 2011 and 2012 because of lack of state funding.

Also on the deferred maintenance list is a new chilled water plant to serve Marvin Hall, Lindley and the Art and Design Building, and possibly the future Budig Hall, Aschutz and Earth Energy and Environment Center.

The deferred maintenance projects would be funded with bonds that will be repaid over five years with a portion of funds KU receives from a statewide property tax that goes toward educational buildings.

Other projects on KU's capital improvements list for fiscal year 2016 include:

• Summerfield Hall, partial remodeling for film and media studies. $3.7 million.

• Corbin Hall renovations. $14.5 million.

• Parking repair and improvement projects. $1.6 million.