

Revised

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Utilization Committee met in Regular Session on March 28, 2019 at 4:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, Durham, Connecticut.

Committee members present: Mr. Augur, Mr. Hicks and Dr. Taylor
Committee members absent: Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Yamartino
Other Board members present: Mr. Moore
Administration present: Dr. Veronesi, Superintendent of Schools
Also present: John Giammatteo

The meeting began at 4 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment

Missy Booth, from Durham, spoke about item 6, the sixth grade transition to Strong timing, and had a strong opinion about the number of transitions that the kids will have to have. She thinks that three schools in three years is a little too much to expect of them. She is also sensitive to starting construction while the kids are in the school and doesn't feel it will be the best learning experience.

Janina Eddinger wanted to speak to item 5, Korn building update, and had sent an idea to the Board of Education talking about possibly renovating Korn into a new school that can be utilized. She felt that people would feel better with a plan moving forward if there were fewer transitions that would include one building for all of the elementary, with the middle school and the high school all located in the same central area.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Augur made a motion, seconded by Dr. Taylor, to approve the agenda.

In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Mr. Augur and Dr. Taylor. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes - January 9, 2019

Mr. Augur made a motion, seconded by Dr. Taylor, to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2019 meeting, as presented.

In favor of approving the minutes of the January 9, 2019 meeting, as presented: Mr. Augur and Dr. Taylor. Motion passed unanimously.

Korn Building Update

Dr. Veronesi explained that Mrs. Eddinger's idea to renovate Korn School had been one of the original proposals at \$35.2 million. Mrs. Eddinger thought it was interesting that that ideas have been put aside

and could have been put out to the public. Dr. Veronesi explained that the Board was aware that the cost of this project and the other renovate-as-new proposals were costlier than the towns would support. She also mentioned that if the district went with the one elementary at the Korn School site that would result in three closed buildings and no schools in Middlefield. Mrs. Eddinger felt that the current proposal could come to a vote and asked what the Board's Plan B would be if it were to be voted down. Dr. Taylor stated that they have not talked much about secondary consequences.

Dr. Veronesi reported that there really is no Korn Building update. She has shared the latest communication from the Board's attorney with the town's attorney regarding some of the considerations. In discussions of a leasing option, the scope of the town's use would need to be clarified, the town would need to provide insurance coverage indemnification to the district for use of the facility, the district would bear no liability, etc. There has been no update from the town's attorney as of yet. Dr. Taylor also asked if there was a ballpark number for the lease and Dr. Veronesi indicated there was not. Mr. Moore stated that he would contact Laura Francis for an update and Mr. Augur suggested that they could possibly hear from members of Durham's Board of Finance as to whether that subject has been discussed. A member of the Board of Finance stated that they have not talked about that and the last he had heard about this was when Kerrie Flanagan was the Board's chair and he thought that a lease had been ruled out. He thought that the town was about to sign a two-year renewal for the space currently being used.

Dr. Veronesi stated that Laura Francis had said that she hoped this would get moving before renewing the lease at the current space. Dr. Veronesi felt that the district's attorneys are being very cautious about the district entering into a lease agreement.

Dr. Taylor felt that the district needed to start exploring options. Mr. Augur reported that last night, there had been a meeting of the joint Durham Boards and Commissions and the registrar of voters stated that they hoped they still had Korn School for elections. He felt that the town was still interested in free use of the building and less interested in taking the building.

Mr. Moore stated that Laura Francis had told him about a conversation she had with someone from Middlesex Community College who implied that they were interested in space. Mr. Augur mentioned that community colleges are also in discussion about morphing into one. Dr. Veronesi stated that a community college would not want to buy the building and the district would still need to manage and upgrade the building.

Dr. Taylor asked how long the district would want to hold onto the building and stated that he would not be in favor of doing that for very long. He felt that building availability is going up in the state and it's unfortunate that it is completely in a school zone. He just doesn't see a viable plan moving forward and would be in favor of razing the building. Mr. Augur would be in favor of moving the question to the full board on a vote on razing it. Dr. Taylor encouraged Dr. Veronesi to make it an agenda item for a full board meeting.

Sixth Grade Transition to Strong Timing

Dr. Taylor explained that there are multiple issues here, including the timing but also other factors about how to minimize the impact on the students. He ran through different scenarios and the Lyman students will get hit, regardless of how it's done. Dr. Veronesi felt that there may be a potential to have a year when all kindergartners go to Brewster if third graders move up to Memorial, but fifth graders stay at Lyman (and go directly to Strong the next year) and the sixth graders stay at Memorial. That scenario would happen in 2020-2021.

Dr. Veronesi stated that they had always talked about sixth grade moving before any others, but that was when the renovations at Memorial were going to be much greater. Renovations are now proposed to be minimal at Memorial, but there will still be a year when students could potentially be at Memorial for just one year.

Missy Booth thought they should wait and just impact one year of students and various scenarios were discussed about how it could be done. Mrs. Booth asked if the students would still be looping, but Dr. Veronesi did not know what would happen. Dr. Veronesi felt that the referendum in November needed to pass first. Dr. Taylor summarized that they are trying to think about this in a way that will minimize the impact on the students as best as possible though some cohort will be impacted. Mr. Giammatteo commented on how surprised he was at how much the two programs are blended at Memorial.

Dr. Veronesi stated that they hear the parents' concerns about transitions. Mrs. Booth added that people oftentimes get no response from the board about their emails and that is concerning. People feel that the board is not listening to the parents. She would like at least one board member to say thank you for sending an email. She stated that a lot of parents think that the board has agenda and they don't care what the people think. Mr. Augur stated that he has responded to parents, but then gets nothing back. Dr. Taylor and Mr. Augur agreed that it would be nice for board members to thank people for their communication.

Ed Specs Brewster/Memorial Building Alterations

Dr. Veronesi stated that she would share the Ed Specs with people electronically and they will need to be voted on at the board meeting on April 10th. She asked for people to review them and send her any comments or questions. There is a reference to a phase II at Brewster to address the cafeteria/gym/auditorium space and a potential better bus drop-off.

School Safety Plan Update

Dr. Veronesi will send out the Ed Specs for the vestibule project at Strong School and Cuginchaug for review as well.

Building Committee Overview

Mr. Moore had a list of all the things the building committee can and can't do. They basically become the organization that approves the design and construction as well as change orders and any other activities. They would have monthly meetings during the construction period and review all of the plans. Mr. Moore has talked to several people about being on the building committee and Darin Overton, John Giammatteo, Willie Norton, Phil Augur and possibly Tom Stephan have agreed to serve.

Mr. Augur asked if the two-thirds vote is a state requirement and Mrs. Neubig stated that it is not. Mr. Augur felt that a simple majority vote would work and Mr. Moore agreed as it can be hard to get everybody at a meeting. Mr. Augur did feel that five may not be enough on the committee.

Dr. Taylor asked what Utilization would be tasked with once this committee is established and suggested maybe just having special meetings as needed. Everyone generally agreed and it was also agreed that the school safety plan can be moved over to the Well-Being Committee.

Public Comment

Missy Booth, from Durham, also commented that 11-year-olds will be on a bus with 18-year-olds once sixth grade goes to Strong School. She hoped that that would be addressed when the time comes and possibly sixth graders could have to sit in the front of the bus.

Adjournment

Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Mr. Augur, to adjourn the meeting.

In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mr. Augur, Mr. Hicks and Dr. Taylor. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting ended at 4:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

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