

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Utilization Committee met in Regular Session on Tuesday, January 28, 2020 at 5:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, Durham, Connecticut.

Committee members present: Mrs. Booth, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino

Committee members absent: Dr. Friedrich and Mrs. Geraci

Community members present: Mrs. Johansen

Community members absent: Mr. Giammatteo

Administration present: Dr. Serino, Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Taylor called the meeting to order at 5:03 PM.

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

### **Public Comment**

None.

### **Approval of Agenda**

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Mr. Yamartino, to approve the agenda, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Mrs. Booth, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino.*

### **Approval of Minutes - November 21, 2019**

*Mrs. Booth made a motion, seconded by Mr. Moore, to approve the minutes of the November 21, 2019 meeting, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the minutes of the November 21, 2019, as presented: Mrs. Booth, Mr. Moore, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion approved, with Mr. Hicks abstaining.*

### **Playground Equipment**

Dr. Serino updated the committee that they are looking into grant possibilities for playground equipment. They have been researching gaga pits and looking at various other catalogs to gather information as far as costs for both Memorial and Lyman. Dr. Serino noticed that Silver Petrucelli had put \$150,000 as a placeholder for replacement of the playscape at Lyman. She also explained that the Board had recommended they put \$100,000 towards the Memorial playground equipment when they discussed the matter at the Board retreat. She does believe that Lyman does need playground equipment and hopes that it can possibly be moved to Memorial when Lyman closes.

Dr. Serino would like to form a small committee to look into this further. They can look into grant opportunities, visit other playscapes, contact vendors and hopefully have something in place this summer.

Mr. Yamartino explained that the playscape that was installed at Peckham Park three years ago was \$120,000.

Dr. Serino added that they also have a placeholder for refurbishing of pickleball, tennis and four square courts. They had received one quote and a new one was received today for \$188,000. The Board did have questions about how and when the students will use the courts and whether or not Middlefield could help fund this project. Mr. Yamartino noted that the initial quote did not include repairing the current surface. He added that he did not see any provision for replacing the fence or assessing any of the electrical. Mr. Yamartino explained that Middlefield is installing LED lighting throughout the town and that they would be willing to add lights at the courts, provided the electric is still functional at the posts. Mr. Yamartino added that he has caucused with the Republican officials from Middlefield's Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance and there is interest in funding a portion of this project. It would have to go to the town for a vote.

Mr. Yamartino added that Middlefield Park & Rec's summer program is open to children from both communities and is held at Memorial School. They would use the courts during the summer and he added that a before- and after-school program, if that were to be held, would use the equipment as well. He did ask Mrs. Neubig to ask both vendors if there were local installations that they could look at. He added that Middlefield Park & Rec is looking at resurfacing the basketball court at Peckham Park. Mr. Yamartino would be willing to serve on the subcommittee and suggested they ask somebody from Park & Rec commissions from both towns.

Dr. Serino indicated that the board will have to decide what they feel comfortable with in the proposed budget for next year. Mr. Yamartino reviewed that they should talk about the fence, the electrical for the lights, resurfacing costs and actual installation. He does not see an advantage to doing just half of the courts.

Mrs. Booth asked if the playscape at Korn can be moved and Dr. Serino explained that it cannot. Mrs. Booth found a couple of playground equipment websites with costs that were much lower. She also felt it was important to make sure some of the equipment was accessible to kids with special needs. She added that it might be good to have some of it suitable for younger kids as they are there when their siblings are playing soccer. Mrs. Booth stated that there might be a small portion that the soccer club may be able to donate as well. Dr. Serino noted that she felt that the playground equipment should be for all students with and that as the discussion continue it should be assumed that they are talking about all students with consideration for children with various challenges. She will ask fellow superintendents if they have recently undergone a playscape project.

Mr. Yamartino and Mrs. Johansen volunteered to co-chair the committee.

Mrs. Booth also suggested that the gaga pit might be a good idea for an Eagle Scout project. Dr. Serino stated that she usually sees the proposal for a project, but could send a note to the scout leaders. There was some discussion about the surface for gaga pits and rubber mulch for playgrounds as well as locations of equipment.

Mr. Yamartino also noted that they may want to consider maintaining the rule that the courts are for use by Durham and Middlefield residents only and Middlefield Park & Rec has volunteered to maintain online court reservations.

**Korn Building Status**

Dr. Serino stated that Laura Francis reported that George Eames will meet with the Town Engineer, Town Planner and Building Inspector on Thursday because they are interested in pursuing the Korn School building project. They are trying to figure out how to get the project done at a lower price and accept the building from the district. They would then have to move to a town meeting and referendum in order to accept it. Carl Stoup noted that he would also be in attendance at the meeting on Thursday. He felt that it wouldn't be long to get an answer.

Dr. Taylor felt that they could come up with a ballpark estimate on Thursday and make a decision from there. He would not want to wait another year to get an answer. Mr. Stoup agreed.

Mr. Moore hoped that they could get more information from the town after Thursday's meeting and report that to the board in February.

There was discussion about how well Korn School had been evaluated and what potential uses could go in there. It is believed that the Town of Durham did a full evaluation on their part, but the board could have looked further into what uses could go in the building. Dr. Taylor felt that the board should express their desire to have a decision sooner rather than later.

Dr. Serino suggested that an email be sent tomorrow to let the town know that the board is looking for a definitive indication of the committee's assessment of the viability of the building project. Mr. Yamartino felt that, if the town felt it was a viable option, the board could ask for next steps and a timeline. Dr. Taylor felt that they should know whether Durham is committing to the process after the meeting on Thursday. Mr. Yamartino noted that that process can easily take three to four months. Dr. Serino and Mr. Moore will write a letter and email and send it to Laura Francis tomorrow.

**Lyman Building Update**

Dr. Serino reviewed the status of the Lyman School building as compiled by Silver Petrucelli and explained that the critical systems were reviewed by the district's facility directors. Those critical items total just over \$2 million. Mrs. Neubig had put a placeholder of \$1 million in the budget. A contingency has not been included in the budget at this point; but Dr. Serino will include the \$1 million so the BOE can see what the impact on the budget. Mr. Yamartino explained that the LED lighting at John Lyman was not included in the energy project.

Mrs. Booth asked what work will be done at Lyman and Dr. Serino explained that they will only do work that is necessary. Mr. Moore noted that there is capacity within the debt service to fix some things. Mr. Yamartino stated that they would have to go back to the taxpayers about that and there are other ways of financing if equipment was to fail.

Mr. Yamartino asked if the costs outlined are 2017 dollars or based on the replacement schedule and Dr. Serino explained that it was based on the time it was done. Mr. Yamartino summarized that costs will have increased 2 to 3 percent a year.

Dr. Serino reviewed that the cost avoidance numbers were estimated at a savings of \$859,000 in the first year with \$1.4 million savings in consecutive years. This includes staffing and operating expenses. The year-one savings is offset by one-time expenses, including custodial, moving company, dumpsters, etc.

These numbers do not include cost avoidance from capital which would be approximately \$250,000 per year.

**Transition Timeline**

Dr. Serino stated that the most recent transition meeting was on Friday and facilities is now putting together a master plan of moving, including if any moves could be done during the current school year rather than during the summer. They are planning to have students visit the schools that they will move to and having parents' nights as well. They continue to work on a more definitive timeline.

Mr. Yamartino asked if they could keep the summer camp program in mind when scheduling the moves.

Mr. Moore reported that he and Dr. Serino have attended several PTO meetings and there are lots of question about the transitions. An FAQ letter was sent out on Friday from Mr. Sadinsky and Mrs. Stone and they will continue to communicate with the parents on issues such as busing, time schedules, recess, etc.

**Public Comment**

Carl Stoup commented about the cracks in the tennis courts in Durham and felt that they would need to redo the complete substrate.

**Adjournment**

*Mrs. Booth made a motion, seconded by Mr. Moore, to adjourn the meeting.*

*In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mrs. Booth, Mr. Hicks, Mr. Moore, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed unanimously.*

*Meeting was adjourned at 5:55 PM.*

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

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