

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Building Committee met in special session on Wednesday, November 15, 2023 at 5:00 PM in the library at Coginchaug Regional High School.

Committee members present: Mr. Faiella, Mr. Giammatteo, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mr. Overton (arrived late) and Mr. Weissberg.

Committee members absent: Mr. Cross

Administration present: Mrs. Neubig, Mr. Proia and Mrs. Smith

Board members present: Mrs. Dahlheimer and Mrs. Petrella

Mr. Weissberg called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Faiella asked to amend the agenda to hear from Mrs. Neubig on the state grant for the fieldhouse lighting before the fieldhouse update.

Mrs. Dahlheimer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Faiella, to amend the agenda, as above.

In favor of amending the agenda: Mr. Faiella, Mr. Giammatteo, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore and Mr. Weissberg. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Weissberg made a motion, seconded by Mr. Faiella, to approve the agenda, as amended.

In favor of approving the agenda, as amended: Mr. Faiella, Mr. Giammatteo, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore and Mr. Weissberg. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Minutes - October 18, 2023

Mr. Faiella felt that speakers were incorrectly identified in the minutes and it was suggested to table the approval until Mr. Cross is present.

Pickett Lane Paving Phase 2

Mr. Proia reported that he reached out to A&J and they plan to do the speed tables during the last week of November as well as the baseball road, weather permitting. Mr. Weissberg will put markings at the locations of the speed tables. The committee discussed possible options for speed table locations. They will also need to get signs ordered and tape will need to be put down. Mr. Weissberg would only install rapid flashing beacons once the sidewalks are done and really aren't necessary on a low crossing volume road.

Mr. Weissberg explained that fire departments typically have an issue because speed humps cause about an 8-second delay and they normally want no more than five or six speed humps. This should not cause any significant delays because there will only be two.

Mrs. Neubig would like approval to pay John Turner Construction, which was formerly VHB, for \$1,175 for quality control services.

Mr. Weissberg made a motion, seconded by Mr. Giammatteo, to approve payment to John Turner Construction for \$1,175.00.

In favor of approving payment to John Turner Construction for \$1,175.00: Mr. Faiella, Mr. Giammatteo, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore and Mr. Weissberg. Motion carried unanimously.

Pickett Lane Paving Phase 3

Mrs. Neubig reviewed that they had provided comment to Mr. Eames and Mr. Curtis, but she hasn't heard back yet. Mr. Weissberg asked if she had any idea if the new administration will be supportive of the sidewalk project and Mrs. Neubig has not heard.

Mr. Weissberg felt that the sidewalks don't need to be 25 feet back from the road and somehow stop cars from driving over it to park. He did feel that people seem comfortable walking on the road. Mrs. Neubig noted that Nathan Jacobson took a ride down Pickett Lane and felt that the roadway surface looked very good. There is a gas line that may limit the extent of drainage swale that can be created on the side of the road and they will need to contact the gas company. They also said that the district needs to obtain a survey of the finished roadway surface and asked if they should proceed on that. Mrs. Neubig did not have a quote as of now.

Mr. Weissberg noted there was a small ponding area that could probably be taken care of by grading. He asked Mrs. Neubig to go ahead and get a quote from Nathan Jacobson.

State Grant for Fieldhouse and Lighting

Mrs. Neubig reported that she has had a conversation with the state and was told that the earliest they will issue the contract and authority to go out to bid will be three to six months. While the grant was approved, it still needs to be signed by the DECD commissioner. Mrs. Neubig needs to provide a budget as well as a narrative of the project. She will also request a waiver of the bidding process and explained that the lights had been bid back when the groundwork was done, but she doesn't have any of the paperwork. She has reached out to Derita and Sons, the GC on the project, but has not heard back yet. Mr. Weissberg noted that he has asked them several times and they do not have the paperwork. Mrs. Dahlheimer will look through the paperwork at the Town Hall tomorrow. Mrs. Neubig will also ask Mrs. Smith and Mr. Proia to reach out to Musco directly.

Mrs. Neubig also noted that the bathrooms will be a completely different design and all of the drawings need to be stamped by an architect. They do need to do the bathrooms before the lights, but it may be possible to do the minimum number of bathrooms required before the lights. Mr. Weissberg noted that there is \$52,000 left and they can get architectural drawings for far less than that, to include insulating the whole facility and bathrooms. Mr. Faiella wasn't sure they needed to install any more than one men's, one women's and one family bathroom. Mrs. Neubig would like to see a base bid for the bare minimum and an add/alt for the remainder.

Joe Aiello is the district's plumber and he is willing to help. Mr. Weissberg suggested that Mr. Aiello work with someone to develop the plans. He felt that could be done by small architecture/engineering firm and he felt that Mr. Cross may have someone. Mr. Weissberg will also reach out to Landmark. Mrs. Neubig added that DECD requires every grantee to budget for \$5,000 for their legal fees which will be deducted from the grant money. Mr. Faiella asked if they need to have the settlement agreement reviewed again to define minimum number of bathrooms and Mrs. Neubig will follow up.

Fieldhouse Update

Mrs. Neubig stated that they can put a camera on the telephone pole near the fieldhouse. She also asked where the committee wants the fobs. Mr. Proia had suggested putting fobs near the ice machine and the rest be hard keyed. Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that the bathrooms need to be fobbed as well. A question was asked if the outside of the building will have lighting and Mrs. Neubig felt that could be done. Mr. Weissberg felt that the electrical will be part of the architectural. The Fire Marshal will need to determine what fire protection is needed. The fencing has been completed and came in at \$4,000. Mr. Weissberg noted that the area near the fencing tends to collect water when it rains and asked if they might want to convert some of the roof drains to yard drains.

Mr. Faiella asked if they will be able to accommodate the ice machine near the bathrooms and Mr. Weissberg confirmed that they will. Mrs. Dahlheimer suggested they bring in coaches and staff as the design progresses. Mr. Proia will reach out to Leading Edge as well as Landmark.

Fire Pump Rehabilitation Update

Mr. Proia reported that he has been back and forth with Central Systems and they plan to do exploratory trips to Strong and Coginchaug before spring to help with the engineering plans. The goal is to have the vault gone and piping reworked sometime next summer. Any leftover funds can remain in Capital and be reallocated to another project. The funds only have to go back to the General Fund if the project is canceled.

School Facility Updates

Mrs. Neubig distributed a printout of the questions from the presentation given to the Board. There is a dollar amount for option 4 minus Strong and Coginchaug. There is also option 10 for Memorial only. Mrs. Neubig also pointed out that the operating savings numbers may change as staffing may have to increase. Mrs. Neubig's spreadsheet includes \$23 million in operating savings.

Mrs. Neubig added that the debt service was calculated on \$83 million, but she has reached out for numbers on options 4 and 10. She reminded everyone that they have to bond and have debt service for the full amount, but only issue half.

Mrs. Neubig went over estimated breakeven numbers and felt that the district would break even in 16.2 years on option 10. If bonding interest is added, that goes out to 17.5 years. She also showed what the change in debt service would be and that the budget would go up in several years, but then start falling again. When the estimated operating savings is applied, it's about a 5 percent savings which will offset the debt service. In summary, the project will raise the budget for a couple of years until the school is closed.

The next question she received was about the cost of the swing space and Mr. Malik felt that would depend on the schedule and the extent of the renovations to the existing building. Mrs. Dahlheimer asked

about using portables used as swing space and Mrs. Neubig noted that the cost of portables counts as reimbursable as long as they are removed within five years. Mr. Faiella asked if portables can be leased for the time period. Mr. Weissberg felt that using portables as swing space can really condense the schedule. Mr. Overton felt that OSGR will drive the district to use available space as swing space before leasing portables. Mrs. Neubig also noted that both Mr. Malik and Mr. Collier will attend the meeting on the 13th.

Another question was about budget impacts and Mrs. Neubig explained that the district can bond up to \$5 million next year without increasing the debt service. Mrs. Neubig explained that the proposed bond schedule staggers three issuances: bond anticipation notes, \$20 million in bonds, another bond anticipation note and another \$20 million in bonds. The largest payment would be \$4 million in 2028-2029. The first payment in 2025-2026, depending on the timeline of the construction, would be about \$1.9 million and the district is at \$1 million in 2023-2024.

The question about code compliance work and the timing and Mr. Malik had stated that the timing includes phased construction with a potential start date of June, 2026. Some systems and components are 20 years old and near their life expectancy. Mr. Faiella felt there may be some flexibility on those items and wasn't sure if there was a benefit to doing it as part of the larger project. Mrs. Neubig agreed that trying to pass a referendum might not be the time to put in the code and ADA issues, however a system might fail at any time.

Mr. Weissberg reviewed that the Board of Education had asked the Building committee to make a recommendation of some sort. Mr. Giammatteo felt that this is a Board of Education decision as to what options it should be narrowed down to and the Building committee should not do that as they are not elected officials. Mrs. Dahlheimer stated that the board would like a recommendation, but there are still a number of outstanding questions so it may need to wait until the next Building committee meeting. Mr. Weissberg asked if everyone agreed that the unoccupied version of option 10 was the best, leaving options 4, 10 and 11.

Mr. Weissberg asked Mr. Proia if Brewster could keep preK and K during renovations. He is concerned about traffic at Memorial with preK and K there as well. Mr. Weissberg feels that the Memorial plan that was provided was really good and Memorial should be a flagship school, but wondered if the preK and K need to be thrown into that mix. He recognized that there would be four buildings instead of three. Mr. Giammatteo wondered if preK and K could have an earlier drop-off time at Memorial to mitigate some of the traffic concerns. Mr. Weissberg felt that Brewster has a decent infrastructure compared to Lyman and could possibly mitigate some of the major sticking points with moving everyone into Memorial. There was also a discussion about mandated universal preK coming in the future and that it would not be able to be at Memorial. Mrs. Dahlheimer felt that that information should come back to the Building committee for review. She felt that the more options they have when going to public, the better it will be. She added that small districts are having a harder time getting funding. Mr. Weissberg felt they could hedge their bets on keeping the existing infrastructure for preK and K and just build what can be reimbursed for, being 1-5. He also felt that that would eliminate some of the opposition with the concerns of going across town for school.

Mrs. Neubig noted that option 2 had been that option and option 2A had included expanded preK. The details were in an earlier presentation.

Mr. Weissberg felt that the Building committee should recommended to eliminate 10A, 10B and 10C. He added that the swing space would definitely benefit options 4 and 11, though he believes option 11 will be a tough pill to swallow financially. It was generally felt that the 10 options were more disruptive to

education. Mrs. Dahlheimer added that Dr. Schuch has noted that option 10A was the best educationally. The group generally agreed that they don't like occupied options in any situation.

Mr. Overton felt that options 10B, 10C and 12 should be eliminated and Mr. Giammatteo agreed, leaving options 4, 10, 10A and 11. It was agreed that option 11 would be the worst-case scenario. They also felt that they should decide between options 2 and 4. Mr. Overton is not opposed to a whole new Memorial campus if there is a value in decreasing disruption or something else, but renovate-as-new doesn't scare him either. Mr. Weissberg asked if he would prefer to demolish first and put a new school wherever they want or to build while the other school is there. Mr. Overton felt that there was a reason why the school was built where it was and an ideal situation would be tearing down the building first. However, there is nowhere for the kids in the building to go while a new building is being built. Mr. Overton gave an example of an elementary school in Brookfield.

Mr. Overton felt that the numbers were reasonable numbers to work with and he felt that some inflation has been included in the estimates. The longer the district waits to make a decision, the more it will cost. Mr. Weissberg asked if the committee had a preference between 10 and 10A and added that he would like Mr. Cross to weigh in as well. Mr. Overton felt that, from a finished product standpoint and the ability to build it while reducing disruption, he didn't feel there was much difference. It would come down to the other intangibles and whether they weigh heavily or not. Mr. Proia stated that the infrastructure at Memorial is fine with new boilers and a new roof.

Mr. Overton asked to look at the 10A and 10B options for layout. The second one is basically building a new school on the soccer fields and he asked if everyone would be comfortable with that. The first one seems to be building behind where the school currently exists. The third one seems to push the building over toward the church. Mr. Mennone asked if the entire church property may become available in the near future and Mr. Moore stated that there had been interest in that about eight years ago. Mrs. Neubig added that she and Dr. Schuch met with them about a year ago and they were interested in selling a piece of the property.

There could also be issues with option 10B as the new parking lot sits on the septic system which would require a new system. Mr. Overton summarized that with any of the new buildings, the entire site will need to be reconstructed which is why they are so expensive. Mrs. Neubig asked if the perception is why do they need a new building when they have a solid building and Mr. Mennone agreed that that is where they will get push-back.

Mr. Weissberg noted that he would only like build-as-new if the building were demolished and built back on the same general footprint. Mr. Moore stated that the original cost of preK-1 at Brewster was \$22 million and Memorial was \$33 million.

Mrs. Dahlheimer felt this will all come down to presentation. She would like to see them present options, but with explanations for why options work and don't work. QA+M will likely have a comprehensive grasp on how it is presented once the Board provides the information.

Mrs. Neubig added that Shipman and Goodwin did a title search on the Brewster property. When the property was transferred over, the deed restriction was removed however there was a first right of refusal. This means that if Brewster is not going to be used as an educational facility, it can be sold to the Town of Durham for \$1.50. Another important thing is that in the conveyance, the district was supposed to evaluate whether Brewster was still needed or not every five years but that has not been done since 1986. If the school is not needed and the town does not want to buy it, it could default to the heirs. If they don't want it, it can then be sold.

Mr. Weissberg summarized that they need answers about portable classrooms for option 4, clarification of the financial impact, remove options 10B and 10C and keep 11 as a baseline. Mrs. Dahlheimer stated that they would want another joint meeting with the Board and the Building committee after this information is available. Mr. Weissberg felt that the health and safety are essentially the same across the options other than a new school. Educational impact is really more of a Board responsibility than the Building committee. Mrs. Neubig clarified that the Building committee is looking for options 2, 4, 10, 10A and 11 and remove Cuginchaug and Strong. It was generally agreed to not promote moving the location of Memorial.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Mr. Mennone made a motion, seconded by Mr. Overton, to adjourn the meeting.

In favor of adjourning the November 15, 2023 meeting: Mr. Faiella, Mr. Giammatteo, Mr. Mennone, Mr. Moore, Mr. Overton and Mr. Weissberg. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

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