

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education held a Public Hearing on Thursday, March 30, 2017 at 7:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, 135 Pickett Lane, Durham, Connecticut. Board members present: Mr. Augur (by phone), Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Moore, Mrs. Petrella, Mr. Renninghoff, Dr. Taylor and Mr. Yamartino.

Board members absent: Mrs. Flanagan and Mr. Hicks.

Administration present: Dr. Veronesi, Superintendent of Schools.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Hearing

Dr. Friedrich read the call to the meeting, the warning of the Public Hearing and the return of the call into the record.

Mr. Moore explained that the public hearing is to authorize the Board of Education to move ahead with the Field House project, and does not mean the project will be started. Bids will have to be obtained; the bids would have to be approved by the Board; a building committee would need to be formed and public financing would need to be attained and approved.

Mr. Moore summarized that several citizens had brought two proposals to the Board of Education, one to build the field house as originally planned but only equipped with bathrooms and two small rooms that are listed in the public hearing information. The other proposal was to build a compact prefab unit by United Concrete and place that on the existing pad. The Educational Resource Committee reviewed those proposals and recommended to go with building the total building, as it was originally proposed, with only bathrooms and the other rooms listed.

Mr. Moore then reviewed several pictures of the current pad, with the pipes for plumbing and electrical services that had been installed. Mr. Moore then reviewed the location of the bathrooms in the building and explained that the other parts of the building will remain vacant.

The ERC Committee brought the resolution to the Board and the Board then reviewed whether this project would have to include prevailing wage rates and it was determined that it would. The Board therefore increased the value of the proposal to \$800,000 to cover contingencies and labor costs. The Board also looked at two different funding mechanisms.

Mr. Moore then opened the hearing for public comment and asked individuals to limit their comments to three minutes.

Public Comment

Henry Coe, from Durham, read a written comment into the record and felt that the Board members are charged with making very difficult decisions concerning the education of the towns' youth. Mr. Coe felt that the Board, the residents present and the taxpayers that are not at the meeting are all equal and he felt that confidence needed to be restored. Mr. Coe felt that the decision for bonding needs to go to referendum so that the taxpayers may have their say.

Lainey Melvin, chair of Durham's Senior Board, was speaking on behalf of the seniors in town since a lot of them can't attend hearings and meetings at night. Ms. Melvin echoed what Mr. Coe had said and felt it was important for the townspeople to vote at referendum.

Nick Faiella, from Middlefield, reiterated his support for this project and would like to see the townspeople have an opportunity to vote. He asked for a show of hands of people in support of the project.

Tyler Wheeler, from Middlefield, explained that he will be attending Coginchaug this September and urged the Board to move forward with the completion of the field house which would trigger the lawsuit that lights can be installed. He also urged everyone to contact their state representatives to vote yes to the prevailing wage proposal that the Governor is proposing.

Kevin Cross, a junior at Coginchaug, thanked the Board for their efforts and spoke on behalf of the past, present and future of Coginchaug football. He would like players to be able to play under the lights on a Friday night.

Michael Andrews, from Durham, felt it was a great idea to continue with the field house project.

Sebastian Manning, from Durham, felt that the proposal for the field house should go forward.

Evan Faiella, from Middlefield, approved the field house building.

Aaron Faiella, from Middlefield, also approved of the completion of the field house.

Tyler Garrettson stated that he approved the building of the field house.

David Lowry, a member of the Middlefield's Board of Finance and father of two student athletes, definitely felt that this should go to a vote of the people. Mr. Lowry felt that it makes sense to have the project completed.

Lisa Franceschet felt that the field not only supports football, but is there for soccer and track as well. She is also a Benchwarmer and is in favor of providing success for the athletes. She felt that lights and bathrooms are necessary and we should be proud of our young athletes.

Jennifer Keane, from Middlefield, thanked the Board for their efforts and asked, as a member of the community, a parent and an educator, for the Board to make another difficult decision to move forward on the field house. Back in 2008, the community asked for a complex and 10 years later, there is still no complex. People ask where the bathrooms are all the time. Ms. Keane felt that the towns made a commitment to the students 10 years ago and have not followed through.

Stacey Duran, from Durham, spoke on behalf of the Coginchaug Soccer Club's parent group and urged the Board to move the project to referendum. She felt that having a field house and lights would allow the soccer club to host tournament games in October.

Michelle DiMauro-Murphy, from Middlefield, echoed the appreciation for the Board's time and effort and asked them to consider allowing the community to have their voice heard on this project. She emphasized that the facility is not only for student athletes, but also for community members.

Rick Parmelee stated that he is a proud American and a very proud resident of Durham. Mr. Parmelee felt that it was unfair of the Board to restrict comments from the public to three minutes on a project of this magnitude. Mr. Parmelee does not support the project. He also brought up that concussion injuries are cumulative and mentioned examples of several colleges' policies about that and felt that the football program should be eliminated. Mr. Parmelee felt that there are several big proposals in front of the townspeople of Durham that he felt moved this project down to the bottom of his list. He also felt that the towns just can't have everything and they have to prioritize their needs, but District 13 seems to get a lot of priority. He felt that this should be reviewed by a regional board of finance (even though there is no such thing). Mr. Parmelee also felt that the District needs to start paying permit fees, as there are a lot of expenses involved. He also reviewed that football had started with Vinal and ended up costing the District a lot of money to get their own program.

Roger Kleeman, from Durham, thanked the Board for their time and efforts. He commented that he didn't think that the project included lighting and wanted some more details.

Mr. Moore explained that the proposal does not include lights. There is a set of plans and three different price estimates have been received, all at approximately the same amount. Once approved, the Board will use the plans to go out with a design build, but the building would sit on the existing footprint. Mr. Moore explained that copies are available.

Dr. Friedrich asked what parts of the plans would not be included and Kevin Boyle, who served on the ad hoc committee five years ago, explained that the entire shell will be built and reviewed what would be included in the interior. Mr. Boyle also explained that he is a construction manager and has provided a cost estimate for the drawing. Randall Luther, an architect, also served on the ad hoc committee and developed the sketch. Mr. Boyle felt that a lot of thought has gone into the project.

Another member of the public asked Mr. Boyle what the \$800,000 included and he explained that the toilet facilities are included, but the other areas are vacant. Mr. Boyle felt that approximately \$150,000 more would be needed to complete the entire project. Mr. Renninghoff explained that the other parts of the building were planned for home and visitor locker rooms and shower facilities, a trainer's office, family restrooms and a coach's office with a vestibule. The resolution only includes the perimeter wall, the roof, the public bathrooms, janitor's closet and the coach's room.

Kevin Boyle asked Mr. Moore to explain what the ERC voted on and why. Mr. Moore reiterated that there had been two options, one for the shell and one for a prefab building, and decided to go ahead with the full shell which could be fitted out at a later time. This decision was made to be cost-conscious and to try to save \$150,000.

Jen Zettergren, from Durham, stated that she has been working with Nick Faiella on this project for about two years and reviewed the progress thus far. Ms. Zettergren also explained that the number for the project becomes far less on a yearly basis. She also explained how she often wondered about what was so great about Durham and Middlefield since there's no police, no paid firemen and no trash pick-up. People always told her it was the schools and she now agrees. Ms. Zettergren feels that the school is

the towns' greatest asset in addition to the kind and wonderful people that live here. She feels that this project needs to be finished to protect the townspeople's investment in the community.

Mr. Moore also reported that the estimated construction costs are about \$600,000 and that Bob Francis had secured a bid from J.R. Rosa about four weeks ago which confirmed that number. The Board put \$100,000 in the proposal for contingencies, design and permit fees \$70,000, the bond counsel \$15,000 and the financial advisor at \$15,000.

Martin French, from Durham, felt that substantial information should be given to the townspeople before they vote on the project. Mr. French did not feel it was time to finish the field house given the financial condition of the State of Connecticut and the Town of Durham. Mr. French agreed that people do think the school system is great and he is happy for that and feels that money has been spent in a responsible, education-focused way. He also feels that sports are just one part of the puzzle.

Roger Kleeman asked if the Board has looked at the ongoing maintenance costs.

David Booth, from Durham, loves the idea of the field house, but commented that he has been closely watching the budget process. He feels that math teachers are more important than bathrooms and lights at the field. Mr. Booth feels that bathrooms are appropriate, but a field house is a bit excessive. He would not want to see more cuts made to the budget next year to support this line item.

Mr. Moore stated that financing would put the first payment for this project in the 2018-2019 budget, not this coming year's budget. There were estimates for 10-year financing, going from \$100,000 a year down to \$82,000, and 20-year-financing, starting at \$64,000 and ending up at \$41,000. These numbers are based on current rates.

At this point, Mr. Moore closed the public hearing and thanked everyone for their comments.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

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Alwaz First