

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Utilization Committee met in Regular Session on Thursday, May 30, 2019 at 6:00 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, Durham, Connecticut.

Committee members present: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci, Mr. Giammatteo and Mr. Hicks.  
Committee members absent: Mr. Yamartino  
Administration present: Dr. Veronesi, Superintendent of Schools and Kim Neubig, Business Manager

Mr. Augur called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Public Comment**

None.

**Approval of Agenda**

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

*In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci and Mr. Hicks. Motion passed unanimously.*

**Approval of Minutes - April 25, 2019**

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to approve the minutes of the April 25, 2019 meeting, as presented.*

*In favor of approving the minutes of the April 25, 2019, as presented: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich and Mr. Hicks. Motion passed, with Mrs. Geraci abstaining.*

**Security Proposal**

Mrs. Neubig had submitted a list of security items and explained that it was time to move forward with the funds that board set aside for security before June 30<sup>th</sup>. It could also be voted to put the funds into capital reserve, if no decision will be made by June 28<sup>th</sup>. The only thing changed on the document was that item 20, a Knox Box, was added to provide access for public safety services.

Mrs. Neubig reviewed that the board had put aside \$400,000 and the district received \$73,000 from the state security grant, for a total of \$473,650. Mrs. Neubig took \$150,000 out of that for the SRO, leaving a balance of \$323,650. She then took \$92,293 for the district's share of the vestibules at Strong and Coginchaug, with a remaining balance of \$231,357. Her recommendation would be to spend \$105,000, including Knox boxes at \$20,000, kiosks and the visitor management systems at \$35,000 and the data boosters on all buildings at \$50,000. That leaves \$126,357 for the board to spend on projects of their choice. Window film had been discussed, but that would not be enough money to do all of the buildings. The price of the window film may be reduced if the vestibules are done.

Mr. Augur asked about item 5 and Mrs. Neubig explained that that \$59,000 would capture every area that the SRO and principals have identified as being potential areas that need camera coverage. Mr. Augur felt that

would be reasonable to do as they have already installed a lot of the cameras and fits within the budget. Mrs. Neubig also noted that the tech department can log into the cameras remotely.

Dr. Veronesi mentioned that item 13, the exterior signage, has been recommended by many emergency management personnel. Mrs. Geraci felt that that made sense to do.

Mrs. Geraci stated that she is biased towards door locks as her husband specializes in that and there is so much technology available. Dr. Veronesi suggested targeting \$40,000 for door locks and Mrs. Geraci felt it would only need to be a couple in each school. Mrs. Neubig felt that there was time to obtain a quote for that and if it was way over the \$40,000, she would come back to the committee. Dr. Friedrich would want to see a lock on every hall-facing classroom door on the ground level.

Dr. Veronesi was happy with the decisions that were made to address a number of the security areas. Mr. Giammatteo also mentioned that if upgrades were being made to doors, it wouldn't be difficult to upgrade the locks as well.

Mrs. Neubig reviewed the proposed items: the district's share of the vestibules (item 1), Knox boxes (item 20), the visitor management system/kiosks (item 6), the Wilson antenna kits (item 15), the additional cameras (item 5) and exterior signage except for Coginchaug (item 13) with the residual being for beginning door locks (item 9).

Mr. Hicks asked what the procedure will be if someone gets into a school without a badge and Mrs. Neubig explained that the office would still be required to open the door. Mr. Hicks also asked about metal detectors and Mrs. Neubig stated that they had received pricing of \$18,000 to \$26,000 per unit, including installation, and \$50/hour for training. Personnel would also be needed to man the units.

The committee generally agreed to move forward with items 1, 5, 6, 13, 15 and 20 as well as phase one of item 9, as listed above.

### **Korn School**

Dr. Veronesi reviewed that at the last meeting Dr. Friedrich suggested that Dr. Taylor recommend to the full board that the Utilization Committee would like to defer a decision, pending a study of other uses. Mr. Moore felt that they would want to evaluate all of the options, including demolition. Dr. Veronesi stated that they would need updated costs for razing the building as well as feedback from the district and the communities. She also mentioned that the legal advice they received was advice that primarily pertained to Durham's use of the building. The razing costs have been updated and remain at roughly \$1 million.

There had also been discussion about the Utilization Committee working with the Town Planner and Dr. Veronesi felt that there should be some talking points to go into those discussions. She proposed that the district maintains the building as it currently is going into next year. During that time, the district will be working with the Town Planner. She asked if they will do a market analysis and continue to explore different uses of the building.

Mr. Augur stated that they have yet to talk about a partial razing, such as keeping the gym, restrooms and a few other rooms. If the kitchen will cost a lot to update, then get rid of the kitchen. That will reduce the costs of heating and ventilation as well.

Dr. Friedrich felt that the committee needs to address what options are available if the district retains ownership. He felt that the idea of the board becoming a landlord is appalling to him. He does not feel that any possible income will produce enough to hire a manager. Dr. Veronesi reminded everyone that they made the decision to close Korn School because they no longer needed the building. Dr. Friedrich also does not

like the idea of letting go of that property to private ownership of any sort. He feels that they need to either mothball it for a few more years or raze it now. Mr. Giammatteo agreed.

Mrs. Geraci felt that the best idea would be to demo the building and make the area a parking lot. Mr. Augur is also for razing the building.

Dr. Friedrich asked if the committee was at a point to recommend razing the building and Mr. Augur stated that he was. Mr. Hicks stated that it kills him to even think of demo'ing the building. He has extreme disappointment over the town turning it down and would want to explore every single possible avenue to see if something could be done with the building. He would not want it sold to a private entity.

Dr. Veronesi commented that they have never talked about partial razing or a parking lot and that it could possibly be a combination of the two. She noted that the district has maintained the building and perhaps the Town of Durham could find the costs palatable to make it usable. Mrs. Geraci suggested that they explore options over the next year and, if nothing comes of it, tear it down by June 30<sup>th</sup> of next year.

Mr. Augur stated that he had worked hard to get the committee to bring the proposed number down for the Korn School project, but to no avail. Mr. Augur would not want to wait another year to make a decision.

Dr. Friedrich asked Mr. Hicks if he would be the point man on researching options over the next year because he does not feel that the administration should have to take this on. He reminded everyone that the district is not in the real estate business. Mr. Augur stated that the district already charges for use of the athletic fields and it would not require additional staff to add a gym onto that. Dr. Friedrich stated that Laura Francis had stated that the town didn't have resources to manage its own business in the building.

Mrs. Neubig reminded everyone that the district does have \$222,000 outstanding in a bond which will have to be paid back, even if the building is razed. That debt is up in 2023.

Carl Stoup also mentioned that the current water system would need to be maintained until the new water is brought in.

Missy Booth stated that people have been saying it would be good to have one K-5 school since the district is going to have one program. Mr. Augur stated that those plans would have the building torn down and built as new.

Mr. Augur summarized that they could at least say to the board that they are not exploring private ownership and everyone agreed.

Mr. Giammatteo asked if the costs escalated because of compliance issues and it was confirmed that that was the case and would impact the types of tenants that could be in the building. Mr. Giammatteo would like to take another year to explore the options. Dr. Friedrich felt that was fine, but asked who would explore.

Mrs. Geraci suggested that the town may want to come back at some point and purchase the property to build a community center.

Dr. Veronesi explained that there would be great opposition to having one new building at the Korn School location and having three empty buildings, including Memorial, Lyman and Brewster. Dr. Friedrich also mentioned that all school buildings would be in Durham and Dr. Veronesi stated that that is an issue in Middlefield. Carl Stoup reminded everyone that Brewster does have land restrictions and can only be used for education. Mr. Augur noted that the heirs to the property could change those restrictions.

Dr. Veronesi added that she had brought up the idea of using some space at the high school for a community center, but got some opposition to that. She also stated that the issue of who would do it and a timeline is the

same discussion that needs to be had about the field house. She doesn't know if the district is working as efficiently as they could be when they keep redefining these potential projects. As of now, things to be explored during the upcoming school year are partial razing and expansion of parking lot.

Mr. Augur agreed that it makes no sense to explore subleasing Korn School, even with Durham being a tenant. Dr. Veronesi mentioned that there are a number of things that would need to be done in the building and the board made the decision to close the building to direct funds to areas that most significantly impact students. She did mention that people love buildings and many people would not want to see the building razed, but may be okay with some of it being razed. Mr. Hicks felt that they could keep the core facility and knock off the wings.

Mrs. Booth asked what the district would be using the building for and why they would want to become a landlord. Mrs. Geraci would want to just tear it down and then entertain the possibility of Durham building a community center on the land. Mr. Hicks stated that the town has been down that road before and it failed.

*Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mr. Augur, to recommend to the full board that Korn School be razed.*

*In favor of recommending to the full board that Korn School be razed: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich and Mrs. Geraci. In opposition: Mr. Hicks. Motion passed.*

Dr. Veronesi stated that the referendum in November is a vital step in the district's forward momentum and it must pass. Dr. Friedrich noted that when this issue goes to the full board, he would happily vote for a resolution that would postpone the decision. He did feel though that this committee should challenge the board to think about that as a real outcome.

Mr. Augur summarized that his committee update will talk about razing, partial razing and pulling private use off the table which resulted in a recommendation to the board.

### **Public Comment**

Carl Stoup thought that the newer wing on Korn School may be an easy part to keep. The gym does have some asbestos and some window areas do as well. Any portables should go, but moving them is cost-prohibitive.

### **Adjournment**

*Mr. Hicks made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to adjourn the meeting.*

*In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mr. Augur, Dr. Friedrich, Mrs. Geraci and Mr. Hicks. Motion passed unanimously.*

The meeting ended at 6:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz  
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