

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Utilization Committee met in Special Session on Wednesday, May 16, 2018 at 6:00 PM in the Library at Strong School, Durham, Connecticut.

Committee members present: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle (arrived late), Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks and Mr. Yamartino

Other Board members present: Mr. Moore

Administration present: Dr. Veronesi, Superintendent of Schools and Mrs. 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. Yamartino made a motion to approve to the agenda, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to approve the agenda, as presented.

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

Planning Focal Points

Communication

Mr. Augur explained that Dr. Veronesi had prepared a document regarding these planning points. Under Communication, one part is to review the survey responses which have been summarized, but does not include any commentary. The second part would be to write a report on the survey responses which Mr. Augur and Dr. Taylor will draft and circulate to the committee members. The hope would be to have that draft report done within the coming weeks.

Dr. Veronesi also stated that she has submitted something to the Town Times to encourage people to complete the survey online or paper copies which have been left at both town halls and libraries. The due date has also been extended until next Friday May 25th.

The next item is to write, publish and distribute is a Utilization newsletter. Dr. Veronesi has worked on a draft of this item as well. Mr. Moore explained that other items will be included in the newsletter as well. Dr. Veronesi felt that the community wants a brief historical overview of the process and what will happen next. Mr. Moore thought it would probably be a tri-fold brochure which would be mailed to all residents. Dr. Veronesi described the Board of Education update that she receives in Plainville. She would like to talk about communication that will be ongoing next year and the consultant from ACES will make a recommendation about what type of communication source should be used for what information and on what frequency.

Transportation

Regarding transportation, Mrs. Neubig has contacted Phil Johnson at Dattco and have discussed Options A and D. Some of the things to consider are can the bussing be done with the existing fleet, will additional busses need to be purchased or will less busses be needed. They will need to consider school start times, length of bus rides and whether there will be a district boundary line. She hopes to have a full report from Dattco showing all the costs and considerations of both options for the June 13th Board of Education meeting. Mr. Augur asked if a highlight of that report can be incorporated in the Utilization newsletter and Mrs. Neubig felt that it could be.

Mrs. Neubig also mentioned that the Dattco contract expires in June, 2019 which means several things will need to be considered in the next budget season, including going out to bid again.

Mrs. Neubig explained that there has to be an available seat for every student which is why you may sometimes see a bus with many open seats.

Financing

Moving to financing, the finalized costs associated with selected options would be due in October. The hope is to engage the Finance Committee in this work and Mr. Augur hopes to meet before the next Utilization Committee meeting on May 31st. Dr. Veronesi suggested that the Finance Committee join the Utilization Committee meeting at 6:00 PM, with a follow up meeting afterward at 7:00 PM.

Mrs. Neubig explained that they will put together a funding rate per household for each option. She will work on that with the Finance Committee. In terms of bonding, there is \$100,000 in the 2018-2019 budget for potential bonding. She has been in contact with IBIC (financial advisors) and it is anticipated that the District can borrow up to between \$1.5 and \$3 million with the \$100,000 in the debt service line. She also mentioned that all of the District's current debt will be paid off by 2025-2026. She will share the information with everyone once she receives the final numbers from IBIC. If the District decides not to bond this in the 2018-2019 school year, they can still bond for capital improvements.

Mr. Yamartino feels that the District is grossly under-funding the capital and he would like to know exactly how under-funded it is. Mrs. Neubig is looking at those numbers (estimated date of replacement, useful end-of-life dates, etc.). Mr. Yamartino feels that if a new piece of equipment is purchased, the District should be budgeting for its replacement beginning with the following year. Mr. Augur asked if that issue is more germane to the ERC than the Utilization Committee and Mr. Yamartino felt there is an overlap. Mr. Yamartino felt that the District will probably need to fund between \$2 and \$2.5 million per year in capital while they are currently funding \$500,000 to \$800,000. He does feel that the Finance Committee would ultimately take this over.

Mr. Yamartino also mentioned that Durham is USDA-eligible and he wasn't sure if USDA offered any special grants or funding that could apply to the school district. Dr. Veronesi stated that they had explored that and the answer had been no. Mr. Yamartino suggested that they talk to Rosa DeLauro about an exception.

The next step is to meet with the Department of Administrative Services, Department of School Construction Grants on Tuesday, May 22nd at 10:00 AM. Dr. Veronesi asked that everyone let her know

by Friday if they will be attending or not. She would certainly like to have a couple of Board members attend.

Building Disposition

Dr. Veronesi reported that she has spoken to Silver Petrucelli regarding the cost of razing Lyman School if that were to be an option and that would be approximately \$1 million.

Mr. Augur explained that it would be best to engage the Town of Middlefield to get their views on future uses of the building. Mr. Yamartino stated that he has spoken to Ed Bailey about it and Mr. Bailey stated that Middlefield will not want to purchase the building. In terms of what they would like to see in that building, Mr. Bailey would like to put together a small committee with members from Planning and Zoning, Economic Development and the Town Planner as well as Mr. Yamartino and Mr. Bailey. Mr. Bailey did ask for a formal request from the Utilization Committee asking for their input so that he can form the committee.

Mrs. Boyle made a motion, seconded by Dr. Friedrich, to draft an email to the Town of Middlefield asking for their input on future uses of John Lyman School.

In favor of drafting an email to the Town of Middlefield asking for their input on future uses of John Lyman School: Mr. Augur, Mrs. Boyle, Dr. Friedrich, Mr. Hicks and Mr. Yamartino.

Mrs. Neubig explained that if John Lyman does not remain a school or a municipal use, there could be some potential payback to the state for past grants. The state has done a preliminary review and they felt that the projects at Lyman were old enough and there shouldn't be an issue. Mrs. Neubig will follow up on this.

As far as disposition options, Mr. Augur reviewed that the Board is working with the Town of Durham on Korn School. The other option would be demolition at a cost of roughly \$1 million and the District would maintain possession of the property. Mr. Yamartino has heard several different people comment that there have been no savings from the Korn School closing which he believes is patently false. He stated that the MBR was lowered because of the Korn School closing. He asked if that information could be included in the communication to the public and Mr. Moore agreed to do that. Mrs. Neubig mentioned that the realized savings in the 2016-2017 school year was \$594,686, which was net of one-time expenses. For the 2017-2018 year, it is closer to \$800,000. Dr. Friedrich suggested the annual savings be included in all possible communications. Mr. Yamartino also mentioned that the District would save on the money owed to the State if the Town of Durham takes possession of Korn School.

Safety and Security

School Resource Officer

Dr. Veronesi stated that they have been working with Troop F on the MOU. Lieutenant Costa is very excited about the prospect of District 13 having an SRO and they have several questions about preparing the MOU. The draft of the MOU will hopefully be available in the next couple of weeks so that it can be discussed at the June Board of Education meeting. Mr. Moore felt the next step would be to evaluate the MOU and the estimated costs. Dr. Veronesi has also spoken to the superintendent in Cheshire who has had a resource officer for many years. Their board just voted to bring on a second resource officer and he shared a copy of their current MOU with Dr. Veronesi. He also mentioned that they will probably be

modifying their MOU moving into next year. She also mentioned that theirs is not a regional district and it is a local police department agreement.

Dr. Veronesi has asked Sergeant Byrnes for a couple of scenarios and related costs, the training the officer would require and how that gets tied into one-time cost for the District. Mr. Moore mentioned that the total salary depends on the rank and experience of the officer.

Staff NIMS (National Incident Management) Training

Dr. Veronesi reported that the administrative team had the NIMS training last month. She stated that the District would like to follow a set protocol, regardless of what the possible incident may be. She hopes to introduce this to the staff as part of their welcome back in August. Dr. Veronesi reported that they used the training today with the possibility of being on generator power at the high school tomorrow.

Mrs. Boyle mentioned that she has heard that the Town of Durham may not get power for the next three or four days. Dr. Veronesi stated that the administration is hopeful that the high school will be back up and running tonight, but also felt that running on generator power would be inconvenient and a little uncomfortable but not impossible. A message went out to the staff today asking them to plan lessons without technology. The District has been in constant communication with Laura Francis. She also mentioned that too many roads were impassable and that was why school needed to be canceled. As of now, there is only one road that is impassable.

Bids/Financing

Mrs. Neubig explained that the Board has appropriated \$400,000 in Purchased Services, but that would not be enough to harden the vestibules nor is it the right budget line. She mentioned that there would be a need for potential bonding for that. These items include the window film and hardening of the vestibules as well as other items, including a cellular system that could be bundled. Mr. Moore explained that they are still working on detail of the various options.

Mrs. Boyle asked where the cellular system came from as it had not been discussed before and Mrs. Neubig mentioned it only as an alternative to the SRO.

Safety/Security Improvement Plan

Mr. Augur stated that this will be the priority item for the May 31st Utilization Committee meeting.

Public Comment

A member of the public asked about the language problem in the legislation for the forgiveness of the debt and Mr. Yamartino explained that the original legislation had referred to it as the Durham School System and it was corrected in the following legislative session.

Adjournment

Dr. Friedrich made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Boyle, to adjourn the meeting.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:57 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

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