

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Playground/Recreational Facility of the Utilization Committee met in Special Session on Monday, March 2, 2020 at 6:30 PM in the Library at Coginchaug Regional High School, Durham, Connecticut.

Committee members present: Mrs. Booth and Mr. Yamartino, Mrs. Johansen, Mrs. Canning, Mrs. Casillo and Mrs. Dubuc

Other community members present: Mr. Giammatteo

Mr. Yamartino called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Agenda

Mrs. Booth made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Canning, to approve the agenda, as presented.

In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Canning, Mrs. Casillo, Mrs. Dubuc, Mr. Giammatteo, Mrs. Johansen and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes – February 17, 2020

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the February 4, 2020 meeting, as presented.

In favor of approving the minutes of the February 4, 2020 meeting, as presented: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Canning, Mrs. Casillo, Mrs. Dubuc, Mrs. Johansen and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed, with Mr. Giammatteo abstaining.

The minutes from the February 17, 2020 meeting were tabled at this time.

Equipment Requirement and Cost

Mr. Yamartino would like to come to some conclusions in the next week or two so that they can make a final recommendation at their next meeting.

A. Lyman

Mrs. Booth has given a list of the students' wants to Dr. Serino and Mrs. Neubig who will sit with Mr. Ford to try to get the kids something for this spring. They may have some money available from the activity fund and Mrs. Gaudreau also explained that they do have money in the budget for more mulch. They do not know if the \$50,000 that has been allotted includes just equipment or land preparation. Mrs. Booth stated that she was told there is no money in the budget for removal of the concrete.

Mr. Yamartino will call Skip Cahill to ask if he would mind bringing a truck over to help remove the concrete. Mrs. Booth stated that a vendor told her it would be best to remove the concrete before anything is installed. It was generally agreed that people are pretty willing to pitch in and help out.

JLPA has a meeting tomorrow night and they have stated that they are willing to contribute money. Mr. Yamartino suggested possibly redirecting the mulch money, but others stated that the mulch would still be necessary. He explained that it may be possible to use this year's money for mulch to create matching funds for money from JLPA for this spring.

Mrs. Johansen asked if John Lyman had a rolling cart with play equipment and it was explained that they do and it includes things like jump ropes, hula hoops, balls and chalk. Mrs. Johansen will try to visit all three schools to see how much time the kids spend on the various pieces of equipment.

There was discussion about Imagination Blocks which are fine for outdoors and can be cleaned, though they are a bit pricey. Mrs. Booth was concerned that they would walk away. Mrs. Canning explained that Brewster has an outside shed that can be locked.

Mr. Yamartino asked if everyone thought a gaga pit would be possible for this spring and Mrs. Johansen explained that someone would have to teach the kids how to play it. It was generally felt that it will be very easy for the kids to pick up. It was agreed to talk to the gym teacher. Mr. Giammatteo felt that the gaga pit could be done at close to no cost by the community. It was also mentioned that high school students need community service hours.

Mrs. Booth clarified that there is a John Lyman activity fund and separate JLPA funds. Mr. Yamartino summarized that some items are being ordered for the spring and it would be a good idea to get a gaga pit going as well. Mr. Giammatteo will take the lead on that project.

Mrs. Johansen explained that you can apply to Kaboom for more than one grant at a time and she wrote a grant for Memorial for an entire playscape as she could justify that 906 kids step on the playground in a year. There is a second grant for \$15,000 towards equipment and a third for an adventure course. They could also do another application for Lyman. Mrs. Johansen sent the information to Dr. Serino on Saturday for her review. She did explain that this is a long shot.

Mr. Yamartino reminded everyone that nothing will be ordered until after the May referendum on the budget anyway. Mr. Yamartino also mentioned that once approved, they can always make some changes to the individual items. Mr. Giammatteo felt that once the budget passes and they know they have the money, they can shop and compare. They also felt that, since John Lyman is built upon democracy, they should get feedback from the kids before ordering anything. Mr. Yamartino would like to give a recommendation to the Utilization committee of what the playscape might look like and its cost. That would then go to the Board of Education and presented to the public. It was agreed to show three different options, all of which are right around \$50,000.

Mrs. Booth asked if an RFP will be necessary and Mr. Yamartino explained that a bid is necessary for a purchase over \$25,000. Mrs. Booth explained to a vendor that they are shopping for two different schools and asked if they could get a better deal for buying two, but he said they could not. Mr. Yamartino explained that the RFP would include specific design items and each vendor can quote whatever equipment they sell. He added that that RFP will ultimately come from Central Office. They will compile their information into a single document to present to the Utilization Committee.

Mrs. Booth also mentioned that Burke does have some sale items available, but the state discount does not apply to those.

B. Memorial

Mrs. Johansen reiterated that the Kaboom grant that she wrote is in Dr. Serino's hands.

Mrs. Casillo explained that her children went through the GameTime catalog and picked out mostly climbing equipment. They liked the spiral slide, the air walk link, the wiggle link and sensory waves. Mrs. Casillo felt that the sensory waves may not work for Memorial, but may, in fact, be great for Lyman and Brewster. The kids also liked the sky runner as well. Discussion continued about specific parts of a play scape.

Mrs. Johansen explained that the swings at Memorial are still usable and the monkey bars are in halfway decent shape. They are looking more at adding individual pieces. There are also issues with location and size of equipment.

Mr. Yamartino explained that there is a budget of \$150,000 for Memorial, with \$100,000 towards a playscape and \$50,000 towards courts. He believes that that should be revised to \$75,000 to the courts as Middlefield will add \$25,000, leaving \$70,000 to \$75,000 for the playscape. The bid came in at \$105,000 for the courts and lights will still be needed. Mr. Yamartino feels that the lights shouldn't even be \$1,000, but he is waiting for the quote. He did add that equipment for courts will also be needed and that could be another \$2,000 to \$3,000.

Mr. Yamartino reached out to Mr. Moore to see if the district receives discounts for anyone because he would like to reach out to Wilson to have them become the official supplier of equipment to the district. He stated that they would put the Wilson logo on the court or fence, if they would donate the equipment.

Mr. Yamartino also noted that if the budget for the work at Memorial does not go through, the \$25,000 from Middlefield is also not available. He added that he also reached out to Laura Francis who is also facing budget constraint issues. Durham is including \$80,000 to recondition tennis courts in Durham for pickleball. Mr. Yamartino suggested that she consider allotting \$25,000 towards the courts in Middlefield instead which could give her a budget savings. Mrs. Francis felt that she would get push-back from the community since they already pay 60 percent of the budget and wouldn't want to put extra money toward that. He reminded her that Durham residents have access to the courts in Middlefield as well and also that half of the attendees of Middlefield's summer camp are Durham residents. Mr. Yamartino noted that if Mrs. Francis was not willing to consider that, they could approach the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance to see if they would consider it.

Mrs. Johansen commented that Middlefield is expecting 150 kids in the summer program this year and she would think it would be wise for both towns to make the investment at Memorial. She also wondered where before- and after-care will be held. There was also discussion about the future of the schools in both towns and Middlefield wanting to have a K-5 school. Mr. Yamartino explained that all of the feedback has said that all kids from a given class should be in the same school. Mrs. Booth did not disagree, but stated that it would still have to pass. It was generally agreed that the feedback from Middlefield is that it's not necessarily Lyman School, but K-5 in town.

Mrs. Casillo felt that to put that kind of money into something like pickleball at this point is a lot. She felt that more than half of the budget would go into something that will be used primarily outside of school hours. She felt that the playground should be the priority. She felt that Durham residents would

be upset if they had to fund a pickleball court for Middlefield. It was discussed that the courts would be used at gym time, but couldn't realistically be used during recess.

Mr. Yamartino reviewed that it would not just be pickleball, but would include tennis, basketball and four square. Mrs. Stone had said that they would figure out a way to make it available for recess and Dr. Serino had agreed. Mrs. Canning felt that teachers would be resistant to having two separate locations for recess and that it could create social issues as well. There was discussion about having more staff outside during recess or community volunteers. Mrs. Casillo would like to have either Mrs. Stone or a staff member come to the next meeting. It was also discussed that there will be a lot more site prep at Memorial than at Lyman.

Mr. Yamartino explained that the committee needs to make a recommendation for Memorial at the same time as the one for Lyman.

Mrs. Canning stated that she had mentioned the Memorial courts while at work at Brewster and someone commented that they were not sure where that would fit within the PE curriculum. No one was sure when the last curriculum revision was done in PE. Mrs. Dubuc will ask Jen Holland what is in the curriculum and when it was revised. Mr. Giammatteo suggested checking to see if unified sports could be tied into the pickleball and court work.

Mr. Yamartino added that the flip side to that is, with them deciding to forget any courts, what will be done with that area? Parking. Then Middlefield would push back that Durham has tennis courts, track and basketball courts and Middlefield has nothing.

Mr. Yamartino will ask Deb Stone or a representative to come to the next meeting to see how this can be integrated with recess. They will also look at how it can integrate with the PE curriculum and integrated sports. They can then have a discussion about the allocated costs.

C. Brewster

Mrs. Canning noted that there had been an inspection recently of the playground at Brewster, but no one was sure who performed that inspection. She has not yet been able to identify how to make the playscape at Brewster more accessible. It was also noted that Brewster has had three different administrators in the past three years and all of them have had different ideas about the rules on the playground. There is one slide in the middle that the kids can climb up.

D. Adaptive equipment (all schools)

There is a SEPTO meeting this Thursday at 6:30 at Brewster, but they have a speaker scheduled and may not be able to discuss this as a group. However, the SEPTO officers should be able to have a discussion afterward. Mrs. Casillo will ask about cost-effective pieces that could be added. Mrs. Booth commented that she really liked the musical components.

Mrs. Casillo stated that SEPTO has done some research and has possibly talked with Laura Francis about a communication board for the playground. Mrs. Casillo thought that that could be installed at all of the schools as well.

Mr. Yamartino summarized that he would like the committee to put together a single document to show what they are ultimately proposing under the current budget of \$225,000 (including the contribution from Middlefield). However, this does not any include any money for spring stuff for John Lyman or adaptive

equipment. He would like to bring a recommendation forward that includes some adaptive equipment and ask for another \$25,000, if that's what is necessary.

Fund raising efforts

Mr. Yamartino again thanked Mrs. Johansen for doing the grant application and encouraged more grant applications. Mrs. Johansen stated that both Lowe's and Home Depot may be willing to donate. Mr. Yamartino will ask the Utilization committee about fund raising and if they allow signage. He would like to look for potential sponsorship and asked if anyone else had any ideas for sponsorship.

Mr. Yamartino reviewed that there is an immediate need for the spring, but Mrs. Casillo noted that Dr. Serino had stated that there are funds for that. It was agreed to alert JLPA to the possibility of need for both the spring and the playscape. Mr. Yamartino explained that they don't only need financial support, but also support in the budget process and referendum. They also need support for the adaptive play equipment.

Long-term expenditure

It was decided to talk about this at a future meeting.

New Business

A question was asked about the life expectancy of Brewster's playground and Mr. Yamartino suggested that they reach out to the person who just did the playground inspection. Mrs. Johansen noted that the equipment is 11 years old. Mr. Yamartino will reach out to Rob Poturnicki to see if he would certify the equipment at Brewster.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Mrs. Booth made a motion, seconded by many, to adjourn the meeting.

It was agreed to meet again on March 23, 2020 at 6:30 PM at Brewster.

In favor of adjourning the meeting: Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Canning, Mrs. Castillo, Mrs. Dubuc, Mrs. Johansen and Mr. Yamartino. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

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