

Playground/Recreational Facility of the Utilization Committee

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Playground/Recreational Facility of the Utilization Committee met in Special Session on Wednesday, June 17, 2020 at 6:30 PM remotely.

Board members present: Mrs. Booth, Mr. Moore and Mr. Yamartino

Community members present: Mrs. Canning, Mrs. Casillo, Mr. Giammatteo, Mrs. Johansen, Mrs. Kahnke and Ms. Malcolm

Administration present: Mrs. Neubig, Director of Finance, Mr. Ford, Principal of John Lyman School, and Mrs. Stone, Principal of Memorial Middle School

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

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda**Comment on prior minutes (committee is non-voting)**

- A. Special Session Minutes - February 17, 2020**
- B. Special Session Minutes - March 2, 2020**

SY 2020-2021 Budget Approval

Mr. Yamartino explained that the Board of Education as well as both Durham and Middlefield have approved their budgets. Middlefield did include the \$25,000 to supplement the courts at Memorial Middle School. Funding of \$50,000 was included for playground equipment at Lyman, \$70,000 for the Memorial playground and a total of \$105,000 for the courts (including the \$25,000 from Middlefield).

Bid Process - Kim Neubig

- A. John Lyman Playground**
- B. Memorial Playground**
- C. Memorial Courts**

Mrs. Neubig explained that the district's threshold for bidding is \$25,000 and the State of Connecticut also has a list of approved vendors that the district can work with which would not require a bid. There are 10 playground companies approved by the state. The district would not be bound to accept the lowest bid. Mrs. Neubig explained that the committee would need to determine the exact scope of what they would want before going out to bid. Mrs. Neubig continued to review what is involved in the bidding process and different ways it can be done.

Mrs. Neubig explained that the Playground Committee could choose to go either way and she did not have a preference, however the bidding process would slow the project down. She did add that the district prefers to have a professional installation and it will need to be inspected. She also added that she recommends it be purchased from one vendor who would take care of the entire project.

Mr. Yamartino reviewed that the bid process will take four to six weeks and he would ideally like to have the equipment available for when the students return to school in the fall, if that were to happen.

Mr. Giammatteo reported that he had reached out to the vendor he was working with and was told that the manufacturers have pushed back delivery dates about two weeks due to being shut down. Installation time should remain the same. The vendor felt that if the district ordered in the next couple of weeks, it could probably be delivered by mid-August and installed by September 1.

Mrs. Neubig added that the committee would not be able to order until after all bids are received, but could, in fact, order tomorrow from a state-approved vendor. Mr. Giammatteo noted that the vendor he spoke with is an approved vendor. Mrs. Booth stated that all vendors they spoke to about equipment at Lyman were on the approved list.

Mr. Yamartino had asked Mr. Moore if he felt it would be appropriate to delay the playground equipment and Mr. Moore explained that he felt that the committee should go ahead with this. He felt that the playgrounds would be in use even the schools are not. Mr. Yamartino concurred with Mr. Moore and added that he's received a lot of comments questioning moving forward with anything at John Lyman. He has stated that outdoor recreation is critical to education as well as social and emotional development. Since the towns did not allow the board to close the school, there will be students there that will need that equipment.

Mr. Ford added that John Lyman does have swings, but that is it. That is not sufficient for the number of students at Lyman.

Mrs. Neubig reiterated that the old playground equipment was taken down because it was deemed unsafe by the playground inspector and could not be insured.

Mr. Giammatteo added that he had talked to vendors about the equipment being able to be disassembled and moved, if necessary. They also looked at the life span of the equipment at Brewster and the equipment can be moved there. Mrs. Neubig added that she would like the risk manager to be involved in that process beforehand.

Mr. Yamartino had hoped to have a recommended design for each school before the budget was approved, but that was delayed due to the pandemic. A lot of work has been done on the layouts at John Lyman and Memorial. He asked if the Lyman group could meet, including Mr. Ford, and review what they would really like and recommend a design. He also asked the Memorial group to do the same, including Mrs. Stone, and come up with a final recommendation. They will then meet again as a full group and move forward.

As far as the courts at Memorial, Mr. Yamartino reviewed that the initial design included one tennis court, two courts that include four pickleball courts each, a basketball court and three Four Square courts. He has heard a strong desire from the community to have one tennis court, one dual use tennis/two pickleball court and one pickleball court (four courts). Mr. Yamartino did ask Mrs. Neubig to go out to bid for that. Once the bids come back, they can choose a configuration and move forward. Mrs. Stone asked if the courts would be the same size and Mr. Yamartino explained that it will be the exact same footprint and reviewed the materials for her and added that the school logo will be in the center of the basketball court. Mrs. Neubig added that she has researched pickleball courts and the most recommended surface for

pickleball is asphalt but the one being proposed is the next best. She also explained that the vendors can bid on whatever brand they'd like. She has been told that the surface will last for 30 years. Mrs. Neubig had created a list of locations that have the courts installed and will forward that to the committee members. Mr. Yamartino would like to visit court installations and added that he'd like to go see some of the playground equipment as well.

Mrs. Booth asked how they will handle prepping the area at Lyman and Mrs. Neubig will ask the landscape vendor to give them a price on that. It is also possible that not all of the existing cement may have to be removed. Mrs. Neubig confirmed that the \$50,000 will not have to be used for site work and hoped that it can be paid for out of the maintenance account.

A question was asked about having the community help with installation and any fund raising that may be done. Mrs. Neubig stated that having the community help with installation may be a problem because they are so strictly regulated. She also explained that fund raising is entirely possible and the district may be able to accept donations. Mrs. Stone asked if student activity funds can be used to buy an additional piece. Mrs. Neubig noted that that could be done and if John Lyman School is closed, the activity funds would have to be dispensed to the other schools.

Mrs. Johansen asked if Mrs. Neubig could check with the landscaper about creating a Go Far path at Memorial. Mrs. Stone thought that that might be a good Eagle project as well. Ms. Malcolm knows of some scouts that are looking for projects and she will suggest that to them. Mrs. Booth added that the gaga pits may be a good Eagle project as well. Mrs. Stone would like the Go Far path to be out around the soccer fields. Mr. Giammatteo added that the sixth graders were hoping to install a gaga pit as a gift to the school, but would like community support. He suggested using the sixth-grade senators as the work force on the project.

Mr. Moore asked the committee to have kids look at the layouts of the playgrounds before finalizing them. Mrs. Stone added that there have been several Eagle Scout projects at Memorial that have turned out great, including several benches and picnic tables. Mr. Ford stated that there really isn't a lot of seating at Lyman, but he doesn't see a lot of kids sitting anyway. Mrs. Booth thought that might help with an outdoor classroom. Mr. Moore explained that studies have shown that being outside is really important, so the more outdoor classrooms that could be available, the better. Mrs. Stone added that they are planning for a non-COVID world and not really considering seating for social distancing. Mr. Yamartino asked Ms. Malcolm to keep seating as a possibility for the Eagle Scouts as well.

Mr. Yamartino noted that time is of the essence and he would like to try to meet next week. Mrs. Johansen suggested that the two teams meet next week and then meet as a total group the week after. Mrs. Booth and Mr. Giammatteo will coordinate with Mrs. Dubuc and Mr. Ford on the Lyman group meeting. Mrs. Johansen will coordinate the Memorial team with Mrs. Kahnke, Mrs. Casillo and Mrs. Canning. Mr. Yamartino noted that Brewster is not off the table, but they are prioritizing Lyman and Memorial to get everything installed before the start of the school year. The committee still needs to review Brewster and all other recreational/athletic facilities. Mr. Yamartino explained that the school district, by state law, cannot do capital reserves but the towns can. He would like to push the capital plan off to the towns in the future. The committee will meet as a group again on Wednesday, July 1.

Mrs. Neubig explained that any purchasing will need to be done through her office.

Mr. Yamartino asked Mr. Giammatteo to look into having sleeves within the concrete supports so that the equipment is easily moved.

Mrs. Booth asked if Mrs. Neubig thought that a zip line would be a liability and Mr. Giammatteo stated that they are standard components in a playscape. Mrs. Neubig felt it would probably be fine if it's not too high.

New Business

None.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First