

The Regional School District 13 Board of Education Building Committee met in regular session on Wednesday, May 3, 2023 at 5:00 PM in the library at Coginchaug Regional High School.

Committee members present: Mr. Cross (by phone), Mr. Faiella, Mr. Giammatteo, Mr. Moore, Mr. Overton and Mr. Weissberg (arrived late)

Committee members absent: Mr. Mennone and Mr. Patel

Administration present: Mrs. Neubig, Mr. Proia, Mrs. Smith and Dr. Schuch

Board members present: Mrs. Dahlheimer and Mrs. Petrella

Mr. Overton called the meeting to order at 5:01 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Giammatteo made a motion, seconded by Mr. Moore, to approve the agenda, as presented.

In favor of approving the agenda, as presented: Mr. Cross, Mr. Faiella, Mr. Giammatteo, Mr. Moore and Mr. Overton. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Minutes - March 29, 2023

Mr. Giammatteo made a motion, seconded by Mr. Faiella, to approve the minutes of March 29, 2023, as presented.

In favor of approving the minutes of March 29, 2023, as presented: Mr. Cross, Mr. Faiella, Mr. Giammatteo, Mr. Moore and Mr. Overton. Motion carried unanimously.

Pickett Lane Paving Phase 2 RFP

It was agreed to hold off on this agenda item until Mr. Weissberg is present.

Fieldhouse

Mrs. Neubig reported that they are working with the Town of Durham for permits. Currently, 144 Pickett Lane encompasses the entire campus but should only be the Community Center. Before they can get a permit for 135 Pickett Lane, the town is working on separating that out. The plans will need to be submitted to the town for approval and an installation date can then be set.

Dr. Schuch added that he has gotten up to speed on the legal history and has spoken to the plaintiff from the rulings. The most recent amendment requires permanent restrooms to be at the site prior to installation of any lights. It also requires a minimum 90-day notice to the plaintiff prior to construction of

any restroom facilities. Dr. Schuch understands that there is no current funding for restrooms, but it is potentially in the queue with the state, along with the lights. He asked the committee if they would agree with them communicating to the plaintiff with their intent to do that. If they do not do that, they could receive the funding but be held up by this stipulation. Dr. Schuch felt that they should notify the plaintiff of their intent, without committing to any plans or a date. Dr. Schuch has already told the plaintiff verbally, but it would need to be done in writing.

The committee did not see a downside to notifying the plaintiff now.

Mr. Weissberg arrived at the meeting at 5:08 PM and noted that he reached out to the manufacturer to explain the importance of getting the documents. They agreed that it is taking longer than anticipated, but promised that they will reach out to the engineers and be placed at the front of the line for fabrication. They hoped to have the plans in no longer than two weeks.

Pickett Lane Paving Phase 2 RFP

Mr. Weissberg reported that he, Mr. Cross and Mr. Proia had a meeting to review the proposals and it was clear that, cost-independent, the Indus proposal for foamed asphalt was a superior one. They will not outsource any of the work. It is a single step process and does not include an intermediate step of tearing up the road and adding material. The company has a lot of experience doing similar work and are doing a foamed asphalt project in Berlin soon. Indus did not provide an asphalt cost and the district can solicit their own pricing and they can go with a smaller thickness.

Looking at costs, the proposals were essentially equivalent but Indus has the ability to be up to \$150,000 less, depending on the design. They can complete the project in three to four days. The district will then have the opportunity to get an independent paving company to pave the topcoat, however the base is completely drivable for weeks. Mr. Weissberg did feel that they can get the base and the topcoat done this summer.

Mr. Overton suggested developing a potential schedule due to all of the youth sports programs in the summer. Mr. Weissberg felt they could lock in a schedule once they forward the proposal to Indus.

Mrs. Neubig explained that if the committee agrees, she will bring the proposal to the full board on May 10th to award the project to Indus. She can then sign the contract and issue a purchase order. They won't know about the topcoat until the design is complete and Mr. Weissberg felt that it will be about \$100,000 per inch of pavement. Mrs. Neubig noted that they do have the funds available since Indus is at \$275,000.

Mrs. Neubig also noted that they have not yet received the final payment on the culvert project, but felt it will be no less than \$300,000.

It was also noted that Little League should generally be over by July 12th and they can definitely try to put off the project until then. Mr. Weissberg explained that it will be a full closure for the road during the construction. Mrs. Dahlheimer added that the Farmer's Market has also moved down to Allyn Brook Park, along with the concerts. Dr. Schuch mentioned that they will probably have to direct high school and Central Office staff to alternate work locations as well. The reclamation will take three to four days and traffic can be maintained for the paving portion. Mr. Weissberg felt that, in all likelihood, some

activities will need to be postponed. He will try to get a better idea of the week this can happen to give everyone enough notice. Mr. Overton suggested completely closing the area during the time of the project.

The committee generally agreed to recommend the project to the full board at the next meeting.

Facility Planning Updates

A. Financial Analysis of Long-Term Configuration Options - Ed Arum

Mrs. Neubig introduced Ed Arum, who has been a school business official and assistant superintendent for 32 years, retiring in 2005 and assisting districts since then. He is the building co-chair of the building project in Torrington which is a new 7-12 school of 310,000 sq. ft. at a cost of \$179 million. He then described the project for the committee and noted that building new was the cheapest option for them.

Mr. Arum's presentation was sent to the committee prior to the meeting. His presentation is based on the assumptions that both Lyman and Brewster are closed and no changes are made at Memorial. Based on the current budget of \$39 million, he projected out 10 years, 15 years and 20 years at a 3.6 percent CPI. Operating only three schools this year would have resulted in a \$2.4 million savings and four schools would be a \$1.2 million savings.

In 10 years, the total budget would be \$54 million, which is a savings of \$1.6 million by operating just four schools. With three schools, the savings would be roughly \$3.3 million. Mr. Arum emphasized that this does not include any new building or renovations. At 15 years, the total budget would be around \$64 million, with \$2.8 million savings for four schools and \$4,036,000 savings for three schools. At 20 years, the total budget would be roughly \$76 million, with \$2,396,000 savings for four schools and \$4,816,000 savings for three schools.

Looking at Lyman personnel, the savings would be nine positions, including principal, PE, music, library, two administrative assistants and two custodians, or \$718,000 as of the current year. There would also be savings on electricity, fuel, repairs, landscaping, snow removal, trash, supplies, property insurance, purchased services, copier service, buses and health insurance.

Closing two schools would reduce staffing by 18 people, two principals, two PE, two music, one art, one library, two nurses, four administrative assistants and four custodians. Mr. Arum added that the first-year savings would result in a 3.1 percent reduction in the budget.

Mr. Arum explained that there are other factors to consider when expanding Memorial, including the possible addition of an assistant principal, an additional nurse, two additional custodians, an administrative assistant, cost of electricity, heating, property insurance and copiers. If the other two schools are closed and Memorial is expanded, the district would still save \$1.9 million. This does not include debt service. Looking at the total budget including this project, he explained that it would be \$51.341 million at 10 years, \$60 million at 15 years and \$72.318 million at 20 years.

A member of the committee summarized that in 20 years, they would have paid for the new building, had better education for the kids and saved some money as well. Mr. Arum noted that if the district builds bigger than the state requires, they would have to pay for that.

Mrs. Neubig reiterated that these numbers do not include debt service which would decrease any savings. Dr. Schuch added that the numbers also do not include the cost avoidance of capital expenditures if the buildings had stayed open. Mr. Arum reminded everyone that the state does not reimburse if the project is just maintenance. He stressed how important it is to renovate-as-new. Mr. Overton summarized that if they do nothing, they will have to continue with maintenance and renovations on all the buildings, but not improving the buildings or the educational experience. He felt that if they moved ahead with a renovate-as-new project, they would essentially have a brand-new school that is paid for within 15 years, with conceivably lower costs moving forward.

Mr. Weissberg felt that this is basically the financial end of the project, but they will need to put a presentation together on the soft end of the project as well, including a better experience, a more energy-efficient building and the age of the building. Mr. Overton added that getting rid of the old building materials and installing a high-tech HVAC system creates a much healthier environment. Dr. Schuch asked if they will ask the taxpayers to pay an additional debt service payment before the savings can be realized. Mr. Arum explained that they would do bond anticipation notes. Mr. Moore noted that there will be a debt service payment peak at some point.

Mrs. Dahlheimer asked if this model could be used to explain the savings from Korn School. She added that people say that they closed Korn, but the budget kept going up. Mr. Moore stated that the budget did not go up and was the same in 2020 as it was in 2015. Mrs. Neubig summarized that it was cost avoidance rather than cost reduction as everything else went up as well.

Mr. Weissberg asked what the next steps are on this project. They will prepare graphs to illustrate this information. Mr. Arum will also attend the board meeting next week to give a similar presentation.

Mrs. Neubig noted that Mr. Arum reviewed all of the district's information and generated these numbers. Mr. Arum added that he went through the enrollment projections as well and the medium enrollment number of approximately 682 is what he would use. He also looked at class sizes and felt that the district is in good shape with that. Using the medium enrollment numbers, they would still need the same number of teachers.

Mrs. Neubig added that Mr. Arum has been very gracious in charging the district for his hours. He also asked O&G to take a look at Silver Petrucelli's estimate for the district and they did that for no charge. Mr. Arum noted that O&G would be willing to come in and talk with the district if they wanted.

Mrs. Neubig explained that the comparison is from Silver Petrucelli's second estimate with the lower number of kids. Mr. Arum asked the committee to review it at their leisure and get any questions to Mrs. Neubig. He will have O&G respond to any questions. Dr. Schuch summarized that O&G agreed with the overall number, but broke it down in different ways. Mr. Overton asked if this considers a phased construction with the building having students in it while the renovation is going on and Mr. Arum will ask O&G that question. Mrs. Dahlheimer believes that was in the Silver Petrucelli estimate.

Mrs. Neubig added that she reached out to the state and had a meeting with Michelle Dixon, Mrs. Smith, Mr. Proia and Dr. Schuch and she will get back to them within two weeks. She did mention that the Plan of Regionalization would be very important and Durham would need to know that they would no longer have an elementary school. Ms. Dixon will check with her legal department on this, but noted that they

cannot allow a building of that size for kids that might not come. Mr. Moore asked if that meant they would need to amend the Plan of Regionalization and Dr. Schuch noted that that was what she had initially said, but then noted she would check with legal. Mr. Moore asked if it adds to the confusion if Brewster remains preK only and Dr. Schuch didn't feel it mattered what they did with Brewster, but rather a commitment that all K-5 kids would be at the new school. Mrs. Neubig summarized that Memorial would have to be smaller if not all K-5 kids would attend there. Mr. Moore felt that someone in town will ask for an amendment anyway. Mrs. Neubig reviewed that it would be decided at a referendum. Dr. Schuch added that it could result in two separate referendums in the same time span.

Mr. Arum cautioned the committee to be mindful of square footage in order to get the highest reimbursement. He felt that the district was on the right track with this project, but it will obviously be up to the community. Mr. Arum added that their project in Torrington was reimbursed at 85 percent, so the town only has to pay \$31 million out of a \$179 million project. Mr. Overton added that there is also no guarantee that the reimbursement program will continue to be funded.

A committee member asked if there has been any discussion about what will happen to the buildings if Lyman and Brewster close. Mrs. Neubig explained that nothing has been factored in for that. Mr. Moore added that there had been a potential buyer for Lyman at one time.

Mr. Weissberg left the meeting at 6:05 PM.

Pumphouse

Mr. Proia reported that the flow test was done in late January. They also looked for feasible areas to house a separate pump, but didn't find anything. Option 2A from Silver Petrucelli is at \$660,000 which would be a prefab building adjacent to the existing pumphouse in front of the high school and was the lowest option. He did ask Silver Petrucelli to update pricing based on the results of the flow test, but has not received that yet. There is a 150 hp pump now and Mr. Proia believes that they may be able to use a 100 hp pump above grade. Silver Petrucelli had recommended two 50 hp pumps, one located at each school.

Mr. Overton summarized that there would be cost savings and long-term maintenance savings by housing the pumps in a single building, while relying on the existing piping back to Strong. Mr. Faiella asked if there was a risk of imminent failure, but Mr. Proia explained that it was at the end of its life. The prefab building would be completely above-ground, and Mr. Proia had asked Silver Petrucelli about a slightly sunken building but they did not recommend that. The estimate includes demolition and filling in the existing vault.

Mr. Cross felt that they would want to take a look at the size as the pumps could be substantially smaller which would mean a smaller enclosure.

Mrs. Neubig explained that funds are in reserve for this project, between the bonding and capital. Mrs. Dahlheimer asked if it has to be done this year or if it can wait until next budget season. Mr. Proia explained that it is a maintenance risk. Mrs. Dahlheimer asked the question because she felt that the money in capital could go to unanticipated, if necessary. Mrs. Neubig explained that it is specifically allocated to the pumphouse and about half of the money was included in the bonding as well. The only way to reallocate the capital is to cancel the project.

Mr. Proia will try to have an updated cost for the next meeting. Mrs. Neubig also explained that if there is residual in the capital reserve, it can go to unanticipated. If there is residual in the bonding side, it can go into other projects that were identified in the bonding package. If the funds are not needed, they are used to pay the bond back. Mrs. Dahlheimer also asked about security at the pumphouse.

Turf

Mrs. Smith explained that the Gmax testing was done on April 24th. Anything under 200 is passing and the field came in at an average of 163 which means it can go another year. Mrs. Neubig explained that the funding was included in the budget so they can replace it this year, but they don't have to. The vendor will keep their spot and the price (\$613,000) for next year. Mrs. Neubig suggested getting another year out of the field as there is so much going on this year.

Public Comment

Carl Stoup, from Durham, felt that the disposition of the two buildings should be part of the proposal. There is still a deed restriction at Brewster and it needs to stay a school property. He encouraged the committee to take Mr. Arum's offer to talk to O&G as they are a top-notch company.

Mrs. Dahlheimer stated that the restrictions on Brewster was based on heirs, but the consensus is that there are no heirs left to that property. Mr. Stoup felt that it would have to be offered to the town.

Adjournment

Mr. Faiella made a motion, seconded by Mr. Giammatteo, to adjourn the meeting.

In favor of adjourning the May 3, 2023 meeting: Mr. Cross, Mr. Faiella, Mr. Giammatteo, Mr. Moore and Mr. Overton.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debi Waz

Debi Waz
Alwaz First