

## HOLLAND HILL SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE

### REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

DATE : 12-1-2016

TIME : 7:00 PM

PLACE: HOLLAND HILL SCHOOL LIBRARY

Members present: Tom Quinn, Harry Ackley, Bill Manderville, , Jason Li, Joe Michelangelo, Nick Aysseh.

Christine Messina (RTM liaison), Phil Dwyer (BOE liaison)

Others Present: Laura Cretella ( Principal), Dr. Toni Jones (Superintendent, Fairfield Public Schools), Chuck Warrington (Colliers), Corinne Dyer , Judy Ewing, Sal Morabito, George Katinger, Pamela Iacono (RTM), Alex Durrell (RTM), Jessica Gerber (BOE) Peter Manning (Gilbane).

Approximately 18 members of the public, most representing the Holland Hill community.

#### I. OPENING-PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Quinn called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:01 PM

Mr. Quinn welcomed parents and members of the public and gave a brief introduction of the committee's meeting procedure, noting that there will be time for public comment later in the agenda.

#### II. DISCUSSION ON FIRST ESTIMATE OF CONSTRUCTION COSTS

Mr. Quinn reported that the projected project costs that were presented at the last meeting budget caused the committee some "sticker shock". At this meeting, he planned to spend most of the committee's time on value engineering in order to have a reasonable number to bring to the Town Bodies. The committee's job to present a plan to the Town Bodies which is likely to be approved.

The proposed project is to include air conditioning and a fresh air system. Mr. Quinn informed the committee that during the recent Riverfield project, that committee learned that this is more than an optional comfort measure. There are many research based educational advantages for students and teachers to such an HVAC system.

The committee reviewed addition items in the project proposal, items 1-13 on p1 of the packet.

They also reviewed the latest enrollment projections, updated 11/30/16, which are slightly down across the board from last January's predictions.

Mr. Ackley asked: What is the reason the number 504 was chosen by the boards?

Mr. Morabito and Mr. Quinn provided this explanation.  $504=24$  classrooms/ $21$  students per room. This accommodates 4 classrooms per grade level.

This exceeds the largest projected enrollment of 442 for the 2025-26 school year. Philip Dwyer, BOE chair, reported that they have been advised by 3 demographers to assume a 10% vacancy rate, in other words a target is that a school achieve 90% capacity. The remaining 10% of seats allow for a margin of error for families moving in or out and for certain grade levels being larger or smaller than others.

21 is the recommended average class size. 24 is the maximum number to respect class size guidelines.

Nick Aysseh asked whether the racial imbalance report is taken into account in the enrollment predictions. Mr. Dwyer answered that enrollment predictions for Holland Hill are calculated separately from the district's racial imbalance predictions. If Holland Hill does not build to 504 capacity, addressing racial imbalance would be more difficult.

Mr. Aysseh stated that even considering reactions to the cost projections, he finds it clear that building to 504 is necessary.

Jason Li stated his position that there is an increased cost factor connected to the fact that the school has not been touched since the 70's.

Mr. Quinn and Mr. Morabito clarified that while there have not been structure renovations, there have been ongoing infrastructure upgrades, it is not accurate that the school has not been touched. For example, boilers, roof, and windows have been replaced and/or upgraded in recent years.

Mr. Ackley raised a concern about the presence of PCB's in windows.

Chairman Quinn reports that the project as planned does address this concern.

### III. DISCUSSION & VOTE ON PORTABLE CARD READERS

Mr. Morabito provided cost estimates for adding card readers at the doors of each portable classroom.

AST Security \$4140.00

Yankee Electric \$2225.00

Principal Laura Cretella affirmed that she sees the need for card readers.

Mr. Ackley **moved** to approve adding the card readers. Mr. Aysseh **seconded** the motion which **carried** unanimously.

#### IV. REVIEW COSTS WITH EMPHASIS ON VALUE ENGINEERING/ VOTE IF WARRANTED

KBA Architects provided a list of value engineering suggestions, which the committee considered line by line. Cost estimates were not yet available for some items, but were provided by Mr. Manning whenever possible.

Peter Manning arrived 7:31.

Mr. Michelangelo asked which items are reimbursable by state funds. After some discussion Mr. Ackley made the point that State reimbursables are really irrelevant to this committee's charge.

Christine Messina asked whether there is a chart with dollar values attached.

Mr. Manning was not yet able to provide such a chart, as his firm had just calculated the dollar values immediately prior to his heading to this meeting.

Mr. Manning explained that these line items could be candidates for ad-alternate status.

The committee considered that some items which are currently a part of this budget, such as window security measures and re-creating a second playground exclusively for the school's youngest grades, may be more appropriately considered under the BOE regular budget. It was duly noted that some Fairfield schools effectively operate with a single playground.

Going through suggestions line by line and making all agreed upon cuts, the resulting savings numbers appear to be in the range of \$530k - \$640k.

With this exercise complete, Chairman Quinn asked the committee members what their outlook is toward taking the existing project budget to update the BOS and begin approval process. Consensus is to support the current draft budget, with a 504 capacity and a proposed total project budget of \$20,789,000.

Mr. Aysseh **moves** to consider and act upon presenting the budget to the BOS as it stands in Colliers' full budget project estimate of 11/17/2016. Mr. Ackley **seconded** the motion, which **carried** unanimously.

Discussion then ensued, with Mr. Dwyer stating that he finds the current KBA plans include an additional 10k square feet designed over what is designated in the Ed Spec document, a figure disputed by Chairman Quinn. Mr. Dwyer also stated that the budget as presented includes a greater scope of renovation than included in the Ed Spec, with more extensive site work. He then stated that the Board of Education anticipated that the project would move forward more swiftly, and that the current pace causes a greater escalation, approximately \$800k, due to taking longer.

Mr. Dwyer also noted that previous BOE building projects have cost more per square foot than reflected in the current proposed budget.

Finally, Mr. Dwyer noted that all additional costs beyond what had been anticipated by the BOE will in turn diminish funding for other projects district-wide. Through this factor is not necessarily a consideration for this committee, it should be noted that it will likely impact the BOE's decision process down the line.

Mr. Li responded that in his experience as a member of the community, Holland Hill has, in the past, been given a smaller share of the Town's funding. His position is that Holland Hill is due for appropriate funding at this time.

Mr. Ackley spoke to his experience looking at the budget for possible value engineering vs. the scope of the project, both with respect to the value to students and to the larger Fairfield community. Weighing these options has led to his conviction to go forward with the current proposed budget.

Chairman Quinn **called for a vote** on presenting the budget to the BOS as it stands in Colliers' full budget project estimate of 11/17/2016. Mr. Li **seconded**. All members present voted "yea" and the vote carried unanimously.

#### V. NEXT STEPS

#### VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Doreen Heren, 53 Forest Ave, commented that the Town of Fairfield needs facilities to accommodate our current and future populations. She urged the committee to continue to fight for funding.

Ms. Jessica Gerber, member of BOE, 25 Shady Hill Road, thanked the committee for approving going forward with the plan to build to 504 capacity.

She shared knowledge gained by looking at Stratfield School, which was built to 504. In theory, they have many "empty seats," but all grade levels are not equivalent sizes. Right now, some grade levels there are at or close to capacity with respect to class size guidelines. Ms. Gerber also expressed the high value to the entire town of maintaining strong facilities, particularly in central locations such as this one.

Ms. Pamela Iacono, RTM District 8, thanked the committee for the decision to go forward with the 504 capacity plan, which is critical for Fairfield. She encouraged the committee members to look at project line items as ad-alternates, particularly anything not on the ed-specs, noting that the success of such projects can require a creative approach.

Ms. Iacono noted that the tradition is for ex-officio members to sit at the members table. She encouraged this committee to adopt that practice.

Mr. Ackley thanked the parents and members of the community for attending, and encouraged their support and presence as the committee continues through the approval and funding processes.

Mr. Quinn announced that this committee is on the agenda to update the selectmen at their next meeting, which is being held on 12/7/2016 at 5:00 PM, at Sullivan Independence Hall. He invited and encouraged the public to support the committee with their presence.

Mr. Li also encouraged community support as the process moves forward.

#### 7) DISCUSS 2017 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS/ELECTION

Chuck Warrington distributed a list of possible meeting dates for the 2017 calendar year. Dates and time will be voted upon at the next meeting.

#### 8) ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Ackley **moved** to adjourn , Mr. Li **seconded** the motion which **carried** unanimously.

At 9:11 PM, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Gardiner, Recording Secretary.