

RIVERFIELD SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
April 16, 2013

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Riverfield School Building Committee was held on Tuesday, April 16, 2013 at 7:30pm in the First Floor Conference Room 1, Sullivan Independence Hall.

Attendance

Present Committee Members: Thomas Quinn, Chairman; Christine Messina, Vice Chairman; Lawrence Ratner, Secretary; Harry Ackley (7:39pm); Dorothy Domeika; Dan Graziadei; John Shaffer

Absent Committee Members: Maureen Sawyer; Scott Thompson; Pamela Iacono, BOE Liaison and Nick Mirabile, RTM Liaison

Also Present: Kenneth Boroson and George Katinger, Kenneth Boroson Architects; Lou Finkel, cost estimator for KBA; Peter Manning, Gilbane; Marc Sklenka and Sean Sullivan; Strategic Building Solutions; Judy Ewing, Liaison from the office of the First Selectman; Sal Morabito, BOE Manager of Construction, Security and Safety; and members of the public

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Thomas Quinn at 7:30pm.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Mr. Quinn requested a moment of silence for the victims of the Boston Marathon tragedy.

3. APPROVE MINUTES FROM March 19, 2013

Mr. Quinn confirmed with the committee there were no changes required to the minutes and they were approved as written.

4. REVIEW AND APPROVE ANY OPEN INVOICES

Motion made by Dorothy Domeika:

To pay Gilbane Construction Company in the amount of \$17,543.

Motion seconded by Christine Messina

Motion carried 6:0:0 (Harry Ackley arrived after this vote)

5. FOLLOW UPS FROM MARCH 20, 2013 BOS MEETING

Mr. Quinn reported the BOS requested more information on three topics:

- Where the Ed Specs differed from educational write-ups - There were about 20 items. Mr. Quinn sent the list to the BOE Central Office, with whom he later had a meeting.

- Reconciliation on Scheme 4 financials - Scheme 4 removed the fifth grade wing and replaced it with a two story structure. The original estimate of \$15M escalated to \$20M when a building construction management company was brought on board to better estimate costs.
- A financial bridge to get from Scheme 2B to Scheme 2BVER - \$16.5M to \$15.2M. Most of the saving is in construction costs.

All this information was sent to the Board of Selectmen, who thus far, has not responded. Mr. Quinn expressed frustration from the BOS meeting with an overall feeling the committee was being delayed rather than helped.

6. REVIEW MEETING RESULTS WITH BOE CENTRAL OFFICE

On April 11, 2013 Mr. Quinn and Mr. Boroson met with Central Office and Pam Iacono (representing the BOE) to brainstorm ideas to reduce the cost while meeting the Ed Specs.

Mr. Boroson presented the new architectural drawings and explained how 1125 square feet (SF) was eliminated by combining the science room with the music room. In a previous meeting with the Riverfield principal, Brenda Anziano, it was confirmed both programs do not require a dedicated classroom. 990SF was obtained by moving the Occupation Therapy room and “pinching” room from the conference, custodial and storage rooms.

Mr. Quinn met with Deputy Chief Lyddy and Lieutenant Perez of the Fairfield Police Department regarding school security. Mr. Quinn and Mr. Katinger then did a “walk through” with Lieutenant Perez who made recommendations (for security reasons, some were not shared with the public). As a result of the new gun laws, the vestibule has been enlarged and made impenetrable with the goal of providing the police department the crucial three to five minutes needed to respond to an emergency. The cost of security features (vestibule and doors) is approximately \$200,000 and will be included in any recommended plan.

The stage area in the gym was shortened after Mr. Boroson received a gym seating chart. The net reduction of these changes is 1440SF.

7. DISCUSSION / AGREEMENT TO STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The premise of today’s meeting is how to strategize the committee’s position and advance the project. The committee aims to be on the dockets of the May 1, 2013 BOS and the May 7, 2013 BOF meetings. Mr. Quinn proposed presenting an array of options: at one end the optimum solution at \$16.4M and at the other end, the \$13.2 M (waterfall) solution which has no air conditioning.

Mr. Sklenka, at the request of Mr. Quinn, described the array of options the committee could present to the various boards. New columns include the changes in square footage Mr. Boroson presented and pricing for security and soffits. (The soffits would enclose new ductwork for air handling in the existing

classrooms which don't have finished ceilings.) Mr. Sklenka proposed the BOS could decide which options to advance and asked the committee if there were questions on budget development.

Mr. Ratner was not in favor of the BOS choosing which options to include or eliminate; that the committee should come to a consensus. Ms. Domeika's understanding was it is the building committee's decision to recommend which budget to go forward with and asked Mr. Quinn if the BOS has indicated choosing "a la carte" was something they wanted to do. Mr. Quinn surmised they did not; the BOS, at a previous meeting, would not vote when presented with both the \$15.1M plan and a second plan with options to reduce the cost to \$14.1M.

Ms. Domeika stated she feels a low sense of confidence moving through the governing bodies especially in this aggressive budget season.

Mr. Quinn feels the \$15.1M is the best plan to support, but feels the BOS is looking for the waterfall number, \$13M.

Mr. Graziadei said the building can't be built for \$13M with the existing Ed Specs. Mr. Quinn remarked the BOS wants the BOE to prioritize or reduce the Ed Specs, and that through Ms. Iacono, the BOE has "put some things on the table" to get it down. Mr. Ratner suggested the committee pick the plan and bring it before the BOS, BOF and RTM.

Mr. Shaffer had a problem with how the "cost" of the renovation went from \$11M to \$15M and couldn't support a "half-baked" plan. Mr. Quinn commented the building committee never entertained the \$11M price. Mr. Shaffer and Mr. Quinn discussed "half-baked" verses value-added solutions, including the elimination of air conditioning. Ms. Domeika reiterated the \$11M being a problem and the credibility issue it has presented for the building committee. The notion that the building with full Ed Specs could be built for \$11M has been problematic. It's not clear who determined that price tag but it was pre-RSBC, and never a budget the RSBC thought was reasonable. Ms. Messina also thinks the \$11M number is a problem and commented that Mr. Quinn makes that point every time he stands before the BOS and says that was never the committee's number.

Going forward Ms. Messina thinks we should proceed as Mr. Sklenka suggested. It is a strategy that was successfully used by the Sherman Building Committee. In response to remarks by Selectman Kiley about things that were left out of a project, Ms. Messina recommended going with the full Ed Specs, whatever that cost might be. Ms. Messina also noted members of CO and the BOE offered good cost saving ideas the RSBC could put before the whole BOE Board for approval.

In response to Ms. Domeika's inquiry about the good ideas, Ms. Messina stated one idea was Tom Cullen's suggestion to take out a large percentage of the FF&E budget. Desks, electrical equipment and things available throughout the district could be used at Riverfield instead of bonding new. FF&E items

could be absorbed by the BOE; building a bigger space could not. The other big idea was Mr. Boroson's redesign to tighten up space.

Discussion followed about the \$330,000 reduction to the FF&E budget. It assumed using existing desks, phones, and AV equipment but allowed for new lockers.

Ms. Domeika asked Mr. Sklenka for an itemization of the \$14.3M budget and Mr. Quinn and he offered information as she went over the list:

1. Soffits
2. Security(Does not include \$200M added safety)
3. New saving on square footage
4. Air conditioning
5. All new lockers
6. Expanded gym with the platform
7. Double serving line in the cafeteria
8. Getting rid of the stage
9. Combining music and science rooms (part of 3. above)
10. Eliminated retaining wall
11. Wainscot bath tile
12. New millwork in classrooms
13. New light fixtures and dimmers in classrooms

Ms. Domeika asked Mr. Boroson (and the rest of the committee) for help visualizing the changes. He said the building will look nice. Mr. Quinn added more importantly it will function as it is forecasted to... and with air conditioning and a new ventilation system.

Ms. Domeika asked Mr. Morabito to comment on CO finding the FF&E items. Mr. Morabito explained the district supports 18 schools and the number of classroom sections changes each year. Although not optimal, there is furniture out there in addition to the furniture in the portables; Stratfield School reused furniture. Also, Smartboards were taken out because they don't have sufficient life expectancy for bonding. Mr. Morabito reiterated the BOE can buy furniture later, but not square footage. CO will continue to work with the RSBC to get this project in front of the various boards.

Mr. Ackley spoke about frustration caused by the \$11M number and how no committee was needed if it had been determined the project could be completed for \$11M. The Chairman, Vice Chairman and others have worked hard and come to a consensus. Mr. Ackley supports moving ahead with the \$14.3M plan and letting the RTM and the other bodies who represent the town reduce it if they feel it is out of scale. If the RSBC were to cut and cut...the project might end up with something missing and "our credibility is on the line." He also agrees with the town cutting budgets, but you can only go so far.

Ms. Ewing reminded the RSBC they need to go back to the BOE to follow proper procedure for state reimbursement. She asked Mr. Morabito for clarification. He stated at the point in the process where we file with the State Form ED042 (Request for Review of Final Plans), that form requires the signatures of the BOE Chairperson, RSBC Chairperson and the FPS Superintendent. The BOE will ask for a presentation before signing and the bargaining should be done before going before the BOS. Ms. Ewing advised going to the BOE before the BOS. Mr. Quinn stated the BOE did not receive an expected letter outlining what the BOS wants the BOE to do. There was some discussion on who owes whom what, with Ms. Ewing ending with the next step is to go back to the BOE.

At Mr. Ackley's request, Ms. Morabito stated based on past practice we can expect 20-22% back in reimbursement from the state, about 2.8M... Considering that, Mr. Ackley stated we're almost at \$11M, the real cost to the taxpayer.

Ms. Domeika stated four months ago she suggested going back to the BOE to "get this thing corroborated" and "the First Selectman's office should respond after our Chairman has made a presentation to the BOE, that he understands what the presentation was, what the budget is, and the process by which we got to \$11M should never be repeated." Time has been wasted, and we're losing confidence. This project could go either way and we've got to get our stuff together to make it great.

Ms. Messina thinks we should present what we have at the BOE April 23, 2013 meeting and gear up for the BOS meeting on May 1, 2013, In reply to Mr. Quinn, Ms. Messina proposed the RSBC show where the full project started at \$16M, then how it was reduced to \$15.1M and finally to \$14.3M, the latest plan with the additional security and square footage and the FF&E reductions. (safety increase of \$200M to be added)

Mr. Ratner agreed with Ms. Messina but is concerned about the FF&E reduction, saying maybe it can be an add-alternative; he would not want to rely on contingency for FF&E. Regarding concern about the exposed ceilings, Mr. Katinger and Mr. Boroson explained those ceiling currently exist; they are not tearing them down. The perforated metal pan deck will remain, which is the finished ceiling.

In reply to Mr. Ratner's question, Mr. Morabito talked about the effect of the new gun law on safety in the schools, Section 80 and state provided funding. Mr. Morabito stated the gun bill passed last week but the action date is July 1. There will be a security check off on projects similar to the existing check off for energy conservation. Although a separate grant for school security upgrades has been restarted and we have benefited from it in the past, he expects most of the funding to be provided, based on need, will be to urban municipalities.

Mr. Graziadei was also concerned about the \$11M, but passed on further comment on the issue. He asked for details about the new soffits and the ceiling in the new construction. Mr. Katinger described and Mr. Boroson provided a sketch of the soffit configuration. In the original design, the duct was left

exposed. It was enclosed in the soffit as requested by the BOE at a cost of \$60,000. Mr. Graziadei recommended leaving the duct exposed and transferring the \$60,000 to FF&E. The new space will have finished ceilings but we can't afford them throughout the existing building.

Mr. Ratner stressed we need to agree to refer to the "fifth grade wing" as such and not the "pod." The word pod has caused confusion with some thinking the fifth grade wing is a temporary structure. We have portables and a fifth grade wing, no pod.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

Thomas Braun, Lakeside Drive (and also part owner of an LLC property on the school's entire west boundary) stated he was never notified there was a school addition being planned. There was a tremendous lack of courtesy from the RSBC to plan all this and not get input from the owner of the longest (probably 300'-400') abutting property. He became aware of the project when he researched CBYD markings on the road which turned out not to be related to this renovation. Dr. Braun thinks he should have been notified. He has a lot of questions and it's late in the plan. This may cause delays. He is not against the plan but he and possibly other neighbors have questions and need their concerns addressed. Mr. Quinn stated the RSBC had three neighborhood meetings for which notices were sent out through the school and to neighbors and does not know why Dr. Braun did not receive them. There were 25 neighbors at one meeting, "it's not through lack of courtesy." Dr. Braun disagreed because he was not notified by mail which is usual in zoning and ZBA issues (which this is not). Dr. Braun has no children in the school system. Mr. Quinn will address the following concerns raised by Dr. Braun:

- Runoff – What are the effect to Dr. Braun's property during heavy rains? Mud already runs onto his property.
- Visibility- Will there be any changes from Dr. Braun's property?
- Lighting- Will additional lighting impact Dr. Braun in any manner?
- Landscaping and fencing -Are there plans for landscaping along the western boundary? There was a chain link fence and Dr. Braun put up a stockade fence to block the view of the school. "We might consider having a higher fence along that boundary...or some different plantings."
- Traffic - There are issues on Lakeside Drive at start and dismissal times, traffic is impassable; sometimes it takes 10 minutes to get from Dr. Braun's driveway to Mill Plain Road. Might consider a stop light.
- Drainage- Is any additional surface drainage going to go into the storm sewers that drains to the open space behind the school? Whenever it rains this drain already discharges a lot of mud, silt, and debris. Additional water might impact the open space.

Kristen Tharrington, Walbin Court asked for a summarization of the difference between the \$15.1M and the \$14.3M plans. Mr. Sklenka answered the saving were from reducing the FF&E budget and reducing the overall square footage. Ms. Tharrington, citing knowledge in finance, suggested proposing the full Ed Spec plan, and presenting the best case scenario to the town bodies and letting them make the cuts.

Ms. Ewing advised meeting information is available under "Agendas/Minutes" on the Town website and in the local newspapers. Mr. Quinn added the entire annual schedule of meeting dates is available on the FairfieldCT.org website under "Agendas/Minutes."

Mr. Quinn addressed the committee and asked if there was any other commentary.

Motion made by Christine Messina:

For representatives of the Riverfield School Building Committee to appear before the Fairfield Board of Education (BOE) at the BOE meeting on or about April 23, 2013 to present the current proposed plan, known as Scheme 2BVERR-04162013, seeking their approval of the alternates suggested in connection with that plan.

Motion seconded by Harry Ackley

Discussion: Mr. Ackley believes this is our stance and this scheme should move forward. If they want to cut the budget, let them take things out but keep moving the plan on to the RTM.

Motion carried 7:0:0

10. ADJOURN

Motion made by Lawrence Ratner

To adjourn the meeting

Motion Seconded by John Shaffer

Motion Carried 7:0:0

Mr. Quinn thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting at 8:41pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathleen Grande
Recording Secretary