

Special Joint Meeting
Board of Selectmen
And
Chatfield School Building Committee
Tuesday, August 5, 2008
Norma Drummer Room
7:00 p.m.

Selectmen Present: Ann Marie Drugonis, Roberta King, Yashu Putorti, Robert Koskelowski, John Conroy, Paul Roy, Frank Conroy

Chatfield Committee Members Present: Donald Smith, Trisha Danka, Phyllis Jachimowski, Bruce Baker, Mark Thompson, Gene Coppola, Fred Stanek, Paul Roy, Frank Conroy, Yashu Putorti

Members Absent: Sandra Gesek, Peter Kubik, Jay Hatfield, Ray Catlin, Judy Legeza, Kurt Miller

Antinozzi Associates' Representatives: Paul Antinozzi
Michael Ayles

Board of Education Representatives: Superintendent MaryAnne Mascolo
Richard Belden

Town Counsel – George Temple

Press – Lauren Garrison – “New Haven Register”
Melvin Mason - “Connecticut Post”

Others: Susan Rafferty, Barbara Wilhelmy, Al Yagovane

First Selectman Robert Koskelowski called the joint meeting to order at 7:12 p.m. and led those present in the pledge to the flag.

Mr. Koskelowski asked for an update on the work of the Chatfield School Building Committee.

Mr. Smith responded that the Selectmen had appointed a Building Committee for the purpose of studying the feasibility of adding on an addition to the Chatfield School. The Selectmen had done this due to the planned housing developments scheduled for the Chatfield School area and the potential of increased school population coming from these developments. Since that time, the Committee had met regularly and have called this joint meeting session to update the Selectmen on the work done and to make recommendations for the future.

A land survey of the Chatfield area has been completed. The Inlands, Wetlands Commission Has been approached and has given approval for any proposed addition the present Chatfield School. A geo-technical engineer was hired to survey the land area to test sub-surface areas where the proposed new gymnasium would be constructed. It was found that some stone removal would have to take place in order to construct the newly designed gymnasium.

The Committee hired a demographic consultant to assess and evaluate the present school populations and project future enrollments in line with the proposed building developments currently approved and ready for construction. The study was done in two phases. One projected enrollment growth in just the Chatfield area; the other took under consideration projected enrollment growth for the entire community. Surprisingly, it was found that the projected future enrollment for the Chatfield School would not be as serious a problem as had been anticipated in affecting enrollments at the school.

The town-wide study came in with similar results. There is no significant enrollment increase imminent with proposed developments and those planned for the future.

If the Committee were to pursue its original charge, the planned renovation for only the Chatfield School would involve a total of twenty classrooms, a renovated present gymnasium and cafeteria area, and the construction of a new gymnasium. These planned renovations would not be one hundred percent reimbursable by the State as some of the renovated areas would be construed as regular maintenance and repair activities.

This led the Committee membership to direct the architects to plan for a larger addition that would accommodate the populations of the present Chatfield and LoPresti schools. The architects drew up the new design for a combined school population which would now require a second floor addition to the building and a total of thirty-seven classrooms.

Surprisingly, it was found that the cost to the town for just an addition to the Chatfield School would be approximately ten million dollars as some phases of this renovation work would not be eligible for State reimbursement. The theory of a totally new renovation planned for the inclusion of the school populations of two schools would cost the town approximately eleven million dollars. This is because the entire renovation project could be classified as totally new, thereby, increasing the State's reimbursement costs.

Mr. Smith introduced Architect Paul Antinozzi who reported on the architectural firm's work to date.

Mr. Antinozzi stated that his firm received the charge of the Committee to plan for a renovation and the building of a new gymnasium for the Chatfield School. All the work done on this phase is now referred to as Scheme I and was planned in line with the charge of the Committee. Once the Committee membership became aware of the demographic study report results, the architectural firm was asked to come up with a new design incorporating the populations of two elementary schools. This design is now referred to as Scheme II. Both schemes were planned to have the construction work being done and completed while school was in session. It is also planned that accommodations would be made in the design to be sure that the proper equipment and materials would be in place to utilize the renovated structure as an emergency crisis center if it were necessary to do so due to natural disasters. This new gymnasium could be constructed without any interruption to the ongoing educational programming.

Mr. Antinozzi went on to describe the planned renovation to the cafeteria and present gymnasium areas as well as the work that would be done on the exterior of the building, including a much larger parking area and the accommodation of two drop off points when children were being brought to school in the morning and at dismissal time in the afternoon.

Mr. Antinozzi related that when the focus changed to incorporating the populations of two schools for the building project, plans had to be made to accommodate a potential school enrollment of six

hundred eighty students as compared to the Scheme I plan that only involved three hundred thirty students. As a result, the cafeteria and media center had to be made larger and additional classrooms would have to be constructed. This was accomplished by expanding the core facilities and constructing a second story to the building that would provide the thirty-seven classrooms that would be needed for both schools' populations.

Mr. Antinozzi then explained the cost estimates for the different designs for the building project. In summary, it was found that the plan to incorporate the populations of two schools would cost the town a million dollars more than if an addition were only planned for the expansion of the Chatfield School.

Mr. Smith stated that if Scheme II were accepted by the community, a new school experience would be offered the LoPresti School's population for only ten percent of the total project's cost.

Mr. Baker stated that the Board of Education had unanimously approved of a building project involving the populations of both schools at its regularly scheduled meeting of August 4, 2008.

Mr. Koskelowski stated that in lieu of the increased school population, class size was important regardless of the size of the enrollment of the total school.

Superintendent MaryAnne Mascolo stated that research was not available at this meeting session indicating the benefits or disadvantages of large and small group educational settings. She pointed out the key element in an educational setting is the classroom teacher and Seymour is fortunate to have excellent staffing in both schools. There would be no impairment to the educational programming if a merger were to take place between the two schools.

Mr. Belden interjected that measures taken at the high school during its recent renovation have had an effect on building maintenance costs. Energy saving measures are paying off budgetary wise.

Mr. Smith stated that the Committee membership is now looking for direction from the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Koskelowski stated that there may be some parental concerns with this new plan. However, he is aware that the majority of the LoPresti School population is bused to the school daily. He also felt that the town should maintain the LoPresti School and the Board of Education should consider moving to part of it for maintaining its Central Office staff.

Mr. Koskelowski also inquired if any thought were given to utilizing solar energy in the new building. Some aspects should be used, if possible, for water, heating, and the like.

Mr. Koskelowski advised the Committee to plan the renovation and new building for opening in the year 2011. In the next three years, the town's debt will be lowered substantially and this planning would aid the financial situation of the community.

Mr. Ayles from the architectural firm outlined the timeline devised by the Committee. It is currently on schedule and the Committee membership is hoping for a town-wide referendum scheduled for October, 2008.

Mr. Ayles also inquired if there were any ruling in the town's charter that would prohibit any promotion and selling point of the building project thirty days before the scheduled referendum.

The question was answered by Town Counsel George Temple who stated that to his knowledge, no such ordinance exists.

Mr. Koskelowski stated that he would call for a special meeting involving the Board of Selectmen, the Board of Finance, the Board of Education, and the Building Committee on the evening of August 19, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. in the Norma Drummer Room at Town Hall. He added that he would need exact cost figures from the architects and the Committee membership for presentation to the town's bonding counsel who will be charged with writing up the bonding resolutions. At this meeting, a date for a Town Meeting will be established as Town approval must be procured for this change of direction of the Building Committee.

Mr. Koskelowski asked for Board of Selectmen action to approve the change in the charge of the Building Committee to include the planning of a building design and renovation that would include the populations of the Chatfield and LoPresti schools.

MOTION: (Mr. Putorti, sec., Mr. Roy) to approve the charge of the Chatfield School Building Committee to include and expansion and renovation plan for the Chatfield School that would include the combined school populations of both the LoPresti and Chatfield schools.

So moved.

Affirmative: Mr. Putorti, Mr. Roy, Mrs. Drugonis, Mrs. King, Mr. J. Conroy, Mr. F. Conroy, Mr. Koskelowski

Opposed: None.

Mr. Koskelowski asked for a motion setting the date of a special joint meeting for August 19, 2008.

MOTION: (Mr. Conroy, sec., Mrs. Drugonis) to approve establishing a special meeting for the town's boards for Tuesday evening, August 19, 2008, at 7:00 p.m., in the Norma Drummer Room at Town Hall.

So moved.

Affirmative: Mr. F. Conroy, Mrs. Drugonis, Mrs. King, Mr. Putorti, Mr. Koskelowski, Mr. Roy, Mr. J. Conroy

Opposed: None.

Mr. Koskelowski asked for a motion setting a special meeting of the selectmen on Tuesday evening, August 19, 2008, at 6:45 p.m., in the Norma Drummer Room for a public hearing on proposed Charter revisions.

MOTION: (Mr. J. Conroy, sec., Mr. Putorti) to set a town public hearing meeting for Tuesday evening, August 19, 2008, at 6:45 p.m., in the Norma Drummer Room at Town Hall for discussion and action on proposed Charter revisions.

So moved.

Affirmative: M. J. Conroy, Mr. Putorti, Mrs. Drugonis, Mrs. King, Mr. Koskelowski, Mr. Roy, Mr. F. Conroy.

Opposed: None.

Hearing nothing further:

MOTION: (Mr. Roy, sec., Mrs. Drugonis) to adjourn the meeting.

So moved.

Affirmative: Mr. Roy, Mrs. Drugonis, Mrs. King, Mr. Putorti, Mr. Koskelowski, Mr. J. Conroy, Mr. F. Conroy.

Opposed: None.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Submitted by:

Eugene Coppola