

**TOWN OF EAST HADDAM
MIDDLE SCHOOL CONVERSION COMMITTEE
November 1, 2010
SPECIAL MEETING
Adopted November 22, 2010**

Call to Order

The special meeting of the East Haddam Middle School Conversion Committee was called to order by Mrs. Malavasi on Monday, November 1, 2010 at 6:14 p.m. at the Town Grange.

Present: Mary Jane Malavasi, Craig Mansfield, Jim Ventres (departed 6:55p.m.), Sharon Wheeler, Chuck Smith (arrived 6:20p.m.), Patricia Stricker, Elizabeth Dillon, Melissa Ziobron, Ed Blaschik and Alan Hanks (departed 8:05p.m.).

Others Present: David Stein-Silver/Petrucelli and Associates, Tom DiMauro-Newfield Construction, Chuck Grabowski-Newfield Construction, Cindy Varricchio (departed 7:15 p.m.), Paul Maxwell, Bob Casner, First Selectman Mark Walter (departed 7:15 p.m.), Bryan Perry (departed @7:50 p.m.) and Ruth Ziobron.

Absent: David Nelson.

Continued discussion on option to present as committee's recommendation at Public Forum

Mrs. Varricchio presented bar charts for the mill rate impact of existing and proposed debt service and cost to median home value of \$290,000 for the three chosen options.

Mrs. Malavasi distributed and discussed draft Middle School Conversion Annual Estimated Costs (operating expenses). Mr. Ventres suggested revisiting the Potential Rental Receipts noting the figures appeared low. It was noted that the figures were based on option 1, full scope with value engineering.

Mrs. Stricker stated she had been asked why the committee wasn't considering full demolition of the old structure and building new (option 3). Mrs. Stricker stated of the importance of presenting this option during the public hearing. Mrs. Stricker stated option 4 to demolish the entire building, grade and seed the site was not in the committee's charge and disagreed with presenting that option during the public hearing. Mrs. Dillon stated there was no design supporting option 3 and that it was based on assumptions. Mrs. Dillon and Mrs. Ziobron agreed that option 3 should be presented during the public hearing.

Mrs. Malavasi stressed the importance of the committee deciding tonight if they would be presenting one scenario or all of the options during the public hearing next week.

Mr. Ventres stated based on the committee's initial charge to build a facility/remodel the old middle school to take care of all of the functions of the town and associated groups; Youth and Family Services, Ambulance, Board of Education and to consolidate government by having one centralized place as well as making room for the revitalization project that he was ready to make a motion.

Motion by Mr. Ventres to choose Option 1, Full Scope with Value Engineering (67,000SF Facility, 6,240SF Garage) with total project costs of \$12,821,214 as the committee's primary consideration. Second by Ms. Wheeler.

Mrs. Stricker stated she did not think that the town would support a \$13,000,000 project. Mrs. Stricker stressed the importance of having town facilities which were handicap accessible, respectable and affordable. Mrs. Ziobron stated she did not feel that the BOF would even support that dollar amount. Mr. Mansfield stated that the complete project should be brought forward for the public to see the amount of work the committee had done and that the full project was the committee's charge. Mr. Mansfield stated after the committee received public input at the public hearing, they could further review the other options. Mr. Mansfield stated he agreed that the town would not support a \$13,000,000 project. Mr. Mansfield stated the town should see all of the options. It was noted that at the last public hearing (August 2009), an estimated cost of \$12,500,000 was presented on the project timeline. Mrs. Ziobron stated of the importance of the committee keeping credibility and momentum. Mrs. Ziobron stated she would prefer to come forward with the most economical option and explain that the committee wished they could present something that met all the needs, but that it couldn't be afforded. Mr. Hanks questioned how the committee was to know what could be afforded. Mr. Hanks stated the committee's charge was to move forward to present a project that met all of the town's needs.

Mrs. Malavasi noted the committee had established a goal to bring the figures down to \$8,000,000 but that in reality, that figure was too low. Mrs. Malavasi stated she agreed that the BOF and BOS probably wouldn't approve a \$13,000,000 project or even a \$10,000,000 project. Mrs. Malavasi stated her biggest dilemma was putting forward a project that she felt in her heart was right, or not doing the project at all. Mrs. Malavasi stated she felt that doing the whole project was the best project for the town.

Mr. Ventres stated senior citizens had questioned why the renovations had not already occurred at the old middle school. Mr. Ventres stated it was time to take into consideration grant funding and put the project out to bid for firm figures. Mr. Ventres stated there was no other viable option.

Favor: Ventres, Blaschik, Mansfield
Oppose: Malavasi, Wheeler, Smith, Stricker, Dillon, Ziobron
Abstain: None
Motion failed.

Mrs. Wheeler stated she agreed with Mrs. Ziobron that there was a credibility issue in that the committee's charge is to include everything, but that the town could not afford it. Mrs. Wheeler stated she disagreed with recommending something the town could not afford. Mrs. Malavasi clarified that the committee's charge was to renovate the middle school and that it included phasing and other options. Mrs. Malavasi stated by not including the extra services and agencies; it did not go against the committee's charge. Mr. Blaschik noted the other 4 options did not include any phasing in that they were either a full build or demolish, and that he could not support any of the other 4 options. Mr. Ventres stated the other 4 options did not save any money.

Responsive to a comment by Mr. Stein, Mrs. Ziobron stated the committee had started with an \$8,000,000 figure and that the ambulance association was an additional charge added to the project. Mrs. Ziobron suggested removing items such as partitions etc to reduce costs. Mrs. Ziobron stressed the importance of developing a project that meets the town's needs at an affordable price, perhaps choosing Option 2A and leaving out items which could be put in at a later date. Mr. Stein stated that figure was unattainable, although there was still room for value engineering. Mrs. Malavasi stated the committee needed to work with the figures presented.

Mr. Ventres stated the committee still had not brought the figures forward to the town for their opinions. Mr. Ventres suggested bringing the information to the public.

Mr. Hanks stated the committee had no control of the figures. Mr. Hanks stated if the people didn't want the whole project, then they needed to tell them so.

Mrs. Stricker stated she was not in favor of Option 2B because it separated the town clerk. The vault is not located near the town clerk. Mrs. Malavasi stated locations of office space could be redesigned.

Mr. Mansfield questioned what the negative would be to present all of the options. Mr. Stein replied the committee had spent many years developing and reviewing information that there was a point in which the committee should lean towards one solution which would show decisiveness. Mr. Stein stated the town would look to them to make a final recommendation. Mr. Stein stated it was ok to not have a final decision until after public comment was received during the public hearing, but that then, the committee would need to make a choice. Mr. Stein warned that the committee would possibly be asked their opinion during the public hearing as to what they thought the best solution was. Mr. Stein stated option 1 met the committee's charge and was the best option. Mr. Stein stated all of the other options were for a higher square footage cost.

Bonding costs were reviewed.

Mr. Blaschik questioned Mrs. Varricchio if he was reading the bar chart correctly that the peak was in 2014 and that it would be \$225 for the average tax payer to which she replied affirmatively.

Mr. Perry questioned what the costs would be if the Board of Education had decided to stay where they were. Mrs. Ziobron replied that would be any option but option 1. Mrs. Malavasi voiced concern because the groups, who were planned to be included in the Ray portion, were not showing any interest and were not begging us to do so, although it was to the benefit of the town to have all services located together.

It was the consensus of the committee to review all of the proposed options during the public hearing and then to present to the Board of Finance for direction.

Review of presentation for Public Hearing

Committee members reviewed the public hearing presentation.

Review of info to be handed out at voting polls on November 2nd.

Public Comment

Committee members reviewed and edited the information which would be handed out at the voting polls.

Motion by Mrs. Stricker to approve the informational document as corrected and edited. Second by Mrs. Dillon and unanimously passed.

Next Meeting Date – Tuesday, November 9, 2010 6:30 PM-Annex

The next special meeting is Tuesday, November 9, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. at the town Annex.

Adjournment

Motion by Mrs. Dillon to adjourn at 8:50 p.m. Second by Mrs. Stricker and unanimously passed.

Respectfully Submitted;

E. Ruth Ziobron
Recording Secretary