

Board of Selectmen
Grange Hall
April 26, 2010
Special Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order

The special meeting of the East Haddam Middle School Conversion Committee, Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen was called to order by Chairman of the Middle School Conversion Committee Mary Jane Malavasi on Monday, April 26, 2010 at 7:03 at the Grange Hall.

In attendance:

Present: Mary Jane Malavasi-MSCC, Melissa Ziobron-MSCC, Jim Ventres-MSCC, Patricia Stricker-MSCC, Sharon Wheeler-MSCC, Ed Blaschik-MSCC, Elizabeth Dillon-MSCC, Chuck Smith-MSCC, Alan Hanks-MSCC, David Nelson-MSCC, Craig Mansfield-MSCC, Brian Perry-BOE, Paul Maxwell-BOF, Bruce Dutch-BOF, Susan Link – BOF, Ed Schwenzfeier-BOF, First Selectman Mark Walter, Selectman Emmett Lyman and Selectman Pete Govert.

Others Present: David Stein- Silver and Petruceli, Kurt Prochorena- BSC Group, Ruth Ziobron-Recording Secretary, Wyley Peckham, Tiffany Quinn-Parks and Recreation, Laurie Alt- Voters of Registrars, Toni McCabe-Family Youth and Services and approximately 8 citizens.

2. Joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and Middle School Conversion Committee:

A. General Project Discussion:

Mrs. Malavasi explained the proposed project would encompass the Ray and Hale portions of the old middle school; incorporating the current core town hall office services, Resident State Trooper, EMS, Youth and Family Services, Ambulance Association, Park and Recreation, Board of Education, Chatham Health District, Visiting Nurse and Food Bank.

Mr. Stein and Mr. Prochorena gave a brief overview of the project. Proposed building plans and site maps were reviewed. Silver and Petruceli is 60% complete with the bid documents. Inside renovations preserve as much of the existing building as possible. Mr. Stein stated the biggest type of renovation to the project would be to the mechanical/electrical/plumbing systems. Plan documents indicate that the renovations to the Ray portion would include window and roof replacement. Mr. Stein stated most of the flooring, doors and existing rooms would not be replaced. Mrs. Malavasi reiterated the committee had tried to keep the building renovations minimal.

Mr. Stein reviewed bidding options. The base bid includes the entire project. An alternate bid would be just to renovate the Hale portion of the building, leaving the Ray portion (the external portion) untouched, for possible future renovations. Another option looks at the garage portion at the rear of the parcel and possible access road alterations as a bid alternate.

Required handicap accessibility improvements were included in the plan documents due to the change in use from an educational to business facility. Mr. Stein stated there was financial relief through the international existing building code for handicap accessibility improvements. Mr. Stein has consulted with the local building official, 3rd party code consultant and the state building official to analyze the building under a different aspect of the code; which would contribute to major cost savings on the overall project.

Mr. Stein reviewed a prepared Energy Model or Life Cycle Cost Analysis of the project. This document is filed at the Selectmen's Office. It compares baseline design, variable refrigerant volume design and geothermal designs. The geothermal system is the least dependent on electric and fossil fuels. Mr. Stein explained the geothermal system installation required drilling of approximately 25 wells. These wells are similar to a home well only nothing is being extracted from the earth. There would be closed loop tubes which would be put into the well for cooling and heating. Geothermal systems require an upfront cost to drill the wells. The analysis performed demonstrated a payback for the geothermal system within 8 – 10 years. Operating costs are significantly lower, due to less demand on fossil fuels. Heat pump technology would be used with the geothermal system. Mr. Stein noted there were potential grant opportunities available for the geothermal system.

Mr. Stein voiced concern with putting rooftop units on the building for the baseline or variable refrigerant design, explaining architecturally it would be difficult to be consistent with the historic aesthetics of the building. The proposed geothermal unit would require smaller units. Mr. Ventres noted the larger rooftop units may require structural modifications to the roof at an additional cost. Mr. Smith noted conventional rooftop units would require big metal duct work at a larger cost than a geothermal system which requires a small pipe. Mr. Stein explained the geothermal system would involve more actual units (smaller), but that they would modulate temperature at the point source, resulting in operating expense savings.

Mr. Blaschik stated the square footage costs for heating and cooling for the baseline design was approximately \$2.00, the variable refrigerant volume design was approximately \$1.91 and the geothermal system was approximately \$1.33.

Mr. Ventres reviewed a document titled "East Haddam Middle School Re-Use Project". This document is filed at the Selectmen's Office. Mrs. Stricker questioned if this document included any potential repairs needed at the current Town Hall to which Mr. Ventres replied no. Plowing and lawn mowing are also not included. Mr. Ventres explained these were services which were currently being performed anyway.

B. Request for Additional funding for Geothermal Design:

Mrs. Malavasi explained the geothermal design option was not included in the original bid specifications for architectural services. The geothermal design option would require an additional \$12,500. Mr. Stein explained additional funding was necessary for mechanical, electrical, plumbing and site work additions to the design. Mr. Mansfield noted the citizens in attendance of the MSCC Public Meeting had strongly requested “green options” with the renovations.

First Selectman Walter questioned if funds had been put aside for testing. Mrs. Malavasi replied \$20,000 and that \$14,000 of it had been spent on items such as Energy Modeling.

Responsive to a question by Mrs. Link, Mrs. Malavasi replied the \$12,500 was needed now for design services for the bid packages. The project will go out to bid prior to requesting funding from the town, giving dollar figures for the base bids and alternates. Mrs. Malavasi explained in order to have the geothermal option in the bid specifications, the design work needed to be complete before the project went out to bid.

First Selectman Walter questioned if industry geothermal standards could be used in the bid package instead of paying an additional \$12,500; and then modifying the plans after the bids. Mr. Stein replied a decision needed to be made now. Engineering is necessary for all three options. Mr. Stein explained currently the plan documents excluded the mechanical, heating and cooling systems and they were waiting for a decision.

Responsive to a question by Mr. Maxwell, Mr. Stein replied the \$12,500 was for architectural fees. Mr. Maxwell questioned how much was necessary in the original bid to design a basic mechanical system with ductwork and roof top units. Mr. Stein replied it was already in the bid. Mr. Stein reviewed fees for the phase II portion of the project. These documents are filed at the Selectmen’s Office. Mrs. Ziobron offered these documents for review. Mrs. Ziobron replied Phase II had been 75% complete and reviewed allocations. The Treasurer’s Report is filed at the Finance Director’s Office.

3. Public Comment

Responsive to a question by an audience member, Mr. Smith replied the heating in the proposed garage renovations would be propane fired unit heaters because not as much heat would be needed. Heating and cooling in the garage would be limited.

Ms. Wheeler stated there were grant and rebate funding available for the geothermal system. Mr. Blaschik reviewed current grant and rebate funding which the Goodspeed actor housing was receiving for their geothermal system. Mr. Blaschik stated Connecticut Light and Power had a program which offered rebates after the geothermal system was built. There was also funding available from Connecticut Clean Energy. Ms. Wheeler stated the Federal Government also offered qualified energy conservation bonds which subsidize 75% of the interest rate. It was reiterated that all rebates, bonds, etc were not available until after the geothermal system was installed.

First Selectman Walter questioned what portion of the project total the Ray portion represented to which Mr. Stein replied approximately 40%. Mr. Stein stated losing the Ray portion would require considerable funds to rebuild what had been taken down and it wouldn't be as simple as taking the Ray portion down and building one façade. Site improvements and rebuilding a portion of the Ray Building would still be necessary because the Ray Building houses the elevator, mechanical and electrical services.

Responsive to comments by Mr. Maxwell, Mr. Ventres reviewed early committee deliberations regarding the decision to have three different bidding options. Mr. Ventres stated the committee had reviewed costs for demolition of brick buildings (Ray portion) and had determined that demolition, replacement of the elevators, mechanical and electrical services was more costly than keeping the Ray portion. Mr. Ventres added it also would be confusing to include this option in the bid packages.

Mr. Maxwell stated he would like bids to eliminate the Ray portion and not estimates. Mr. Stein explained adding the elimination of the Ray portion to the bid documents would make the project design and bidding too complex. Mrs. Malavasi stated the elimination of the Ray portion had been investigated by the MSCC and based on the architect's recommendation, the committee did not choose it.

First Selectman Walter voiced concern with leaking water in the building and potential mold issues. Mr. Stein replied the biggest improvement would be a mechanical electrical system/HVAC system which would keep the temperature constant throughout the year. Mr. Stein stated surface mold would be remediated. Mr. Stein stated environmental testing has indicated surface mold was not inside the walls or masonry. Air quality testing has not represented elevated levels of mold.

Selectman Govert questioned if the group agreed with the document handed out by Mr. Ventres titled "East Haddam Middle School Re-Use Project" (operating cost comparison figures). Mrs. Ziobron stated she disagreed with the need for part time and full time cleaning/custodial. The committee had toured other town hall projects, Mrs. Ziobron stated the mechanical systems and custodial had been an issue with regards to importance during these tours. Mrs. Malavasi stated the committee didn't have authority as to how many custodial/cleaning staff were hired, but that it should be identified as an operating cost. Mr. Hanks reiterated the committee presented worse case scenarios. Selectman Govert stated of the importance of the MSCC, BOS and BOF all being in agreement with the operating cost comparison figures.

Mrs. Malavasi stated town rental offset was not included in the operating cost comparison figures. Mrs. Ziobron questioned who would be negotiating the potential revenue from Family Youth and Services, Ambulance Association and Chatham Health; as well as the development of the current office site. These potential figures could substantially offset project costs. Mrs. Ziobron stated these figures should also be presented, but that this was not the MSCC charge.

Mr. Mansfield stated the MSCC was in agreement with the operating cost comparison figures.

Mr. Maxwell stated currently almost 50% of the current operating expenses were the recently inflated town expenses in maintaining the old middle school. Mr. Maxwell disagreed using the existing expenses of the old middle school to justify spending more money on the middle school. Mr. Maxwell stated actual operating expenses, including the BOE, were currently \$90,000 a year and the proposed operating expenses were three times that much. Mr. Maxwell clarified that included in the existing expenses; there was \$25,000 electric for the old middle school, \$44,000 for heating fuel, \$21,000 for maintenance and \$3,000 for custodial services which was 50% of all the existing operating expenses on the proposed project. Mr. Maxwell stated if this was included in the total figure it would be almost triple of what the town's current operating expenses were, exclusive of the proposed project. Mr. Maxwell stated he was not in agreement with the proposed operating expenses.

Mrs. Malavasi stated until the building was no longer there, it was an expense which the town currently had. Mrs. Malavasi stated if dollar amounts were to be taken out of the current operating expenses, then they should also be taken out of the proposed operating expenses.

Mrs. Ziobron stated once the BOE moved over to the space there would be a minimal reimbursable amount from the state for the project.

Motion by Mr. Maxwell to appropriate \$12,500 out of the contingency fund for additional fees for the design of a geothermal system. Second by Mrs. Link and unanimously passed.

More discussions will be necessary among the MSCC, BOS and BOF regarding operating expenses prior to public hearing.

Mr. Blaschik stated mothballing the building was not the MSCC's charge. Mr. Blaschik added it was the committee's responsibility to provide the town with a handicap accessible facility as well as safe and healthy work environment to town employees. Mr. Maxwell stated the town could not afford this project, but that was not his decision, but the town voter's decision. Mr. Maxwell stated it was the BOF's responsibility to provide the voters with all the information they needed to make the decision. This was the consensus of everyone in attendance.

Mrs. Ziobron reviewed public relations efforts. The web site is ehmscc.com.

It is estimated that the project will go to referendum September or October.

Mrs. Link questioned if there had been a value given to potential rental of current town space. Mrs. Ziobron replied a revitalization commission had been appointed. This information was located on the easthaddam.net website. There may be more definitive

information from the revitalization commission prior to the September/October referendum date.

Public Comment (continued)

A citizen questioned if there was agreement that the old middle school was a historic building. She stated many people felt there was value to the building and it was upsetting that it may potentially be taken down. Ms. Wheeler stated the building was not technically listed but that she had met with a representative of the Connecticut Historical Registry whom had stated both portions would qualify for the registry. Currently an application was being formulated for processing. This would make more grant funding available. Mrs. Malavasi stated the MSCC was very concerned with the historic value of the building.

Motion by Mr. Maxwell at 8:30 to adjourn. Second by Mrs. Link and unanimously passed.

Motion by First Selectman Walter at 8:31 to adjourn. Second by Selectman Govert and unanimously passed.

Invoices

Mrs. Ziobron stated there was a discrepancy with invoice #09-983. Mrs. Ziobron stated it appeared that there were two billings for the same service. Mrs. Ziobron will meet with Linda at the Selectman's office to write a letter to be mailed to Silver/Petrucelli and Associates. Invoice #10-259 was reviewed.

Motion by Mr. Mansfield to pay invoice #10-259 in the amount of \$5,100. Second by Mr. Nelson and unanimously passed.

Referencing the unit price for Bond Print FR Hard Copy of 22 cents, Mr. Perry commented this figure was high and questioned if a better price could be found. Mr. Stein replied they had received quality service and were interlinked with the company in order to get prints through their computer system. Mr. Stein stated they could find another company but would prefer not to. Mr. Stein stated they restricted the amount of copies made and once the project went out to bid the contractors (bidders) would be purchasing the documents.

Mrs. Ziobron stated there needed to be a physical sign off in Linda's office on each invoice that got paid.

Construction Manager RFQ

First Selectman Walter stated the documentation would be ready in one week. Linda will need to advertise the Construction Manager RFQ in the newspaper (DAS website, local newspaper and Town's website).

First Selectman Walter agreed to review the status of the Demolition documentation.

Mr. Stein recommended hiring a CM as soon as possible.

Responsive to a question by Mrs. Ziobron, Mr. Stein replied some construction managers would take the project at risk and then the fees would be included in the referendum dollar amount. Mr. Stein stated some construction managers request funding before referendum.

Mrs. Ziobron questioned if the committee would have access to all project documentation to which Mr. Stein replied affirmatively.

Adjournment

Motion by Mrs. Stricker to adjourn at 8:55. Second by Mr. Mansfield and unanimously passed.

Respectfully Submitted;

E. Ruth Ziobron
Recording Secretary