

East Lyme Board of Education
East Lyme Elementary Schools Design Steering Committee Meeting
August 18, 2016
5:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Members Present: Dr. Tim Hagen, Mr. Jeffrey Newton, Eric Bauman, Linda Johansen, Ray O'Connor, Jeffrey Provost, Marc Salerno, Dr. John Whritner

Others Present: Barbara Senges (BOE Member), Al Jacunski from Jacunski Humes Architects, LLC

Members Absent: Linda Anania, John Arnold, Candice Carlson, Melissa DeLoreto, Gil Gallant, First Selectman Mark Nickerson, John Rhodes, Maria Whalen

The meeting began at 5:00 p.m.

Update on Elementary Schools Design Project

Superintendent Jeffrey Newton updated the Elementary Schools Design Committee that all elementary building plans have been put on hold due to the high estimated cost to the Town and taxpayers, the limit of reimbursement dollars expected from the State of Connecticut, new State requirements to file for reimbursement before June 30th, and the influx of newly enrolled kindergarten students for the 2016-2017 school year. The current 2016-2017 enrollment for Flanders School is 362, Lillie B. Haynes School is 296, and Niantic Center School is 158. If we redistrict and close Niantic Center School, the remaining two schools can have equitable student population and smaller class sizes. Mr. Newton distributed the Initial Conditions Report and Feasibility for East Lyme dated July 2016 and a copy of Dr. Timothy Hagen's memo sent to the members of the Board of Education on August 17, 2016 outlining the recent history of the elementary school projects, his thoughts on the path forward, and the urgency to bring the best plan forward that will be supported by the Board of Selectman and Board of Finance.

Dr. Hagen reported that at their next meeting on August 22, 2016, the Board of Education will discuss rescinding their motion of March 28, 2016 to renovate Lillie B. Haynes School for a total conceptual cost estimate of \$45,060,609 and refurbishment of Flanders School not to exceed \$1.5 million dollars. Dr. Hagen suggested bringing a new proposal to the Town between \$20 to \$25 million that both the Board of Selectman and Board of Finance can agree upon and that will be a reasonable increase for the tax payer. Dr. Hagen reported that John Rhodes was unable to attend the Elementary Schools Design Steering Meeting but that he emailed his thoughts to committee regarding his endorsement for a two school plan.

Discussion:

Eric Bauman: If the Board of Education rescinds their motion of March 28, 2016, the two questions that need to be decided upon are (1) two versus three elementary schools and (2) if two schools is decided upon, which two will remain open. The Board has all the information needed to make its decision without having to start the process over.

Barbara Senges: If the two school option is adopted, both schools need to be equitable in student enrollment. If the Board of Education decides to use Niantic Center School for other programs, these programs, and the associated renovation costs to house them, must be included in their discussion and final proposal.

Dr. John Whritner: A decision on a new plan should be made soon with the Board of Finance and Board of Selectman in agreement with the cost estimate. The Board of Education has been given the responsibility for student's education and the Elementary Schools Design Committee should

make a recommendation to the Board of Education to vote on and to bring forward to the Board of Selectman, Board of Finance, and the community.

Jeff Provost: There is still a need in the community for three elementary schools and the Board of Education should not give up a building if we may need additional space at a later date if enrollment should increase.

Linda Johansen: Suggested having a couple of different referendums to ask the tax payers what they would prefer before the Board of Education makes their decision. The Board of Education needs to be concise and specific about the operating expense of three schools. The community needs to be informed of the educational ramifications of maintaining three schools, not just the brick and mortar ramifications.

Eric Bauman: If additional referendums are held, we need to educate the community on the renovation and operational costs of two schools versus three schools beforehand. Eric noted that the Town will not be able to sustain a large increase for 2017-2018 Board of Education budget. If the Board of Education's decision is to maintain three elementary schools, then educational programs will need to be cut to fund the operational costs of three buildings.

Mark Salerno: It costs the town \$10,000 per referendum. Ultimately, it is the Board of Education's decision to make because they currently have all the facts to base their decision on.

Dr. Hagen: The community needs to be informed on the cost of redistricting, refurbishing, and the operating costs of three schools versus two schools. The Board of Education needs to bring the best plan to the Board of Selectman and Board of Finance before a decision is made.

Al Jacunski: Additional rooms could be added to Flanders School to house the equitable disbursement of students at an estimated cost of \$1.5 million. Some refurbishment money may be reimbursed by the State.

Next Steps

Jeff Newton will work with Tim Hagen to put together a presentation for the committee to review and for their input that includes the following:

- The criteria used to determine two schools versus three schools
- Two schools of equal size will enable small class sizes
- Too expensive to maintain three buildings
- Refurbishment is needed for the improvement of air quality
- Why the selection of Lillie B. Haynes and Flanders School for the two school option.
- What will be done to make both schools equitable
- Bring forward a cost estimate that is appropriate for the Town to work with.

Jeff Newton will talk to First Selectman Mark Nickerson regarding their plans for possible relocation of Park & Recreation fields behind Lillie B. Haynes School.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. Timothy Hagen
Timothy Hagen, Ph.D.
Steering Committee Chair

Mr. Jeffrey Newton
Mr. Jeffrey R. Newton
Superintendent of Schools

Reinhart, Leigh

From: John Rhodes [jrhodes777@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, August 18, 2016 11:47 AM
To: Reinhart, Leigh
Cc: Bauman, Eric; Carini, Jill; Carlson, Candice; Derry, William; Hagen, Timothy; Kleinhans, John; Littlefield, Albert; Nickerson, Marlene; Senges, Barbara; Shelburn, Jaime; Al Jacunski (wajacunski@jharchitects.net); Anania, Linda; Candice Carlson (candice.carlson@att.net); DeLoreto, Melissa; Eric Bauman; Gallant, Gil; Johansen, Linda; John Arnold; John Whritner; Marc Salerno; Mark Nickerson; Newton, Jeffrey; Provost, Jeff; Raymond O'Connor; Sheldon "Ted" Hunt; Tim Hagen; Whalen, Maria; Drowne, Amy E.
Subject: Re: Thoughts from the Board of Education Chair re: the Elementary Schools Building Project

I will not be available this afternoon for this meeting. After giving all of this a lot of thought I completely agree with we need two schools that address the health (air quality), safety, ADA and technology deficits. I also recognize that the cost and the need for timeliness is an issue. So...if I were to rank the condition of each elementary school building and relative cost to achieve these goals it would be as follows:

1. Lillie B Haynes - best condition overall and lowest square foot cost to achieve upgrade goals,
2. Center School - second best overall condition and second least expensive to achieve upgrade goals due to available window opening and roof deck height for HVAC ductwork, and
3. Flanders School - worst condition and most expensive to achieve goals. Due to the existing low building roof height it will be very expensive to retrofit ventilation and due to the lack of existing window openings this building will offer the least amount of natural light.

I had voted for the LBH and Flanders option before I saw the condition of Flanders School. As a taxpayer I was embarrassed by its condition. The staff in that building have performed a heroic job keeping it going and achieving educational goals! Any money spent on that building will be a waste of taxpayer dollars since it ultimately needs to be demolished.

At a minimum I request an estimate be completed to bring each of the three elementary schools to equal health (air quality), safety, ADA and technology levels.

Thank you for your consideration,
John Rhodes

On Wed, Aug 17, 2016 at 3:48 PM, Reinhart, Leigh <Leigh.Reinhart@eastlymeschools.org> wrote:

Hello,

Attached is a memo from Dr. Timothy Hagen, Board of Education Chair, regarding his thoughts relating to moving forward with the elementary schools building project. We will discuss the attached memo at the Elementary Schools Design Steering Committee Meeting on August 18th and the Board of Education Meeting on August 22nd.

Leigh Reinhart

Executive Secretary to the Assistant Superintendent

East Lyme Public Schools

P.O. Box 220

165 Boston Post Rd.

East Lyme, CT 06333

860-739-3966 Ext. 5601

860-739-1215 (fax)