Approved Meeting Minutes

Middle School Building Committee Meeting

January 27, 2014 – 8:15 a.m.
BOE Conference Room, 3rd Floor Annex Building
5 Linsley Street, North Haven, CT

Committee Members in Attendance:

Goldie Adele, Michael Brandt, , Miriam Brody , Lou Coppola, Sr., Gary Johns (committee chairman), David Mikos, Walter Nester, Jr., Joseph Porto, Michelle Spader (committee secretary), Dyann Vissicchio (committee vice-chair)

Absent: Bruce Morris

Others in Attendance:

Jeffrey Donofrio, Phil Diana, Edward Swinkoski, Diversified Technology Consultants (DTC); Shay Atluru, Rick Morse, Perkins Eastman; Joe Costa, Phil Piazza, and Kristine Carling

Meeting called to order at 8:16 am by chairman, Gary Johns.

Motion to approve the minutes of January 13, 2014 meeting: Moved by Lou Coppola and seconded by Goldie Adele.

The purpose of today's meeting is for the committee to discuss the purpose of the town meeting tomorrow, Tuesday, January 28, 2014 at 7 pm in the middle school auditorium as well as well as discuss what is coming up in the future.

There are 3 resolutions on the agenda for the town meeting tomorrow night. Attorney Donforio discussed the resolutions with the committee. Donofrio explained that the sole charge of this committee was to review the 4 options presented in the Feasibility Report prepared by DTC and Perkins Eastman and come up with a recommendation to be presented to the residents at a town meeting. Therefore, we have discharged that responsibility.

One of the resolutions is to authorize the North Haven Board of Education to submit a grant application to the State Department of Education for the hybrid option. If that resolution passes, we move on to resolution number two which appoints a building committee for the project, because until that first resolution is approved by the town's legislative body, aka the town meeting, the project does not even exist.

The last resolution authorizes the building committee to procure an architect. The grant application is due no later than June 30, 2014 in order to get into this bonding cycle. A significant part of the grant

application is schematic design, outline specifications, and a cost estimate. Whatever dollar amount is in the grant application is the authorized dollar amount for the project.

The way that the cost estimate is prepared has gotten more complicated. A month ago the state announced that cost estimates submitted with grant applications have to be prepared in accordance with ASTM E155709 – an elaborate standard of cost estimating in that it identifies practically every building component that there is and requires the cost estimator to assign a dollar value to it. So instead of listing mechanical, electrical, roof, and masonry – the costs need to be broken down further, which will require more time to prepare. It is concerning since we are on a tight timeline.

If the resolutions pass, the next step will be to procure the architect. That gets done according to a statute. If passed, the committee will reconvene on Thursday, January 30, 2014 to authorize the town to go ahead and publish the RFQ (Request for Qualifications). The RFQ goes out (there is approx. a two week time span), and the committee will receive Statements of Qualifications from firms interested in the project. The Building Committee will meet to review those Statements of Qualification, decide which firms meet the criteria, and are qualified to receive an RFP (Request for Proposals). The RFP, along with a contract, (so we can expedite the process) will then be sent to the firms the committee deems qualified. This way, they can see the contract up front and determine if they are ok going forward with the terms, since there will be no negotiation or haggling over the contract and there is a stipulation that says the firm selected must sign the contract within two days. If they don't agree to the terms in the contract, they can choose not to submit the RFP. When the RFP's are returned to us, the committee will reconvene to develop a short list (no more than four are allowed, per statute) of firms to interview. After the firms are interviewed, a decision is made.

Gary Johns wanted to make it a point to clarify that there IS a vote tomorrow night. The vote is on the direction of the project and not the money to fund the project. There had been some miscommunication on that.

Aside from the referendum we will need an appropriation to pay the architect for this pre-referendum service. Another town meeting will be called, if necessary, to make this appropriation to pay the architect for pre-referendum services. The real commitment to spend the money doesn't happen until after the architect does their pre-referendum services and we submit the grant application. The grant application is due June 30 and the referendum will more than likely be in June or July. Usually they occur around the same time.

Project approval from the state will probably not come until 2015, according to Donofrio. Phil Diana asked if the architect will be doing the mechanical part of the schematics as well. Donofrio said 'yes' and explained that the RFP is set up for pre-referendum services as well as design services for the project (which consists of schematic design, design development, construction documents) a bidding phase and a contract administration phase during the construction. We will receive 2 sets of envelopes from the firms we submit their RFP's to us – one with their proposal and one that has their fee proposal. The fee proposal form will require the respondent architectural firms to break out their fee (pre-referendum, schematic design, design development, bidding, etc.) so you can see what number goes

into each line item. Diana wanted to clarify further that this is not the architect that we are using just for the pre-referendum services, but as the firm chosen for the entire project, should it be approved. Donofrio confirmed that and stated it doesn't make a lot of sense to hire an architect to do only pre-referendum work because then another firm would be stuck using that first firms cost figures.

Spader wanted to make sure she was understanding next steps correctly. It is her understanding that we hire one architectural firm for the entire project, with the understanding that if the project does not pass at referendum the only portion of the work they would be doing was for the pre-referendum services. Donofrio stated that was correct. He added that this is stated in the RFQ, RFP, and the contract they are presented with.

Spader once again wanted Donofrio to stress that no appropriation was being approved at the town meeting on Tuesday night and that the appropriation would not occur until the referendum. Donofrio explained that there is no cost estimate yet, therefore there cannot be an appropriation. Donofrio also mentioned that the vote for appropriation does not necessarily have to be done as a referendum – whether we have a town meeting in an auditorium or by a machine vote – it is up to the town. He had not previously mentioned this to the town committee or town hall. He did mention that the vote for the high school was done at referendum and on a $75 million project you would want to be able to give the greatest number of people the opportunity to be heard, and a machine vote was the way to do that.

Joe Porto asked how the vote is taken at the town meeting. Donofrio explained it can be a voice vote, a hand vote, or you can have people stand to be counted. The moderator decides how the voting will be done.

Mike Brandt asked who will decide whether the appropriation gets voted on at a future town meeting or at referendum. Donofrio explained that the Board of Selectman will warn the town meeting for the appropriation so they can either, on their own, send it to machine vote or if they don't send it to machine vote, there is a statutory procedure for a petition to send it to referendum, but he is unsure what town hall has planned. They have a couple months to think about it.

Johns reiterated that as of tomorrow, Tuesday January 28, 2014 the committee no longer exists, since we have successfully completed our charge (to bring an option to the town). The new committee, (which will include the same members) will get reorganized and voted on Tuesday night. If the resolutions pass it will necessitate the committee coming together again (on Thursday, January 30, 2014) for purposes of electing officers and continuation of business.

The committee then reviewed the slides in preparation for Tuesday's town meeting. Cost estimates were added to the slides for each option.

There was a discussion regarding the school security report we reference in the slides. Shay Atluru explains that there was a school security commission that was formed in response to the tragedy at Sandy Hook. It was a committee comprised of educators, legislators, professionals, security consultants, and technology consultants that drafted a report, which will be enforced by the Department of Construction Services as the roadmap for school building design in regard to security. Donofrio added

that in the last legislative session, Public Act 13-3 received a lot of publicity nationwide because it contained Connecticut's new gun laws, and there was a requirement in it that this school safety infrastructure council that Atluru referenced stated that by January 1, 2014 standards for school security be incorporated into all school construction projects receiving grants. The standard were published at the end of 2013, and are very comprehensive. They are requiring grant applications starting July 1, 2014 forward to meet these standards. The budget for the hybrid option does include money for security in anticipation that these standards were coming out. So despite the fact that we are not required, since our grant application will be submitted prior to that date, the professionals advised us that we would want to go ahead and include this and the RFQ and RFP were drafted with these standards included. Our project will comply with the new construction security standards that are effective July 1, 2014.

Spader wanted clarification about the fields because the slide featuring the aerial view of the hybrid mentions fields, yet the committee had been talking about gaining one field. Rick Morse said it would depend upon the type of field(s) that was put there. For example, 2 soccer fields (practice fields?) would fit in that space. The Ed Spec only requires students have access to a field. It does not specify what type or how many fields are required.

Joseph Porto noted the tight timeline for the return of the RFP's and the interviews of the selected firms (4 or less). RFP's are due back on February 25 and interviews are slated to occur on February 26 and 27 (if necessary), with selection of a firm also on February 27. The interviews themselves normally last about 45 minutes to an hour each.

If there were additional interviews on February 27, the committee could go into executive session to complete scoring and make a decision.

The goal is to give the architect we hire as much time to do their work as possible. So shortening the procurement process, gives them more time to do their work. Donofrio stated to get submission in by June 30 deadline we have to get an architect hired next month. He also stressed that the committee is going to have to be prepared to meet frequently in order to make decisions on schematic designs in a timely fashion. Repeatedly having the architect make changes to designs will slow down the process, as our time frame is very tight.

Joe Costa asked when the referendum date will be determined. Donofrio said that it should be decided in late April, as the Board of Selectman will have to warn the town meeting and they meet the first Thursday of the month.

The committee discussed setup of the middle school auditorium and then played the rough cut of the video showcasing the middle school conditions that will be inserted into the slide presentation at the town meeting. It is a 6 minute video that Justin Falcon, a media specialist at the high school put together with his students.

Donofrio also stressed that in future presentations to the residents we must stress that the mechanical, electrical, plumbing (MEP), are past their useful life and the fire protection system is basically non-

existent (most of the building doesn't even have sprinklers). A year from now when bids are coming in they are going to see a significant amount of money is going to need to be spent on things that we can't capture on the video – things found in the ceiling, and walls as well. It needs to be made clear that there is no air conditioning in any of the rooms. Page 19 of the feasibility report should be copied and circulated for people to see what the deficiencies in the current building really are. The video couldn't really portray much other than the cosmetic needs. Phil Diana said he will provide us with details, from a code perspective, what we are lacking that will cost the lion's share of our funding.

Spader had two additional questions for Attorney Donofrio. The first was if the resolutions fail, what is our next step? Donofrio stated that if the very first resolution fails, we do not even get to vote on resolutions two and three. The town would then have to decide next steps and probably try to figure out why it failed. Do the people of the town not think a new middle school is necessary? Do people not like the hybrid option?

The second question she posed was if there is failure to get the project passed at the referendum, what happens? Donofrio said "it's back to the drawing board". If you can't get the appropriation the project is dead in the water and the town would have to make a determination if it wants to come back with a project with a reduced scope. The architect would need to be brought back in to make changes. It would essentially have to start the process all over again (revised grant application and Ed Specs) because it is essentially a new project if the scope changes.

NHHS passed by a very slim margin despite a significant 'get out the vote' operation that was undertaken to get people out to the polls.

Diana stressed the importance of informing the public what it means if the project is voted down. The town will still need to invest a very significant amount of money just to keep accreditation and to bring the building up to safety codes. He said that once you start working on the building you are going to run into all kinds of additional expenses. Dr. Cronin suggested a one page summary of what it would cost to even get the building up to code.

Dyann Vissicchio also wanted people to keep in mind that the timing of this coincides with the fact that there is a town budget approval coming up and we need to be conscious of it because there are residents looking for high increases in budgets and that is not going to help the middle school cause. There is even the possibility that if the town votes down the budget in May because of an increase, they may not be favorable towards another referendum the following month that also includes the request for funding the middle school project. You can't have a huge tax increase and then be asking for money for the middle school.

Diana asked when the debt service on the high school was going to be dropping off. Perhaps by the time we start this project, the high school will be paid off. Donofrio said that with this project we wouldn't be bonding for approximately 5 years and if not mistaken the bond for the high school was thru 2018, so it should be paid off around that time.

In 2002 the town hall sent out a postcard to taxpayers that showed the projects impact on the mill rate over an 18 year period. Johns said there was also a colored brochure that went out to taxpayers regarding the project and it also had the mill rate impact listed. These could be useful tools. Donofrio also mentioned that the architects set up a website that displayed all the schematic designs, etc. as a resource for people to get information throughout the project.

Dr. Cronin asked if NHTV was planning on taping the town meeting. Chairman Johns was unsure and Michelle Spader said she would verify that they planned on being there to tape the proceedings. They do not have the capability to 'go live' from the middle school location.

The chairman reminded the committee that tours start at 6 pm and the town meeting starts at 7 pm tomorrow night.

Motion to adjourn at 9:22 am by Goldie Adele and seconded by Michael Brandt.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Spader
Committee Secretary