

**MINUTES - BOARD OF EDUCATION PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
MEETING HELD SEPTEMBER 23, 2020 BY VIDEO CONFERENCE**

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Planning Committee Members Present: Andrew Martelli, Timothy White, Kathryn Hallen  
Board of Education Members Present: Anthony Perugini, Anne Harrigan, Adam Grippo,  
Faith Ham  
Additional Attendees Present: Jeffrey Solan, Superintendent of Schools  
Vincent Masciana, Chief Operating Officer  
Richard Clavet, Facilities Manager

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Martelli called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

**2. Audience**

Dr. Solan reported that there were no questions or comments made via the [Covid19@cheshire.k12.ct.us](mailto:Covid19@cheshire.k12.ct.us) email address.

**3. Humiston Building Discussion**

Mr. Masciana shared his screen and presented and reviewed two documents related to the Humiston Building that were previously shared with the meeting attendees, namely a *Review of Annual Maintenance Costs* and a *Stay versus Go Template Draft*. Mr. Masciana explained that the Humiston Building is approximately 15,000 square feet and houses Humiston School, our alternative high school, and Central Office.

In the discussion with questions and answers that ensued, the following items from the *Stay versus Go Template Draft* were addressed:

- Humiston Building's total operating and maintenance costs have averaged \$85,760 per year for the past 2 years (\$48,102 recurring and \$37,658 non-recurring). Paying for rent and the amortized costs of leasehold improvements on new space plus operating costs will be higher than existing annual operating costs for Humiston.
- Humiston Building is over 100 years old and the interior is in need of modernization. The 5-year capital budget requested for 2020-21 totaled \$3.45M for ADA Compliance, Roof and Window Replacements. Humiston Building would need elevators to be installed on both the school and Central Office sides to achieve basic ADA compliance. Perkins Eastman had estimated in their 2017 study that the cost to improve Humiston would total approximately \$5M.
- The Humiston Building was funded by a generous donation of \$30,000 made by Julia A. Humiston in 1911, and the agreement entered into by the Town at that time states "...said school when completed and ready for occupancy shall be turned over ... to said Town of Cheshire and the same shall thereafter be its property for public school purposes."

- Humiston Building will have carrying costs if vacated by Cheshire Public Schools and will need to be maintained at some minimal level until it is repurposed, demolished or sold. It should be noted that the use restriction for “public school purposes” will need to be rescinded through a legal process prior to repurposing, demolishing or selling. Along the same lines, factors that will need to be considered and dealt with are that the Humiston Building is included in the National Register of Historic Places listings in New Haven County and it is our understanding that the Humiston family still resides in Town.
- Central Office and Humiston School are each approximately 7,500 sq. ft. and, as our smallest spaces, could be incorporated in other larger building projects. A move prior to the approval of the recommendations of the School Modernization Committee may prove to be an inefficient use of resources.
- At just .9 miles apart, it is fast and convenient for students and staff who travel between Cheshire High School and Humiston School during the school day.
- Central Office being located in the Humiston Building in the center of Cheshire allows for quick and convenient access to all schools, which is an advantage in critical situations when Central Office staff presence is required in our schools.
- Mr. Martelli asked if a market study of the Humiston Building has been done. Mr. Masciana responded that there was no market study done in the past 10 years. Ms. Ham commented that Humiston is a prime piece of property and that it might be beneficial in the future, as the School Modernization Committee is completing its work, to have a study done.
- Mr. Grippo commented that we may be able to purchase property that is ADA compliant that could be less costly than the \$3.5M investment required in the Humiston Building and the School Modernization Committee can consider combining the Darcey component as part of the overall plan for the district.

Based on the various comments made and upon conclusion of the discussion, the consensus of the Board of Education members was to allow the School Modernization Committee to complete its work and provide recommendations for an overall school district plan including the Humiston Building, and not to pursue any short-term alternatives for Humiston School or Central Office at this time.

#### **4. Other – District Solar Energy Project**

Mr. Masciana provided an update of the potential Solar Energy Project that was discussed earlier in the year. He reported that the Planning Committee members met with Dave Newman from ECG Engineering at their meeting on 2/24/20 and then received a proposal to conduct a review of possible energy projects including solar carport installations. An agreement with ECG was executed on 3/5/20, for a \$90/hour fee for engineering services with a not-to-exceed limit of \$9,800. An initial information package for our buildings was provided for review to Michael Sahm, the engineer assigned to this project. Mr. Sahm then provided an initial findings report on 3/12/20 which was further updated as of 4/2/2020. The initial report, which was shared with the Committee, focused on potential roof installations with the caveat that we

were going to meet to discuss ground based solar options such as carports. Due to the onset of the pandemic, we went to remote learning the week of 3/9/20 and had to put a hold on the project. Mr. Masciana explained that we have not been invoiced for any work and thus far no funds have been expended for this project.

Mr. Masciana advised that since school is back in session and operational activities are under control at this time, we can take the project off hold. He suggested beginning with a video meeting of the Planning Committee with Michael Sahm of ECG in a couple of weeks which he would arrange. Mr. Martelli indicated that he was open to having a video meeting and Mr. White indicated he would like to move forward as well. Mr. White reminded the attendees that the cost of energy will likely be increasing next year and solar project incentives will be expiring by December of 2021, so installations would have to be completed by that time.

**5. Adjournment and Executive Session to discuss Land Acquisition**

On a Motion by Mr. White, which was seconded by Mr. Grippo, the meeting was adjourned into executive session with no action to follow at 7:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:

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Vincent J. Masciana  
Chief Operating Officer

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Carol Jesensky, Executive Assistant

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