

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF EDUCATION
PLANNING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
HELD AT HUMISTON BOARD ROOM DECEMBER 16, 2021 AT 7:00 PM**

Committee Members Present: Andrew Martelli, Samantha Rosenberg, Timothy White (7:05)

Other Board Members Present: Anne Harrigan, Adam Grippo, Faith Ham (7:15)

Administrators Present: Jeffrey F. Solan, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools; Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Vincent Masciana, Chief Operating Officer

Additional Participants: Charles Warrington and John Koplas of Colliers International

Public access made available through live streaming the Cheshire Public School's YouTube Channel at www.youtube.com/cheshirepublicschools . Public comments were accepted at CPSCovid19@cheshire.k12.ct.us .
--

1. **CALL TO ORDER – 7:00 P.M.**

- A. Roll for Quorum. The roll was called and a quorum determined.
- B. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.
Mr. Martelli led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

2. **AUDIENCE**

None.

3. **2022/23 to 2026/27 CAPITAL BUDGET – INTIAL PROPOSAL REVIEW**

Mr. Masciana distributed and reviewed three documents with regard to the Capital Budget. He explained this is an initial presentation and discussion in order to obtain input from the Committee and the Board members, and no approval was being requested at this time. He noted that the Capital Plan does require Planning Committee approval and then approval by the full Board, which needs to be completed within the operating budget approval cycle that will occur in January of 2022.

Mr. Masciana highlighted that the Board of Education approved a Capital Budget totalling \$37.7 M in February 2021. When reviewed with the Town Council in July of 2021, the budget was reduced by \$9.4 M because the assumption was made that if the recommended School Modernization Plan were to be approved, the improvements and costs for Chapman, Darcey, Norton, and Humiston/Central Office would not be required. The total Capital Budget that was ultimately approved by the Council was \$28.07 M.

Mr. Masciana then reviewed the document (on file) that summarized the initial Capital Budget proposal for the next five years from 2022-23 through 2026-27. The total is \$26,497,500. He noted that he left out any requests for those same four schools that will come offline under the proposed School Modernization Plan. He explained that the starting point for the new Five-Year Capital Budget is last year's plan, less what was

appropriated for Year 1 (2021-22), and that it is a “no-frills” Capital Budget request to maintain our buildings. The breakdown is as follows:

Category	5 Year Total	% of Total
Window Replacements	\$7,750,000	29%
District Paving, Roofing, Sidewalk and Masonry Improvements	\$5,100,000	19%
District Cafeteria Improvements	\$5,045,000	19%
HVAC Improvements	\$2,915,000	11%
Interior and Exterior Building Improvements	\$1,820,000	7%
Fire Alarm Control Systems	\$1,300,000	5%
Lighting and Electrical Improvements	\$880,000	3%
CHS Athletic Complex Improvements	\$737,500	3%
Flooring, Ceiling Tile and Door Replacement	\$700,000	3%
District Lavatories	\$250,000	1%
Totals	\$26,497,500	100%

The following is the funding request for the first year of the plan:

Category	5 Year Total	2022-23	% of Total
Window Replacements	\$7,750,000	\$1,250,000	23%
District Paving, Roofing, Sidewalk and Masonry Improvements	\$5,100,000	\$275,000	5%
District Cafeteria Improvements	\$5,045,000	\$845,000	16%
HVAC Improvements	\$2,915,000	\$645,000	12%
Interior and Exterior Building Improvements	\$1,820,000	\$600,000	11%
Fire Alarm Control Systems	\$1,300,000	\$650,000	13%
Lighting and Electrical Improvements	\$880,000	\$480,000	10%
CHS Athletic Complex Improvements	\$737,500	\$150,000	3%
Flooring, Ceiling Tile and Door Replacement	\$700,000	\$300,000	6%
District Lavatories	\$250,000	\$250,000	5%
Totals	\$26,497,500	\$5,445,000	74%

Mr. Masciana explained that the \$5.4 million is for projects that we really can't wait on for very much longer. The Committee discussed some items that are being delayed.

In the discussion that ensued, the Committee talked through the items that are being delayed. Several issues and questions were raised, including the need to replace the Doolittle Roof, swapping the proposed backup generator at Highland with a battery-array alternative, storage space, and potential escalation of costs of the projects in the five-year plan.

4. **DISCUSSION REGARDING SCHOOL MODERNIZATION PLAN**

Mr. Martelli introduced Mr. Chuck Warrington and Mr. John Koplas from Colliers International. Mr. Warrington said they have been doing due diligence efforts at the Casertano property, as well as the Norton parcel, and that there are no major surprises or anything that would prevent us from moving forward with new schools at both sites. In

explaining further, he said they performed a study called a phase one environmental site assessment, which is a historical review of the sites. They are looking for areas of concern and environmental types of issues. At the Casertano property, the primary concern is the use of pesticides and herbicides in the past, as it was used for agricultural purposes and fertilizers do not typically wash out with rain, they stick to the soil, specifically in the first 12 inches of soil. He said it is important to understand how we have to manage the soil, if the pesticides or other materials exceed certain DEEP levels. There is a residential exposure criteria limit, which is important for children touching the soil. If it exceeds a certain limit, the soil must be hauled offsite, which is expensive, and it is hard to find places that will accept those materials. The other one is pollutant mobility criteria that has more to do with groundwater pollution. There is a house on the corner of the parcel, and it is suspected that there could be an underground storage tank there. At the Norton site, there were somewhat similar findings, including the report of an older 8,000 gallon underground storage tank. They also performed preliminary geotechnical borings at both sites. At the Casertano property, the recommendation is keep the school up on the higher side of Marion and there were no surprises at the Norton site.

Mr. Martelli said the next charge is to do the environmental soil sampling and a traffic study at the Casertano site. Mr. Grippo asked about a traffic study at Norton, particularly about the Sharon Drive access. Mr. Warrington responded that the Sharon Drive access was just going to be used during construction and the school traffic would continue to come and go from the main entrance but it is something the architects would determine. He said as soon as the design phase starts they will do a more extensive analysis.

Mr. White asked about the culvert that is on the property. Mr. Warrington said it is not on our property but is on the adjacent property.

Mr. Martelli asked if there is anything else for which we should be requesting the Town Council to allocate money. Mr. Warrington explained that we will need to update the enrollment projections, and are requesting a proposal from SLAM because the demographer that was with SLR who did the original study left SLR to join SLAM. We will also need to fund the phase two environmental site assessments.

Mr. White asked about sustainable and net-zero building construction, including the costs and whether they should be incorporated before referendum. During the lengthy discussion on this topic, Mr. Warrington responded that the design specs and costs would have to be incorporated. He went on to explain that the State has stringent requirements as to meeting the High Performance Building Standards including LEED Silver. Ms. Harrigan noted that in the prior Facility Master Plan, certain energy enhancement options were included. Mr. Masciana displayed those enhancements on the SmartBoard, they included options for photovoltaic and geo-thermal that could be added to the project being discussed at the time. Mr. Grippo commented that as far as he is concerned, net-zero is a luxury item, and unless we can justify a payback for it, he does not think it is realistic.

Dr. Solan noted that the next step would be a Planning Committee meeting, hopefully in January, to discuss and recommend the plan in terms of the two sites. In January, the Board will vote to adopt the plan, not the dollars. The Council would then take that up in a vote to either move that plan forward, or not. By June, we would have to submit documents such as the Education Specifications. Mr. Martelli reminded all that we are voting on a project, not a budget and just laying out what the Planning Committee will recommend to the full Board, after that the full Board will make a recommendation to the Town Council.

The next broad topic discussed was the Darcey Program. Mr. Masciana distributed and reviewed with the attendees the Education Specifications for the Darcey program that were prepared with the assistance of our consultant, Dan Hansen. The specialized programs at Darcey include Birth-to-3, Special Education Pre-K, Reverse Mainstream Pre-K, and Smart Start Pre-K. The space requirements, as detailed in the Educational Specifications, total 15,200 square feet. Mr. Masciana also distributed and reviewed a floor plan for Highland Elementary School, and he explained that an analysis was completed. Based on the projected K-6 enrollment for Highland after redistricting, which peaks at 675 students, there would only be 4 classrooms and approximately 5,000 square feet available. The result of the analysis is that the Darcey Program would not fit at Highland, as it is currently constructed. In the discussion that ensued, it was agreed that while expanding Highland is a consideration, the property size would likely not be sufficient for a larger building or for the 40 additional parking spaces that would be needed for the Darcey staff. Upon further discussion, the consensus reached was that keeping the Darcey programs together was very important from an educational perspective and that the better option was for the Darcey Program to be housed in the new north-end elementary school.

Questions were also raised and discussed by the attendees for the options for Humiston and Central Office, concerns about pricing, inflation, labor rates, and whether the project contingency was sufficient, as well as, the need to replant trees on the Norton property that will be removed for construction.

1. **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Mr. White and seconded by Ms. Rosenberg, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Martelli, Planning Committee Chair

Attest:

Carol K. Jesensky, Board of Education Clerk

Filed at the Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, Cheshire: 1-12-2022.