

**MINUTES - BOARD OF EDUCATION PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD SEPTEMBER 12, 2022 IN HUMISTON CONFERENCE ROOM A**

Planning Committee Members: Andrew Martelli, Timothy White, Samantha Rosenberg

Board of Education Members: Adam Grippo

Administrators: Jeffrey Solan – Superintendent of Schools
Vincent Masciana - Chief Operating Officer

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Martelli called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AUDIENCE

No members of the public were present nor were there any questions or comments received.

POSSIBLE SPACE NEEDS DUE TO ELEMENTARY ENROLLMENT GROWTH

Mr. Masciana distributed an analysis that included current elementary enrollment by school and noted that Highland’s enrollment of 841 students increased by 55 students as compared to last year and is 40 higher than was projected for this year. Doolittle’s enrollment of 524 students increased by 40 students from last year and is 15 students higher than projected. He then shared a copy of the School Modernization Committee’s Final Report dated 4-1-2021 and explained that Highland’s current enrollment of 841 students was exceeding the calculated functional capacity of 827 students. Mr. Martelli highlighted the number of new developments underway or being planned and in discussion with the Committee, there was agreement that the relatively rapid student growth rate we are experiencing is expected to continue across our schools. The future concern is that there may not be sufficient classroom space to accommodate the student growth in our elementary schools and particularly at Highland starting as soon as next year. It was pointed out that even if the referendum for the construction of two new elementary schools is approved by the voters in November, the new schools would not be ready until August of 2026. The options available to remedy the issue in the near term that were discussed included reallocating spaces within each building, increased class sizes, redistricting, and expanding available classroom space through the installation of portable classrooms (i.e. trailers).

The consensus reached by the Committee was for Mr. Masciana to issue a Request for Proposals to identify and potentially hire a design professional to complete a survey each of our elementary schools and provide potential classroom expansion options including locations where portable classrooms with appropriate infrastructure can be installed. Mr. Masciana will report back to the Committee on this initiative as it progresses.

POTENTIAL SCHOOL FIELD IMPROVEMENTS

Mr. Masciana explained that the Bartlem Park Improvement project that is scheduled to begin in the Spring of 2023 will result in the loss of two diamond fields that are used regularly by local athletic organizations and, that due to high user demand for fields, substitute fields are needed. He added that working in conjunction with the appropriate town and schools employees, an RFP was issued to potentially make improvements to the existing diamond fields at Doolittle,

Highland, Chapman, Dodd and/or Darcey so that they can be used by the town's various athletic organizations. Only one proposal was received which was unfortunately too high to be entertained. After discussion, the Committee asked Mr. Masciana to consider alternative options including contacting a local firm who made improvement to the fields at McNamara Park last year at a reasonable price and report the results back to the Committee.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION MATTERS

Mr. Masciana provided an overview of the long-term planning needed with respect to student transportation with three key parameters to be considered, as follows:

- a. Our 5-year contract with Dattco Contract expires 6-30-2024
- b. Improvements of .86 available acres at the Bus Depot (\$125k appropriated)
- c. Requirement for Alternative Fuel Buses by 2035 and Zero-Emission by 2040

A discussion ensued as to the three key parameters and it was suggested and agreed that the next step would be to invite representatives from Dattco to provide information as to their experience with the deployment of propane and electric buses, financing and incentives options, etc. With that in mind, a Planning Committee meeting was tentatively scheduled for October 19th at 7pm to include a discussion with Dattco representatives as part of the agenda.

OTHER MATTERS – PENDING ZREC'S FOR SOLAR CARPORTS

Mr. Masciana explained that he was waiting for a response to his request for an update from representatives of Energy Resources for the solar carport installations at Highland Elementary and Doolittle Elementary Schools that were approved to be funded using Zero-Emission Renewable Energy Credits (ZREC's). The projects have not been advanced after they were approved due to extraordinarily high construction costs caused by supply chain issues and materials shortages related to the pandemic. He advised that he would report back to the Committee when he has an update.

A recorded video of the meeting is available on the Cheshire Public Schools website at this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1fGOWoUr8B0>

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mr. White, which was seconded by Ms. Rosenberg, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:

Vincent J. Masciana
Chief Operating Officer

Carol Jesensky, Executive

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