

**MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
SMARTR COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2013
Manchester Room, Town Hall**

MINUTES

PRESENT: M. Crockett, M. Flick, S. Gates, D. Hagenow, N. Leon, B. Murphy, C. Pelletier, L. Stewart, A. Strong, J. Topping, M. Tweedie, S. Walton

ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Kisiel, S. Shanley, C. Till

ABSENT: J. Doucette

The meeting was called to order at 8:02 p.m. by Chairperson Crockett.

JCJ, the architecture team doing the feasibility study on Robertson and Washington, had three team members representing their firm: Jim LaPosta, Jr., who is in charge of the team, along with Jim Hoagland and Christine O'Hare.

Ms. O'Hare reviewed that the team had met with town officials last Thursday, including representatives from the Rec Department, Fire Department, Building inspectors, etc. A meeting with Dr. Kisiel is scheduled for this Thursday at 11:30 a.m.

Mr. Hoagland noted that with all the legwork SMARTR had already done, the questions they are asking have probably already been discussed, but the goals need to be formalized for the team, not necessarily prioritized. They simply need guidance.

Dr. Kisiel wants to include Special Education pre-K in the plans, but realizes there is no commitment for regular Pre-K. Mr. Shanley notes that we had talked about the opportunity for an easy addition to accommodate Pre-K in the future. Currently, the Special Education pre-K is moved around the district, wherever space is available.

Mr. Topping asked where the figure of 400 students came from, he recalls discussing up to 600 students. Dr. Kisiel stated the ideal is 400, but it is not set in stone. He noted looking at enrollment projections. He feels 400 for Robertson is too low.

Mr. Stewart notes that there is currently more space at Robertson than is "needed", but it is used inefficiently. Mr. Hoagland feels we can gain efficient use of space and we could make classrooms smaller than the requested 900 square feet, in the 700-750 square foot range.

Mr. Strong feels the North end projections drive a larger building at Robertson. Mr. Hoagland notes that 48,000 square feet is the standard for 400 students. Washington, without the

portable, is now about 60,000 square feet, which would be a reimbursement rate of about 64%. If we go bigger, the reimbursement rate drops to about 51.7%.

Mr. Shanley states that unless the Board of Education were to redistrict to optimize the number of students at a new building prior to the project, we would not get full reimbursement if we build larger than for the projected population.

Mr. Stewart wondered if we are assuming Cheney will be feasible as we talk about Robertson and Washington? The consensus is that we have to assume that at this point, as it affects the number of students we are planning for at those schools.

Mr. Leon wondered if the 60,000 square feet at Washington includes the Mahoney Recreation Center. It does.

Mr. Hoagland noted that we could break off Mahoney and run that separately, but it would require a new gym and cafeteria to be built for the school. Mr. Hoagland feels town officials have embraced separating Mahoney. The principal of Washington notes she feels like she is borrowing rooms from the rec center. Separating the two buildings would simplify that, but there would be operational issues. Ms. O'Hare also noted that there would need to be some work done to the heating system for Mahoney to separate the two systems.

Dr. Kisiel stated we should be looking at K-4, assuming 5th will be at Cheney, and he will look closer at the numbers at the Thursday meeting with the architects to get accurate projections over the next several years.

Mr. Hoagland noted that at Robertson approximately 36,000 square feet of rooms are needed, and the building, including the portable, is approximately 57,000 square feet. That equals a 1.56 efficiency rate and the target is 1.4.

Mr. LaPosta does not recommend exceeding space standards unless necessary.

Mr. Topping notes that we are expecting an additional 120 students district-wide next year. Mr. Shanley thinks we need hypothetical if we redistrict to optimize new construction.

Mr. LaPosta asked, from an educational point of view, what the optimal size should be? Dr. Kisiel does not have that answer. Mr. Shanley feels 30% larger than currently is what we hoped for.

Mr. Hoagland pointed out that with a greater number of students, there comes a need for more music rooms, art rooms, a larger gym, larger cafeteria, etc.

Ms. Walton wondered if the Board would be willing to redistrict to optimize space. Mr. Shanley pointed out that unless they do that, then we cannot build for more than is currently projected. Ms. Pelletier noted we have to justify the numbers.

Mr. Hoagland pointed out that we have to recognize that we cannot move students that have already been "counted" by the state in prior projects, such as those at Highland Park.

Mr. Gates feels that we have to assume that the number of elementary schools we currently have, nine, will remain the same if we are not making new schools larger to eventually accommodate closing a school. Ms. Pelletier states we were looking to build 30% larger to eventually allow for another closure down the road, but we now realize we cannot just do that.

Mr. Hoagland brought up the third question, which is swing space. If we do a simple renovation in the existing building then no students will be allowed in that building during construction. Dr. Kisiel notes that would possibly mean finishing Cheney first, which would then create room at other schools to accommodate students for a year, such as was done with the Highland Park students who were relocated for one year during construction.

Mr. LaPosta noted in some scenarios we could keep the students on site and move them around, having them located away from construction, and then moving them into a completed portion of the project and then working on the vacated area. Ms. Pelletier likes the plan that keeps the old part of Washington and annexes a new construction for that reason.

Mr. Leon wonders if Cheney is not feasible, then what? Mr. Shanley states he does not feel having students on site is acceptable. Mr. Leon feels that if the construction area is totally separated it would be okay.

Mr. Shanley brought up the idea of using Nathan Hale as swing space, wondering if that is even a consideration. Dr. Kisiel noted that because the state advised waiting until July 1st to submit the planning grant application for a magnet, the school will be empty for now. Ms. Walton notes it would take approximately \$900,000 to repair the heating system in that building. Mr. Shanley feels if an investment that large is needed, then it is not a viable option. Mr. Topping wonders who would want to send their child there since the building was closed. Mr. Shanley stated we just need to take the option of that building off the table so everyone is aware.

Mr. LaPosta notes that there are less expensive options (than fixing the NH heating system) if we need other swing space.

Ms. O'Hare asked for clarification of the Special Education Pre-K and would like those enrollment numbers. It was noted that those classrooms typically move around from school to school, depending on where there is space for them and Dr. Kisiel would like to see them settled in one location.

Ms. O'Hare noted that Jim is using the existing Ed Specs from Highland Park as a basis for his calculations, is that accurate? Dr. Kisiel felt that made sense as a jumping off point, since they were not that old.

Ms. Hagenow wondered if the Central Office part of the building was included in the Robertson numbers. Mr. Hoagland stated it was not. Ms. Hagenow wondered where all the wasted space is at Robertson? Mr. Hoagland noted the width of the corridors and other spaces in the building that are not used efficiently.

Mr. Randall Luther of Tai Soo Kim Partners presented on the Cheney project. He noted he had met with Dr. Kisiel and after a program analysis and making some changes to the expected needs, such as locating sciences labs in the classroom, that instead of 45,000 square feet being needed at Cheney, now only 32,500 square feet is needed. Dr. Kisiel noted that he expects to have a team-oriented team design, like that at Bennet, where there are 3 classes per team and one of those classes also acts as the science lab.

Mr. Luther noted that the distance learning lab is obsolete and the unified arts can all fit at Bennet. He states the Cheney building alone is 25,440 square feet and he is planning a 7,000 square foot addition on the Cheney side, inside the courtyard area. He no longer plans to use the firehouse. There is also still planned a 2,000 square foot addition to the cafeteria, which is needed to accommodate more students, for a total 9,000 square foot in additions needed. He expects an adjusted reimbursement rate of about 58.5%.

Mr. Stewart noted that last time we talked about the old gym and the basement area used for storage. Mr. Luther noted possible use for the top floor gym is a music room. Regarding the pool/bowling area, he is unsure of any uses at this time. Mr. Stewart wondered if we could utilize that basement space, would we still need the addition at Cheney. Mr. Luther noted that we would still need the addition, because the need is for classroom space which could not work in the basement area. Ms. Pelletier pointed out that the addition at Cheney allows for all the 5th grade classes to stay together, coming to the Bennet side for unified arts and the cafeteria, etc.

Mr. Shanley reviewed that the swing space for the Highland Park kids, which included adding some portables to another school, cost approximately \$600,000, all of which was unreimbursed. If Cheney is completed prior to other projects, it would create swing space in other buildings at no cost.

Mr. Murphy asked if the Board of Education wanted 5th and 6th grade separate, wouldn't that cause further transitions? Dr. Kisiel clarified they will not be separate, only their core classes would be. Ms. Flick pointed out the 5th/6th campus also gives the students more time with the same team instructional model. Mr. Luther suggested another benefit might be for the teachers to loop with their students from 5th to 6th if the Board desired.

Mr. Strong had issue with filling in the horseshoe part of Cheney, noting it would obstruct the natural light. Mr. Luther stated whatever design is chosen, there will be plenty of natural light.

Dr. Kisiel noted this needs to be presented to the full Board to confirm the educational decisions that make sense. Mr. Crockett added that we also need the Board of Directors to decide if it would be okay to build bigger, or if we can only build for the current projected students. Dr. Kisiel felt it was up to SMARTR to determine the size and scope, and the use would be determined by the Board of Education.

The next meeting is set for March 27, 2013 at 6:30 pm in the Manchester Room at Town Hall.

Meeting adjourned 9:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Doucette, Secretary
SMARTR Committee