

**MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
SMARTR COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2013
Rm. 293, Manchester High School**

MINUTES

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

ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Kisiel, S. Shanley, C. Till, M. Carlino, various members of Building Committee and Board of Directors

ABSENT: B. Murphy

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Chairperson Crockett. Mr. Crockett explained that this was a meeting of the SMARTR Committee and would be treated as such, with no public comment. He noted that if there were questions, to pass them along to a committee member to be asked now or at a future meeting. This is the 28th meeting of the SMARTR Committee, which was begun on February 17, 2012. It has been difficult reaching consensus among the 13 members.

Mr. Till introduced Randall Luther from Tai Soo Kim Partners. Mr. Luther is the partner in charge of the Cheney project. Mr. Luther presented a Power Point that is available on the website.

Mr. Luther reviewed that phase 1 of the site assessment was completed a week ago, regarding the historical aspects and hazardous materials study. There were no significant areas of concern. There are one or two underground fuel oil tanks, but there is no evidence of leaking. This will have to be investigated further. As expected, asbestos was found in the building, but nothing alarming. The building was built prior to the use of PCBs, so this will probably not be an issue as it was at Highland. The windows in Cheney will need replacement.

Some under-utilized spaces were identified at Bennet. It was decided to keep the team structure for Cheney the same as Bennet has, with teams of three classrooms. This will help with scheduling between the two buildings.

Mr. Luther reviewed that some spaces, such as the library at Bennet, would be able to handle the increased capacity of the 5th grade, while other spaces, such as the cafeteria, are too small. The cafeteria needs an additional 1800 square feet to accommodate the added student load.

Mr. Luther noted that the upper gym is used both at recess and by the Parks & Rec department every day and during the summer so it was important to leave that to current use.

In Option 1, the boiler building would be renovated to house 3 classrooms, and the two buildings would be connected with the area between the boiler building and Cheney housing the lobby and the office. A challenge in the plan to use the boiler building for classrooms is the sound from the cooler. The sound can be dampened, but this will be a challenge. There are unknown risks in using an old building such as the boiler building. It also constrains the lobby and office in both size and location. The classrooms would be about 830 square feet, which is smaller than the Ed Spec of 900, but about the same or larger than the classrooms currently at Bennet.

Option 2 is to not use the boiler building at all, but fill in part of the U shape of the Cheney building. This would mean the team configuration is hampered, with one team being split up among three floors. This option still means a constrained office and lobby. It also means next door to this would be an abandoned building (the boiler building) that would be deteriorating. The classroom sizes remain at approximately 830 square feet.

Option 3 would be to demolish the boiler building and build a new facility, which would house three classrooms with the office and lobby being in the front of that building. There would be a need to relocate the cooling tower, either in the new building or moving it elsewhere. Classroom sizes would remain at 830.

Next Mr. Luther explained the designs for the cafeteria at Bennet:

Option 1 was to add a courtyard addition to the cafeteria. The negative to this is adding square footage to an already inefficient building, causing a penalty from the state.

Option 2 is to use the lower level, which is currently unused and previously was a pool and bowling alley, by cutting into the floor of the current cafeteria and utilizing the basement area as additional seating. This would repurpose currently underutilized space. The cons are that it is a marginal quality of space requiring extensive renovation and will require additional staff to monitor the two levels.

Mr. Luther explained where music and art would be located, and the necessity to move a wall to expand the orchestra space. He also noted the custodial space would be moved to allow for all the music rooms to be in close proximity.

Site/parking issues were next discussed. It is a difficult issue to find room to add the required additional parking that would be necessary at the school.

Option 1 would put 15 spots right out front and add 13 spots to the 7 already located behind the school. The grassy area behind the school that is not used by Parks & Rec and is rarely used by the PE department can house another 70 spaces. There would be gates that would

be closed during the school day on School Street and opened to allow bus traffic at the start and end of the day. The courtyard could be made into a grassy area to replace the play field. In order to accomplish this plan and allow for a turn around on School Street, as the street would be gated off, one rental property would have to be acquired. This is in the historic district and they are not excited about that.

Option 2 leaves the play field alone and puts a lot for 70 cars across Main Street, still having the 15 spots out front and 13 additional in back. To accomplish the turn around 2 properties would be required or repurposing the small, 32 car parking lot next to Cheney as a turn around. This would mean no close parent parking to Cheney. All daily parking would be on-site, with the Main Street parking lot being used for events. The cons to this plan include having to cross Main Street, property acquisition, and historic district approval.

Option 3 is to not gate off the street at all. The plan to put 15 spots out front and 13 in the back remains the same. This plan keeps the playing field, putting 17 cars down the side of the field. There would be 63 spots across Main Street and 7 more between the fire house and boiler building. This is least disruptive to the site; however event parking remains across Main Street. This plan does not enclose the campus.

Option 4, which Mr. Luther feels is the most desirable, keeps the plan to gate off the street, but opens Vine Street back up to allow for traffic flow. Parking across Main Street would still happen. No property acquisition would be required.

Ms. Walton asked if Vine Street would be a one way road? Mr. Luther stated it could be, that had not been discussed.

Mr. Luther showed a reimbursement rate chart and the approximate reimbursement rate is 58%. All of the different scenarios vary by only about \$100,000 up or down.

Mr. Shanley asked what the margin of error is. Mr. Luther stated there is an estimated contingency planned in there.

Mr. Stewart asked if the parking options were figured in the cost. Mr. Luther noted that there is a placeholder number noted as "site work" in the figures.

Mr. Luther reviewed the schedule, and with a November 2013 referendum, that means missing a submission date for the EDO 49. This would require waiting an additional year to start construction. However, Mr. Luther hopes that special legislation could be accomplished to get us on the priority list so we wouldn't lose the year waiting. He recommends that the Cheney Option 1 or 3 make the most sense. For the site, he feels Option 4 is the best. For Bennet dining he prefers Option 1. He has seen no impediments in the feasibility study.

Mr. Gates concurs with the recommendations, and prefers no property acquisitions being required. Regarding the Main Street parking lot, he wonders if there are ways to safely cross

that street, including an elevated walk or tunnel. Mr. Luther feels the state is not in favor of a bridge, and there would also be a reimbursement issue in any work done in that area.

Mr. Leon wonders if we could chose Site Option 4, but instead of the Main Street lot, utilize the playing field as a lot, still keeping Vine Street open. Mr. Luther stated that could be considered. Reimbursement for this, as it would still be on school property, would work better as well.

Ms. Walton wondered if we could talk about the parking lot as a committee instead of tonight.

Mr. Leon wondered if the work on Bennet could be accomplished over a summer so as not to disrupt the students currently in that building. Mr. Luther stated that would be manageable.

Mr. Crockett stated there had been a rumor that the Cheney building was not sound structurally and he wanted to address that tonight for the public. Mr. Luther stated his structural engineer was not concerned. He pointed out that previously steel columns were added to the building, so possibly that rumor was from prior to that.

Mr. Crockett asked some questions that had been passed to him:

Removal of the boiler plant versus a new building - are the costs the same? Mr. Luther explained that the smaller footprint of a new building equals less cost, plus more reimbursement. Renovation on that building would be very difficult versus a new build.

Moving the music room wall - is that a structural wall and is it costly? Mr. Luther answered yes to both questions, but that is all factored into the figures.

Prices appear to drop with the cafeteria expansion. Mr. Luther noted that the price actually rises \$60,000, but the gross cost in utilizing the lower level versus an addition are lower, as extensive renovation would be required in the lower level.

Mr. Crockett asked what Tai Soo Kim needs from each Board at this point. Mr. Luther stated they need direction as soon as possible, hopefully within a week, to be able to start on the schematic design.

Mr. Gates pointed out that on Site design 5, Mr. Leon's idea to tweak design 4 should be added. Mr. Luther stated he can work that up prior to the next meeting. He reviewed that they have a two phase contract and phase 1 is now complete.

Mr. Till introduced the JCJ team, who has done the feasibility study on Washington and Robertson. Mr. Jim LaPosta is the principal in charge. Mr. Jim Hoagland and Ms. Christine O'Hare were also present. Mr. LaPosta reviewed that they will need a recommendation on whether to renovate or build new by the end of April. He notes that all estimates are on the

high side to cover the details that are assume but not known 100%. A full report is available on-line.

Ms. O'Hare noted the two options presented tonight for each school are what the SMARTR Committee voted on at the last meeting from the various selections presented to them. She reviewed that the full report talks about the current buildings in depth. Both buildings are safe now, but will need to be brought up to current codes if renovated. They have smaller classrooms that are "best practice" currently. She notes that the projected enrollment of each school, assuming K-4 as 5th would be at Cheney, shows Washington at 357 and Robertson at 380. This plan also assumes 38 pre-K special education students at Robertson.

Mr. Hoagland noted the detailed program options are in the full report and they reviewed the goals that SMARTR gave them. All plans include space for future expansion.

Washington Option 1 is to build new. This option leaves the Mahoney Rec Center in tact, but the school will not use it. The new building would be behind the location of the old building in an L shape. This option can be built while the students are in the old building, requiring no swing space. This option maintains the playing fields. When the old building is demolished, that area off Cedar Street would become staff and parent parking, with a bus loop on Pleasant Street.

Option 2 is a renovation plan. This plan would leave the 1912 portion of the building and add an addition onto that. The middle portion of the current building – the 1958 addition - would be removed, leaving Mahoney Rec free standing. The new addition would house a cafeteria, gym, media center, and office, as well as K-2 classrooms. The 1912 building would be renovated and house grades 3-4 as well as art and music. Parking for staff and the bus loop would be between the new building and the Mahoney Rec, allowing for both buildings to use the area. A parent loop would be where staff parking and bus loop is now. This plan also allows for children to remain on site during construction, necessitating no swing space.

Estimated costs for Option 1 \$33,876,306 and for Option 2 \$30,962,793.

Option 1 for Robertson – the original design for a new building was on North Main Street, but after consultation with the SMARTR Committee that plan was revised and a new building would be situation approximately where the ball field is currently. This site posed restrictions due to underground pipes that cannot be built over. The ball field could be relocated to where the current building is after demolition. The original building, except for the Central Office portion, would be demolished.

Option 2 for Robertson is a renovation. Most of the rooms in Robertson have movable walls, which is an acoustic nightmare. There would also be a small two story addition with 12 new classrooms for grades 1-4. The gym and cafeteria would be renovated. The six classrooms off the office would be reworked into 4 Kindergarten rooms. There would also be a small addition to the media center and the cafeteria/kitchen.

The costs for Option 1 are \$35,431,992, Option 2 costs are \$26,961,811.

Mr. Stewart was confused. He was under the impression after the last meeting that the Robertson renovation option would only use the existing space, with a small addition for the kitchen. Mr. Hoagland stated that was one of the options, but in the 1971 portion of the building all the classrooms are undersized with the media center in the middle. In order to meet the classroom needs and make the comparison necessary to a new build an addition was necessary.

Mr. Stewart asked if the cost was +/- 20%. Mr. LaPosta stated that there is a 20% contingency on cost and that all estimations were done on the high side.

Ms. O'Hare added that these numbers are the ideal, but specific areas can be reduced as needed or wanted. These numbers are estimates.

Mr. Stewart noted the costs on the Washington options did not vary as much as they do with Robertson.

Mr. Gates wondered what the feedback was from the Historical Society was on the 1912 building at Washington. Mr. Hoagland stated the building was very important to them and we can use that building effectively.

Ms. O'Hare noted that an option of renovating Washington as-is was also done, but that option did not meet many of the goals of the project and was not an ideal option.

Ms. O'Hare noted that the full report is lengthy and a link to it can be emailed to anyone desiring it.

Mr. Leon pointed out that no swing space has been planned for and asked for confirmation that the students can stay on-site during construction. Mr. Hoagland stated they can remain, though it may extend the schedule a bit. Mr. Leon asked about a certificate of occupancy and Mr. Hoagland was confident that was not an issue.

Ms. Hagenow was confused about the Option 1 on Washington covering the basketball courts. Mr. LaPosta explained that in Option 1 the courts would remain where they are. The need to move the courts is only if at some point in the future the building is expanded. The courts would then need to be relocated. Mr. Shanley reviewed that we can't "over build" and can only build for expected enrollment, but the architect was asked to be sure there was space for a future expansion.

Mr. Crockett wondered; on the Robertson new build option, could we leave part of the Robertson building attached to Central Office to use for other needs, such as housing maintenance crews? Mr. LaPosta stated that would be possible, though the reimbursement on that would be lower. Mr. Crockett asked him to price it up. Mr. Leon wondered if leaving

a portion of that building would add to the square footage of the "school" project. Mr. LaPosta stated it would not be counted for school square footage as it would not be used for the school. The cost to isolate the building from the school is part of the project and would be included, any renovation to that building would not be.

Another meeting will be held within a week to confirm the plan to present to both boards.

Meeting adjourned 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Doucette, Secretary
SMARTR Committee