

EAST LYME BOARD OF EDUCATION
East Lyme, Connecticut

MINUTES OF
FINANCE, FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, March 14, 2011
Central Office, Office of the Superintendent
7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Marlene Nickerson (Chair), Beth Groeber (Vice), Tim Hagen, Rich Steel, Kevin Seery

Members Absent: None

Administrators Present: Dr. James Lombardo, Brian Reas, Don Meltabarger, Nancy Burdick

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. **FY11 Budget Update**

Budget figures were updated as of 2/28/2011. The current budget freeze on discretionary accounts remains in effect and the projected surplus remains at \$303,000. The district has experienced deficits in special education, pension and unemployment costs, as well as custodial overtime due to snow removal.

2. **FY11 Budget Transfers**

Don Meltabarger discussed several budget transfers to be requested at the next full BOE meeting. Savings from the elimination of one DW non-certified position are being used to offset unemployment costs and snow removal overtime. Transfers are also necessary to move funds from 1) the heating oil to the natural gas account; 2) Sp Ed tuition accounts to cover renovations to the medically fragile room at the middle school; and 3) prepaid dues and fees to pay for the feasibility study.

3. **Discuss Process and Timeline to Develop and ELPS Long Range Plan to Address Facilities Needs**

Ben Monroe and Brian Solywoda from Kaestle Boos were present to discuss and address additional questions regarding the feasibility report. Dr. Lombardo presented five possible options that the district and town might choose for addressing the long term elementary school and Central Office facility needs. The costs range from \$11 million up to \$56 million with varying options depending on whether existing structures are repaired with no additional improvements (i.e. to code with full compliance) from fully renovated to "as new". The Committee members had much discussion around the forming of a vision committee which would be charged with bringing forward a plan. Additional points of discussion included feasibility of closing schools and moving students, demolition costs (including building remediation, should the building be used for another purpose rather than demolition be chosen) and concerns over local impacts of a potential Pfizer site closure. The FFO committee agreed that input from a cross section of the town/community is important. It would also be beneficial to use the experiences from the middle school project. A suggestion was made to request excess town annual budget funds as a special appropriation for the repair of two of the most urgent facility needs: the HS music wall (brick outer layer pulling away from main foundation) and the LEARN wing roof repair of the Lillie B. Haynes elementary school.

The committee agreed that Dr. Lombardo should 1) proceed with bringing the 5 options presented before the full Board including the estimated current costs for further discussion; 2) draft a charter for a Vision committee, to be tasked with setting the plans for facility renovations/building, timelines, boundaries,

assessing priorities, drawing in community input and buy-in; 3) approach the town for special appropriations for immediate repairs (as above).

4. Plan a Tour of ELPS Facilities for Board of Education

The committee agreed that a tour of the grounds accompanied by Kaestle Boos in order to highlight areas of concern was both desired and appreciated. The invitation should be extended to the full BOE. It would also be beneficial to visit comparison schools with state of the art facilities and/or renovations to consider the full range of options available. A tour will be scheduled in the near future targeting a Saturday morning.

5. Feedback/Ideas/Quests to March 30, 2011 Board of Finance Meeting with the Board of Education

The Committee focused on potential questions and concerns the BOF may raise as part of the BOE presentation March 30th. Anticipated questions included how the overall reduction in student population affects our staffing, budget and the recent administrative restructuring. The feasibility study relates to our capital budget and therefore, will not be discussed at the March 30 presentation. Also, attention should be drawn to the fact that ELPS requested (and achieved) 0% salary increases for the current budget year. Preserving the maintenance and technology budgets is a priority considering the basic district needs in these areas.

6. Before/After School Rates Changes

Assistant Superintendent Brian Reas presented an updated payment schedule for before and after school care. A payment schedule was introduced in the previous calendar year, effective 2010-2011 to bring consistency and equity across all schools in the district. It is now realized that to remain a self sustaining program, the prices need to be increased for the 2011-2012 calendar year. The current deficit in the HA and FL programs total \$26,000. The rate for a student enrolled in both before/after school care may rise from \$18 to \$20/day next year. The EL program is comparable or less in cost than other area programs.

Public Comment

Stacey Lyster, 19 Park Court, Niantic – Likes the idea of seeing two schools remain open to allow for more flexibility in adjusting to enrollment and moving kids between schools.

Kelli Daugherty, 47 Sleepy Hollow Rd., Niantic – Commented that implications around what may happen within the community as a possible result of Pfizer closing the Groton facility should be considered.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elizabeth Groeber
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Vice-Chair