

2/13/96 Committee on Joint School Buildings

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COMMITTEE ON JOINT SCHOOL BUILDINGS

February 13, 1996

6:30 PM

The Clerk called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: School Committee Members Healy, Tremblay, Zebrowski
Ald. Reiniger, Clancy, Domaingue

Messrs.: L. Bernard, K. Clougherty, A. Gaudreault, R. Houle, R. MacKenzie
R. Girard

The Clerk addressed item 3 of the agenda:

The Clerk advised that the purpose of the meeting was organizational in nature and in accordance with RSA 199:3 the Committee shall elect a Chairman from its members.

On motion of Mr. Healy, duly seconded by Ms. Zebrowski, it was voted to elect Janice Tremblay as Chairman of the Committee.

Chairman Tremblay addressed item 4 of the agenda:

Chairman Tremblay advised that the next item of business would be to consider recommendations from the School Capital Improvement Committee (Messrs. Bernard, Clougherty, Gaudreault, Houle, MacKenzie) relative to an architect selection for a new middle school.

Mr. MacKenzie stated that he was unsure how far to go back in explaining the middle school program, the process had been underway for awhile, money had been allocated in this years' CIP budget for middle school design, the staff had been

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working diligently to keep the process going. There was not a recognized need or school capacity problem right now, but the staff had looked at a number of alternatives to address those needs, ultimately the staff felt that the middle school program, from a facility standpoint, was a reasonable approach to address the capacity issues. Architects had been interviewed, requests for qualifications and proposals had been made which was the purpose for being at the Committee meeting, to review the proposals and recommendation for an architect for the program.

Mr. MacKenzie added that he believed they had three of the finest architectural firms in the State, references had been checked, ultimately they had felt that Frank Marinace had a tremendous amount of experience at the middle school level, and probably had the most experience with middle schools in the State, and dealt specifically with schools.

Chairman Tremblay asked if Mr. Marinace would be the design architect only or inspecting and everything.

Mr. MacKenzie answered that if selected he would be doing the design process, contract fitting, preparation, and administration and supervision of the construction.

Ald. Domaingue asked why the low bid process was not being followed.

Mr. MacKenzie answered that professional services were not on the low bid basis, but on most qualified, based on the charter, there were ten criteria outlined in that process, each firm must be evaluated against that criteria, and although the Marinace firm was not the lowest bidder, when considering an 11 million dollar program, it would easily make up the difference by selecting the most qualified firm that had the experience to avoid the type of problems common to this kind of project.

Ald. Clancy if either of the other firms had any experience with middle schools at all.

Mr. MacKenzie answered that Lavallee/Bresinger had none.

Mr. Bernard stated that one of the things that created an advantage was that they

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were planning to develop a user group, a group made up of teachers, parents, and principals, people who would be working with the middle school, to look to the architect to help them along in the process, the group would have an idea in mind of what they would like to see accomplished education wise, and how they would want the structure of the facility designed. To have an architect who had done three or four other middle schools, would have a vast amount of knowledge which would be a tremendous help to the project.

Ald. Clancy asked if the architect was local.

Mr. MacKenzie answered that the firm was from New Hampton.

Ald. Domaingue asked how the 11 million estimate was arrived at, and what percentage of the cost could be picked up by building aid.

Mr. MacKenzie answered that the cost consisted mainly of two components, 8.5 million for the middle school, early on estimates were completed based on national standards and local costs of construction, relayed the information to various architects for their input and compared it against other projects, the particular size the City was looking at was about the size of the Derry Middle School which was recently completed and came in just under 8.5 million dollars, the balance arose from estimates for the addition at Parkside Junior High School which would be the middle school for the West side.

Ald. Domaingue asked Mr. Bernard what percentage of the cost would be picked up by the State Building Aid.

Mr. Bernard answered that 30% would be covered.

Mr. MacKenzie noted that the impact fee ordinance for all new residential construction had been implemented and would also be a contributor to any projects that increase school capacity, which would pick up another 20% of the cost.

Chairman Tremblay stated that to her understanding, approximately 4 million of the cost would come out of the CIP money.

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Mr. MacKenzie answered that it was more like 5 or 6 million.

Ald. Clancy asked if the site chosen was on City property and was it near Green Acres School.

Mr. MacKenzie answered yes but that the exact location would depend on the architect's input, there were 34 acres in that area.

Ald. Clancy asked if there was only one way in and out of the area.

Mr. MacKenzie answered not necessarily, that there were some preliminary designs done to put in another road.

Ald. Reiniger asked what the alternatives were to building a middle school and adding to the junior high's.

Mr. MacKenzie answered that they had looked into building additional elementary school capacity, there were two parts to that equation, one was if they built one or two new elementary schools, it would not solve the growing enrollments at the junior high level, if the two elementary schools were built on the east side that would not help the west side problem, and if elementary schools were the choice, the city would have to re-district, because all of the existing elementary schools had capacity problems. The school department and School Board had worked hard to adjust the capacity problems, but there was not anyplace within the City that an elementary school could be built that would solve all the capacity problems. The other problem was that it was predicted that within 7 years the elementary level would stabilize or start to decline, which would mean closing elementary schools. The other option was to lease schools on a short term basis, the problem with that was the buildings available were not up to standard with the other elementary schools, they were also not very large.

Ald. Reiniger commented that the enrollment trends indicated that by the year 2005 there would be less elementary students than today, the decline was predicted to begin in 1999, with 8800 students at that time, and 8000 today.

Mr. MacKenzie stated that combined elementary, junior high, and preschool

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program, the preschool program would not decline, but the elementary would begin to decline around 1999. The junior high would not begin to decline for about 12 years.

Ald. Reiniger commented that it appeared that by the year 2005 the elementary and junior high populations would go down, but the high school population would be 1,000 more than today, had there been research into that.

Mr. MacKenzie stated that the high school capacity was a lot harder to plan for because some of the surrounding communities had thought about building their own high schools, the capacity might be reached by the year 2000 if the surrounding towns continue to use the City's high schools.

Mr. Bernard stated that the issue of enrollment was a difficult to predict, and it seemed to turn out higher than predicted.

Ald. Clancy stated that he felt the location chosen for the middle school was good because the Bodwell Road area seemed to be one of the faster growing areas in the City, but if Hooksett or Bedford was to build a high school, that would take a large amount of students out of the Manchester school.

Ald. Domaingue stated that her concern was that the elementary schools were at capacity right now.

Ald. Reiniger asked Ald. Domaingue if she felt that they should look more closely at building an elementary school instead of a middle school.

Ald. Domaingue answered no, that she would rely on the expertise on the people who were involved in the project all along, that the planning seemed to account for any type of situation that may arise.

Ald. Reiniger asked if this was the cheapest alternative that was investigated.

Mr. MacKenzie answered that there was a possibility of a cheaper solution but was unsure if the same education could be offered with a cheaper alternative.

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Chairman Tremblay stated that the other problem with a cheaper alternative like leasing a school, the price of transportation would rise, along with the cost of leasing itself.

Mr. MacKenzie stated that even if the enrollment began to drop right away, because the classrooms were already overcrowded, the schools would not be under capacity again for at least ten years. When there was a dedicated art or music room, in times of overcapacity, those rooms were used as regular classrooms.

Ald. Reiniger asked if consideration had been given to the Lakeshore Hospital site as a possible alternative.

Mr. MacKenzie answered yes, but in terms of the actual site itself, it would need a lot of additional work to make it suitable as a school, also the location was in an industrial park area with access from industrial roads, it would create much more traffic.

Ald. Reiniger asked if there was a budget proposal for the middle school project.

Mr. Bernard answered there was in the sense that they were working with training teachers about the middle school concept, if the middle school was built, there would be a need to staff it.

Ald. Reiniger asked if he could get a summary sheet of the costs.

Mr. Bernard answered that anything he would put together would be extremely premature because what had been envisioned was, first hire the architect who would work with the user group to decide how many teams would be needed, how many teachers on each team, how large the school should be, etc.

Mr. MacKenzie stated that at this point they were asking to proceed with a schematic design which would allow an architect to work with the user groups and get an idea of how the building should look, do rough sketches, etc., the information would probably be available in two months for Mr. Bernard to review it to be added to the budget process.

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Ald. Domaingue asked what part of the total cost would the schematic design be.

Mr. MacKenzie answered roughly 20 to 25%, or \$110,000.00 to \$120,000.00.

Ald. Domaingue asked if that amount had already been set aside.

Mr. MacKenzie answered there was \$285,000.00 set aside this year and they could also tap into the impact fee fund.

Ald. Domaingue asked where the \$285,000.00 was.

Mr. MacKenzie answered in FY 96 CIP Program under new school design.

Ald. Domaingue asked if the proposed architects fees were part of the estimated 11 million.

Mr. MacKenzie answered yes, and although it may look high, it included electrical engineering, structural engineering, soil testing, and all of the other things that were necessary.

Ald. Domaingue asked if there were numbers available on what the impact would be on the tax rate.

Mr. MacKenzie answered that Mr. Clougherty would be better able to answer that, but historically the CIP program had been about \$3.00 on the tax rate which was about 10% of the tax rate, which was significantly less than when the CIP Program first started.

Ald. Domaingue asked if the project would be part of the \$3.00 on the tax rate.

Mr. MacKenzie answered it would be part but might exceed that, because CIP Programs look 5 to 6 years in advance and recognized that there would be large chunks of expenses at certain points, and smaller ones at others, so in the next program, spending for FY 98 would have to be careful.

Ald. Domaingue stated that this project would take a significant chunk of the \$3.00

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CIP Program tax rate for a significant period of time.

Mr. MacKenzie stated that one thing that had not been historically looked at was the fact that the calculation did not recognize the school building aid reimbursement, meaning that 50% of the program would get money back from impact fee ordinance and school building aid.

Ald. Domaingue asked if the reimbursements came back to the City in the same form that the City would pay on a bond, or in pieces.

Mr. MacKenzie answered that if the reimbursements came in on an annual basis, if the City paid \$500,000.00 a year on bonds, the City would bill the state for 30% of the principal which would come in annually.

Mr. Girard stated that not counting the reimbursements the City might get from the state or from development fees, the 11 million dollars being discussed was roughly equivalent to the 11 million worth of bonding the City did in the entire 1996 CIP.

Ald. Domaingue asked if the City was reimbursed on all the capital projects last year.

Mr. Girard answered that it was his understanding that there were no reimbursed projects in the current CIP year because they did not deal with school buildings or additions.

Ald. Domaingue asked if the City would bond the entire 11 million or only the portion that would not be reimbursed.

Mr. MacKenzie answered that the City would have to bond the entire amount.

Ald. Domaingue stated that she would not feel comfortable going forward without considering factors like tax rate impact.

Mr. MacKenzie answered that having a schematic design would enable them to estimate what impact the middle school would have on the tax rate.

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Chairman Tremblay clarified that what the SCIP Committee was asking of the Joint School Buildings Committee was to concur with their choice of architect to design the middle school project, and could the SCIP Committee begin if the Joint School Building Committee approved the first phase, and after the design was completed, go before the Committee again to report figures on tax impact, etc., before giving the final approval.

Mr. Houle answered that would be fine, that it would be the Committee's decision on whether the project went forward to phase two.

Mr. MacKenzie stated that he was sorry to have to put a big decision in front of a new Committee, but if they did not make a decision within the next month, there would be no guarantee that added capacity would be on line by the fall of 1997.

Chairman Tremblay asked if the architect would do soil testing as part of the schematics, because if there were wetlands there it would be a moot point to go on with the planning.

Mr. Houle answered yes they would test the soil.

Chairman Tremblay asked if the Committee was agreeable to proceed with the first phase, that there were funds available to do so.

Ald. Reiniger asked if hiring an architect to do the schematic design different from the soil test.

Chairman Tremblay stated that it was all part and parcel, one contract that the Committee would ask them to phase, approving the first phase for the preliminary work, then come before the Committee to discuss going forward.

Ald. Clancy stated that out of 34 acres it probably was not all wetlands.

Mr. Healy asked what the suggested amount of acreage was for a middle school.

Brief discussion ensued regarding the amount of land needed to build a middle school.

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Ald. Clancy asked whether money from Rooms and Meals Taxes could be utilized for the project.

Brief discussion ensued regarding Rooms & Meals Tax funds and how they could be used.

Mr. Girard stated that when the Rooms & Meals increment began the Board set aside a specific account within the budget for the receipt of those funds so that they could be dedicated or at least a portion that would be needed to amortize a bond for CenterPlex could be dedicated in its own revenue area, the money currently received had been set in that account by the Board, and would require an action by the Board to use it.

Ald. Domaingue stated that she had no objection to utilizing the \$120,000.00 in CIP funds to begin the first phase of the project, as long as the price did not exceed \$120,000.00, but would stop after that phase if numbers on the tax impact were not forthcoming at that point.

Mr. Houle agreed, and stated that if the price was to exceed \$120,000.00 he would come back before the Committee for consideration. They had not had discussion with any of the architects relative to these negotiations, but it seemed reasonable to be able to negotiate the terms decided by the Committee.

Ald. Reiniger asked if the figures that Ald. Domaingue wanted include operating costs for the middle school project.

Mr. Bernard answered the estimates for cost of operation would be based on the architects rendition put together from teacher's input and the architects own experience, it would still not be an exact number until actual construction costs were established.

Ald. Domaingue stated that what she thought Ald. Reiniger was asking was for cost to operate the school, not cost of the operation of building.

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Ald. Reiniger agreed, noting that what he wanted to avoid was to have people come to him later and ask why the middle school cost ten million to operate instead of 3 million for a junior high school, and why was that not known before hand.

Mr. Bernard answered that what he would give was costs not only to staff the middle school, but hypothetical costs for two elementary schools, it would not be fair to compare doing this with doing nothing, because something had to be done.

Ms. Zebrowski asked about the timeline on the soil tests and design.

Mr. MacKenzie answered that the soil testing probably would be done in April, because it would be difficult to test before then due to the weather, but that he would provide all members of the Committee with a memo after negotiating with the architect to inform them of the timeline and costs, and any additional information.

Ald. Reiniger asked if an estimate for transportation cost could be included in addition to program cost, and any cost associated with the new school and entire program.

Mr. MacKenzie answered that was a factor in the site selection in that the growing areas were all bussed, the middle school would probably not change the amount of students being bussed, which would not significantly increase the transportation costs.

On motion of Ald. Domaingue, duly seconded by Ald. Clancy, it was voted to approve the first phase of the project utilizing up to \$120,000.00 from existing CIP funds to conduct soil testing on the proposed site and schematic design.

On motion of Ald. Reiniger, duly seconded by Ald. Clancy, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.


Clerk of Committee.

