

4/22/96 Joint School Buildings

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COMMITTEE ON JOINT SCHOOL BUILDINGS
(Continuation of 4/15/96 Meeting)

Chairman Tremblay called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

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

Messrs. Sean Thomas, L. Bernard, B. MacKenzie, R. Houle, K. Rhodes,
P. Marinace, F. Marinace, M. Vincello, D. Dill

Chairman Tremblay addressed item 3 of the agenda:

Status report relative to a new Middle School to be presented by Robert MacKenzie, Director of Planning.

Mr. MacKenzie handed out a spreadsheet breakdown of operating costs for four alternatives, middle school, additions to junior highs, leasing space or a combination of new elementary school and additional junior highs, with a breakdown of administrative costs, teaching costs, employee benefits, building maintenance, and operating costs, for leasing it included lease costs, also a brief breakdown of pros and cons, site and floor plans that were presented at the last meeting, and elevations of the building. He cautioned that the site plans were still in the tentative stages, and did not want the plans to alarm the neighbors, that they would go to the neighbors and get their input, there were many things in the plans that the neighbors would appreciate such as reducing the impact on traffic in the area. Mr. Bernard had helped work up the numbers for the operating costs.

Chairman Tremblay addressed item 4 of the agenda:

Status report relative to a new Middle School operating budget to be presented by Superintendent Bernard.

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Ald. Domaingue asked Mr. Bernard or Mr. MacKenzie to elaborate on the fact that the total operating costs of the additions to junior highs with a middle school format appeared to be more expensive than the new middle school.

Mr. MacKenzie answered that there were parts that would be slightly less costs, the facility maintenance, custodial costs, and building operating costs, the employee costs would be slightly higher, and advised that Mr. Bernard would elaborate on that aspect.

Mr. Bernard stated the main reason costs for teachers and administrative help would go up was because the schools would be over State standards for capacity, in every case there would need to be another assistant principal and counselor, and secretary, also special area people like arts, once the junior high schools were increased by 400 hundred students it would be physically impossible to schedule all of those students to the same number of special area classes.

Chairman Tremblay asked if the drawings were the same ones that had been viewed last week.

Mr. Marinace stated he did not really get to talk about site plans last week and passed out a time schedule for the project. He explained the building was proposed at 98,300 square feet, with an anticipated opening of August 1998, rather than 1997.

Chairman Tremblay asked if the maximum capacity was 800 students, would the building be opened with that many, and was there room for expansion.

Mr. Bernard answered that the school would open at peak, and hopefully would not get an increase.

Chairman Tremblay asked what the demographics showed because she did not want to see the same situation as at Northwest.

Mr. MacKenzie answered they would hopefully see a decline in the next two years at the first and second grade levels, at the middle school and junior high level, there would still be increased enrollments probably for the next 8 or 10 years, the City would still have capacity problems beyond the 800 students for the next 6 or 7

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years, when that point was reached, there should be a decline at the elementary level.

Mr. Bernard stated to support Mr. MacKenzie's projections, he handed out the latest kindergarten enrollment figures, which was about 77 students less than last year, and first grade was less than last year also.

Ald. Domaingue asked why Mr. Bernard combined the numbers for kindergarten and first grade.

Mr. Bernard answered the kindergarten figures were on the top and the first grade was on the bottom.

Ald. Clancy stated that with all the construction going on it did not appear to him that the enrollment would go down.

Mr. MacKenzie answered that the area of construction would not see a decrease, the demographics had to be looked at, the areas that had continued growth would not see a decrease, including the southeast, southern and far eastern sections of the city would continue to grow where the older more established areas would see a decline.

Ald. Clancy asked if he meant the Webster, Smith area.

Mr. MacKenzie answered yes, those were two of the areas that were hoped would begin to see a decline, also Hallsville, Jewett, Bakersville and McDonough.

Ald. Clancy stated he could not see Wilson or Beech having a decline because of the amount of people that moved into and out of those areas.

Mr. MacKenzie stated the demographic changes were surprising, and he had expected Beech and Wilson to decline but they had not.

Mr. Bernard stated that the enrollment at Beech Street School had gone up by 70 students since September.

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Ald. Clancy asked what would be done if the school was at maximum.

Mr. MacKenzie answered they could build additional space but might be faced with closing elementary schools within 10 years.

Ald. Domaingue asked when Mr. MacKenzie talked about the "bubble", what had he based those figures on, the history of what had happened in Manchester in previous years.

Mr. MacKenzie answered they were based on several things, the first was birth rates which in 90, 91, 92 and 93 had begun to decline, the number of children entering the public schools had begun to decline, with children being home schooled or attending parochial school, and third was the rate of migration, Manchester had many people moving out of the City into the suburbs with others moving in, which had seemed to stabilize. Those were the key items that the figures were based on.

Chairman Trebly stated they had no way of predicting how many people would move into the city, and asked who was coming into the city.

Mr. MacKenzie answered a high minority population, the Hispanic population was up, also Asian, and Eastern European.

Mr. Bernard stated the kindergarten registration was up to the maximum at 8:15 on registration day, and ended up with 56, none of whom were minority, which meant that sometime during the summer more students would be registered.

Ms. Zebrowski asked if there was a high number of kindergarten students who attended private kindergarten and entered public school in the first grade.

Mr. Bernard answered there was in the Webster and Smyth Road School areas, so the kindergarten and first grade numbers could not be correlated.

Chairman Tremblay asked if there was a State requirement or was it the amount of room available that determined the square footage.

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Mr. Marinace answered there were a few restrictions, the site was not a restriction, but the budget was.

Discussion ensued regarding how many children would be affected in a restructuring of schools.

Chairman Tremblay commented the situation was worse than she had thought.

Brief presentation by Ken Rhodes of CLD relative to preliminary site work; traffic pattern , water capacity was relatively strong, they would probably recommend the installation of a new water main through the project site and connect it to the existing main at the end of Aurora and Brady Circle creating a loop system, the sanitary sewer to Green Acres was served by a lift station, one option would be to set up a small pump station or take the existing one out and put a central station in lower, electric service existed for the school, probably only cost customary services for additional, same for telephone, Nynex would probably do the work free of charge, Continental Cable was available, Energy North would extend the line to get heat to the building at service cost, would work with Frank Thomas from the Highway Department for on site drainage, there were no serious issues so far.

Mr. Marinace stated one of the questions had been what was keeping them to 800 students, and the answer was site, expanding to 1000 was possible but pushing the limit, and also budget.

Ald. Clancy asked how close the building would be to Brady Circle.

Mr. Marinace answered about 200 to 250 to the road.

Chairman Tremblay asked if the traffic would be coming up Brady Circle.

Mr. Marinace answered Brady Circle would be an emergency entrance.

Ald. Clancy asked if Brady Circle was unavailable would the school be one way in and one way out, and could Cohas Ave. be utilized.

Mr. Marinace answered yes, but it would interfere with wetlands.

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Mr. MacKenzie stated they wanted to work with the abutters and talk about putting in a gate near the residential area for emergency only, the other entrance would be 2 way.

Ms. Zebrowski asked if a traffic study had been done.

Mr. MacKenzie answered no.

Discussion ensued regarding traffic flow possibilities.

Ald. Domaingue asked if the transportation costs would increase.

Mr. Bernard answered he did not think it would cost more, but would need to be restructured and redistricted.

Mr. Rhodes stated the way to solve the traffic problem was to work with the group of neighbors on Aurora Dr. in the area deemed the best for access.

Ald. Domaingue asked if the building design were changed to a more conventional design, would there possibly be more space, and would it affect the cost.

Mr. Marinace answered there were six teams, 2 teams per grade, when all students were in their teams there would be some teams, there would be some rooms such as art and music that would not have students in them, when all teams were occupied they would be at 100% utilization.

Mr. Bernard stated that the elementary schools functioned at over 100%, junior high schools were dinosaurs in education, it had been proven that they could not give students at that age level the kind of education they could get at the middle school concept, that was why all the junior high schools had gone to the team teaching design.

Ald. Domaingue stated it had been done within the constraints of a traditional building.

Mr. Bernard stated no, the only difference between the team design within the junior

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highs and the new middle school design was that the middle school design was better in terms of space.

Chairman Tremblay asked did it not also have something to do with the way the educational day was structured.

Mr. Bernard answered yes.

Mr. MacKenzie stated there were actually two parts to Ald. Domaingue's question, the first was the cost effectiveness of building a middle school, and secondly what would happen 20 years from now, with one exception the middle school could be designed in a more traditional way, with the exception of the science labs, if middle team teaching were to go away, the building could still be used as a traditional school, it was theoretically possible to build it cheaper in the traditional manner however it appeared that this particular design was more space and cost effective.

Ms. Zebrowski asked how the floor plan could be changed if the school became over maximum and needed to turn something into one or two additional classrooms.

Mr. Marinace answered it would be difficult but the music or art rooms could conceivably be utilized for that purpose.

Ms. Zebrowski asked if it could be designed in a way to group certain classrooms together so that if another team was needed it could be in the proper location.

Mr. Marinace answered that the present design was very efficient, it was laid out to accommodate a certain number of teams, it could be laid out so that the seventh team was art, language and music.

Chairman Tremblay stated the bottom line was that they could make do with what was there.

Mr. Marinace stated at 27 per class, they could not go to 30 per class because it would not meet state standards, they had been given a budget and square footage requirement and had come up with the most efficient design possible with those constraints.

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Discussion ensued regarding the expansion possibilities.

Chairman Tremblay asked the committee to wrap up the discussion.

Mr. MacKenzie summarized the next step in the process would be to authorize the architect to move on to the next phase which was design and development, the committee must be comfortable with several things; one that the middle school program was the most reasonable approach, that the site was the best, and that the floor plan was reasonable.

Chairman Tremblay stated a while back they had authorized a limited amount of money for the preliminaries which had been expended, and permission was needed to do the next phase and expend the next amount of money.

Mr. MacKenzie stated they had in this fiscal year \$285,000 for design, the committee had authorized up to \$120,000 of which \$90,000 was encumbered, leaving a balance of \$190,000 in the current year budget.

Ms. Zebrowski asked if the site had been soil tested.

Mr. Marinace answered he had received proposals, and the process would take about weeks and cost in the area of \$14,000.

Ald. Domaingue stated she believed the soil test was supposed to have been completed at the same time as the other preliminaries so the committee could decide how to proceed.

Chairman Tremblay asked Mr. Marinace if the soil test was part of his contract.

Mr. Marinace answered yes but they had not gotten to it yet, they had not known how many teams there was going to be in the building until recently, everything was jammed up because of that.

Ald. Domaingue stated she had reservations about the project.

Mr. MacKenzie answered to give an idea of the schedule, the proposed budget did

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include funds for the program for over two years, the CIP had been asked to make a recommendation on that, and would be reviewing it on May 1, the CIP Committee could have as long as they liked to review that program, they may want some input from JSB Committee because the CIP would not be able to get into the level of detail on the school or the site as the JSB Committee.

Ald. Clancy asked Mr. MacKenzie what the next phase would be and the cost.

Mr. MacKenzie answered they had not broken that down yet and should probably discuss it.

Mr. Houle stated there was enough money for Mr. Marinace to move forward with design/development, before spending any more money the soil test needed to be completed, and approval of the concept, the elevations, the floor plan. The School Board as well as the BMA should take a look at the concept.

Chairman Tremblay suggested another meeting after the 7th of May, having had a chance to look at the CIP proposal.

Discussion ensued regarding the concept of the middle school and approval of same.

Ms. Zebrowski stated she was concerned with the noise level from the Highway for the outside classrooms.

Mr. Marinace stated he could sketch out something to attempt to move the classrooms further from the Highway.

Paul Marinace stated there were a lot of reasons why they did not design the school that way, they had looked at the entire site.

Mr. Marinace explained the reason for designing the school the way it was, noting that all classrooms must have windows.

Discussion ensued regarding design and space.

Chairman Tremblay stated the committee needed to determine whether the

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architects should be authorized to proceed with the soil testing.

Ald. Clancy answered yes.

Ald. Reiniger asked Mr. Rhodes what the cost of the sewage drainage would be.

Mr. Rhodes answered it would be 200 or so feet of water main at approximately \$50 a foot, the pump station, he did not have costs available on the sewer options either way but would bring that information to the next meeting.

Chairman Tremblay stated she was concerned about the drainage because of something Carol Resch said about there being a lot of water on that site, and children had played ball in knee deep water, how would that impact the building, and could Mr. Rhodes be prepared to address that at the next meeting.

Mr. Rhodes answered yes, and he would be very specific.

Chairman Tremblay addressed item 5 of the agenda:

Status report relative to heating and ventilation at Central and West High Schools to be presented by Richard Houle, Director, Public Buildings Services and W & V Engineering.

Mr. Houle stated that two of the engineers from W & V Engineering, the firm hired to complete the heating and ventilation work at Central and West High Schools, were present at the meeting and it was hoped to gain approval to move forward with the low bidder provided funds were made available through the CIP Project.

Mr. Vincello stated that a lot of the areas in the two high schools contained very old systems with no central ventilation whatsoever, their commission originally was to put ventilation back into those buildings so that they met code, after going through the buildings they established several goals for putting the mechanical systems back together. One was to minimize the number of pieces to be maintained, they wanted a 25 year solution, something that was energy efficient, something simple and straightforward, with a uniform approach throughout the buildings with central

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controls to monitor the two buildings remotely. The further into the project the larger it became, last fall they spoke with Mr. Houle to try to put numbers on parts of the project and to identify priorities. They began with the vacant building at West that had no ventilation at all, in both buildings there had been some kind of ventilation system, what they did at both buildings was removed old radiation method and reactivated ventilation shafts within the building, new heating system around the perimeter, took away the steam heat altogether, that was phase one. The rest of the projects that were designed so far were the libraries in both buildings, cafeterias, band & chorus areas and theaters, administration areas, the approach was to use a central air handler, do away with the small pieces, central air handlers had the ability to add cooling to them at some time in the future, six bidders had been pre-qualified in February, five of whom were the major mechanical contractors in the State, plus a general contractor who specialized in doing major mechanical and electrical renovation projects. They had received two bids, one had dropped out, Meridian Construction bid with two mechanical contractors, Eckhardt & Johnson and Palmer & Sicard, each firm bid for one campus, they were also the low bid and had the manpower to do a major portion of the phase I work during the summer, the bids had been higher than expected, the last six months mechanical bids had been about 5% to 6% higher, they had not anticipated the amount of work involved. He had recommended to Mr. Houle that the City go with the low bidder.

Ald. Domaingue asked if Meridian had done this type of project before.

Mr. Vincello answered yes, they had done a mechanical renovation project with the City of Concord, also the electrical upgrade of three theaters.

Ald. Domaingue asked where Meridian was based out of.

Mr. Vincello answered Bedford.

Ald. Domaingue asked Mr. MacKenzie if funding was available for this project.

Mr. MacKenzie answered not yet but the CIP Committee was going to meet the next evening and would be discussing it then.

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On motion of Ald. Domaingue, duly seconded by Ms. Zebrowski it was voted to approve the project subject to funding.

Chairman Tremblay addressed item 6 of the agenda:

Status report relative to West High School Science Labs.

On motion of Mr. Healy, duly seconded by Ms. Zebrowski, it was voted to table item 6.

Chairman Tremblay addressed item 7 of the agenda:

Communication from Richard Houle, Director, Public Buildings Services, regarding the Central High School Locker Rooms architect selection.

On motion of Mr. Healy, duly seconded by Ms. Zebrowski, it was voted to table item 7.

There being no further business to come before the Committee on Joint School Buildings, on motion of Ald. Domaingue, duly seconded by Ald. Reiniger, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.


Clerk of Committee