

Facts About Bridge Street School

- Opened in 1924- 95 Years old
 - Not an historic property
 - Not located within the Suffield National Register Historic District
- Decommissioned in 2004 - 15 years ago without a plan
- Many failed attempts to repurpose or sell the building over the years

Current State of Bridge Street School

- Public Works took pictures of the BSS two weeks ago in light of roof leaks last year
 - Public Works addressed last year's leaks by hiring a roofing contractor to patch the roof
- Pictures speak 1,000 words













CIRMA – Town's Property and Liability Insurer

- On September 19, 2019, the Town and BOE had its annual meeting with CIRMA in which we review all town property and buildings
- CIRMA Representative called in its Risk Management Department and put the Town on verbal notice that BSS would likely lose coverage due to its poor condition
- I asked the Building Official and Fire Marshal to inspect BSS as I was concerned for the safety of employees and others accessing the building
- In consultation with NCHD, the Building Official posted the building as unsafe for human occupancy

In 2008, First Selectman Scott Lingenfelter noted in a memo to Justin Donnelly, Jack Muska, John Cloonan, Ted Flanders, 90 Bridge Street Review Committee:

“First Selectman’s Recommendation: We need to determine the future use of the building and land soon. The building should never have been shut down without knowing the future plans for it. It was a working and effective school at the time, but is now a rapidly deteriorating shell of a building. We are throwing taxpayer money at a problem by continuing to heat the building and should winterize the building and shut off the heat this winter. Our past efforts to preserve the building by heating it have not worked and there is no need to continue to spend taxpayer money to heat a building when the expenditure of that money is not creating any benefit. Any deterioration that may occur this winter as a result of our not heating the building will not be any greater than the deterioration that will occur if we continue to heat it as we have been. Furthermore, if the boiler were to fail this winter, then we have bought ourselves a much larger bill and will cause more damage to the facility then if we do not heat it at all.”

From: Michael Caronna [<mailto:mcaronna@ncdhd.org>]
Sent: Tuesday, April 09, 2013 2:43 PM
To: First Selectman; Edward Flanders
Cc: Bill Hawkins
Subject: Bridge St. School

To Edward McAnaney, Suffield First Selectman: On April 8, 2013 our department in conjunction with the Suffield Building Dept. conducted an inspection of the vacant Bridge Street School. The inspection was conducted to determine if the building was safe to allow the building to be opened to the public.

Upon entering the building there was a strong musty odor, evidence of mold. During the inspection it was noted that floors, walls and the ceiling were in poor condition. Deteriorated paint chips were noted peeling and flaking off surfaces throughout the building. Based on the age of the building, most likely there is lead paint and asbestos in the building.

Based on the present condition of the building it is recommended that the building not be opened for tours by the public.

Cc: Director of Health, Michael Pirro

Michael S. Caronna, R.S., M.P.H.
Director of Environmental Services
North Central District Health Dept.

From: Patrick McMahon
Sent: Tuesday, April 09, 2013 4:42 PM
To: Edward McAnaney
Cc: Bill Hawkins; Glenn Chalder (G.Chalder@planimetrics.net)
Subject: Tours of Bridge Street School

Ed,

We know that North Central Health recommended against tours of the building. We believe tours of the building are essential for the public to get an understanding of the building's condition and layout. Our recommendation would be to allow for residents to enter the main hallway in order to peer into the various rooms on the first floor. We would have a tape across each of the doorways so that residents would not enter into the rooms themselves. We would not have residents view the downstairs classrooms as that is where the greatest concentration of mold appears to be. Let us know if you agree with this approach.

Thanks,

Patrick

Patrick J. McMahon

Director of Economic and Community Development

Town of Suffield

BSSCC Referendum

- On October 8, 2015, the Town approved by 1176 v. 1076 votes by referendum the following:

“SHALL THE TOWN OF SUFFIELD APPROPRIATE \$8,400,000 FOR RENOVATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO BRIDGE STREET SCHOOL FOR CONVERSION TO A TOWN COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER AND AUTHORIZE THE ISSUE OF BONDS, NOTES OR TEMPORARY NOTES IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$8,400,000 TO FINANCE SAID APPROPRIATION?”

Procedural History of Work Done on BSSCC Project since October 2015

- During 2016, the Town engaged ATC Group Services LLC to perform environmental consulting to determine the cost to remediate the building
 - During 2016, the Town engaged Shipman & Goodwin, LLP's Construction Law Practice to assist the Town in drafting RFP documents to protect the Town's interests and accurately describe the scope of work for the BSSCC project
 - On September 22, 2016 - conceptual estimate from Gilbane Building Company received projecting the cost of the project at **\$9,928,700 (\$1,528,700 more than the Town approved)***
- * Less than one year later, the price had increased by **18.2%**

Procedural History of Work Done on BSSCC Project since October 2015 (cont.)

- On 7/18/17 the Town of Suffield issued a Request for Qualifications and Proposals to get a Guaranteed Maximum Price for the BSSCC Project
- Sealed Proposals were due to Public Works on 8/16/17
- On 8/25/17 Permanent Building Commission invited contractors for interviews

Procedural History of Work Done on BSSCC Project since 2015 (cont.)

- September 2017, the bids revealed that the Town would have to expend between \$300,000 and \$500,000 to perform enough work to get an estimate to determine whether the project could be built for the dollar amount and scope of work approved by the Town.
- On 9/13/17, I informed the Board of Selectmen that I could not authorize borrowing against the bond because the Town approved bond authorization provided that “the costs of the project may be paid from temporary advances of available funds that the Town ***reasonably expects to reimburse any such advances*** from the proceeds of borrowings...”.
- One of the proposals received by the Department of Public Works states that an \$8.4 million budget would only allow them to build a 2,000 square foot gym. The approved plan called for an 8,200 square foot gym.
- The Town has expended approx. **\$116,090 of taxpayer dollars to-date on due diligence** and work to advance the BSSCC project over the last four years.

Town of Suffield Bond Counsel

Sandra D. Dawson, Esq., Pullman & Comley LLC

Kent Memorial Library and PCB Remediation Expense

- In case anyone doesn't know, KML opened in June 2019, but with a \$1.5 M overage on account of PCB remediation expenses.
- In addition, DEEP and EPA require quarterly air quality testing for PCBs that will cost the Town at least \$10-15k per year in increased operating expenses for the life of the building.
- Reminder: environmental remediation **was not** factored into the original \$8.4 estimate upon which the Town relied to approve the BSSCC project and its authorization.

Business Plan – Recommendation to Repurpose Bridge Street School into a Community Center prepared by: the Ad-Hoc Committee on February 13, 2015

EnviroScience Consultants Inc. inspected the interior and exterior of the former BSS in late 2004.

“The results of this inspection concluded that some materials/structures within the building contained asbestos and lead. The ballasts in the building were unable to be inspected **but are assumed to contain PCBs**...The recommendation was to properly abate all hazards.”

“TRC was engaged in June 2014 to further investigate the presence of PCBs within outdoor caulks, glazes and surrounding soil”
(Business Plan Page 11)

Environmental Issues with BSSCC

- TRC was the environmental consultant on the Kent Memorial Library renovation project in which PCBs were overlooked. Similarly, the BSSCC Business Plan reports nothing about PCBs detected in TRC's investigation.
- **No mention of the ballasts in TRC's review of PCBs or any opinion shared on the presence of PCBs**
- **No mention by either company of the presence of mold which has permeated the building for decades**

Future Town-wide Facilities Planning

- Superintendent, First Selectman, Parks & Recreation Director and Town Planner will be meeting to discuss facilities needs Town-wide
- Goal is to work together to broadly address needs in our community
- ACCE, Parks & Recreation Director and I will be joining the Superintendent and the BOE for a walk-through of all school facilities on October 26th