



**Lamoille North Supervisory Union and
Lamoille North Modified Unified School District
Finance and Capital Committee
October 21, 2019**

Those in attendance: Mark Stebbins, Angela Lamell, Lisa Barry, Patti Hayford, Bart Bezio (arrived at 6:19 p.m.), Mark Nielsen, Deb Clark, Jan Epstein, Laura Miller, Dylan Laflam, Brian Pena, The Langs, Randy Burnett, Brenda Barnum
Minute Taker: Sue Trainor

Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Public Comment: Stebbins called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. The agenda was amended by moving the review of the deed modification agenda item to follow public comment. Barry made a motion to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Nielsen. The motion passed unanimously. There was no public comment.

Review Deed Modification: Clark explained to those who had not attended the recent Board meeting that the red house on Rt. 15 was being purchased by the Langs. The deed to Stevenson was being modified to change the service use from a veterinarian's office to a hair salon. The Langs would also like to include an Airbnb or short-term rental. Clark read the new language to the Committee. The deed also waived the right of first refusal on this transaction only and retained the right of first refusal on any future transactions. Clark stated the Board had empowered this Committee to make a decision to accept the deed if they were comfortable with it. Clark recommended approval of the deed and asked that the Committee authorize her to be the signer. Nielsen made a motion to approve both the deed and to allow Clark to sign the document. Lamell seconded the motion. Miller asked how close the building was to the school and how they could ensure that registered sex offenders did not stay there. It was determined that those individuals were required to self-report. The motion passed unanimously.

Routine Business: Consent Agenda Items

Minutes of July 29, 2019 and September 23, 2019: Nielsen made a motion, seconded by Lamell, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Space Use Analysis Presented by Randy Burnett and Brenda Barnum from the Office of Colin Lindberg, Architect: Randy Burnett reported on the shortcomings and highlights of each school's design.

- The District Office building was quite tight and was basically a residential structure in design rather than a commercial space. It would not meet today's ADA standards.

- Belvidere: the building was currently being used as a pre-school. K-6 students were now at the Waterville site. This facility was an underutilized asset. The challenge was proximity and transportation.

- Eden Central School: The classrooms were large, especially for the current enrollment numbers at that facility. However, the smaller instruction spaces for special education and one-on-one instruction were being met by having divided up the library. Therefore, there was little privacy or confidentiality. Additionally, there wasn't a dedicated space for the art or music program. The art teacher had to move her supplies throughout the school and music classes were held in the gym. Music lessons took place at the same time that physical education activities were going on. Other than the classrooms, the other spaces were very cramped. For example, a storage/custodial space had been converted to an office space and it did not have the proper ventilation to be used in that way.

- Hyde Park Elementary School: a lot of needs had been addressed with the recent renovations. The classrooms were all being utilized, but each of them was slightly underutilized based on current enrollment.

- Johnson Elementary School: The large addition that had been done almost twenty years ago was holding up considerably well. Some of the spaces in the older wing were now going through a transition. A nurse's office was very close to the administrative office, creating some privacy issues. This facility was adequate for handling most of its needs but didn't seem to have the extra space available that could accommodate some of the needs of other schools. Burnett stated a new program wouldn't be able to come in unless sixth grade were to move to middle school.

- Waterville: the building was built in the mid-90's when the standard classroom approach was prevalent and there wasn't as much dedicated small instruction space. Similar to Eden, the dedicated small spaces for one-on-one instruction were hard to find. Waterville was trying to utilize the library for storing their art materials and music was held in the gym. A possibility for both Eden and Waterville was to add on space as opposed to trying to transport students to another facility. After assessing the square footage of the classrooms and looking at the current enrollment it appeared the classrooms weren't at capacity currently. Therefore, there was a possibility of carving out a small one-on-one space. However, it could be expensive to undo that if enrollment were to rise in the future.

- Lamoille Middle School: This building had large classrooms and a great layout. It had a very modern feeling. Administration felt they had challenges with privacy or finding space for confidential conversations. However, it wasn't as stark as some of the other facilities. The classrooms were so large they could easily carve out a few small offices to give them the spaces they needed without making a classroom too small for future enrollment increases. Burnett stated there might be a question as to whether there was enough space to add additional curriculum. He noted that the classrooms were all occupied and utilized, but not at 100%. It would require a lot of juggling to make that work. There was discussion of 6th grade classes being moved to the school, but Burnett felt that most issues could be solved at the individual schools.

- Lamoille High School: The bond had just passed to upgrade some of the facility needs. Burnett noted there was still more roofing to be done within the next five to ten years that had not been part of the bond. The review of the building was positive. Burnett noted there were a number of changes in technology. Maker spaces were becoming popular and may eventually require additional space.

- Tech Center: This was a fantastic facility and a great asset. However, the enrollment figures were disappointing with classrooms sitting empty. Transporting students from another school to the Tech Center would be difficult.

- GMTCC - Forestry and Land Management: This program was located on the Hazen Union campus. It was a fantastic facility but proximity to other schools was an issue. Enrollment had declined, but it appeared it might be on the rebound.

- GMTCC - Sustainable Agriculture and Food System (Robtoy Farm): This was a smaller facility near Cambridge. There had been some recent small upgrades. Miller noted there were eight people enrolled in the program. Again, travel distance was an issue. The question was how best to utilize the facility.

- Cambridge Elementary School: Burnett stated this was a beautiful school. The facility was fortunate to have both classrooms and dedicated smaller instruction space. Recent upgrades had helped with that and were a model of what some of the other schools needed to try to do. There were no empty spaces within the school for other programs to use. Miller noted they had built three classrooms for each grade but, with declining enrollment, space was now available for smaller instruction spaces.

Burnett stated there were a small handful of facilities that were just short on supporting the programs that the District wanted or were required to run. Clark noted that education quality standards had changed and there were now requirements for breakout spaces. Burnett noted that Eden had a lot of challenges in this regard. Music and art had no home, the library had been cut up to make space and even with that they didn't have enough space for what was needed. Burnett asked if the District would want to relocate 6th grade or move the Pre-K or kindergarten program to another town. Another thought was to combine grade levels, although he thought that could be a challenge with a larger class size.

Miller asked if a classroom could be divided in half. Burnett stated that since enrollment was down, one approach could be to create four small spaces that would only take out 100 square feet of a room. That would reduce the classroom size a small amount. He thought it would be good to study that option in order to solve the pressure on small instructional space needs. Burnett also suggested adding a smaller size addition that could handle music and art in combination. They were not trying to expand the footprint of the school but to bring the school standard up to par for equity among the schools. Burnett stated Waterville was in a very similar situation.

Miller asked if a sixth grade class could be moved to GMTCC. Burnett stated there were several issues with that, including transportation, the need for their own administration, supervision, and support services. Following further discussion among the Committee, Burnett stated that moving Eden's sixth grade class to Hyde Park would be a good financial decision and would open up space at Eden. Laflam stated that Belvidere was underutilized. Burnett agreed that the design of Belvidere lent itself to be a Pre-K. Waterville, Eden, and Belvidere could have a joint Pre-K.

Clark asked the Committee if they wanted the architects to return to provide information to the full Board. The Committee agreed that they did. Burnett and Barnum were asked to provide bullet points and send a report out in advance of the November 11th meeting.

Nielsen noted there was currently a conflict with some Eden parents who didn't recognize that small breakout spaces were needed at the school. Laflam stated he was going to be pushing for Belvidere a bit because it was a beautiful school and not being utilized. Waterville was using it for a preschool but he believed it could handle kindergarten as well. He suggested making an early education academy for the two schools.

Burnett stated he would provide the Board with the findings on November 11th. The next step would be determining the feasibility of potential solutions.

Discuss Track Proposal: Laflam informed the Board that the project had been broken into three phases. Phase 1 included surveying elevations. This would then provide a rough estimate of the cost to build the track. The cost for that phase was \$4,500. Laflam suggested bringing this phase to the Board. It would provide hard data to determine whether to move forward. Laflam noted that an eight-lane track would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Phase 2 was the actual design work and permitting. Building a track would affect the current stormwater permit. Phase 3 would be construction management.

Both Miller and Hayford were concerned that the location of the track was a deeryard because people hunted there. Laflam noted hunting on school property was illegal. Pena stated the cost for cell coverage and upgrades would have to be considered as well. Barry asked where the \$4,500 would come from. Hayford asked if PA would utilize the track and, if so, would they pay for gear. Miller stated if they start working on a track, people would begin to ask for tennis courts and a swimming pool. Stebbins stated the track program had expanded significantly and that was where the interest had come from.

Barry stated they had just had a bond vote approved and she didn't think it was a good idea to move forward with this item. Nielsen stated he was leaning towards not doing a lot with this right now. There were a number of urgent items on the table. He would like to look at the business end of the deal and find a way that the district wouldn't have to pay for it. He suggested there was grant money available or facility fees could be charged. Miller suggested track students could raise the \$4,500. Stebbins stated that if the Committee were to decline moving forward with this project they would need to have evidence of the costs. Moving forward with the first phase would provide that evidence.

In response to Barry's question, Laflam stated the \$4,500 would probably come from capital reserve funds. Clark suggested looking at what was available in the budget six months from now. Laflam and Clark noted that money would be freed up now that the bond had been approved. Clark stated it was not a project that would happen overnight. It was suggested that students could raise the \$4,500 if they were interested in the project. Lamell was concerned that the estimate could double over time if the track was approved now but built three years later.

Nielsen stated he would rather see money go toward students in classrooms. Laflam stated Phase 1 would take three weeks to do. They could actually wait until May to make a decision on whether to move forward with Phase 1. Bezio thought it would be best to review the business aspect of building the track. Bezio then made a motion to table this until after the new year. Barry seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Receive FY20 First Quarter Finance Reports: Clark reported that preliminary reports had been sent out. They looked good and all entities were trending on track.

Review First Run of FY2021 Budgets: Clark reported that the information being provided to the Committee was extremely preliminary. The increases in the reports were high at this point. Tomorrow the administrators would review the reports and offer ideas on what could be cut if needed.

The SU were proposing adding three positions that were the bulk of the increase. The first position was an IT systems assistant manager. That position had been empty for two years in the hopes that other positions could jointly handle the duties. The assistant manager would travel to all the sites to cover more high level needs that the District was experiencing. The second initiative was the continuation of the 2510 position. With the failure to merge, the conversion to the new uniform chart of accounts at the State level and the pending conversion to the SSDDMS e-finance, this position would need to remain in the budget. The third position to be added was a data manager. While Pena and Jewett were doing a great job it was clear that a dedicated year-round data manager was needed for State filings and curricular data filings.

Clark stated that in FY19 \$320,000 of available reserves had been dedicated. That had not been needed so \$300,000 of that would be available to apply to FY21. As far as health care costs, Clark stated that VEHI was asking for a 12.9% increase. Laflam added that Hyde Park Electric was asking for a 15% increase, which would mean a \$40,000 increase for the LUHS campus. Barry stated she would like to see FTE's added to the budget material and Stebbins asked to see enrollment and staff at each school.

Determine Next Meeting: Clark stated the target deadline to adopt the MUUSD budget was January 13, 2020. It was clear that figures from the State would not be available by early November. Therefore, Committee decided to meet on November 18th, December 2nd, December 16th and January 6th.

Other Business: Hayford discussed her concerns with carpet being on the floor at Hyde Park Elementary School. Laflam informed the Board they would open bids for the health center at Johnson on October 24th. The results would be presented to the Board the following Monday.

Adjourn: Nielsen made a motion, seconded by Barry, to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 p.m. The motion passed unanimously