

## **Questions from RTM Members for North Mianus School Repairs**

### **May 25, 2021**

#### **Questions from Lucia Jansen, RTM:**

- 1. We were looking for the RFP as well as bid response from Wernert for the work and did not see it on the school's purchasing website. Can you please forward the RFP response and awarded contract for Wernert?**

We have posted the bid summary on our website which is our standard practice. We can forward a link for the RFP (which is taken off the website once the bids are received) and response as requested. The awarded contract can be forwarded upon final approvals from the RTM, Town Finance and Town Legal.

- 2. Also, since there is a lot of price fluctuation in the construction materials market do you have a flat price for the materials so that the awarded amount is guaranteed for a certain period of time?**

The bid response included a bundled price for the base bid and for each of the alternatives. Based on our standard contract language, we expect the contractor to deliver at the prices quoted in the bid response.

- 3. There is \$334,000 in change orders not part of the RFP. How fixed is that pricing? Is that amount expected to remain constant?**

Those prices were received post bid but pre-award and will carry the same time restrictions as Bid amount.

- 4. There has been a lot of dissatisfaction within the North Mianus community with the offsite facility arrangements. Since the BOE has released no information on the offsite facility arrangements, how certain are you that the North Mianus community will find the new arrangements acceptable? What process was done to get this feedback from the community?**

We understand from communications with our NMS families that they have faced challenges with the logistics of traveling across town, most notably those that were displaced to Parkway School. As we shared, the proposed alternate location would be a good solution for our families and is within a reasonable distance to North Mianus. Given the ongoing nature of the contract negotiations, we are unable to say more at this time. We will share more information if the facility is approved.

- 5. Is the expectation being expressed to the North Mianus parents that move in is likely after Christmas or is there communication that it may be longer to add more months or even the end of the year?**

We shared at a recent BOE Meeting that renovations are expected to last through the end of this year, pending any delays. We are hopeful that after construction concludes and inspections are completed, that we will have our North Mianus School community returned to the building shortly after that.

**Questions to the BET from Lucia Jansen (Responses from: Leslie Tarkington, Chair BET Budget Committee:)**

6. In the bond is \$1,773,123 in operating costs (plus \$72k for a project mgr) for alternate space related costs. This seems odd given that we all know that implies paying off in 5-7 years what are going to be 6 months of operating costs. Can you please refer us to the accounting guideline for allowing these operating expenses to be bonded.

***BET RESPONSE***

- Pete Mynarski, Comptroller confirmed end of last week in his GASB accounting principles book that the presentation for the “ancillary charges to place the asset in its intended location and in the condition for the asset’s ultimate use” in the capital fund is acceptable GAAP accounting. The Town’s outside auditors confirm and support this presentation.
- To bus the students at North Mianus to school under normal circumstances is an operating cost. To bus the students to other locations during the repair of the school is not a normal operating cost. It is a cost associated with returning the school to its normal usage. Under GAAP, ancillary charges are considered part of the historical costs of construction. Therefore, costs such as for temporary placement of students and teachers while the building is under construction can be capitalized as part of this construction project for the North Mianus School. Roland Geiger Budget Director, agrees with this accounting presentation.
- Pete Mynarski’s understanding is that most of the alternate space charges are reimbursable from insurance recoveries. Therefore, they would not be attributed to the bonding tranches that would take five to seven years.
- The BET/Budget Committee was advised that the Alternate Space-Related costs to occur in FY22 if approved in FY21 as a BOE operating budget appropriation would lapse on June 30, 2021. The appropriation would have to be presented/approved after July 1 in either a regular or special meeting. The RTM would then have to schedule a summer special meeting. That would delay the signing of the lease until after the series of meetings, with the intent that the space would be occupied in August. In addition, some expenses had already been approved as capital, which would complicate accounting for items.
- Previous examples of capitalizing “an alternate location” for students or workplace costs during construction: 1. Central Greenwich Fire House at Horseneck Parking lot (operations; engines) and 75 Holly Hill (Dept administration); Hamilton Avenue School in modular buildings at Western.

- 7. We are also wondering why we are authorizing a total of \$4,652,912 when the insurance will be covering at least \$1,176,134 as of March 19, 2021 so should we not be deducting the insurance sum from the total amount?**

**BET RESPONSE**

- By Charter, to spend money all must be appropriated. Funding can come from multiple sources to support the appropriations. The word “appropriation” is used throughout the Town Charter. An applicable section to response to your question, is Section 30. (a) No officer of the Town shall expend, or enter into any contract by which the Town will become liable for, any sum which, with such contracts as are then in force, shall exceed the appropriations...”
- Appropriations can be funded by multiple sources of funds including bonding, insurance proceeds, FEMA reimbursements, capital non-recurring fund, general fund balance.
- A Bonding Resolution only “authorizes spending up to an amount”. Therefore, providing a bonding resolution for the full amount ensures that funds are available. Proceeds from other sources, such as school reimbursements, grants and insurance recoveries are deducted from that amount.
- It is difficult to plan reimbursements. The Town only borrows what is needed against the appropriation, and only once a year. Under the bonding resolution approved on May 24<sup>th</sup> by the Budget Committee and full BET, the earliest likely funding would be in January 2022, for any funds needed. Pete Mynarksi/Finance will fund based on cash flow needs. If insurance is received, he will deduct it. If construction is not complete, or bills presented, he will not be funding in advance for those items.

**Questions from Brian Raney, RTM**

- 8. Is there any scheduled capital work in the 15 -year budget projection that this work will remove? Many of the items sound similar to the descriptions in the CIPs.**
- a. **Ceilings & Lighting \$728K in 2022-23**

*The projections for the FY 2022-23 currently include \$748K for ceiling replacement and lighting upgrades. Obviously we will have to revise those projections to eliminate the ceiling replacement scope of work for the portion of the building affected by this project. Also, the District is involved in a Lighting Incentive Program offered by Eversource and North Mianus had been scheduled for a complete fixture replacement project. We are still trying to confirm the logistics of this work so that it dovetails into the overall project. The budget request for the lighting will also be amended.*

### **Emergency Lighting \$59K in 2023-24**

*Any emergency lighting fixture affected by the ceiling event will be replaced as will any emergency lighting fixture within the sections of the building not affected. These lights will be part of the Lighting Incentive Program. However, there may be some exterior lighting that would need to be replaced and at this time it is not clear if that part of the system is included in the incentive program. The budget request for Emergency lighting will be amended as more information becomes available.*

### **c. Furnishings \$366K in 2024-25**

We will still need furnishings as the funding is for the entire building.

### **d. “Other Minor Renovations” \$1.468M 2023-25**

The values currently listed in outer years under the “Other Minor Renovations” will be addressed. Obviously most of the work listed as Main office Renovation in the 15 Capital Plan will be revised but note that the description in the CIP sheets states *“The request is for funding for smaller identified projects within the district, usually requested by the school administration.”*

### **e. Plumbing & Electrical \$284K 2022-26**

Some of the scope items proposed thru FY 26 under Plumbing and Electrical will need to be revised. There is really no plumbing work associated with the project that is listed in those years however there are some components under the Electrical portion.

### **f. HVAC? No longer listed as not for FY21-22 (BET decision to divide multi-building request)**

Not sure what the question is. The HVAC was replaced in the building a few years ago and additional work will be done during the repair work for an HVAC compressor and controls to allow for better control of HVAC in different parts of the building, taking advantage of spaces being opened up to accomplish this work.

### **9. Is there any additional capital work in the 15-year budget projection that could be completed during this time?**

No

**10. Please explain in detail why the relocated students cannot be accommodated in existing schools. Why is it greater than the "disruption" of the Glenville, Ham Ave, Cos Cob, New Leb, and Cos Cob (did I miss any?) relocations?**

The buildings do not have the open space to accommodate the number of needs. While we made it work this year, it has been very disruptive to all four buildings. The North Mianus Fact Sheets shared how space has been a challenge (April 19, 2021). Please see the hosting challenges below.

Greater Disruption for North Mianus

- a) At Hamilton Avenue modular classrooms were utilized. We do not have modular classrooms, and installing them would require not only electrical and plumbing work, but the number of classrooms would be significant and much more expensive than an alternate location.
- b) Cos Cob Flood- The impact was much smaller and did not cause half of the building to relocate. It was also for a limited duration that did not span two school years.
- c) New Lebanon- The students stayed in their building during construction and the demolition took place after the building was constructed.
- d) As far back as Glenville, the federally mandated preschool numbers were considerably less and in 2021-2022 GPS will have between 14-16 classrooms in K-5 which are now utilized for PK. In comparison, just a decade ago the numbers ranged between 8-9 classrooms. Thus, we have 6-8 classrooms no longer available for K-5 use.

*\*From the North Mianus Fact Sheet*

**Is there a possibility to keep students at Cos Cob, Parkway and Old Greenwich?**

The current disbursement of students across other elementary schools is challenging for long-term learning and logistics. This solution has been helpful to allow our students to complete the rest of the school year in-person from an alternative location. Ideally, these host schools will regain the use of their spaces, especially as we are hopeful that we will return to a set-up similar to pre-pandemic times. Below is a short summary of how space is being utilized currently.

Our commitment is to have all children participating in in-person learning. Our first choice would be an alternate, educational space where all displaced 15 classrooms, plus specialty spaces, of

NMS students could be together. The district is exploring multiple options and will move forward with special consideration to: spacing needs, logistics, and available options.

- Old Greenwich:
  - Hosting 5th Grade
    - 1 Class: Situated in the music room
    - 1 Class: Situated in the science lab/math intervention classroom
    - 1 Class: Situated in teacher workroom
    - 1 Class: Took over remote instruction space
- Cos Cob:
  - Hosting 1st Grade
    - 1 Class: Situated in occupational therapy room (OT moved to a breakroom)
    - 1 Class: Situated in speech room (Speech took over PPS office)
    - 1 Class: Situated in music room (Music moved to the Cafetorium Stage)
    - 1 Class: Situated in the science lab
  - Hosting 4th Grade
    - 1 Class: Situated in math intervention/foreign language teacher's room
    - 1 Class: Situated in the art room
    - 1 Class: Situation in ESL room (ESL moved to ALP classroom; ALP moved to the media center)
    - 1 Class: Situated in second ALP room (ALP moved to computer lab)
  - Specials Teachers
    - Special Education: Moved to maker space
    - Literacy Specialist: Portion of Media center
    - Literacy Specialist: Moved to half of the teacher's workroom
    - Assistant Principal: Situated in a conference room

Cos Cob School has lost all areas for breaks, teaching remotely or conducting remote PPTs. Staff are using areas such as the Principal's Office and Assistant Principal's Office.

- Parkway:
  - Hosting ALP Grade:
    - 1 Class: Situated in the Speech and Language Room (Speech and Language moved to the art room)
    - 1 Class: Situated in Foreign Language and Math Intervention Space (moved to Media Center)
    - 1 Class: Situated in the Science Lab (which during COVID was being used as storage, District brought in storage containers to accommodate the move)

**11. What happens if the work is not completed prior to Dec 2021 and the end of the alternate location lease?**

There is some flexibility in the lease term.

**12. Will a Municipal Improvement be required? No**

**Approvals by anyone other than the Building inspector?** Yes. Besides the Building Inspector, approvals will be needed from the Fire Marshall. The First Selectman has committed that all inspections will be completed without haste.

**13. What was our deductible on this event?**

The Town's deductible is \$100,000.

**Questions from Abbe Large, RTM**

**14. First and foremost, I would like to see this project done swiftly. I'd like to add, however, I really can't understand the use of bonding for all the operational expenses of this project (1.8mm I believe). The Town has the cash, especially with the COVID relief that just came in and the extra 2mm of cash from how the BET handled the Mill Rate. Bonding is usually used for capital expenses. So if their taking it from operational, does that mean it will be deducted from the BOE's budget next year? What will the BoE have to remove to accommodate this large deduction? Why use bonding for a short term project? Isn't this what a rainy day is? What was the BET's reasoning as I believe this was a 12/0/0 vote by them. What are they saving the money for exactly?**

Please refer to Leslie Tarkington's response to Lucia Jansen.