

Phase II Subcommittee Meeting: 9/26/2019

Joint with School Committee

Present: John, Al, Steve, Lindsey, Andrea, Julius, Talia

Called to order at 6:57pm

John: constructive to do joint with school committee after our Monday night. Bids came in on Friday, higher than anticipated, all over the place. Curious. Telling was at least every component came in on estimate, but not from same bidder. Working over weekend, Art (our architect) didn't have time to review everything, had meeting Monday night, Art and Andrea couldn't be there. Voted to extend bid to allow value reductions, have learned more since then, cannot proceed with what we voted (option 3), leaves two options. We found out discrepancy in one bidder (3x cost for softball field) was a gross misunderstanding of scope, they would've been low bidder if hadn't bid it as an artificial turf, but they do not get a do-over necessarily. Two options to discuss tonight.

First, we can proceed to recommend to school committee to accept low bid from Clark, has to be accepted at the \$2.8 million in change and then work with them, opportunity to work with them on reductions to bring cost closer to budget.

Second, we can rebid. We take some of the value engineered ideas that Art listed, rebid, believe the company that mis-bid would come in lower.

Art: Correct, those are the options available. Can accept bid from Clark as indicated, going into contract for that value and then value engineer but would have to move forward with that dollar value but understanding that Jim (from Clark) believes can be lowered. Have gone thru this before on other projects, hope get same bidders, need to be clear that have three highly qualified, capable bidders. If I were to rank would go Clark and Rad together at talk but Clark has knowledge of Williamstown and proximity. Understanding that he is saying there are value engineering options would be valuable to see those first before voting.

Regina: Can accept low bidder but that locks us in to the \$2.8 million, Option 2 is going back to bid and is it for artificial, natural or both? Two things to consider in the second option.

Jamie: spent a lot of time looking at numbers. Turf field would meet the goal of increasing playability, no doubt in my mind. I share concerns about cost. Looking thru the material disclosed with FAQ, if do the numbers my back of the envelope is similar to Stephanie Boyd, cost of turf field coming in the \$700,000 to \$900,000 more over the period. Concern from community: heartfelt, sincere, concern on health and

environmental effects. Have had all three Lanesborough Selectmen say don't do turf, two Williamstown have said don't do. Need to preserve working relations with selectboards, communities. See this project as something we need to make sure we've done all due diligence, assessed as best we can what the trade-offs are. Very sympathetic to Hugh's suggestion: rebid and include a natural grass field. Organic separate question on maintenance. Need both for Phase I for building project and Phase II for how we are going to pay and keep in shape for long haul.

Ali: Discussion has gone on for over a year, I've had many of the same questions, have learned a lot more about efficiency of drainage system, irrigation system would need to be built for grass to be viable which takes water and is a conservation concern. So many trade-offs, no perfect solution, no black and white, can debate health and toxicity. My day job on sustainability, don't want impression committee is not interested. Accessibility, can go out on turf field in wheelchair more easily. Part of me wants to get good numbers on both, but part of me feels that if grass is not a viable solution....

Christina: only thing not sure on is have we fully addressed natural grass. We three are the three most recent serving. See benefits of artificial turf in terms of use of athletes, students in gym. Been watching climate protests, feel concerned about what happens in ten years.

Dan: One of the reasons I suggested we meet concurrently with subcommittee is so that we can all hear the information. Will ask the MtG chair to recognize the other members of Phase 2.

Julius: Christina concerned about legacy. Been thinking about that, from a student perspective we in this room are first and foremost to leave something better behind. Right now, the students want a turf field, have had discussions with students on teams, overwhelming majority that this is a better option. It's funny, I think we worry so much. Jamie said an issue of trust. The town we live in is amazingly sheltered from the real world, I think that sheltering our kids will send them to a world they won't be prepared. You mentioned listening to children on climate strikes, children here are saying turf fields. Having grass discussion is slowing things down, on the sub-comm we have come to the consensus that turf is the way to go. Given the task of what to do, our decision, our recommendation, is firmly for a turf field.

Talia: Also agree with everything Julius said. Have talked to many athletes and students in gym classes. Disabilities: turf gives a whole new access. Get out in gym, not sheltered indoors. Nice to get outside and be on a good turf. Not only night games, but 7th and 8th graders here to watch that varsity sport. Or Friday night are you going to see soccer. Something students are looking forward to, brings us together as a community, that's a goal to bring us together as a community. Know all want what is best for us to come together as one, overall turf does that.

Lindsey: First listening to Julius and Talia makes me proud of our students, spoke so eloquently and shows why we are here and why we are doing this. Best access for the students. We might've started this 4-5 years ago with different committees. First request was a new field, we need another field to be able to rotate things around. More options with synthetic, grass could have issues with our ability to maintain. Concerned on water and health, synthetic turf will lead to safer scheduling. In spring often have to go off-site b/c spring is wet, that can mean starting a game at 8pm on Monday, not good for students / parents, not convenient. Don't want schedule compression, want to spread things out.

John: This was meant to bring community together. Just came from game where Julius and my son were playing. Help coach girls soccer team. Meant to bring community together, cannot say enough about that. It's about the students and the kids.

(Al yields to Dan)

Dan: Surprised by the community's response to artificial turf. Surprised. Seen dozens of kids sign up for programs on the Williams fields, never heard concerns on that, saw many people I know and respect on that field, kids of all ages on those fields. Never heard any concerns on that. People ask how can you possibly consider given the risks. In my experience I've seen the benefits of these fields, I hadn't heard the other side. I'm not attacking those arguments, I'm trying to explain like John said that this seems like a divisive issue but there was no way to know this was going to be divisive because of how I saw turf fields being used. Gave me no clue that these other opinions were out there.

Al: Committee has been accused of not doing due diligence. Not true. Been accused of not caring about health of kids. Every time something came up, always asked what is good news, what is safe, never thought of using turf as an experiment. This committee has really worked. Started 4 years ago, had 10 different options with the Williams gift. Originally was going to be the administration building, now more than that. Second part was the fields. I was put on that sub-comm. Thought we'd have ADA compliance, thought would have Title IX compliance. Over three years, got more and more involved with artificial turf. I know more about artificial turf than I thought I would know, and more than I want to. Contact vs non-contact sports. Cancer. Look at Big Ten: 11 of the schools have artificial turf. Was a student during Kennedy, saw we went to the moon in a decade, think we can deal with the turf issues. What are we in spending on John Allen field? (Kim: was a big amount as we had to bring in stuff) Missing my point: year ago didn't know had to do this, five years ago didn't know We have no idea what will cost us down the road to maintain turf? Four years ago there was a blight going thru Berkshire golf, spent thousands of dollars on this. Ask farmers about cost of growing.

Steve: Agree with most of the supporters. I understand the concerns raised by members of the community, and have looked at the data. For me big item is access and playable hours. Not just how much something costs, but how much we can get. We're not a Division I college with those practice and play

schedules. We're a middle/high school, and turf will give more hours for our students and teams, it will prevent more travel and more schedule compression, and I have been convinced.

Jamie: if we do a synthetic turf field now, committing ourself to funding a replacement for that at some point in the future. Could be 8 years, could be 10 or 12 or 14. At some point will have to come up. If look at the numbers in the fact sheet appended to the FAQ, for the size of our turf field of 90,000 square-feet we're \$590,000 and \$708,000.

John: I don't believe that is an accurate figure, can have Art address.

Dan: can we find out the dollar figure?

Art: Trying to predict something 10 years in future. \$4/square foot, a few others, \$450,000 range. We've done replacement fields. When set up

Al: If we keep a million in the endowment should double our endowment every 8 years, that's why we set up an endowment fund. What gets us in trouble is when we don't know what we are going to spend. We are aware of the costs down the road, if we put the money in an endowment will likely cover these expenses.

Regina: The endowment was to replace / repair buildings not fields.

Al: included maintenance to the field.

Dan: I believed that if we agreed to go in this direction with a field, that we would understand that we were improving the quality of the playing surfaces and that would involve an increase in operating costs irregardless of choice to the extent that part of the tradeoff b/w the different choices for field surfaces would be how much carried on an annual basis, how much put up front in the initial capital expenditure, either way I anticipated that. Hear from the public that there is a need to improve the playing field, would ask to increase appropriations, to the extent that that is not necessarily can build a reserve fund that would gather over time for a lump sum cost at some point in the future.

Regina: Would ask sub-comm on training, equipment, get it professionally cleaned, ..., have all these costs been factored in for what you are asking, or is that in addition to? How much of the gift are we dedicating?

Dan: Art can verify, my sense is that all of those needs were included in the package that we were considering.

Art: That is correct. Grooming equipment included, training included, stock for future, also includes a one year annual maintenance for 8 years to have a professional come in and reset to get back to ground zero, test and make sure meets safety standards. The responsibility for the district is the daily maintenance, you own the equipment, similar to mowing, pulling a small machine that grooms the field roughly once every two weeks.

Regina: Do we accept the low bid or do we have new bids?

John: do we have any strong feelings one way or the other?

Julius: discussed Monday on bidding again and have the number change, likely the number will go down but could go up, we opted for option 3, fear if rebid down the line can have more delays. Personally we have been kicking this can a long time, would be great if someone picked it up right about now.

Al: I think we should take option 1.

John: Want to acknowledge that feel a \$300,000 savings.

Dan: Not sure I understand the process, don't want to ask awkward questions with contractor here and Art on the line, but need to understand: are we taking on a legal obligation for a larger amount with an understanding that we won't pay that much in the end. Any color I can get on that would be helpful.

Art: Would have to take in good faith what Jim stated publicly, cannot go below 20% of the bid, can do 20% legally.

Dan: At no time did I ever hear us as a school committee say \$2.8 million, absent a better assurance of how the process goes and what the number would be. Thought in bidding you bid, I understand if we find things we are willing to sacrifice it going down, but just having the amount go down to get the same thing I'm confused, why would the bidder not do that originally.

Art: Must keep in mind that Jim is recommending a value engineering change, saying think can do changes that will be in scope of work.

Dan: Clears it up a bit, but would prefer to have that conversation where first discuss cut and then take on legal obligation.

Regina: reached out to legal counsel. What are options? If committee chooses not to accept a bid, ask for new bids with value engineering. All persons must have opportunity to make bids based on specifications provided by school committee.

Kim: Our office was contacted as district own the bid, Berkshire trade president has put us on notice for a potential bid protest. Not sure what the protest is, not sure what went on with the bids.

Dan: can you speculate on the nature of the protest?

Kim: Do not have any information.

Al: Going with option 1.

Jamie: not sure what grounds would be for bid protest.

Andrea: There is an option to change and negotiate a price, part of services not design. According to AG: value engineering is not allowed post bid. As for a bid protest: not sure what talking about, we followed the bid procedures, posted correctly, opened in public session, been transparent, nothing illegal done. When someone threatens they should do it in writing, nothing has happened yet.

Dan: to Al's point on what the alternative is to option 1: if going to do option 2 and reject a bid: would be helpful to go thru a process like Jamie said with ballpark estimates for expenditures on fields, reserve for future expenses, then perhaps that can guide our discussion. If committee is comfortable spending amount that is bid...

Christina: not comfortable with \$2.8 million.

Ali: tough. I don't love the idea of extending the process any more. Number is high, but hope is that we would not pay that.

Andrea: have to post on the central register and combine, have to advertise, deadline is Thursday, would have to then do Oct 10th then would go till October 30th basically.... Could have everything done at the same time.

Art: extending into next season, and with weather a challenge in the Berkshires.

Jamie: does the timing change if we want to have the rebid include a grass field, or can that be done in the time frame Andrea mentioned?

Andrea: would need specs.

Art: would need to redesign field and location. Would have to do a full redesign, would have to bid as an alternative, would need time to do that. If we push really hard 2-3 weeks. Would be a full redesign of the field.

Andrea: same timeline, worked in a week for Art.

John: Ask Art, back to Julius point, are we pushing into another season, does it mean we get better numbers or worse?

Art: not necessarily better numbers, if start now would mobilize and then shut down for winter.

Jamie: do we have permitting built in for ground exposure.

Art: Yes. Only permit required are for track and lights itself.

Jamie: based on square footage of exposed...

John: have had these discussions.

Jamie: Move we reject the bids, Dan seconds.

Steve: My understanding is that we are rejecting option 1, and then will discuss next steps. Can have that as a rebid.

Dan: Want to know what is an acceptable expectation so can guide a future bidding. If say \$2.8 is too high but don't say what is acceptable we haven't gained any ground. Must be clear what we are comfortable with.

Al: If vote \$2.8 million and comes in at \$2.5 then pay \$2.5. I'm confident that the work will not take \$2.8.

8:09pm: Julius and Talia leave.

John: Art: what is the likelihood of the bids, outlier and time tables, are we going in to another season, whole new landscape on where we will end.

Art: cannot predict where we will end.

John: all along we had approval to go out back in May, delayed because we know summer is expensive and prime season, waited till the fall, have a bidder here, know the situation, if this is further pushing it down and away, things normally get more expensive with time, with new info trying to get a better sense of what this portends, don't want another conversation in a month on \$2.8 million on smaller scope as later.

Art: always potential for that, cannot predict that knowingly, have had bids come back higher and lower. There is a public number out there, perception of that, contractors can look at that and go up or down.

Regina: does the committee have a number comfortable with?

Dan: we were given \$2.3 million, was told \$2.85 is conveniently 20% above that, seems that there is an understanding that want to end up at \$2.3, I'm comfortable with \$2.3 million, given that our estimate for Phase I is in the \$2.1 - \$2.2 million range. The endowment has grown. Note this is similar to what I said six months ago, will try again.

Steve: Fine with Dan's numbers, value in getting things done, endowment has grown, have contractor who has worked in region and with college.

Jamie: easy to put in field and write the check with money sitting in the endowment, more challenging as a committee to come up with a project that matches up with a realistic with an annual increased operations cost or reserves money for replacement over time. Need to look at all of these together.

Dan: What do you envision that process?

Jamie: Haven't had the conversation of what we want for fields and what we are willing to pay. Laudable goal of maximizing play time, but haven't asked the question of at what cost on an annual basis and what that surface looks like. From my perspective it's not just me as a school committee member to decide, would feel much different to me if there was broad consensus on the community that a \$2.8 million dollar field and reserving for replacement field is that the community / taxpayers want. Then a no-brainer, have the money and we're together. Hearing people saying do it now and get kids on the field now, in 10 years when we do not have the money set aside to repair. No one is going to remember this conversation, stuck with a field that is not playable. How much are we willing to pay to meet our community standards, and what are they?

Dan: Maybe haven't asked directly, but have heard an answer from my reading of the community. Have heard precious little on why are you spending money to improve the fields. One comment expressed that. Debate is what is the vehicle to make these improvements? Maybe like turf and willing to pay, maybe like natural grass and willing to pay for it, but whatever you like you're willing to pay for it. That's why ok not fleshing out the number. Say \$45,000 a year if 10 years. Proposals for natural grass had dollar amounts. I think there is an expectation as to what that number looks like.

Steve: Have heard from coaches and players about more playability. Believe can reserve funds from the endowment's growth. Also what about the timeline for ADA, Title IX,

Kim: variance is until April 2022.

Dan: Clarification: You say you are comfortable reserving from the endowment.

Steve:

	return rate			0.05	0.07	0.09								
	amount	1.5 million					amount	1.2 million				amount	1.0 million	
year	0.05	0.07	0.09		year	0.05	0.07	0.09	year	0.05	0.07	0.09		
0	1.50	1.50	1.50		0	1.20	1.20	1.20	0	1.00	1.00	1.00		
1	1.58	1.61	1.64		1	1.26	1.28	1.31	1	1.05	1.07	1.09		
2	1.65	1.72	1.78		2	1.32	1.37	1.43	2	1.10	1.14	1.19		
3	1.74	1.84	1.94		3	1.39	1.47	1.55	3	1.16	1.23	1.30		
4	1.82	1.97	2.12		4	1.46	1.57	1.69	4	1.22	1.31	1.41		
5	1.91	2.10	2.31		5	1.53	1.68	1.85	5	1.28	1.40	1.54		
6	2.01	2.25	2.52		6	1.61	1.80	2.01	6	1.34	1.50	1.68		
7	2.11	2.41	2.74		7	1.69	1.93	2.19	7	1.41	1.61	1.83		
8	2.22	2.58	2.99		8	1.77	2.06	2.39	8	1.48	1.72	1.99		
9	2.33	2.76	3.26		9	1.86	2.21	2.61	9	1.55	1.84	2.17		
10	2.44	2.95	3.55		10	1.95	2.36	2.84	10	1.63	1.97	2.37		
11	2.57	3.16	3.87		11	2.05	2.53	3.10	11	1.71	2.10	2.58		
12	2.69	3.38	4.22		12	2.16	2.70	3.38	12	1.80	2.25	2.81		

Al: Elected, sub-comm has reached out, didn't decide over 6 weeks, been going on for weeks, months, years. Any controversial decision... We had discussions on sending students to Puerto Rico, if had a lot of community input sure would here concerns. We make decisions all the time.

Christina: I would be more comfortable with \$2.3 million.

Ali: As much as I would like to get things moving, there is a risk locking in.

Motion to reject: All in favor of rejecting but Al.

Dan: Move to authorize the sub-committee to consider value engineered reductions with the intent of reducing the expected expenditure of the project to \$2.3 million. Steve seconds. Intent to get us to the number we hope to be at, hope those who bid on the project will understand where we want to go. Would prefer not to legally bind the district to \$2.8 even though think we would get to \$2.3.

Kim: Question for Art: can you give me a number for this committee: what must they hold for contingency.

Art: 10% and then go to 5%. These must be held in case things are discovered that are needed / in case something goes wrong.

Dan: There is an expectation that we will not need to pay these additional amounts.

Sub-comm is willing to meet and discuss what comes back in a timely manner to minimize delays.

Dan: Director of Operations and Superintendent were present at last Phase II meeting and were very helpful.

Jamie: I would like to see something responsive to community concerns. Selectboard concerns, Hugh Daley's concern. Getting a bid on the cost of a grass field. Not sure, trying to think in my head as to what this motion would do. My objective is to go back to bid with an alternate for a grass field. Think we should have an alternate for a track.

Dan: there was an alternate for track.

Jamie: Base bid for what absolutely must do: Title IX, ADA. Had add alternates for grass, turf, track. I think that would show to the community that we have explored all options.

Steve: I understand that, but with what I've read and all the discussions I'm fine with supporting the turf fields.

Christina: Torn, see both sides.

Ali: Would it be helpful to ask Art on the issue of the environmental angle on what happens to the turf when being replaced?

Art: with chrome rubber can reuse infill with next field, there is a new Danish company that has a facility in Pittsburgh that can recycle turf up to 99.5%, other ways to recycle parts of turf, vacuum is where hard to remove, additional cost is shipping on the order \$5000. Alternative turfs, full recyclable, but those are all a cost differential.

Ali: politically good to consider grass and perception of due diligence, but there is a cost.

Regina: I think worth additional cost.

Al: Where is the money coming from?

Regina: same place where we get the money to redo the specs?

Steve: Come from the endowment.

Al: when people say just go out and bid, all of this has a procedure and cost.

Steve: I don't support adding grass, but the cost is small relative to the size of the project.

Dan: nothing in my motion prevented asking for things such as grass. The sub-comm made its recommendation. Could direct sub-comm to work with a grass option. Clear to me in evaluating the current proposal we all want the extra info the sub-comm process on value reductions and getting the number down would give. There is a process whereby the sub-comm would bring back to us. Can consider the rest separately.

Regina: Agree needs to come down in price, not going to support motion without natural field added.

Al: surprised to hear from someone as involved with committees as you. Dynamics involved in getting a turf bid. Not interested in spending another 9 months if new sub-comm. Would need to redo all that we've done.

Steve: I support Al, but I understand why Regina would feel as she does.

Andrea: If Al's cost is at a certain level then we do need to have more architects bid, wouldn't recommend having Art say his number (Art concurs).

Lindsey: there's the additional time, took many meetings to get specs of turf, there would be back and forth. Irrigation....

Steve: Call to question.

Motion passes 4 to 3 (Al, Dan, Steve, Ali; Jamie, Regina and Christina against).

Jamie: Would move that as part of the rebidding of the Phase II project we include an alternative for grass field, title IX and ADA, alternates for turf and track, and take whatever steps are necessary to prepare the bid documents for that.

Regina seconds.

Jamie: we owe it to the communities before we spend \$2.3 million and commit ourselves to spending every 8-10 years out of the endowment to evaluate all the other options. I'm not comfortable going down that track.

John: What have you missed in the last three years of work in defining the list of priorities while serving for three months?

Jamie: I've missed concrete cost on grass fields. We don't have. Has there been a discussion as to why the turf has been a higher priority? Only thing I saw was that a track was discounted as a probability because of cost, would be great to have a track, don't think we can afford, never saw the meat of the conversation as to why the turf was the direction instead of the track. I don't have a dog in this fight.

Lindsey: a lot of it was based on the number of students affected. PE can use field more than track, the track got removed multiple times over the years, brought it back when not able to use Williams the same way. Numbers using is less.

Steve: For me it is not just the cost per field, it is the cost per field times playable hours. I would support putting the track back as an add on, just part of a rebid.

Dan: thought we would rebid the project but with value options.

Discussion: track alternative is still in the rebid.

Ali: seems like we can contain costs, I don't want to think about natural, to me that's in the past, to go back to that we'll be sitting here five years from now. Let's make a decision and go.

Dan: Main concern with adding natural grass is the extent as to giving a false equivalency. Would get a cost, right next to another and compared as qualitatively equivalent, in my opinion they are not. What I have seen from decision process in dozens of communities across the commonwealth that they have come to the conclusion that they cannot make a grass alternative meet the same educational needs an artificial turf can. To me it risks being misleading to get a number that has the potential to get a number that can be misused. I can understand your concerns and the political implications of getting that number, troubled by the division within the committee, if there is a chance that having this number would potentially resolve the division in the committee then there is a reason to pursue even at the cost.

Ali: Thanks Dan for articulating. One thing I've heard is that we have no water source, is that a deal breaker for grass?

John: need irrigation to properly maintain.

Kim: Would have to determine where to put it, dig in a new well.

Art: Believe would build field where the turf would be (if do grass). Would need a well for irrigation. Cannot have an athletic field without irrigation. Growing Kentucky blue-grass, need water, heals and recovers faster than other grasses.

Kim: is this not possible with existing water?

Art: would have to test, get flow data, With synthetic turf haven't needed to do.

Kim: can we irrigate if put behind building?

Rob: need to know how many gallons a day, probably not cost effective as putting treated water.

Kim: Would have to consider a secondary pump, decommissioned other pumps.

Art: not a hard test, but need to know flow data, what drives the cost is if low flow need booster pump.

Al: excellent example of needing a second sub-comm. What we experienced in Phase II. Now talking about wells and gallons per minute. Not just a simple thing. For me, interested in what is best for the children, if 4-3 or 5-2 that's what it is, looking at what I think is the best option.

Dan: I understand the concerns of members of the committee wanting to get more information for comparisons. That might make the decision for them easier, more consensus, I hear what you are saying, I respect what you are saying, trying to listen to all.

Motion now to add back the grass alternative, passes 5-2. Against Al and Steve.

Al: what are the next stages. What happens next?

Regina: Schematics are going to be made up.

Jamie: someone has to draw up a plan for a natural grass field.

Dan: I don't think we kicked it down, the process is going to go on concurrently, there is going to be a process for Art to go thru to present the challenges with the project that we will see in bid documents, get a cost estimate from him on what it will look like, most of the safety considerations will be the same. I don't think it will take much more time. We get these answers, appeases the members of the committee who have their doubts, I am confident it will resolve their doubts.

John: Art, what will you need?

Art: need to engage some people and have a discussion on irrigation, don't want to speak for them.

Steve: I was fine going forward, I am fine supporting bidding the grass alternative and trying to reach consensus. and just being aware, as Dan said, that we compare apples and apples. Also, do we know it will be Art, or do we have to bid this out?

Andrea: can use Art (Steve's summary, Andrea concurs and will send the text).

Jamie: need to build communications with boards of selectmen and finance boards to help them understand all the thoughts that have gone into this. Lay of the land is little support or understanding of artificial turf. Not sure they understand what phase II have done. Important that they do understand.

Al: Ask the Lanesborough Board of Selectman to pay for the additional costs.

Steve: We discuss with other boards, we get input then decide. Lanesborough board years ago said would vote against the school budget if we kept the after school bus, cost of about \$10,000 to them, we voted 4-3 to do so, they rejected but the towns did. My understanding of what Jamie and others are saying is that we are trying to get consensus, hear voices and input, and make a compelling case. We made the case to the towns, and the bus was supported.

Motion to adjourn made by Steve, seconded by Al, passes unanimously at 9:20pm.