


Date: March 20, 2023

Memo: Mr. Fred Camillo, First Selectman
Ms. Lauren Rabin, Selectwoman
Ms. Janet Stone McGuigan, Select-person

From: James Waters, Chairman, Old Greenwich School Building Committee 

Subj: Municipal Improvement Application for the Old Greenwich School Renovation

The Old Greenwich School Building Committee (OGSBC) is submitting an application for a Municipal Improvement (MI) for the Old Greenwich School (OGS) renovation project. The OGSBC is aiming to submit a pre-application to the Planning & Zoning Commission (P&Z) in May/June 2023 followed by the formal application in June/July 2023. The Board of Education (BOE) endorsed the OGS renovation project for a MI on March 16, 2023. We are seeking the support of the Board of Selectmen (BOS) in recommending the OGS project for a MI so we can begin to work with P&Z in our collective effort to address deficiencies in this school building on behalf of the Town of Greenwich.

Background

The Old Greenwich Elementary School was constructed in phases starting in 1902, with additions in 1950, 1957, and 1995. Some renovations were also completed in 1993. No significant capital projects have been completed at this campus in 25 years.

The building currently comprises approximately 72,000 gross square feet with a current enrollment that is consistently 400+ students in grades Pre-K through 5. The most recent demographic report projects that the highest probable enrollment will not exceed 438 students. The campus is in a prominent location in the Old Greenwich section of Town and plays an important role in defining the traditional appearance of the broader community that it serves. In addition to being an educational hub, the campus serves as a polling station and hosts seasonal events and many children’s sports activities.

OGS was identified in the 2018 Greenwich Public Schools Facilities Master Plan and 2020 OGS Feasibility Study as requiring critical renovations. In 2021, the BOE unanimously approved Educational Specifications (Ed Specs) focused on addressing core deficiencies in the building. As this plan and study were created, a complaint was filed with the US Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights claiming that OGS was discriminating against children and adults with disabilities because of the building’s non-compliance with federal ADA regulations passed in 1990. This complaint was addressed in a 2021 Resolution Agreement signed by the School Superintendent, stating the Town of Greenwich expected to address ADA non-compliance issues through a renovation contemplated for 2023.

In addition to critical ADA concerns, OGS lacks a secure entrance, a sprinkler system and a proper HVAC system for heating, cooling, and air circulation/ventilation. The school also has serious plumbing concerns on the lower level including periodic backup of raw sewage as well as space deficiencies for current and future needs. OGS, like much of Old Greenwich, sits in a FEMA AE flood zone.

The BOE and First Selectman included \$1.5 million in architectural & engineering funds for the OGS renovation project in the FY 2022-2023 budget request and the Board of Estimate & Taxation (BET) approved \$1.0 million. The Board of Selectmen formed the OGSBC in Fall 2022. The OGSBC has 9 members, including BET & BOE representatives, 5 Ex Officio members including the OGS principal, and 2 liaisons to advise the committee on ADA compliance and energy efficient construction methods. OGSBC members, meeting agenda and minutes, and updates are listed on the [OGSBC website](#).

Over the last 6 months, the OGSBC has hired a project team including the architecture firm Silver Petrucelli & Associates, and the construction firm Morganti Group to provide Owner's Representative services. The OGSBC will soon interview applicants for the Construction Manager position.

The OGSBC and its project team have recently started the Schematic Design process. It is expected that the following activities will be completed by June 2023:

- Space programming
- Design Decisions
- Stakeholder and community engagement forums
- Site surveys
- Hazardous Material Testing
- Environmental Phase I/II Study
- Environmental soil remediation testing
- Geotechnical soil borings
- Traffic study (if required)

Project Scope

The scope for the planned renovation is defined in the OGS Ed Specs. The National School Boards Association describes the purpose of Ed Specs as follows: "The purpose of educational specifications is to define the programmatic, functional, spatial, and environmental requirements of the educational facility, whether new or remodeled, in written and graphic form for review, clarification, and agreement as to scope of work and design requirements by the architect, engineer, and other professionals working on the building design." There is no current standard format for Ed Specs in the State of Connecticut.

The OGS Feasibility Committee members (for a listing see [Appendix 1](#)) created the OGS Ed Specs over a period of four months from August-December 2020, which the BOE approved in October 2021. The OGS Ed Specs are focused on addressing the following in the renovation:

Educational Adequacy

- Provision of an adequate number of grade-level classrooms that meet the District's recommended minimum size standards.
- Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and 1st Grade Classrooms are all required to be located on the Ground Floor.
- Support Spaces (i.e. Speech and Psychologist) are in under-sized spaces.
- The nurse's suite is undersized and does not meet current demands.

- Spaces for Next Generation Learning approaches (listed as Goal spaces in Model Program) are not currently provided.

Security

- Absence of a secure vestibule for visitor management.
- Main entrance is not visible by the office or security personnel.
- Main office is remote from the main entrance.
- All outdoor spaces are exposed to the public.
- Kindergarten Classroom is in a potentially vulnerable location next to the main driveway.

ADA

- There is no elevator in the building, and it has 6 different floor levels.
- The main entrance is not accessible.
- The gym/auditorium public entrance is not accessible.
- Student toilet rooms are not fully ADA compliant on all levels.
- Classroom sinks and closets are not accessible.

Health & Safety

- At least two of the ground-floor classrooms are located below a level identified as a flood plain and have experienced water intrusion.
- Powered ventilation systems are not present in older parts of the building and as a result, do not meet current codes for school buildings.
- Classrooms are partially air conditioned with window units which are not energy efficient, are damaging the window frames and masonry, and are noisy.
- Filtration for window units is inadequate and does not address cleaning of air in the classroom, bringing tree/mold spores in from outside.
- Windows are not energy efficient and are difficult to operate.
- A number of building systems have significantly exceeded their expected useful life and as a result require replacement, including communications, fire alarms and emergency lighting.
- An emergency generator is needed to maintain basic services and to operate sewage and stormwater pumps.
- Key upgrades to building systems are also proposed, including; completely new Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning systems for all areas that are not currently served, selective roof and window replacement, installation of an emergency generator and upgrades to building Communications, Fire Alarm, and Emergency Lighting Systems.

Enrollment data was analyzed during the creation of the Ed Specs, determining the following:

- “Significant changes in enrollment are not expected at Old Greenwich Elementary School, and so they are not the prime generators of the need for changes to the facility. The demographic report completed concurrently with the Master Plan (Statistical Forecasting, 2017) identified historic enrollments in the range of 430 students. Current enrollments are somewhat skewed by the pandemic but are reported in the range of 360 - 400 students. The Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE) supports planning facilities for the highest enrollment that is projected to be in place in the next 8 years. The highest probable enrollment for Old Greenwich Elementary

school is projected to be 438 students in 2025-2026. This total enrollment still keeps Old Greenwich in the 3 section per grade level group.”

- In the 2022-2023 school year, OGS has four Kindergarten and three 1st grade sections. In the 2023-2024 school year, OGS expects to have four Kindergarten and four 1st grade sections.

A detailed analysis of building capacity was conducted, to fully accommodate the enrollment and the Model Program. This analysis determined the following:

- The use of each space was updated during the course of the current study and it was found that the building is adequate for approximately 408 students. There are several areas, primarily in the Goal category of spaces that are missing from the school but the prime reason for the capacity figure falling below the enrollment is the size of the classrooms used for grade level instruction.
- There are many grade level classrooms for grades 2 and above with a net (useable) square footage (NSF) in the 675-710 range. The Model Program developed for Greenwich set the size requirements for these rooms at 850 nsf based on the new buildings that have been recently constructed in the District (i.e. Glenville & New Lebanon). Connecticut SDE supports a size of 900 nsf for these types of classrooms utilized for grades 2-5. While the discrepancy accumulates to an overall 10% shortage of space for grade 2-5 alone.
- For new or replacement buildings, the quantity and sizes of spaces included in an Ed Spec can be more or less fully realized. For renovation and re-construction projects, it is typical that it serves more as a guideline because it is more challenging to fully realize due to the constraints provided by the existing facility. It makes sense for renovation projects to include a conceptual approach as part of the Ed Specs to best describe how the project’s goals are to be realized in the specific context of an existing school building. The conceptual design at this stage serves as a “proof of concept” and one possible way to meet the highest priority needs. This approach is also necessary in order to begin the development of a reasonable budget for the proposed improvements.

Educational Program Requirements

The OGS Ed Specs identified quantitative and qualitative issues to address. Quantitative issues include:

Core Spaces	Goal Spaces – Not Currently Provided
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Undersized Pre-kindergarten Rooms ● Undersized Grade level Classrooms for grades 2 – 5 ● Lack of Small Group Instruction Rooms ● Undersized Special Education Resource Classroom ● Lack of a Commons or Large Group Instruction Room ● Undersized Cafeteria ● Undersized Teacher’s Lounge ● Underprovided space for Specialists ● Undersized Nurse’s Suite ● Lack of a Secure Vestibule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Commons / Transition Area ● Small Group Instruction Rooms ● Activity Commons ● Project / Idea Lab ● Flex Lab Flex Special Programs Rooms ● Sensory Room ● Reflection / Small Group Room After School Program Room Separate Copy and Mail Rooms

The total shortage of usable square footage represented by the existing deficiencies outlined above is over 12,000 nsf or 22% smaller than the full model program. A 9,500 sq foot addition and associated renovations would decrease this shortfall to 8,791 nsf or 16% smaller than the full model program.

Qualitative issues include not only the condition of each space but also its location, including its adjacency (or lack thereof) to related instructional spaces. Perhaps the most important adjacency issue is the requirement that all Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and First Grade Classrooms be located on the ground floor of an elementary school. Further it is desirable to have all classrooms for a single grade nearby to each other and on the same floor of the building.

The other significant location or adjacency issue is the location of the main office on the opposite side of the corridor from the main entrance. This results in the undesirable situation of admitting visitors to the building and trusting that they will find their way to the office. It also does not allow for a direct visual connection to visitors by main office staff or security personnel.

Anticipated Costs

Professional estimates of project costs will be provided during the Schematic Design process, anticipated to be complete in June 2023.

Using estimates produced during the Feasibility Study and creation of the 2021 OGS Ed Specs, updated construction cost escalations, and a 20% contingency, the OGSBC anticipates project costs of \$35.9 million if construction starts in 2024 and \$38.0 million if construction starts in 2025. The BOE and BET have been briefed on these estimates, and the BOE endorsed them at its March 16, 2023 meeting.

Below is a breakdown of estimated project costs:

	2020 Estimate¹	2024 Estimate²	2025 Estimate³
Site Development	\$1,180,022	\$1,805,603	\$1,913,940
New Construction	4,789,500	7,328,625	7,768,343
Renovation	2,012,978	3,080,147	3,264,956
Infrastructure	9,023,697	13,807,555	14,636,008
Contingency ⁴	1,700,620	5,204,386	5,516,649
Soft Cost Allowance	3,061,116	4,683,948	4,964,984
Total	\$21,767,933	\$35,910,265	\$38,064,881

¹ Estimated costs as per 2020 Feasibility Study and 2021 OGS Ed Specs, includes 10% contingency and 18% allowance for soft costs

² Estimated costs in 2024 using 2020 estimate as base, including historic/expected cost escalations 2021-2024, a 20% contingency, and a traditional 18% allowance for soft costs

³ Estimated costs in 2025 using 2020 estimate as base, including historic/expected cost escalations 2021-2025, a 20% contingency, and a traditional 18% allowance for soft costs

⁴ 2020 estimate only includes 10% contingency, 2024 and 2025 estimates include traditional 20% contingency for a renovation project

Anticipated Timeline

A detailed breakdown of the anticipated OGS renovation timeline can be seen in [Appendix 2](#).

The OGSBC and its project team expect to complete the Schematic Design process in June 2023. If construction funding is provided in the FY 2023-2024 budget, the OGSBC will be ready to submit an application to the Connecticut Office of State Construction Grant & Review (OSCG&R) in June 2023 and make the state priority list in December 2023. If construction funding is not provided in the FY 2023-2024 budget, the OSCG&R submission will be delayed at least until June 2024.

The OGSBC expects to start the Design Development phase and commence with Local Land Use approvals in July 2023 and is aiming for completion by December 2023. The Local Land Use approval process will include vetting by P&Z, the Architectural Review Committee (ARC), the Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Agency, and other relevant local departmental agencies and commissions. To ensure a thorough and expedited review of this important project for the community, the OGSBC intends to follow this timeline regardless of whether construction funding is provided in FY 2023-2024.

When complete, the OGSBC will move to the Construction Documents and Bidding & Award phases in January 2024. This would enable construction to start as soon as Spring 2024. The Bidding & Award phase and construction start date may be delayed if construction funds are not provided in FY 2023-2024.

The BOE and BET have been briefed on this timeline and it is consistent with the OGSBC's 1st quarterly report submitted to the Representative Town Meeting (RTM) on January 13, 2023.

When construction starts, the OGSBC anticipates major construction activities will be completed in a phased manner over three consecutive summers. A phasing plan will be completed in partnership with the OGSBC architect, owners rep, and Construction Manager as part of the preconstruction process.

Appendix 1 - List of OGS Feasibility Committee Members

Toni Jones (Superintendent - Committee Chair)

Karen Kowalski (BOE)

Jennifer Bencivengo (Principal)

Daniel Watson (Director of Facilities)

Todd Mickel (Teacher)

Tiffany Vaccari (Teacher)

Jennifer Webb (Teacher)

Erica Jacoby (PTA)

Carolyn Petersen (PTA)

Frank DeLuca (Parent)

Joe Dowling (TOG Disabilities Committee Member)

Appendix 2 - Detailed OGS Renovation Timeline

[See next page]

