

Finance and Capital Committee
Minutes of Meeting
May 10, 2023

Attendees: Mark Nielsen, Bart Bezio, Mark Stebbins, Katie Orost, Deb Clark, Brian Pena, Dylan Laflam, Rene Thibault, Angela Lamell

Minute Taker: Sue Trainor

Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Public Comment: Stebbins called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Nielsen made a motion, seconded by Lamell, to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously. There was no public comment.

Consent Agenda Items - Minutes of April 19, 2023 Meeting: These minutes were already approved by the full Board on May 8, 2023.

Discuss Cricket Hill Project: Laflam provided the Committee with a packet of proposed site plans and designs, along with a preliminary budget.

Laflam began by discussing the current draft of the athletic field improvements. He said that the coaching staff, athletic directors, and administration had reviewed this concept and liked it. All track and field events would be moved outside of the center of the track. This would allow the large space in the middle of the track to be used as a soccer field. There would also be room in the middle for throwing events, high jump, long jump and pole vault. There would be eight lanes for the 100 meter. There would be a retaining wall between the track and the parking lot. Laflam was currently working through stormwater, wastewater and water plans.

Bezio asked if there would be room for a football field in the middle of the track. Laflam stated there would be. This proposed concept included everything but the uprights. It could easily be turned into a regulation varsity football field. There would be no additional cost to do that. Laflam noted that the cost of lighting was not included and could be an add alternate in the bid process.

The first floor of the building (basement) would have four dedicated locker room spaces, with each one having 40+ lockers. It would be easy to accommodate most of the track meets. The bathroom facility was a shared concept with full floor to ceiling walls and it would be unisex. Laflam stated there was a large cost to any bathroom facility and typically students didn't use them. Therefore, he would like to have more locker space. Laflam then asked if they should eliminate the locker rooms and instead consider adding team rooms.

On the next floor, the pre-school wing would have two dedicated classroom spaces both over 1,000 square feet which could accommodate twenty students each. There would be a large/instructional space which would support a GMTCC program. This area would be for evaluations for students working with the younger students. A full kitchen facility and a dedicated staff bathroom would be in this location as well. There would also be a small conference space/auxiliary space.

Laflam then talked about Central Office, explaining that there would be two dedicated entrances to the building: one to the pre-school and one to Central Office. People would need to be allowed entrance into the office and the waiting room. Finance and HR would have their own suites. There would be a large conference room, a file storage room, and a mailroom. The elevator would be programmed so that access to each floor would be dictated by programmed permissions.

The second floor would have offices for the administration. There would be a kitchenette, copier room, and janitor closet. There would be a fairly large IT closet.

Clark noted that a set of bathrooms could be eliminated from one of the spaces. Lamell agreed that there were a lot of bathrooms. Laflam agreed, noting they were expensive and harder to clean. Lamell suggested the bathrooms could be replaced with more office space or filing space. Stebbins asked if Laflam had considered open concept bathrooms. Laflam said that could be done.

Lamell asked how many people getting office spaces under this new design were currently located in other schools. Laflam stated twelve school spaces would open up.

The review moved on to the performing arts center concept. It was a large open space, 2100 square feet in size. There would be a new office space, storage, and dressing space. There had been a last minute request to change the design of the performing arts center to a dance studio and a music classroom. The school now had a third music teacher. They didn't have enough space and needed to shuffle classrooms. Laflam noted that band and chorus were very specific programs that required sound proofing. This request would reduce the room to a classroom space, not a performance space.

Laflam discussed the bathroom design at the high school. This new design would be across from the high school's office. The common space would be reduced. Each bathroom stall would be an individual private stall with floor to ceiling walls. The sinks would be put into the common space. It would now be harder to hide for vaping or vandalism. Laflam stated they were losing all of the urinals. There would be a net gain of toilets but a loss of four urinals. This design was presented to the student council and they liked the level of privacy.

Laflam informed the Committee that the Community Meeting Room and the GMTCC roof needed to be dealt with. They could save money with this part of the project though.

There was a lengthy discussion about parking and traffic flow. There were two ideas. One was to fix the storm drains and resurface the entire lot. This would cost significantly less than a complete re-do. The design of the current parking lots and bus loops were poorly put together and there was a lot of cross traffic. This could be the time to address those issues. The proposed design would turn the entire campus into one-way traffic with a dedicated bus loop and drop-off. This would result in a net loss of 40 spots though. Clark then discussed ensuring there was green space between sidewalks and buildings. GMTCC had significant metal rot and creating a four-foot grass buffer would help.

In discussing costs for the project, Laflam reminded the Committee that these numbers were preliminary. Mechanical, electrical or plumbing costs were estimated. The costs were as follows:

Pre-K Classroom, Playground, Track Lockers and Central Office: \$5 million

Site Improvements: Track and Field and Parking: \$2.5 million

Cold Storage Building: \$125,000

LUHS/LUMS/GMTCC Bathrooms: \$537,300. Removing one of these bathrooms would result in a savings of \$186,000.

GMTCC Roof: \$1,144,950

LUHS Performing Arts Center: \$1,162,500

Middle School Health Classroom (Blue Room): \$62,500

LUHS/LUMS/GMTCC Parking and Sidewalks: \$1.5 million. Resurfacing saves \$500,000 to \$700,000

Subtotal: 12,018,225

15% Contingency on Estimate: \$1.8 million.

Total Construction: \$13,820,000

These figures were before factoring in soft costs such as architectural design, state permits, legal expenses and insurance costs. Clark noted they had \$800,000 in investment earnings available dedicated to this campus. Laflam stated the goal was to try to raise 10% of the bond costs through donors, sponsors, Efficiency Vermont grants, and early education pre-school funds. They would have to bond first though, without knowing how much they would ultimately raise.

Laflam talked about ways to save money on the project. A bathroom could be removed from the design and they could resurface the parking lot, but otherwise there weren't a lot of places to save money on the project. The size of the preschool could be reduced, however, having the two classrooms was conducive to having a program at the Tech Center. Clark said there could be some state funds for childcare. The roof repair could be eliminated from the project but Laflam anticipated having to come back for the funds because the work ultimately needed to be done. The Performing Arts Center could be cut as well as the track and field, however, Clark noted they had been talking about this for a number of years. Laflam noted that these costs were based on the last 24 months which were the highest costs he had seen so the figure could be less.

Lamell stated it was a hard time to request \$14 million from voters and stated she would have voted differently if she knew the building for Central Office would end up being this expensive. Nielsen said he would prefer to see one more bathroom and as much as he'd like to see the parking lot done the right way, resurfacing would be his vote. The roof repair was important. The track had a lot of exposure and popularity and he wouldn't consider removing that. Central Office needed to be done. Nielsen said the District was looking at an increase in students. There would come a time when the District would have to spend the money. Laflam noted that Burlington High School was spending \$165 million. Fairfax just approved \$36 million. Bezio noted that this District was in the top 10% of the State as far as the condition of the buildings were.

Laflam said that after the May 15th Board meeting there was a fairly aggressive PR campaign scheduled. The campaign involved getting reactions through online surveys. Changes could continue to be made until the actual bond vote.

Thibault stated that what was included in this project at this stage touched a lot more of the community than some other projects had. This was a huge selling point. Clark said the track would be open to all the other competition level entities around. It wouldn't be just for Lamoille North. It could also draw families to the area.

Nielsen said that it was important to explore other funding sources such as state money, sponsors, and fundraising opportunities.

Orost stated her opinion was to resurface the parking and remove a bathroom. The Committee members agreed. Bezio suggested providing the Board with the design options but outline what the FCC recommended. The Committee members agreed. Lamell recommended adding an estimate of the soft costs. Clark stated at this point she wanted the numbers being presented to be high. She did not want to under-bond. It was worse to not be able to do some of the projects because you didn't have enough money.

Lamell asked what the operating costs of the track would be. Laflam said there would be one additional person for all of Cricket Hill at a cost of \$70,000. He wasn't sure exactly how much it would cost for the upkeep of the track, but he anticipated it would be minimal. As the project moved along he would provide more detailed information on the cost of upkeep and utilities. The bleacher capacity was set at 750. Revenue from other groups using the facility would help defray the costs.

Adjourn: Nielsen made a motion, seconded by Bezio, to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m.