

Old Greenwich School Building Committee

Second Quarterly Report

January 13, 2023 - April 13, 2023

The Old Greenwich School Building Committee (OGSBC) continues its rigorous work towards advancing the long-overdue renovation of Old Greenwich School (OGS), a treasured community landmark for pre-K and elementary students dating to 1902. Standing weekly meetings are Tuesdays at 7:00 am in the Old Greenwich School Media Center and are open to the public. Since convening in October 2022 the committee has met 36 times. Meeting agendas, minutes, and other documents can be accessed on our [website](#).

The renovation focuses on bringing the building into full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and addresses key areas of health, safety, security, and water intrusion among other items as outlined in the [Educational Specifications](#) approved by the Board of Education (BOE) in October 2021.

Project Update

Architect/Owner's Representative

On January 19th, the BOE unanimously approved the OGSBC recommendation of the architectural firm Silver Petrucelli and Associates (SP&A) of Hamden, CT. The OGSBC unanimously selected The Morganti Group of Danbury, CT to provide Owner's Representative services. SP&A's contract was signed in March and Morganti's will be done in April.

SP&A has begun the schematic design, which it expects to complete in June. These design plans must be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) within 15 days of completion as part of the agreement between Greenwich Public Schools (GPS) and the OCR after a 2021 complaint against OGS about its lack of ADA compliance.

SP&A designed the upcoming secure entryway at Greenwich High School, accessibility improvements at Western Middle School, and has substantial experience in school construction design throughout Connecticut.

The 100+-year-old Morganti Group has begun providing project management services including overseeing pre-construction processes over the April school break. Morganti has met with Planning and Zoning (P&Z) to understand best practices and procedures in preparation for the Municipal Improvement (MI) process.

Construction Manager at Risk

The OGSBC opened bids on March 23rd and will interview firms on April 19th. The OGSBC expects to select the CMR in April and sign the contract in May. The CMR will ensure that the best professional construction cost estimates are obtained during the pre-construction process.

Pre-Construction Assessments

Detailed design meetings have been underway since March. Site surveys were conducted in late March with reports expected in late April/early May. A team of professionals, including SP&A architects and engineers, was on site the week of April 10th to carry out an in-depth ADA assessment and thorough evaluations of plumbing, mechanical, electrical, and fire protection.

Phase one environmental studies also commenced, including interior hazardous material testing and exterior geotechnical borings.

Financials & Funding Update

\$1M in Architectural and Engineering (A&E) funding was approved in FY '22-'23 with expected placeholder construction funds of \$24.5M to be provided in FY '23-'24. On January 24th the First Selectman proposed that construction funds be deferred for one year. Without additional allocation, the OGSBC's present appropriation would be exhausted in Fall 2023. Accordingly, the building committee created options for the BOE, First Selectman, and Board of Estimate & Taxation (BET), to keep the project moving forward:

1) The OGSBC worked with SP&A and Morganti to update the pre-COVID construction estimate with more accurate escalation and contingency assumptions, arriving at a total estimate of \$35.9M for FY '23-'24. The BOE unanimously accepted this estimate on March 16th and asked the BET to reinstate construction funding in FY '23-'24. This would ensure no delay in meeting the original anticipated August 2026 project completion.

2) The OGSBC worked with its project team to build a detailed cash flow analysis, showing that \$1,085,746 in incremental A&E funding would allow the OGSBC to complete pre-construction work by Spring 2024 and apply for State funding in June 2024. The project's conclusion would instead be August 2027 at an incremental cost of \$2M due to expected cost escalations.

3) The OGSBC also worked with its project team to examine costs of a new school, leveraging comparable projects from the 2021-2023 CT State Priority List and FEMA requirements for new construction in a flood zone, and determined that a new construction school would cost roughly double vs. a renovation per the 2021 OGS Ed Specs.

On March 16th the BOE reaffirmed its support of the renovation and acknowledged that the OGSBC will provide updated costs dependent on final schematic design to compare against figures for new construction. The First Selectman advocated for the incremental A&E funding at the BET public hearing on March 29th.

On April 4th Decision Day, the BET allocated the following:

- 1) \$1,085,746 was approved in incremental funding, subject to release upon:
 - Completion of a BET independent estimate (BET funded at \$15K) of the partial renovation of OGS as per October 2021 OGS Ed Specs vs. a new school with an equivalent capacity at the same location or elsewhere on the site if applicable
 - BET approval of an itemized renovation budget if the partial renovation estimate is greater than \$24.5M

- 2) Though not requested, \$1.5M was appropriated to partially address ADA and sewage. The OGSBC will work with GPS and the BOE to determine next steps, to include the possible legal impact of failing to ensure full ADA compliance, the likelihood of increased project costs through this approach, and the likely result that spending funds on partial solutions will eliminate the projected 13% State reimbursement.

- 3) Construction funding in FY '23-'24 was denied.

In June 2023, the BET expects to have its estimates and the OGSBC anticipates providing a revised renovation estimate based on the chosen schematic design.

To date, the OGSBC has spent \$996.94 from the approved \$1M allocation in FY '22-'23. In the coming weeks, the OGSBC expects to consider invoices for legal, architecture, and owner's representative services and environmental testing. The OGSBC expects to spend ~\$432,000 by the end of June 2023 in support of the pre-construction process.

Municipal Improvement Update

On March 16th the BOE authorized the OGSBC to start the Municipal Improvement process. The OGSBC Chairman went before the Board of Selectmen (BOS) on March 22nd to ask for approval to submit to P&Z and on April 13th the BOS voted 3-0 to grant this request. The committee aims to file an MI pre-application in May or June and a formal application in July.

Communications and Community Update

The OGSBC appreciates the considerable town-wide support and interest shown in the renovation, with substantial written submissions and speaker advocates at the January 24th and March 29th BET public hearings, attendance at the February 9th BET school capital discussion, and the many Letters to the Editor. Exhibit 1 lists articles and letters written about the OGS renovation from January 13 - April 13, 2023.

In addition to its extensive dealings with the BOE, BET, and BOS, the OGSBC has actively engaged with numerous community stakeholders, including presenting to the Old Greenwich Association on January 30th, briefing RTM committees, and holding three forums with SP&A between late March and early April to solicit input from parents, teachers, and students. An engagement session with abutting neighbors will be held on April 26th.

Based on input, the OGSBC adopted a Mission Statement:

"The Old Greenwich School Building Committee is committed to preserving the character of Old Greenwich School and ensuring the timely, cost-effective completion of necessary renovations. While not new construction or a complete renovation, the project will address the critical issues of security, health and safety, accessibility, and programming to meet baseline requirements for current and future generations. With a campus in a prominent location, we aim to ensure Old Greenwich School plays a vital role for the broader community for decades to come."

OGS Renovation Timeline

The following updated timeline, based on the BET's decisions, is for illustrative purposes only:

- Design (Schematic Design, Design Development, and Construction Documents):
February 2023 - April 2024
- Local Land Use Approvals: March 2023 - December 2023
- Town Funding Approvals: February 2024 - April 2024
- State Funding Approvals: June 2024 - January 2025
- Construction Bidding/Awards: February 2025 - June 2025
- Construction: June 2025 - August 2027 (phased construction schedule)
- Board of Education Occupancy & Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment move-in:
continuous, consistent with phasing

OGS Building Committee Members

Voting Members

- James Waters, Chair, james.waters.ogsbc@gmail.com
- Jackie Welsh, Vice Chair, jackieogsbc@gmail.com
- Barbara O'Neill, Secretary, barbaraOneilLOGSBC@gmail.com
- Jason Brown, jbrown@jklr6.com
- Cristina Dawson, cristina.dawson.ogsbc@gmail.com
- Leander Krueger, leanderkruegerogsbc@gmail.com
- Leigh Erin Izzo, leigherin.izzo.ogsbc@gmail.com
- Michael-Joseph Mercanti Anthony (BOE), MJ_Mercanti-Anthony@greenwich.k12.ct.us
- Stephen Selbst (BET), Stephen.Selbst@greenwichct.org

Ex-Officio Members

- Jennifer Bencivengo (OGS Principal), Jennifer_Bencivengo@greenwich.k12.ct.us
- Peter Lowe (P&Z), peter.lowe@greenwichct.org
- Molly Saleeby (RTM), msaleebyogsbc@gmail.com
- Janet Stone McGuigan (BOS), janet.stonemcguigan@greenwichct.org
- John Vallerie (DPW), john.vallerie@greenwichct.org

Liaisons

- Alan Gunzburg (First Selectman's Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities), 24fado@optonline.net
- Peter Schweinfurth (Energy Management Advisory Committee), peter.schweinfurth@greenwichct.org

Respectfully Submitted,

Old Greenwich School Building Committee, s/James Waters, Chair, April 13, 2023

Exhibit 1: Articles & Letters on the OGS Renovation, January 13 - April 13, 2023

GREENWICH FREE PRESS: Old Greenwich Association Annual Meeting Set for Jan 30, January 24, 2023

<https://greenwichfreepress.com/around-town/old-greenwich-association-annual-meeting-set-for-jan-30-193703/>

GREENWICH FREE PRESS: Disappointment Echoes as Major Renovation at Old Greenwich School Deferred to FY25, Greenwich Free Press, February 6, 2023

<https://greenwichfreepress.com/news/government/disappointment-echoes-as-major-renovation-at-old-greenwich-school-deferred-to-fy25-194273/>

CAMILLO: Setting the Record Straight on Greenwich Schools Capital Budget and Old Greenwich School, February 8, 2023

<https://greenwichfreepress.com/letter-to-the-editor/camillo-setting-the-record-straight-on-greenwich-schools-capital-budget-and-old-greenwich-school-194535/>

KOVEN: For Old Greenwich School, Ignoring Consent Decree from the Office of Civil Rights Is a Very Risky Fiscal Strategy, February 8, 2023

<https://greenwichfreepress.com/letter-to-the-editor/koven-for-old-greenwich-school-ignoring-consent-decree-from-the-office-of-civil-rights-is-a-very-risky-fiscal-strategy-194554/>

PRIHODA: BET, Shame On You!, February 8, 2023

https://greenwichfreepress.com/letter-to-the-editor/prihoda-bet-shame-on-you-194463/?fbclid=IwAR2DXSfWwHHZrxQhhTmX6kwNy5xb1mHdEHLO5b24jFWKCw---_TL-Le6eGPc

ANDREWS: For OGS Renovations, Fiscal Year 2025 is Not Good Enough, and Sets the District up for Potential Legal Action, February 9, 2023

https://greenwichfreepress.com/letter-to-the-editor/andrews-for-ogs-renovations-fiscal-year-2025-is-not-good-enough-and-sets-the-district-up-for-potential-legal-action-194595/?fbclid=IwAR21qyn6uKs_cBW6stlxetqPDazBnmpDxsJf6GfOERZiY94BUhQGzFD8NHs

THAKOR: Old Greenwich School Ed Specs Were Not Dreamed up Out of Thin Air, February 11, 2023

<https://greenwichfreepress.com/letter-to-the-editor/thakor-old-greenwich-school-ed-specs-were-not-dreamed-up-out-of-thin-air-194657/>

GREENWICH TIME: Old Greenwich School upgrades likely delayed until 2025 while town directs most repair funds to Central, February 14, 2023

<https://www.greenwichtime.com/news/article/renovations-delayed-2025-aging-old-greenwich-17781138.php>

GREENWICH FREE PRESS: BET Budget Committee Grapples with Greenwich Schools Capital Budget: OGS and CMS, February 14, 2023

<https://greenwichfreepress.com/news/government/bet-budget-committee-grapples-with-greenwich-school-capital-budget-for-ogs-and-cms-194723/>

Community Update – Old Greenwich School Readies for Renovation, February 26, 2023

<https://greenwichfreepress.com/schools/community-update-old-greenwich-school-readies-for-renovation-195273/>

BURNS: BET Must Support BOE Capital Expenditure Proposals, March 9, 2023

<https://greenwichfreepress.com/letter-to-the-editor/burns-bet-must-support-boe-capital-expenditure-proposals-195932>

LANDRY: Greenwich's Republican-Controlled BET Fails on ADA Compliance, March 15, 2023

<https://greenwichfreepress.com/letter-to-the-editor/letter-greenwichs-republican-controlled-bet-fails-on-ada-compliance-196258/>

GREENWICH TIME: 2 older Greenwich schools need to be more accessible. The school board is pushing for fixes. March 21, 2023

<https://www.greenwichtime.com/news/education/article/greenwich-elementary-schools-renovation-projects-17849673.php>

GOLDRICK: BET Republicans have starved our town and our schools of proper funding for decades, March 21, 2023
<https://greenwichfreepress.com/letter-to-the-editor/goldrick-bet-republicans-have-starved-our-town-and-our-schools-of-proper-funding-for-decades-196693/>

BET Republicans: Evaluate the Feasibility of Constructing a New Old Greenwich School, March 25, 2023
<https://greenwichfreepress.com/letter-to-the-editor/bet-republicans-evaluate-the-feasibility-of-constructing-a-new-old-greenwich-school-196923/>

GREENWICH FREE PRESS: Building Committee “Moving with Purpose” on Renovation Plans for Iconic Old Greenwich School, March 25, 2023
<https://greenwichfreepress.com/news/government/building-committee-moving-with-purpose-on-renovation-plans-for-iconic-old-greenwich-school-196863/>

BENCIVENGO: Fully Fund \$35.9M in FY 2024 for Old Greenwich School Renovation, March 26, 2023
<https://greenwichfreepress.com/letter-to-the-editor/bencivengo-fully-fund-35-9m-in-fy-2024-for-old-greenwich-school-renovation-196941/>

ANGLAND: Don't get fooled by makeshift “plan” concocted by 5 BET Republicans at the 11th hour, March 27, 2023
<https://greenwichfreepress.com/letter-to-the-editor/angland-dont-get-fooled-by-makeshift-plan-concocted-by-5-bet-republicans-at-the-11th-hour-196974/>

RAABE: Welcome to Old Greenwich - A Funding Flyover State, March 28, 2023
<https://greenwichfreepress.com/letter-to-the-editor/welcome-to-old-greenwich-a-funding-flyover-state-197100/>

GREENWICH FREE PRESS: Supporters of Greenwich Public Schools Rally at Town Hall, Max Out Meeting Room Capacity at Final BET Budget Hearing, March 30, 2023
<https://greenwichfreepress.com/news/government/supporters-of-greenwich-public-schools-rally-at-town-hall-max-out-meeting-room-capacity-at-final-bet-budget-hearing-197162/>

Chiavaroli: The Op-Ed the Republican BET Should Write to Greenwich Public School Parents, April 2, 2023
<https://greenwichfreepress.com/letter-to-the-editor/opinion-the-op-ed-the-republican-bet-should-write-to-greenwich-public-school-parents-197346/>

ANGLAND: Greenwich First Selectman does not answer to the BET. He answers to the Voters. April 2, 2023
<https://greenwichfreepress.com/letter-to-the-editor/angland-greenwich-first-selectman-does-not-answer-to-the-bet-he-answers-to-the-voters-197367/>

SPRUNG & RESNICK: Capital Spending on Schools Has Sadly Become Politicized, April 3, 2023
<https://greenwichfreepress.com/letter-to-the-editor/sprung-resnick-capital-spending-on-schools-has-sadly-become-politicized-197410/>

GREENWICH TIME: Greenwich BET guts Old Greenwich School renovation construction budget, cutting it from \$35M to \$3M, April 5, 2023
<https://www.greenwichtime.com/news/education/article/greenwich-bet-guts-ogs-construction-budget-17880069.php>

WEISBROD: Republican BET: “I alone can fix it”, April 6, 2023
<https://greenwichfreepress.com/letter-to-the-editor/weisbrod-republican-bet-i-alone-can-fix-it-197634/>

GREENWICH TIME: Many Greenwich schools aren't accessible even three decades after ADA. What's being done?, April 9, 2023
<https://www.greenwichtime.com/news/education/article/greenwich-public-schools-ada-17856378.php>

SELBST: Next year's budget fails our schools. Here's why. April 11, 2023

<https://greenwichfreepress.com/letter-to-the-editor/selbst-next-years-budget-fails-our-schools-heres-why-197879/>

GREENWICH TIME: See the renovation prep work at Old Greenwich School happening while students are on break, April 12, 2023

<https://www.greenwichtime.com/news/education/article/ogs-pre-construction-work-taking-place-this-week-17891040.php#taboola-4>

GREENWICH FREE PRESS: With Blessing from Selectmen, OGS Building Committee to Proceed to P&Z with Pre-Application in May: “Every Week Counts”, April 13, 2023

<https://greenwichfreepress.com/news/government/with-blessing-from-selectmen-ogs-building-committee-to-proceed-to-pz-with-pre-application-in-may-every-week-counts-197969/>