

## **Old Greenwich School Building Committee - Responses to BET Questions**

June 2023

The OGS Building Committee looks forward to speaking with the BET on June 23, 2023. We confirm that we are on track to hit the state's June 30 deadline if construction funding is provided by the BET and the RTM. In advance of our meeting, below are answers to questions we've received from BET members:

- 1. Last night during the BOE presentation the OGBC presented an analysis of a cost to build a new school. I don't see that document listed on the BOE meeting page or included in the BET Budget Cmtee packet. Can you please circulate?**

These materials will be uploaded by GPS Admin. The analysis, put together in consultation with the building committee's owner's representative and construction manager at risk, shows that when you factor in the likely cost of a new building in 2025/2026, the abatement and demolition required based on our diligence of OGS, the sitework required to raise the entire site as per FEMA guidelines, standard contingency and allowance for soft costs, and the likely need to pay for an alternate location to house 400+ students for 2 years (and the required transportation for that), the likely cost of a new construction OGS would be in the ballpark of \$70-80 million, depending on school size and options selected. This more detailed analysis is consistent with the input provided to the BET in March 2023, although the building committee now has more information and professional input to break down various components of this cost.

We have heard discussion that OGS should be dramatically smaller, perhaps the same size or smaller than New Lebanon School, which is ~62,000 square feet. As of October 2022, New Lebanon has PK-5 enrollment of 336 students; OGS had enrollment of 406 students, nearly 21% larger. This fall OGS enrollment is expected to increase to 413-415 students. A ~62,000 square foot OGS would be smaller, on a Square Foot/Student basis, than almost every elementary school in the district.

- 2. The playscapes in the amount of \$771,832 was deleted as being out of scope, and indicated it was being picked up somewhere else. Playground replacement for OG school was included in the FY23 Capital Budget for the BOE at \$217K in FY27. There are no dollars for playground in FY27 for Parks and Rec. My understanding is that P&R inspects the school playgrounds but replacement of playgrounds is a BOE capital item. Can you clarify what "playscapes" is exactly - it's a much bigger figure than typical playground project. And if this is a reimbursable expense, why wouldn't it be included as part of the scope?**

Playscapes means playground equipment and the surrounding soft surfaces underfoot and they are reimbursable. Based on the replacement schedule that we learned from GPS Admin, and the relatively good condition of the current playscapes, the building committee decided that it was not a must to include this in the project to achieve the EdSpecs. A portion of the current playscapes will need to be moved to facilitate the new addition and we have included \$75,000 for temporary playscapes and \$57,500 for relocating current playscapes during the phased construction to ensure that children have appropriate playscapes to use during that period. After construction is

complete, likely in the December 2026 timeframe, we felt that the BOE could decide if it wanted to reinstall the current playscapes or invest in new playscapes at that point, as contemplated in the BOE's FY27 capital budget.

Downes priced four playscape items that were removed during cost management: a new large pour-in-place safety surface and subbase (\$137,280), new large playscape equipment (\$300,000), new Pre-K and Kindergarten equipment and surface (\$300,000).

- 3. Similar comment as above for laterals, albeit it's a much smaller figure at \$41,875 that was deleted as being out of scope of the project. Can you address what this is for, and where it's being picked up, if not in the scope of the OGBC?**

Based on diligence conducted to date, the building committee believes it may be required to replace the lateral sanitary sewer lines (estimated at \$41,875) that connect the building to the Town sewer system. We have more diligence to conduct during the Design Development and Municipal Improvement process in the coming months, in partnership with Langan Engineering, including sending a camera down the south lateral sewer line, conducting design work to remedy the sewer issue, scoping the plumbing under the building while inspecting the laterals, and meeting with facility staff to further understand the sequence of events and exact locations when flooding occurs.

There is nearly \$1.9 million in trade cost in Downes' estimate allocated to plumbing, but our initial sense was that at least a small portion of this cost should be borne outside the project given the connection to the Town's sewer system and the fact that this has been a longstanding issue that the Town has been working to resolve for several years. In our conversations with the GPS Facilities Director, it sounded like money had been allocated to do this work. In addition, the portion of this work outside the property line of the school is an ineligible expense and not reimbursable, which reinforced our decision to cut it during cost management.

- 4. In looking at the renderings of the front of OGS, please confirm that a new entrance at the lower level would result in a grade that equals the current floor level throughout the 1902 section of the building. I ask as the front façade windows, which are half height, appear to indicate a lower floor level. Further, I note that the architect described that there could be no floor above the entrance at the second level due to a ceiling height issue. (I recognize there will be a fill in of a dip in floor level at an earlier addition, but that is something different.)**

The existing interior elevation at the lower level of OGS is +12.5'. The proposed ADA compliant main entrance to the school will be at +14' as required by FEMA and state regulations. When a visitor enters the school, they will walk through a vestibule which is at grade level, and then they will walk into a double height space and down a ramp to connect them to the existing +12.5' hallway. Drawing A100 in the Schematic Design set reflects this ramp and entry configuration. In addition, the plumbing in the ceiling of the existing lower level will be raised to accommodate a higher ceiling height in the 1902 section of the building.

The building committee and SP+A feel strongly that this solves multiple problems at the same time: providing for a universal, accessible, and secure main entrance, solving for the drainage problem and preventing water from pooling in the much used plaza space, having a more appropriate ceiling height inside the lower level, and retaining the grandeur of the front plaza. The building committee received extensive, positive feedback from the community on this solution, documented in our meeting minutes. We have more work to do on this first draft of the rendering and we'll continue to get feedback in the months ahead as we work to finalize the design.

**5. Please explain what you're doing with the roof. What sections are you replacing and which ones are you not?**

The building committee and its project team have consulted with the GPS Facilities Director on the roofing plan. The estimate includes costs for roofing above the new addition, the gymnasium, and the cafeteria. The latter two were deemed high priority for replacement when inspected by our engineers and architects.

The roof above the Kindergarten (southern rooms) was replaced in 2018, is in good condition, and doesn't need to be replaced. It also wouldn't be eligible for reimbursement because it was done 5 years ago.

The rest of the roof was replaced in 2007. The 2018 Facilities Master Plan listed 60% of the roof as "newer asphalt shingle" and in good condition, estimating then it would last another 20 years. While this section is just over halfway through its useful life and would be eligible for reimbursement, the result of our diligence deemed that it was not a top priority and could be replaced later as a scheduled maintenance item, as with all public buildings. A full replacement of these roof sections was carried in Option C and also listed as an alternate in Option A at a cost of \$1,964,936. This figure is grossed up as an alternate to include all associated direct costs and contingency. If the BET would like to add that funding to the project, the building committee will incorporate it, but we don't believe it is as urgent as other areas addressed in the EdSpecs.

**6. Will Old Greenwich School be ADA compliant as a result of this project or will there be more to do to get there? Will the building have a full HVAC system? What about other systems?**

OGS will be compliant with the 2010 ADA Standards as a result of this renovation as per the Schematic Design approved by the BOE and the revised OGS Ed Specs. There is some scope increase from the original EdSpecs to ensure that ADA compliance is addressed. By July 6, as per the Resolution Agreement with the US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR), the building committee will work with the school district to provide OCR with a copy of the Schematic Design (for OCR's approval), a schedule for completion of the construction process specifying the major remaining steps in that process, and the anticipated timeline for completing those steps. We hope to be able to tell them the renovation will start in June 2024, completion

estimated at December 2026. Silver Petrucelli has certified that its Schematic Design will meet the 2010 ADA Standards as required by the OCR.

OGS will have completely new electrical, fire protection and upgraded ADA plumbing systems and the entire building will have a new HVAC system. There is some scope increase from the original EdSpecs, which left approximately 23,095 square feet in the building (>25% of the building) without HVAC (corridors, stairs, etc). Our project team recommended that the full building receive HVAC to be compliant with recent code guidance and with the maximum state reimbursement in mind. At the end of the day, this is the largest component in terms of added scope and cost. The BOE unanimously approved the revised EdSpecs.

**7. Why is this estimate more than the original \$24.5 million budget and the \$35.9 million projected by the building committee in March?**

The original \$24.5 million budget was created in 2020, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The building committee has briefed the BET on the assumptions that went into that estimate, which included insufficient cost escalations and insufficient contingency for a renovation project.

The OGSBC's construction manager at risk, Downes Construction Company, explained to the BOE that cost escalations during the COVID-19 pandemic were unprecedented and are still occurring, despite leveling off somewhat recently. This accounts for the vast majority of the increase. Downes' estimates were reconciled with a third party estimator, PM&C of Boston, MA.

In addition to cost escalations, the building committee's diligence to date identified some required increases to scope that weren't contemplated in the original Ed Specs. The BOE unanimously approved the revised EdSpecs to account for this scope. They are:

- Increased scope related to HazMat abatement, demolition and reconstruction: \$2,910,547. This number is an estimate based on thorough investigations and testing by Langan Engineers. The Ed Spec budget anticipated a small amount of remediation in the boiler room only. Buildings of this age with multiple renovations typically require a considerable amount of remediation and we have focused abatement around the areas that must be conducted to facilitate installation of HVAC and sprinkler systems and to ensure ADA compliance.
- Increased scope related to Phasing Costs: \$1,673,110. No costs for phasing the project were identified in the Ed Spec. Since the school will remain occupied during construction, there will be phasing costs for additional security and material to separate the children from the construction area, and multiple cleaning and moving expenses and multiple contractor mobilizations in the different areas of the building for construction and completion. There will also be costs associated with maintaining the existing MEP systems while the school is occupied and under construction until the new systems can be completed. In general, a phased project requires a longer period to complete.
- Increased scope related to core objectives of the Ed Specs, specifically ADA compliance, HVAC compliance, and the new addition: \$1,965,095.

- The building committee conducted extensive value engineering work to pay for additional ADA improvements REQUIRED to properly address the OCR complaint and subsequent agreement between GPS and the OCR signed in April 2021. This work includes new toilets and sinks, door widening, casework, ramps, signage and a secure universal main entry. The original EdSpec was created before the complaint was received and resolved and only included some ADA upgrades. The building committee has included all required ADA upgrades.
- In the original EdSpecs, a building-wide HVAC system was emphasized, but the EdSpecs left approximately 23,095 square feet in the building (>25% of the building) without HVAC. Our project team has recommended that the full building receive HVAC to be compliant with recent code guidance and with the maximum state reimbursement in mind. At the end of the day, this is the largest component in terms of added scope.
- Additional Geotechnical scope not budgeted. KG+D were not aware of the geotechnical soil conditions, which will require mass excavation and structural fill for the addition.

The OGS Building Committee believes the Schematic Design is thorough and incorporates items that were perhaps oversights of the original EdSpecs. The building committee worked diligently to pay for things within the budget and will continue to place a focus on cost management as we move through the next phases of the project.

We were pleased that the BOE unanimously endorsed the revised EdSpecs on June 21, 2023. The OGS Building Committee believes that with this design this building, newly accessible and free of flooding, with brand new mechanical, fire suppressant, and electrical systems, and a modest addition, will stand and continue to serve the community for another 100 years.