



East Greenwich School Committee Meeting & Budget Hearing

Tuesday, March 7, 2023

Hybrid Meeting: Cole Middle School & Via Zoom

Minutes

Those in attendance

School Committee: Ms. Alyson Powell, Chair; Ms. Nicole Bucka, Vice-Chair; Ms. Clare Cecil-Karb (arrived at 6:04 pm); Mr. William Hangan; Mr. Kevin Murphy; Mr. Tim Munoz; Dr. Eugene Quinn

Additional Attendees: Dr. Brian G. Ricca, Superintendent; Mr. Michael Podraza, Assistant Superintendent; Mr. Neil Marcaccio, Director of Student Services; Mrs. Maggie Baker, Director of Administration; Mrs. Amy Healey, Confidential Administrative Assistant; Attorney Aubrey Lombardo

I. Call to Order

Ms. Powell called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Budget Hearing

- A. Student Services
- B. Personnel
- C. Administration
- D. IT
- E. Facilities

Dr. Ricca explained that each department head will present a budget with their requests for what is needed to continue excellence in EGPS in FY 24. Spending for FY 24 was stopped just before February break. The budget presentations will focus on successes for this year and considerations for next year.

With no objection, Dr. Arnoff's presentation of the IT budget was brought to the top of the presentation.

Information Technology

Dr. Arnoff explained the phone system failover routers and 911 emergency calling upgrades. The entire phone system will need to be brought up to federal code. At the next meeting, a request for approval of the project will be brought to the Committee. Funding for the project is being provided by the technology bond monies approved on November 6, 2018. Another major project is replacing the virtual computing network, including backup and disaster recovery.

Dr. Quinn thanked Dr. Arnoff for the exceptional work done by IT every day. Dr. Arnoff said that the current team and previous team have both done a lot of work on these and other IT programs for the District.

I. IT Department Update

a. IT Department Vision, Mission and Goal statements

Goals

- To continuously improve the support of all technology needs for our 2,595 students
- To continuously improve the support of all technology needs for our 428 staff members
- To provide continuous improvement in the quality and support of the technology products, services, and tools provided by the East Greenwich Public Schools for teaching and learning

b. A brief explanation of the computer network's wireless (front-end) and wired infrastructure (back-end) components

c. Successes in FY 23 and continuation in FY 24 budget request

Successes

- a. Student and staff user devices
- b. New school library media center computers and library management software
- c. High school sports events streaming video service
- d. WiFi upgrades and improvements
- e. The phone system - failover routers and 911 emergency calling - meeting federal safety requirements
- f. Replacement of network switches - upgraded infrastructure, including fiber connections between requirements
- g. Replacing the virtual computing environment, including backup and disaster recovery capabilities
- h. Staff safety and security training
- i. Meeting cyber security insurance requirements
- j. Selection of a new school department website

II. The FY 24 Budget Request

Student Services

Mr. Neil Marcaccio, Director of Student Services, presented the FY 24 budget request. Most changes that are needed are not personnel changes, but system changes. He noted that Student Services is not only special education, but it is for all students. Mr. Marcaccio spoke of the need for expansion of mental health services.

Student Services FY 23 Successes

- Communication- pathways and process
- Targeted work with families
- Mental health pathways
- MTSS Superteam and school-based teams. Uniform systems, protocols and digital tools
- RIDE Student Support Visit
- Independent audit PLACE LLC
- Push for embedded clinical SEL supports
- Curriculum-Unique Learning
- SEL screener pilot > process
- Ongoing SEL curriculum implementation
- EL Education - coaching/access
- Small bites PD
- Transitions
- PBIS refresh

Student Services FY 24 Priorities

- Program evaluation
- Curriculum / resources
- Pathways, programs & access
- Professional learning - All Means All
- Staffing - adequate is not adequate
- MLL pathways
- Parent guidance / engagement
- Access to evidence based interventions
- Transitions
- MTSS Fidelity
- Systems + structures + implementation

Mr. Munoz inquired whether Mr. Houghtaling programs can be expanded more in the schools. Mr. Munoz asked about programs for Multi Language Learners (MLL). Mr. Marcaccio gave an explanation about the assessments given and programs offered. Ms. Bucka spoke of her experience as an ELL teacher. She asserted that the District is not meeting the needs of these students.

Ms. Bucka suggested cutting back on tech tools and increasing monies for professional development.

Dr. Ricca explained that the mantra for next year is “back to basics” - Not adding anything unnecessary and trying to shoulder the load a little more equitably.

Administration and Finance, Personnel

Mrs. Baker, Director of Administration, presented this FY 24 budget request.

FY 23 Successes

- Former responsibilities of Town Finance moved to School Finance and HR
- MUNIS moved to the cloud, Tyler Content Manager has been completed
- Audit and municipal reporting completed on time

FY 23 Overview

- Proposed budget FY 24 - \$3,576,625
- Increase in the expenses from FY 23 budget
 - Legal Fees, Auditing Services, Local Transportation, Student CTE and Charter tuitions
- New Expenses
 - Communication Services, Annual Plan (writing and distribution)
- Approved budget FY 23 - \$3,379,297
- Percent increase from FY 23 to FY 24 - 5.84%
- Proposed budget FY 24 salaries - \$27,655,232 and benefits \$9,325,217
- Approved budget FY 23 salaries - \$26,403,045 and benefits \$8,959,628
- Percent increase from FY 23 to FY 24 - Salaries 4.7% and benefits 4.0%

FY 24 Considerations: New Personnel Request

- 2 Elementary teachers - \$79,809 each
- 1 Self Contained Teacher @ EGHS - \$117,066
- Increase current SLP .50 to 1.0 at Cole - \$37,991
- .50 OT at Meadowbrook - \$64,267
- Special Education Administrator - \$79,001
- 1 Building Paraprofessional - \$37,050
- 1 Trainor (Athletics) - \$81,535
- 1 Floater Custodian - \$49,690
- 1 Safety/Security Officer - \$39,508

The elementary teacher positions are budgeted; all other positions are unbudgeted

The Committee members asked about mental health professional positions - current and additional.

Dr. Page spoke to how the lack of a trainer is being handled as a current stop gap measure.

Facilities

Mr. Robert Wilmarth, Director of Facilities, presented the proposed Facilities budget.

FY 24 Overview

Proposed Budget \$3,746,000

Building

- 300 individual pieces of HVAC equipment
- 15 boilers
- 299 plumbing fixtures
- 400 pieces of electrical switchgear
- Miles of piping and conduit
- Thousands of fittings and valves

Personnel

- 1 Director
- 1 Administrative Assistant (part-time)
- 1 Maintenance Supervisor (working)
- 3 Maintenance Workers
- 22 Custodians (2 part-time, 2 floater 1 new request)
- 1 Mail Carrier (part-time)
- 2 Substitute custodians (as needed)

Budget

- Proposed budget FY 24 - \$2,018,592
- Approved budget FY 23 - \$1,687,450
- Percent increase FY 23 to FY 24 - 19.62%
- Cost / SF
- 46% Salary and Benefits (\$1.416M)
- 21.5% Utilities
- 16% Purchased services
- 11.5% Supplies and materials
- 5% Building improvement

FY 23 Unbudgeted Expenditures

- Classroom Hepa Filter Replacements - \$25k
- Temporary storage containers - \$6k
- Feminine hygiene dispensers and supplies - \$16k
- Classroom furniture - \$6k
- Replace EOL microwaves at Cole - \$1.5k
- Replace EOL AC units at elementary schools - \$3k

FY 23 Successes

- Turf replacement / Operational MOU
- Hired an energy consultant to manage/time utility expenditures at no cost

- Custodial Masterplan advancements
- Cole HVAC controls upgrade
- HS data center cooling upgrade
- District safety upgrades
- HS band room remodel

FY 24 Considerations

- 5% Building Improvements
- Continuing bond projects
- Facility/Recreation MOA
- Continue project and vendor collaboration with DPW and Recreation
- Begin renting field space to defray cost of replacement
- Pursue energy efficiency grants for renewables and efficiencies
- Explore autonomous cleaning robots to offset personnel costs
- Strategic custodial services improvements to reach APPA 2.5
- RIDE Asset Protection Minimum Requirement FY 24
- Budget Maintenance Expenditure
- The District's maintenance requirement will have been met through budgeting

Ms. Bucka suggested usage agreements for organizations that use the schools' facilities to assist with cost and maintenance.

Dr. Quinn asked about the cost of deferred maintenance. Mr. Wilmarth replied that those costs are going up.

Ms. Cecil-Karb asked about auto scrubbers and cleaning robots.

IV. Discussion

A. Master Plan Update

Town Manager Andrew Nota and Mr. Derek Osterman of Colliers joined the meeting.

Mr. Osterman gave a review of the Necessity of School Construction.

Agenda

- Criteria/ Parameters for Option Development
- Eldredge Adaptive Reuse
- Elementary School Options
- Option Feasibility
- Matrix Analysis

Criteria / Parameters for Option Development

- Site Constraints
- Traffic Considerations

- Overall Project / Program Impact
- Cost Value Impact
- Schedule Impact

Eldredge Adaptive Reuse

- Recreation Center
- Wellness Resource
- Meeting Spaces
- Incubator Space
- Offices (Town, School, etc.)
- Museum/Historic Center
- Community Resource
- Learning & Tutor Center
- Adult Education Classrooms
- Art & Dance Studios
- Non Profit Organizations
- Community Group Offices
- For Profit Business/Retail
- Athletic Field Use Support

Elementary School Options

Option A

- New Build at Frenchtown Grades 3-5 District Wide
- Add/Reno at Hanaford Grades K-2 Neighborhood School*
- Add/Reno at Meadowbrook Grades PK-2 Neighborhood School
- Eldredge Closed as a School

Site Constraints: Frenchtown, Hanaford, Meadowbrook

Option B

- New Build at Frenchtown Grades PK-5 Neighborhood School
- New Build at Hanaford Grades PK-5 Neighborhood School
- Eldredge Closed as a School
- Meadowbrook Closed as a School

Site Constraints: Frenchtown, Hanaford

Option C

- New Build at Frenchtown Grades 1-5 Neighborhood School
- New Build at Hanaford Grades 1-5 Neighborhood School
- Reno at Meadowbrook Grades PK-K District Wide
- Eldredge Closed as a School

Site Constraints: Frenchtown, Hanaford, Meadowbrook

Traffic Considerations, Current Considerations: Frenchtown, Hanaford

Proposed Improvements: Hanaford

Option Feasibility: A validation exercise of the programming. Not a design solution. To be further developed through community engagement

Overall Project / Program Impact

Option A

Hanaford K-2 Add/Reno
Meadowbrook PK-2 Add/Reno
Frenchtown 3-5 New Build

- Neighborhood Schools for Early Learning
- Districtwide 3rd thru 5th grades create equitable education with preparation and transition to MS
- Learning Environments in alignment with the strategic plan, maintaining number of transitions
- New construction at Frenchtown site permits use as swing space for additions and renovations to Hanaford & Meadowbrook

Option B

Frenchtown PK-5 New Build
Hanaford PK-5 New Build

- Neighborhood Schools but not comprehensive or equitable
- Number of school transitions reduced
- All East Greenwich children would attend new ES Schools starting in PK

Option C

Frenchtown 1-5 New Build
Hanaford 1-5 New Build
Meadowbrook PK-K Renovations

- Neighborhood Schools but not comprehensive or equitable
- Number of school transitions remain unchanged
- All East Greenwich children would attend new ES Schools starting in 1st Grade

Cost Value Impact

Option A

Hanaford Elementary	\$18 million	add/reno	K-2
Meadowbrook Elementary	\$23 million	add/reno	Pk-2 PK-2
Frenchtown Elementary	\$52 million	new build	3-5
EG High School	\$17 million	add/reno	
Total	\$110 million		

Option B			
Hanaford Elementary	\$52 million	new build	Pk-5
Frenchtown Elementary	\$52 million	new build	Pk-5
EG High School	\$17 million	add/reno	
Total	\$121 million		

Option C			
Hanaford Elementary	\$47 million	new build	1-5
Frenchtown Elementary	\$47 million	new build	1-5
Meadowbrook Elementary	\$19 million	reno	Pk-K
EG High School	\$17 million	add/reno	
Total	\$130 million		

Draft Cost -Updated March 2023

Option A			
Hanaford Elementary	\$28 million	add/reno	K-2
Meadowbrook Elementary	\$29 million	add/reno	Pk-2
Frenchtown Elementary	\$64 million	new build	3-5
EG High School	\$20 million	add/reno	
Total	\$ 141 million		

Option B			
Hanaford Elementary	\$64 million	new build	Pk-5
Frenchtown Elementary	\$64 million	new build	Pk-5
EG High School	\$20 million	add/reno	
Total	\$ 148 million		

Option C 1			
Hanaford Elementary	\$57 million	new build	1-5
Frenchtown Elementary	\$57 million	new build	1-5
Meadowbrook Elementary	\$16 million	reno	Pk-K
EG High School	\$20 million	add/reno	
Total	\$ 150 million		

Option C 2			
Hanaford Elementary	\$37 million	add/reno	1-5
Frenchtown Elementary	\$57 million	new build	1-5
Meadowbrook Elementary	\$16 million	reno	Pk-K
EG High School	\$20 million	add/reno	
Total	\$ 130 million		

Ms. Bucka inquired about the consideration of universal pre-K. She asked whether there was an option that included both universal pre-K and smaller schools. Mr. Osterman responded that the cost to renovate Eldredge is astronomical. Additionally larger schools can be brought down into smaller cohorts or groups, operating as more than one school within a school. Dr. Ricca said that the town does not have additional space elsewhere for a new building.

Ms. Bucka asked whether any of these options increase the construction time during the school year. Mr. Osterman said that limits would be made to sites having both construction and active schools simultaneously. Ms. Bucka raised concern about the optics of one side of town having a new build school (Frenchtown) while the other side having a renovated building (Hanaford).

Ms. Cecil-Karb spoke of the traffic benefits of a new build at Frenchtown.

Mr. Hangan asked about the cost per square foot. Mr. Osterman said square foot per student is set by state regulations. Mr. Osterman explained that there will be more space for a similar number of students.

Dr. Ricca pointed out that Dr. Quinn has done enrollment projections.

Dr. Quinn asked whether the designs being considered allow for a small expansion. Mr. Osterman replied yes.

Ms. Powell noted that this master plan includes renovations to the high school. A plan for the high school is being developed with high school students to address the auditorium, cafeteria, courtyard, life skills and storage.

Mr. Munoz noted how transformative these new spaces are going to be.

Ms. Elizabeth McNamara, EG News

Ms. McNamara asked how the proposed 400 unit development would impact these plans.

Dr. Quinn replied that his analysis zeros in on how students are in each home in EG. Recent building has not included single family homes and the residential condos have not produced a large number of new students. He asserted that those 400 units may only produce an additional 40 students.

Mr. Nota spoke about how the building committee has gotten to a plan where every part of the schools would be touched. There are 3 bond scenarios put forward by the Town with a low end of \$80 million and a high end \$120 million.

School Bond Assumptions

Factors:

- Assessed valuation with / without revaluations
- Average one family home valuation with / without revaluations
- Operating budget assumptions for Town and School
- Tax implications to homeowners

Mr. Nota explained the Town's debt fund.

Dr. Quinn pointed out that the bond money would be borrowed in phases and would have a 50% state reimbursement.

Ms. Powell spoke of the timelines for submitting plans to RIDE and for the Town to consider a proposed not to exceed amount for the school building bond for the General Assembly. By August the Council will submit an exact amount for the bond referendum in November.

Dr. Quinn shared the history of the Town borrowing money for school projects.

V. Action Items

A. Out of State Field Trip, EGHS - Spring Track, Philadelphia, PA

On a motion by Ms. Bucka, seconded by Dr. Quinn, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the out of state field trip.

B. Home School Request, Grade 10

On a motion by Mr. Murphy, seconded by Ms. Bucka, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the home school request.

VI. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Murphy, seconded by Dr. Quinn, the Committee voted 7-0 to adjourn the meeting at 9:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy J. Healey
School Committee Clerk

Approved 3-20-23