

Old Greenwich School Building Committee
Fourth Quarterly Report
July 13, 2023 - October 13, 2023

The Old Greenwich School Building Committee (OGSBC) continues in-depth planning for the renovation of Old Greenwich School (OGS), a treasured community landmark dating to 1902 serving Pre K - 5th grade. The OGSBC held 10 public meetings during this period and standing bi-weekly meetings are Tuesdays at 7:00 am in the Old Greenwich School Media Center and open to the public. Meeting agendas, minutes, designs, reports, and other documents can be accessed on our [website](#). The OGSBC welcomes members of the public to attend its meetings.

The project focuses on bringing the building into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and addresses key areas of accessibility, health, safety, security, and sewage intrusion among other items as outlined in the [Educational Specifications](#) (Ed Specs) approved by the Board of Education (BOE) in October 2021. The BOE unanimously [Revised the Ed Specs](#) on June 21, 2023.

All details reference the time period of July 13 - October 13, 2023. See “subsequent events” addendum.

A. Activities

1. The OGSBC project team - including architect ([Silver Petrucelli + Associates](#)), owner’s representative ([Morganti Group](#)), and construction manager at risk ([Downes Construction](#)) - moved into the Design Development (DD) phase. This phase takes the approved Schematic Designs and fleshes out detail that will ultimately become construction documents for the project. The DD phase is expected to last through December 2023, at which point a new project estimate will be provided.
2. Detailed diligence was conducted through the summer and fall on demolition and abatement design, environmental testing, additional hazardous material testing, geo-technical borings and engineering, site drainage, soil testing, ground water characterization, fire flow testing, and investigating solutions and options for the sewer problems that have plagued OGS for years. The findings are being incorporated into the architectural plans and construction phasing plan.
3. The OGSBC and Silver Petrucelli worked to advance the [project design](#). Specific focus this period was placed on the new front entry at OGS that will provide for a secure, accessible front entrance. The OGSBC also continued to refine the design for the new addition, floor plans, accessibility, building-wide HVAC, building-wide sprinklers, sewers, interiors, landscaping, trees, and drainage systems.
4. The OGSBC worked in partnership with town officials and engineers in the Department of Public Works (DPW), the Fire Marshal, and the Tree Warden to get guidance and feedback on draft plans.
5. Downes Construction continued to refine estimated state reimbursement for the project through the use of a worksheet in the state’s format. As of this writing, forecasted state reimbursement is estimated at 15.6%.
6. The OGSBC and Greenwich Public Schools (GPS) administration reached out to the Office of Grants Administration (OGA, formerly OSCG&R) to attempt to get a meeting and feedback on design planning. As of this writing OGA has not responded due to the lack of construction funds appropriated for the project. An application to the state typically takes six months to process, involves extensive feedback from the state, and ultimately determines the expected state reimbursement for the project.
7. The OGS renovation appeared at the Planning & Zoning Commission (P&Z) for a pre-application on August 8. [Feedback from P&Z was positive](#). Based on feedback from the P&Z pre-application, the OGSBC decided to work on formal submission of its Municipal Improvement (MI) and Preliminary Coastal Site Plan applications.
8. The OGSBC released RFP #2420-23 for Commissioning Agent services. Four proposals were received and the OGSBC interviewed all four respondents. After completion of scorecards, the OGSBC selected AKF Engineers, who will provide both pre-construction and construction services for the project. The contract for this award is not yet complete.

9. After extensive deliberations over the summer, with the assistance of outside counsel Shipman & Goodwin, the OGSBC approved the contract for its Construction Manager at Risk, Downes Construction, on September 19. As of this writing, the contract is under final review from the Town Attorney. All anticipated costs associated with this contract are broken out in the project estimate provided in June 2023.
10. As Design Development drawings approach 50% completion, Downes Construction has begun work on a detailed construction phasing plan. This plan is expected to be complete in the first quarter of 2024 and will include detailed planning for construction and abatement activities. As a phased, occupied renovation, this phasing plan will be required to go through an exhaustive review and approval process with the state and stringent safeguards will be employed to ensure safety. The OGS project team collectively has extensive experience with this type of school renovation. The construction phasing plan will be communicated to the community as soon as it is available.
11. The OGSBC hosted forums for OGS parents and OGS neighbors on September 19 and 20 (the building committee has now held seven forums to get feedback). Attendees asked detailed questions. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and the OGSBC is working to further refine designs based on the input.
12. The OGSBC formally approved submission of the Municipal Improvement and Preliminary Coastal Site Plan applications on September 19, received unanimous approval (for the second time) from the Board of Selectmen on September 28, and appeared before P&Z on October 3. P&Z [unanimously approved Municipal Improvement status](#) for the OGS renovation on October 3. P&Z also provided [feedback on the site plan](#) that the OGSBC will work to incorporate prior to submission of its final site plan, in conjunction with the Design Development process and associated project estimate. This hearing was covered [extensively in the press](#).
13. The OGSBC unanimously agreed on October 3 to go back to the Board of Education (BOE) for construction funds when MI status was granted.
14. The BOE met on October 5 and unanimously supported three separate motions to (a) re-approve construction funds for the OGS renovation now that MI is complete, (b) ask the Board of Estimate & Taxation (BET) to release conditions on architectural & engineering (A&E) funds in the FY 2023-2024 budget, and (c) reaffirm its support for the OGS renovation rather than a new construction school.
15. The BET Budget Committee met on October 11 to consider the BOE request to release conditions on the OGS renovation's A&E funding (approved 4-0-0) and consider construction funding (failed 2-2). On October 13, the full BET agreed to take up both items on October 16.

B. Budget & Project Estimate

In June 2023, at the completion of the Schematic Design phase, a [project estimate](#) was produced, estimating project costs at \$41.9 million if the project starts in summer 2024 and \$45 million if it starts in summer 2025. Additional estimates will be provided at the end of the Design Development phase (December 2023/January 2024) and the Construction Documents phase (April/May 2024). All estimates are an "opinion of cost" from construction professionals based on the Ed Specs, design, and recent market data. Actual costs may be higher or lower when the project is taken out to bid prior to the start of construction.

If an interim appropriation for construction funds is not provided by the BET in the near term, the BOE will include the escalated figure above in its FY 2024-2025 capital budget request, less A&E funding provided to date.

C. Financial

As of October 13, the OGSBC has spent or encumbered \$411,000 in A&E funding, with \$589,000 remaining from its FY 2022-2023 budget allocation. If the BET does not release conditions on the \$1,086,000 in A&E funding in the FY 2023-2024 budget, the project expects to run out of funding in January 2024. To date, despite the extensive planning and diligence conducted, the OGSBC has saved significant costs vs. its expectations in February 2023.

If the BET releases conditions on the aforementioned A&E funding, the OGSBC anticipates having enough funding to complete the pre-construction process by Spring 2024.

D. Project Plan & Timeline

The Design Development phase is a six-month effort that will be complete in December 2023. It will be followed by the Construction Documents phase, which is expected for completion in April 2024. After that, the pre-construction process will be complete; the project will be fully designed and all associated phasing plans will be finalized.

That said, the OGS renovation cannot begin until construction funds are approved by the BET and the RTM. Full construction funding from the Town is required to apply for state reimbursement (school construction grant). This process typically takes six months to complete and the next deadline is June 30, 2024 for potential inclusion in the 2025 Priority List. The project cannot be taken out to bid until completion of the state process.

If construction funding is provided through an interim appropriation, the OGSBC is standing by to work with the state delegation to seek special legislation to attempt to add the project to the 2024 Priority List, typically released in the 1st quarter of the year. The OGSBC has had extensive conversations with state representatives about this.

When construction starts, the project is estimated to take 30-36 months to complete. As per the BOE Ed Specs, it will be a phased, occupied renovation where the pacing of work will account for keeping students and staff safe and minimizing disruption to learning. Portions of heavier construction will be conducted over the summer and during school breaks. Phased, occupied renovations of school buildings are standard across the state and the nation.

Assuming construction funds are provided in the FY 2024-2025 budget but not sooner, the OGSBC anticipates the following timeline:

- Project Design*: February 2023 - April 2024
- Final Site Plan approvals: January - April 2024
- State Funding approvals: July - December 2024
- Construction Bidding / Awards: February 2025 - June 2025
- Construction: June 2025 - August 2028
- Occupancy: Continuous, consistent with phasing

**Note: design includes Schematic Design, Design Development, and Construction Documents*

E. Next Steps

1. Completion of BET consideration noted above regarding A&E funding conditions, construction funds.**
2. The contract with Downes Construction is expected to be signed in the near term. The contract with AKF should be signed in the upcoming quarter.
3. Feedback and approval from the US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) on the draft project design and project schedule (NOTE: This approval is required after a 2021 complaint was filed against the school district because of the lack of accessibility at OGS.)**
4. Work to finalize diligence and the Design Development process by December 2023, with updated project estimate and construction phasing plan to follow.
5. Continued outreach to stakeholders - parents, neighbors, the wider town community, and local media - to include an initial forum on phasing / safety.

Respectfully submitted,

Old Greenwich School Building Committee
s/James Waters, Chairman

OGSBC Approved October 31, 2023

Addendum: Subsequent Events

The following events happened subsequent to this report's July 13 - October 13, 2023 time period and prior to submission to the RTM:

- On October 16, 2023, the BET rejected construction funds for the OGS renovation for the third time in six months. The BET also released conditions on the \$1,086,000 in A&E funding for the OGS renovation in the FY 2023-2024 budget. Those conditions required the project to obtain P&Z approval of the project's Municipal Improvement and Preliminary Site Plan applications (completed October 3, 2023), the BET to hire an independent estimator (BET wasn't able to complete), and the BET to approve the project estimate (provided in June 2023 and again in October 2023). The OGSBC anticipates that it has the required design funding to complete the pre-construction process.
- On October 30, 2023, the US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) formally approved the project design and schedule for the OGS renovation. The schedule specifies that the OGS renovation expects to receive construction funding in the FY 2024-2025 budget and to start construction no later than the summer of 2025. If there are any deviations from the OCR-approved design or schedule, the OGSBC and the Greenwich Public Schools are required to notify OCR in writing within 15 days and OCR will need to re-open its previous approval.

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