

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MARCH 20, 2024
7:00 P.M.
Suffield Middle School, 350 Mountain Road, Room C120, Suffield CT
In-Person Meeting**

Selectmen present: Colin Moll, Kathleen Harrington, Pete Hill, Mel Chafetz and Jerry Mahoney

Also present: Superintendent of Schools - Timothy Van Tassel, Ed. D, Director of Facilities - Larry Plano, Business Manager - Eric Remington, BOE Vice-Chair – Melissa Finnigan, BOE Secretary - Deb Dudack, BOE Member - Tracy Cloyd, Suffield Middle School Principal - Ken Smith, Permanent Building Commission Chair - Kevin Goff, Town of Suffield Facilities Director – Lee Corbert and Tecton Principal & COO – Jeff Wyszynski

First Selectman Moll called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and asked everyone to join him in the Pledge of Allegiance.

A moment of silence was observed for former Suffield Fire Chief Charles “Chuck” Flynn who passed on March 13, 2024.

Public Comment

Kathy Bielonko, 981 East Street North – Ms. Bielonko commented on the Historic District Commission, their recent decision to demolish a historical barn and changes made to the February 5, 2024 Meeting Minutes.

BOE Presentation of Proposed Facilities Recommendation for Middle School

Superintendent Van Tassel provided the selectmen with a handout identified as the “Suffield Middle School Building Project Proposal.” He thanked them for their support and encouraged them to ask questions at any point during the presentation. The majority of the proposal was presented by Mr. Plano with assistance from Mr. Remington, Mr. Smith, Ms. Dudack and Ms. Finnigan. Discussion topics included:

- Background information involving the study process dating back to Fall 2020 when initial discussions began
 - Existing Conditions Assessment
 - Programming Workshops
 - Community Engagement Committee & Board Meetings
- Review of the Suffield Middle School Existing Conditions
 - Original 1964 construction identified
 - 1965 Vo-Ag Addition
 - 1972 Additions & Alterations
 - 2002 Conversion from High School to Middle School
 - Site Conditions
 - Architectural Exterior
 - Building Systems
- Programming
 - Concerns with current flow of overall building
 - Concerns with specialized teaching rooms and core facilities
 - Concerns with lack of efficiency in the current layout
- Why the Need for a new Middle School Building
 - Review of Efficiency of Systems

- Review of CIP Projects greater than \$500,000
- Review of cost differential between building new or renovating as new

Guided Tour of Suffield Middle School

Mr. Plano led the group on a tour of the Middle School and highlighted the problem areas discussed during the presentation. The following areas were visited:

- General Classroom – too large/wasted space/possible ADA issues
- Family and Consumer Science Room – outdated equipment/current layout causes visibility problems for teachers/safety issues with glass exit door and windows
- Band Room – too small/acoustic issues/safety issues with glass exit door and windows
- Cafeteria
- Electrical Room near Cafeteria
- Gymnasium – Poor condition of gymnasium floor - replacement needed
- Student Bathroom – poor condition/exposed pipes
- Locker Room/Shower Area (currently being used for storage)
- Inaccessible classroom – due to design and location of the classroom it is only accessible if a student walks directly through another classroom to gain entry which would cause disruption (currently used for storage)

Discussion ensued during the tour with various members of the Board of Education addressing the questions and answering accordingly. Mr. Wyszynski from Tecton was also available to answer questions pertaining to Tecton's findings and recommendations provided in the Facilities Master Plan study.

Discussion of Proposed Facilities Recommendation for Middle School

First Selectman Moll and the selectmen commented on what they had seen during the tour, expressed their thoughts and concerns and provided guidance to the members of the Board of Education as to what work they feel still needs to be done before further consideration of a new Middle School Building can be considered.

Selectman Updates

None

Public Comment

Kathy Bielonko, 981 East Street North – Ms. Bielonko expressed her hope that there will be a wide variety of individuals allowed to participate in the decision making process involving whether to build a new Middle School or renovate the existing building. She felt many mistakes were made during the building of the High School and she does not want to see the same thing happen again.

Selectman Mahoney motioned to adjourn at 9:05 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristen O. Lambert
Recording Secretary