



Torrington Public Schools

SUSAN M. LUBOMSKI
SUPERINTENDENT

SUSAN B. FERGUSON
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Building Committee Meeting Thursday, September 24, 2020, 5:30 P.M. Torrington School

Minutes

1. Call to Order: 5:30 P.M.
2. Roll Call: Anne Ruwett, Ryan Bingham, Mayor Carbone, Ms. Hoehne, Ms. Petzel, Mr. Arum, Mr. Longobucco, Mr. Dominov, Ms. Mangiagli, Mr. Biega, Mr. Solywada, Mr. Maniccia, Ms. Cappabianca, Mr. Mele, Mr. Finn, Ms. Mattiello, Mr. Mitchell, Ms. Herold, Mr. McKenna, Ms. Ledversis, Mr. Eucalitto, Mr. Kissko, Ms. Lubomski, Ms. Fergusson, Mr. Barlow
3. Approval of Agenda: Mr. Eucalitto made a motion to approve the agenda, second by Mr. Maniccia. All in favor.
4. Approval of Minutes: Mr. Longobucco made a motion to approve the minutes, second by Mr. Finn. All in favor.
5. Public Participation: None
6. Information Sharing Session/Next Steps:
 - a. Conceptual Energy Modeling and Goals: Vanzelm Engineers Presented energy efficient models comparing the Existing Energy Costs of the Middle and High School at \$626,000 per year and the potential savings of \$180,000-320,000 per year, depending on the energy systems that are chosen for the new construction. This would result in a 46% or more savings per year.
 - b. Conceptual Tour of Torrington High School: Mr. Arum reviewed the highlights of the areas of concern that were noted during the tour of the high school. He will share the information in written form at the next meeting.
 - c. Review of the Tax Impact: Mr. Arum reviewed the tax impact and possible cost per day to the tax payers depending on the value of the owner's house. The Mayor stated that those numbers were the average over 20 years, "that there was not much impact for the first several years to the taxpayers." The Mayor talked about the "explanatory text" that was stated in the absentee ballot, including the

impact on the mill rate broken down by year. Mr. Arum expressed concern that there was never explanatory text in any other mailer or referendum documentation. He shared previous referendum documents. The Mayor said Mr. Arum had time to look at the verbiage and that the explanatory text included his verbiage. Mr. Arum read from his proposed verbiage, which was not put into the mailer. “The existing Torrington High School building is fifty-eight years old and much of its infrastructure ***are in critical*** need of repair” in comparison to what the explanatory text says as “may” need repair.

Ms. Mattiello stated “The word “may” is very misleading. It is a small but significant difference.” The Mayor said, “That seems fair. I can bring your suggestion back to City Council.” Ms. Cappabianca brought up the issue that the bond analysis seemed premature, because it is uncertain what the tax base would be if the City was able to increase the tax base with more people or businesses moving in. Ms. Cappabianca spoke about closing a school and Migeon as cost savings as well.

Ms. Lubomski talked about how Kosta Diamantis, Deputy Secretary for the Office of Policy and Management which approves all construction projects at the State requires the proposals to be fiscally responsible and to close buildings when appropriate. She shared the NEASC report findings and their areas of concern: plumbing, heating, electrical and the gym. These are essential items to address as per the State Accreditation Board. Ms. Lubomski also spoke about the cost savings if students from magnet, charters and VOAG schools were to return to the district. Right now, the district is spending upwards of \$2 million a year in tuition costs for students who leave the district and participate in these programs.

Ms. Ruwett stated she is in support of the project. “We have to invest in Torrington.”

The Mayor said “I’m the one who broke the tie...The increase to the taxpayers is 7 years away.”

Mr. Longobucco asked if the Mayor was in support of a 7-12 school structure. The Mayor said her bond council advised against her advocating for or against the project. She acknowledged the 2 years of work that went into this project and that Ms. Cappabianca had spoken with her for years about the needs for renovation of the high school. The Mayor shared “The taxpayers have the right to decide this.” Mr. Maniccia said, “This is the most cost-effective way to resolve the issues at the high school.” Mr. Arum explained if the referendum does not pass, it would not be possible with the state timelines and requirements to go back to referendum within the year. He stated it would take two years to go through this application and approval process again. Ms. Cappabianca reminded the committee that we do not have 2 years to waste.

Mr. Eucalitto spoke about how difficult it is to address the building issues. “Just replacing one window area would include taking out the whole wall. We do not know what we will find in those walls. You cannot have students in the building while this is occurring. Besides, it would take years. Each window, each wall. Where will you house the students and staff? The longer it takes the more money you pour into this project.”

Mr. Longobucco said the original estimate of \$112 million will keep increasing each year because it was impossible to complete all these projects at once, and this does not even begin to address any of the educational needs.

- d. Explanation of BOE Responsibility for Building Repairs and Capital Improvements:

Mr. Eucalitto talked about future planning for maintenance projects, like what was being done for the turf field, allowing money to be budgeted each year to address future maintenance. The Mayor agreed, “We can’t not do it.” Ms. Cappabianca stated this is essential to addressing decades of issues.

- 7. Comments for the Good of the Order: None
- 8. Topics for Future Meetings:
 - a. NEASC
 - b. Cost Savings
 - c. Pathways
 - d. Capital Improvements Plans
- 9. Adjournment: Mr. Longobucco made a motion to adjourn the meeting, second by Mr. Eucalitto. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:51 P.M.