

Trumbull's plans to build a new Hillcrest Middle School will go to a vote in November

TRUMBULL — A new Hillcrest Middle School took another step toward fruition after the Town Council authorized the distribution of future bonds for the project during a recent meeting.

The project will go to a referendum in November, as required for projects that exceed \$15 million.

But first, Council Chairman Carl Massaro asked Jeff Wyszynski, principal at Hartford-based Tecton Architects, to explain the Board of Finance's approved \$142.3 million figure for the authorization even though the total projected cost of construction for the project is \$140.9 million.

Wyszynski showed a detailed breakdown of the cost. Finance Director Maria Pires later explained in an email that the higher authorization included an additional 1 percent to cover additional financing costs.

The cost to the town is now projected to be \$81.7 million, a reduction of about \$27.8 million drop from the original \$109.5 million projection.

Wyszynski said the town's total cost of the project dropped after Rep. Sarah Keitt secured a higher school construction state reimbursement rate through the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee.

"It essentially drops the cost to Trumbull by about \$30 million and that's because special legislation was approved," Wyszynski said.

The state reimbursement rate was expected to be 24.29 percent, but Wyszynski said the state approved a 44 percent reimbursement rate instead, saving the town almost \$27.8 million.

"We should thank Rep. Sarah Keitt for her hard work in Hartford to help us get that 44 percent rate," said council Democrat Kevin Shively