PLANNING & BUILDING COMMITTEE

Merrimack School District
http://www.sau26.org/PBC/

Joint Meeting with School Board

Minutes

January 22, 2024

Present: S. Albuquerque, T. Groff, R. Hendricks, G. Perry, F. Rothhaus, and M. Alukonis
Also Present:
School Board members: K. Martin, L. Rothhaus (PBC Committee Liaison), J. Hardy and N. Halter;
School Administrators: Chief Educational Officer B. Olsen, Business Administrator M. Shevenell and Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum A. Doyle
Ad Hoc Members: Andy Schneider, Gary Krupp, Chris Christensen and Dave Hackett

The meeting began at 6:02 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

R. Hendricks provided background and historical information on the Planning and Building Committee's (PBC) past efforts in support of building a combined Central Office building. He presented a video of the conditions at the current buildings. He said there were currently 11 employees working in the Superintendent's building and 8 employees working in the Special Services building.

K. Martin gave a power point presentation on the proposed new building. He said the estimate for the new building is $6.9 million dollars and he gave an itemized breakdown of the costs. K. Martin also explained that the current building is not ADA compliant, has no conference room, no sprinkler sprinklers, limited parking and is in violation of several building codes.

M. Shevenell said he had received 4 price quotes for the 11,000 sq. ft. building.

He said he recommended a 15 year bond. He said the fire department has inspected both buildings and he is waiting for the report.

R. Hendricks said that the cost to lease portables would be about $400,000 plus an additional $30,000 for utilities per portable, per year.

M. Shevenell said that he and R. Hendricks had investigated potentially leasing space in town but found several problems including the possible need to renovate space that was not District owned and the possibility of having to quickly find a new location if the leased building was sold.

B. Olsen said a review of current school space usage shows there is not enough available space to relocate all current staff into the schools.

R. Hendricks said that it has been suggested that the School District could renovate and use the current police station for a Central Office after the town builds a Public Safety building. He felt that a new Central Office was needed now and could not be put off until a Safety Building was passed and built by the town.

The Ad Hoc Members were asked to for their feedback on the project which included:

- The middle school bond is paid off.
- The District owns the suggested site location (former Brentwood building).
- Put a Central Office Capital Reserve Fund on the ballot as a back-up plan.
- Shut down current Superintendent's Office and Student Services buildings.
- Have one message and keep to the facts.
- The current buildings are inadequate.
- The video needs work: remove toxic language and emotion.
- Explain the reason for the increase in the building cost from then to now.
- The number of individual office spaces will be criticized.
- We need the fire department report.
- Consider requirements versus wants.
- Include storage space media equipment in the conference room for Merrimack TV broadcasts.
- Find another place for the files in the basement at the Superintendent's Office.
- Clear the deck of all other expenses to avoid overwhelming the voters.
- Have a brief understandable message for WMUR to cover.

Those present offered a list of the facts that need to be emphasized:

- The current buildings are not ADA compliant.
- Health and safety issues are major concerns.
- Staff spend time traveling to and from meetings.
- The high school conference room is the only meeting space in the District that can tightly accommodate the 21 members of the leadership team.
- There is not enough space at the Superintendent's Office to meet with more than three family members at one time.
- Construction costs have increased over the many years since the building was first proposed on the ballot.
- Decisions made in emergency situations may not be the best decisions for a long term solution.
- An additional conference room in town that could comfortably accommodate the leadership team and a few guests could be used for table talks with police and fire departments, staff training and be available for outside groups.

Possible steps that could be taken to promote the project were:

- Create and publish a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document
    - Send FAQs to sandy.swanson@sau26.org
    - Create two- or three-minute videos to address each of the FAQ for Merrimack TV and social media.
- Offer informational presentations in support of a new building to the community such as senior citizens groups, members of the Merrimack Youth Association, parent/teacher groups, at the public library and other events during the month of February.
- Hold neighborhood open houses to discuss the proposed project.

K. Martin ended the meeting by saying everyone needs to attend the Deliberative Session on March 4th and vote on April 9th.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Heinrich