

*The Mission of the Litchfield Schools, in partnership with parents and the Litchfield community, is to provide and develop a complete education program of the highest quality that enables students to develop intellectually, socially, physically, emotionally and be capable of adapting to a changing world and its technology. The School Board recognizes this mission statement as its guiding principle. (1994)*

**LITCHFIELD SCHOOL BOARD - BUILDING SUBCOMMITTEE**  
**APPROVED MINUTES**  
**PUBLIC SESSION**  
**October 10, 2006**

Present:

Mrs. Cindy Couture, School Board Chair  
Mr. Mike Boschi, Building Committee Member  
Ms. Tracy Caprioglio, Building Committee Member  
Mr. Shawn Egan, Building Committee Member  
Mr. Jack Scheiner, Building Committee Member  
Mr. Dan Cecil, Architect at Harriman Associates  
Ms. Catherine Hamblett, Superintendent  
Mr. Steve Martin, Business Administrator  
Mr. Martin Schlichter, Principal, GMS  
Mrs. Michele E. Flynn, School Board Secretary

**1) Call to Order** - 7:00pm

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m.

**2) Approval of Minutes** – Minutes of September 12, 2006  
Minutes of September 26, 2006

The minutes were deferred to the next meeting.

**3) Committee Questions or comments** –

Ms. Caprioglio asked Committee members for suggestions to raise community awareness of what this Committee is doing. She also asked for suggestions for ideas to increase community involvement. She commented that there are many questions circulating through the community.

Members of the Committee discussed ideas for communication through the Committee. Those ideas included a monthly article in the HLN, drop boxes for community members to drop questions or comments in placed at each school, the Library and the Town Hall; a website with an interactive questions/answer link; encouraging people to watch the Building Committee meetings.

Ms. Caprioglio commented that we need to answer the community's questions, find a common ground and promote trust. Mr. Scheiner agreed noting that people may want to ask questions anonymously. Mr. Boschi suggested that answers to those questions can be posted on the website. Mr. Scheiner suggested that the answers be posted on cable as more people can see it, noting that not everyone has a computer. Mr. Cecil suggested that Committee members bring the questions to the Committee to answer publicly, and then address it in writing to the community.

Committee members agreed on setting up drop boxes at each school, the Library and the Town Hall. Mrs. Flynn and Mr. Ballou (Technology Director) will work on the website.

**4) Update from School Board** –

a. Action on Building Committee Recommendation

Mrs. Couture informed the Committee that the School Board accepted the Building Committee's recommendation not to go forward with a warrant article for a new school or renovations until March 2008. She added that the Board asked for a deadline for a report for a recommendation (in spring). Members felt that they need to let the information drive the deadline and will have a better idea of a date by January or February.

Ms. Carprioglio commented that she would like the community to be aware that the Committee is letting the information drive the deadline. Mr. Boschi commented that the best forum for getting out ideas is at the election. He suggested that flyers be handed out to voters. Ms. Hamblett suggested that, in light of the recent HLN articles, the Committee may want to ask the community to give them time to do their work.

b. Status of RFP for GMS renovation

Mrs. Couture reported that the Selectmen asked for additional information on the Scope of Renovation RFP. The Board will receive the information at the meeting tomorrow night and can make a decision to go to the Selectmen.

**5) Review of Previous Design Studies -**

- a. Mar 2004 proposal
- b. Options considered for Mar 2005 proposal
  - i. Draft 1 Proposed GMS: grade 4 and 5 (D. Beauregard 7-30-04 and revised cost estimate 11-23-04)
  - ii. Preliminary Total Project Budget Options A, B1, B2, and C(9-21-04)
  - iii. Elementary School Option Selection Criteria (9-21-04)
  - iv. Summary Sheet – Total Cost Options (9-28-04)
  - v. SAU Office Options (revised 9-24-04)
  - vi. SAU Office Options Estimate of probable costs (9-24-04)
  - vii. March 2005 proposal
- c. Mar 2006 proposal

Mr. Cecil provided a collection of the options previously considered by the Building Committee as well as budget costs, selection criteria, site surveys, floor plans, SAU Office options for 2004, 2005, and 2006.

Mr. Cecil walked Committee members through the 2004 conceptual plans for a two grade option at GMS, which consisted of using nineteen rooms as classrooms and rooms for art, music, Special Education, Reading and computers. He also explained build-out projections that were provided by the NRPC at that time.

Committee members raised concerns about a decrease in elementary enrollment. Mr. Boschi commented that when proposing an option it isn't enough to talk about what works, but if it will work and if it is feasible while keeping in mind economic constraints. He also questioned if we should be building for build-out capacity. Mrs. Couture noted that it is wise to build for a ten year projected enrollment and that there should be a plan for the future.

Ms. Caprioglio commented on placement of the SAU Offices stating that it is easier to put the SAU in some classrooms and then move them out if more classroom space is needed. A brief discussion followed.

Mr. Cecil continued with the agenda items. He explained the rationale behind the conceptual plans for GMS noting that the Committee looked at plans for taking down part of the building that had the worst water problems and updating what was left. The Committee looked at the PK-3 option and the different ways to lay out floor plans. Also included in the options was the Kindergarten proposed plan, an aerial plan of GMS and LMS sites, plans detailing wetlands and tiers with existing schools and an area for the proposed new school, plans for bus and parent drop offs and parking spaces needed for a new school. Mr. Cecil also included the conceptual site plan with a rough layout of the proposed school at the end of 2003 with floor plans and a second proposal for a smaller school.

Mrs. Couture explained that the School Board went to the bond vote with the 600 student school, which would initially house up to grade 4, keeping grade 5 in portables at LMS and renovating GMS. Once GMS was *renovated*, grades 4 and 5 would move into GMS and the new school would house PK-3 classrooms.

Mr. Cecil covered the March 2005 bond cycle, which included a list of tasks for the Committee from the Budget Committee. Mrs. Couture noted that after the March 2004 article failed, a survey went out to registered voters with a list of options. 1030 people responded providing much input for the Committee to focus on. Mr. Cecil explained that the Committee was faced with looking at other options and the tasks associated, as well as a look at the District as a whole, which is what led to working with the NRPC and build-out projections. He pointed out that the previous minimum renovations to GMS are the same as the current Scope of Renovations. He also explained that the summary sheet of total option costs depicts the rationale that a consolidated building is less expensive to operate than two (or more) school buildings. SAU Office options were included as well. He concluded with the option that went to vote - option B1 which is a building for 774 students with core spaces for 1000 students. The cost is reflective of 30% Building Aid.

Mr. Martin noted that when proposing an article for a bond vote the total cost before Building Aid is applied must be bonded.

Mrs. Couture distributed a copy of the selection criteria to Committee members, which included each option with a rating system for each item associated with a project (financials, traffic, bus routes, etc.).

Mr. Cecil remarked that construction costs increased each year and although the State mandated a maximum amount for construction costs, we were always below that maximum. Mr. Martin added that Mr. Murdough from the NH DOE informed him that construction costs have increased 16% (\$155/sf). Mr. Cecil explained that India and China have been driving the costs up lately as they are huge consumers of steel and concrete. Energy and fuel costs are affecting construction cost increases and Hurricane Katrina caused lumber costs to increase. A brief discussion followed.

Mr. Cecil continued with the presentation. Included in the information was an operational cost summary list of options and design studies for the 774 student school as well as different site options. He pointed out that these options were considered before anyone knew how bad the water issue was at GMS. Mr. Cecil explained the septic concept plans, noting that a septic study must be done regardless of the site you plan to build on. He covered site plans, floor plans, the Building Committee informational hand out for the bond vote, studies for moving the SAU offices and specifications for square footage needs and costs for different options.

Mr. Cecil also included a list of minimum renovations to GMS with the scope of work description for line item estimates and noted that at that time we used industry standards for construction costs, which included \$125,000 for dewatering [before we knew how bad the water situation was].

Ms. Caprioglio raised a question about under draining noting that if the dehumidification works then we would not have to dewater the site. Mr. Cecil noted that dehumidification of the building is the most cost effective option, but there was a lot of controversy about this scope of work. The new scope will go into more detail to try and answer the questions from the former scope. The Board is asking for a larger study to answer questions the community may still have about GMS.

Mrs. Couture noted that the other reason for the controversy is that the community wants real numbers and not industry standards costs or estimates.

Ms. Caprioglio wanted to know what has to be done to get State aid. Mr. Martin explained that if the renovations are over 60%; you must prove to the State that you considered a replacement building; and that you considered the cost of the existing building for value. Mrs. Couture noted that the minimum renovations cost must be 25% of the value of the building. Mr. Martin added that with major renovations you must meet 100% of the State's standards and the NH DOE will waive the square footage requirement of the classrooms if class numbers are reduced.

Ms. Caprioglio commented that other schools in the area have renovated or built additions and not met certain codes. Mr. Martin responded that if you want to renovate GMS you need to carefully consider how long you want to use it and what you want to use it for. Mr. Cecil added that whatever you decide on has to be approved by the NH DOE and the local fire department. A more detailed study and costing out of all aspects should answer questions of which use of GMS is the best option.

Ms. Caprioglio commented that she agrees that we have to listen to the NH DOE, but we have to listen to the town as well. Ms. Hamblett mentioned that the Committee may decide to renovate GMS without the benefit of building aid. Mr. Cecil noted that if the Committee decides to build a new building, you should plan it for future use.

Mrs. Couture suggested deferring the March 2006 portion of the information packet to the next meeting. She asked Committee members for input on the agenda for the next meeting. *One suggestion was to invite Dean Michener who develops the enrollment projections to a meeting in November to discuss the information and any trends.*

#### **Next Meeting – October 24**

Mrs. Couture asked for Committee members' agreement on the next meeting date. The Committee agreed to meet on October 24, 2006.

#### **6) Adjourn** – 9:00pm

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.