

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
JOINT BOARD/BUILDING SUBCOMMITTEE
PUBLIC SESSION
SEPTEMBER 21, 2004**

Present:

Mrs. Cindy Couture, Chair
Mr. Ralph Boehm, Vice-Chair
Mrs. Dot Beauregard, Board Member, Building Committee Chair
Mr. Dick Rafferty, Board Member
Mr. Scott Innes, Building Committee Member
Mr. Brian McCue, Building Committee Member
Mr. Doug Orlando, Building Committee Member
Mrs. Susan Seabrook, Building Committee Member
Mr. Roland Bergeron, Building Committee Member
Mr. Bill Spencer, member, Joint Budget Committee subcommittee
Mr. Daniel Cecil, Harriman Associates
Ms. Catherine Hamblett, Superintendent
Mr. Steve Martin, Business Administrator
Dr. Linda Scott, Principal, Griffin Memorial School

1) Public Session – Call to Order – 7:15 p.m.

Mrs. Beauregard called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

2) Draft Personnel and Operating Cost Comparisons of Each Option

Superintendent Hamblett reviewed assumptions in the drafted personnel costs currently, and for two following years for each option. Mr. Spencer and Mr. Innes reviewed assumptions related to operating costs over a ten year period with a 5% increase over ten years added to provided personnel costs. Mr. Spencer explained that the small variation in personnel costs between the options now causes any decision to be driven by the use of the Griffin Memorial School.

Mr. Bergeron stated a plan is needed first and major systems replacement should be conducted in sections rather than systems replaced singly over time. Mr. Spencer questioned the need for mechanical renovations as included at nearly a million dollars and stated his disagreement with this assessment. Mr. Bergeron stated the need for upgrades as minimum and the need for corrections for the health of students and staff. Mr. Spencer questioned this need in light of what he has read in the original Team Design report. Mr. Cecil stated that conducting a detailed inventory of upgrading mechanicals would be lengthy, but upgrading mechanicals would assist in breathing another 50 years into the building. Mr. Cecil confirmed the numbers proposed for mechanical upgrades are good comparison numbers.

Mr. Spencer stated again that the cost of renovating Griffin will drive the final decision. Mr. Bergeron reminded committee members that renovation costs are expensive and systems have changed. Mr. Spencer asked how renovation of mechanical systems would impact the education of students. Mrs. Seabrook answered that students would be more alert [awake] and would learn better in a healthier environment. Dr. Scott mentioned the overcrowding effect on air quality within the building. Mr. Bergeron explained current, higher exchange standards for newly designed buildings. Mrs. Seabrook stated her belief that we have an obligation to bring the building up to code [with even minimum renovation plans]. Mr. Cecil stated the renovation plan is by wing. Mr. Orlando shared his fear that more would be taken on than able to provide. He stated his belief that every generation expects a better [provision] and the [minimum renovations] do not take the step to eliminate risk and provide a quality education. Mrs. Beauregard reviewed some of the Team Design findings, including out-dated unit ventilators and the limited remaining life of ventilation systems and boilers. Mr. Cecil states that any renovation would begin at the older wing the 1930s building.

Mrs. Seabrook commented on the data provided regarding surface water and shifted the discussion back to the consideration of a new school vs. a smaller school with renovation of Griffin. Mr. McCue asked for clarification of building aid for renovation. Mrs. Beauregard and Mr. Cecil clarified the 25% for substantial renovation, need to exceed a percentage certain of the replacement value of the building, and the request sent to Ed Murdough of the DOE for clarification of the time period for which such renovation projects would remain eligible. Mr. Bergeron stated his concern and others that the funding over time would not be sustained. Mr. Boehm stated the potential for such renovation costs to be cut from the budget [as before]. Mr. McCue asked rhetorically how many times the ceiling tiles would be replaced in a renovation over a period of years. Mr. Cecil confirmed that is one reason why renovation is recommended wing by wing. Mr. Spencer stated his concern of more payments in interest if renovations bonded than the return in building aid. Mr. Boehm explained bonding tables. Mr. Bergeron stated again that a plan is needed. Mrs. Couture remarked that in her memory there was not consideration in the past of amount of interest in comparison to aid. Mr. Spencer remarked it is because of the single school or 2 school option.

Mr. Rafferty stated his belief that community members trusted [Boards] to maintain the buildings and that has not happened and therefore he and others do not trust proposed commitments [to do so]. Mrs. Couture asked if renovation costs could be “Sanborntonized” [voters warned of multi year costs]. Mrs. Beauregard directed attention to the bond tables.

Mr. McCue asked the result of the LMS septic site review and Mr. Cecil explained the new request for a Hydro-Geological study to determine if a reduction in the septic design was possible thereby ensuring a [comfortable] fit for the 1,000 student school. He said the building can physically fit the only variable is the septic [at the B location].

Evaluation of Options Grid

Mr. Rafferty called to eliminate B2 and C options. Mr. Cecil explained the lack of contiguous dry land at the Griffin site and the availability of 80% land for building without the demolition of Griffin. Construction could work in such situations, by fencing off from the existing school, but it is not practical. Mr. Innes remarked that two new schools at 22 million is the most expensive option.

Consensus was reached to eliminate options B2 and C.

Mrs. Beauregard had been using the table to evaluate comparisons of each option and redirected members to continue this process. Dr. Scott commented on accreditation issues such as current library facilities. Mr. Orlando commented on the impact of overcrowding on the art program now delivered from a cart and Mrs. Seabrook spoke about the need to defer hearing screening because there is no location available.

Mr. Innes reminded members that two grades located at a renovated Griffin school would correct these overcrowding issues. Mrs. Beauregard agreed but indicated that the square footage requirements are not met [among other concerns]. Mrs. Couture states the ideal size of an elementary at 400 students however it is possible to form smaller communities within a single larger school.

Mr. Rafferty stated his opposition to using Griffin, but if the Board felt that option best he would prefer younger students at that specific location. Mrs. Couture expressed concern regarding the septic at the Griffin site which is not included in the renovation costs. Mrs. Seabrook received confirmation that the LMS site of a 1,000 student facility would accommodate separation to smaller communities by grades. Mr. Cecil clarified separate grade wings would be more difficult, but with the full second story more was feasible. Mrs. Couture repeated her need for assurance of the flexibility of the site which was confirmed by Mr. Cecil. {LMS site}

Mr. Innes states a reference to the A or B1 options since the site remains as sized. Mr. Rafferty expressed his wish the gymnasium size remain and firmly stated that Griffin is a black hole that the gym is its only value and remaining should be razed. Mrs. Seabrook confirmed the lack of storage in classrooms which is not included in renovation cost. There is some discussion of bus routes and school start times. Mr. Innes asked for clarification on locations of students during renovation. There was some discussion of the use of portables and impact of dust, noise, playground restrictions as with playing fields. Mr. Martin mentioned the asbestos removal to be scheduled in the summer as required.

Mr. Innes asked for clarification of the options. Mr. Boehm reviews costs of the new single school at roughly 14,000,000 after aid and reviewed tax impacts as he did with one small school and renovated Griffin with a 1,000,000 difference in over all cost. Mr. Rafferty remarked on the small school not solving the [problem] than what would be value added with single school to the value of homes, the asset of the options to the homeowner. There is some discussion regarding values. Mr. McCue confirms the cost spread over the build out period. Mr. Rafferty asked what it would take to get the project passed. Mr. Innes asked about the impact of the remaining Campbell bond. Mr. Spencer restated his belief that the renovations should be placed in the operating budget over time. Mr. Rafferty asked committee members to consider what is best for the town and school and [if in the end it is not the best] then God Bless.

Mr. Boehm remarked that the B2, single school option solves the space needs problem. Mr. Rafferty states a confirmation and a wish to proceed because committee members will never agree on the renovations necessary. Mr. Spencer states there is only disagreement on how much to spend. Other commented generally. Mr. Rafferty remarked that the building is a black hole, respectfully a healthy and sound building is needed. Mr. Spencer states the renovations in the operating budget would substantially lower the cost. Mrs. Couture called for each member to make a personal evaluation; the perfect solution may not be here but we must choose. Mr. Boehm asked members to consider what would happen if the single school option was brought forward and failed. Mr. Cecil said it behooves us to have the school pass this year [costs are continually rising]. Mrs. Beauregard reminded members that the Griffin septic is not in the renovations and already exceeds its life span by many years. There is further discussion regarding interest rates, the water at GMS and lack of vapor barriers, road improvements, the emergency access. Mr. Orlando asked if it were possible to survey the town. Mrs. Seabrook expressed concern. Mrs. Couture raised the idea of a smaller building with expansion delayed. Some members expressed concern at a new option being introduced.

Mrs. Hamblett noted the time with at least two members needing to leave the meeting. The discussion focuses to the vote on a recommendation.

Mrs. Couture made a motion for option A with renovations of Griffin at 4 million with bond. Mrs. Seabrook seconds.

During discussion, Mr. Innes moves an amendment without the bond. There is limited discussion with Mr. Bergeron stating the septic would still be a problem. There is no second.

Original motion fails. 1-8-0

Mrs. Beauregard moves option B1, a building for 774 students with a core for 1,000. Mr. Rafferty seconds. Motion passes. 8-1-0

The motion is repeated by Mrs. Beauregard with a hand count. There are no changes. The motion passes.

3) **Adjourn** The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.