

Our mission is to provide rigorous and varied educational opportunities that challenge and engage all students to attain their highest level of intellectual, social, physical, and emotional growth. (2007)

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT NO. 27

Litchfield, New Hampshire 03052

July 31, 2007

APPROVED MINUTES

Present:

Ms. Tracy Caprioglio, Building Committee Chair
Mr. Mike Boschi, Building Committee Member
Mr. Shawn Egan, Building Committee Member
Mr. Karl Franck, Building Committee Member
Mr. Jack Scheiner, Building Committee Member
Mrs. Cindy Couture, School Board Representative
Mr. Dennis Miller, School Board Chair
Mrs. Pat Jewett, Selectwoman, School Board Member
Mr. John Harte, Budget Committee Member
Ms. Catherine Hamblett, Superintendent
Mrs. Michele E. Flynn, Secretary

Also in attendance: Dot Beauregard (School Board Member), Dennis Miller (School Board Chair), Pat Jewett (School Board Member & Selectwoman), Fred Snell, John Harte (Budget Committee), Clyde Kay (President Gilcreast Farms), John Blake (Gilcreast Farms), Dave Johnson (Union Leader), Nick Martin (HLN).

1) Call to Order - 7:00pm

Ms. Caprioglio called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2) Approval of Minutes –

Minutes of July 24, 2007

Mr. Scheiner made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Egan seconded. The motion passed.

Ms. Caprioglio welcomed members of the community, Budget Committee, School Board, and media to the meeting. She explained that the purpose of the meeting is to present the Committee's options to date and collect feedback from the community in order to decide on the best recommendation to present to the School Board to solve the educational space need issues in the District. Ms. Caprioglio indicated that it is only through community partnership that we will find a solution. She added that we need cohesion to accomplish the tasks.

3) Presentation of Building Committee Summary

Ms. Caprioglio gave an overview of the Committee's past year. She explained that the Committee reviewed historical information from previous committees, options the town rejected in the past, the cost and future of the elementary school, and the water issues. She added that the water issue is a groundwater problem and many people wondered why GMS did not flood during the significant rainfall in May 2006. Surface water from the rainfall ran off the site and, although the groundwater rose on the site it did not rise higher than the slab during this event. However, if GMS had a basement it would have flooded. Evidence of the groundwater problem at the GMS site was evident when Hamm Septic replaced the failed septic at GMS as the water poured into the hole from the extracted septic tank at 600 gallons per minute.

Ms. Caprioglio reviewed the options the Building Committee considered, but are not recommending. Mr. Franck commented on the second story addition option that was considered, but will not be recommended. He explained that the construction engineers from Harriman and JCN did not feel confident that the structure would support a second floor. He also mentioned that the only second story addition able to be built at GMS would be a second floor suspended 3 feet above the existing structure and supported by footings, however, this would not be feasible because the geotechnical study necessary could not be completed because of the failed 2007 geotechnical study article and an expensive cost to suspend a second story over the existing building.

Ms. Caprioglio reviewed the Building Committee's current options. Option 1: a scaled back new school that would house Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 5; Option 2: renovate GMS for existing Pre-Kindergarten and public Kindergarten classes, as well as the SAU offices and construct a new Grades 1-5 school on the LMS site – pricing will include both small and large gymnasium options; Option 3 renovate GMS for Grades 4 and 5, and construct a new school for the existing Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 3.

4) Review of GMS Renovation study and costs

Ms. Caprioglio briefly reviewed the Harriman/JCN walkthrough of GMS in February noting that Mr. Franck and Mr. Boschi toured the school as well. GMS was thoroughly inventoried by the engineers at Harriman and JCN. Final results included issues with mechanical systems, electrical systems, and life safety systems (sprinklers). They also found that the insulation in the walls did not go up to the roofline. The 1930's building floors are deteriorating and the lower part of the building has a severe moisture problem, as well as intermittent mold. There are dehumidifiers in every classroom in the 1930's building and every classroom in the entire school building.

5) Review Elementary School Options

Ms. Caprioglio started to explain the Committee's current options. She indicated that in Option 1, a scaled back new Grades Pre-K/5 school would be more costly to build, but less costly to maintain. It would have less of an impact on bus schedules and remove the possibility that the state would revoke their funding because there would be no water issues on the LMS site. She referred to Mike Boschi's mock up provided for the meeting. Referring to conflicting views of comments made by Mr. Ed Murdough (NH DOE) regarding the water issue at GMS, Ms. Caprioglio asked for clarification. Ms. Hamblett contacted Mr. Murdough and asked if he would clarify statements made at the July 17 meeting regarding State Building Aid and the GMS water problem. In his email, Mr. Murdough noted that in his opinion dehumidification alone will not be sufficient to solve the moisture problem in the building, but he is willing to give it a try. Ms. Caprioglio explained that if the Committee recommends renovating GMS and dehumidification does not work, the State will revoke their funding. That is the risk we will be taking as the State will monitor the building throughout the year to ascertain if the school stays dry.

Ms. Caprioglio continued to explain the current options. Option 2 is to renovate GMS for current PreK and public Kindergarten classes, as well as the SAU offices, and build a new Grades 1-5 school on the LMS site. Grade 5 is still in portables at LMS and the cost for the portables has exceeded the amount it would have cost the town to build an addition had the voters not voted it down [this vote lost on a recount].

6) Question and Answer

Mr. John Blake of Gilcreast Farms in Litchfield asked how much space can be added to LMS. Mr. Boschi indicated that there is enough room for four classrooms. Ms. Hamblett noted that there is room for a new building on the LMS site. Ms. Caprioglio commented that options for building on the LMS site and additions were considered in past years.

Ms. Caprioglio and Mr. Boschi discussed the space allocation workbook and what the State will approve for square footage per student. The State has determined that funding for Building Aid is based on 120 square feet per student. The last proposed new school was 126 sf per student, which the State agreed was close enough for eligibility for Building Aid. The State will give 30% Building Aid if we renovate GMS or construct a new building. They will give 75% reimbursement to construct or renovate, furnish and equip classrooms for Kindergarten, which we have been approved for. The State will also give 40% for SAU space. Ms. Caprioglio indicated that the bond for new construction would reflect the full amount before subtracting Building Aid over the life of the bond and Kindergarten Construction Aid is a direct reimbursement.

Mr. Boschi indicated that a space allocation workbook was completed for a bigger school as on the previous proposed new school warrant. This Committee downsized to new options and the space allocation workbook changed. There is currently a review of the workbook because of educational and functional space requirements. We are waiting for the costs of the new configurations. Ms. Caprioglio noted that the Committee's goal is 130 square feet per student and that this year's construction price (as set by the State) is \$153 per square foot.

Ms. Caprioglio continued with an explanation of the options. Option 3 is a smaller new school (grades PreK-3) and renovate GMS for use by grades 4 and 5. Options 1 and 2 are being priced with both a large and small gym. We are looking for feedback from the community before we go forward.

Mr. Blake asked why the Committee decided on a full size gym if there is one at the high school. Ms. Hamblett indicated that there are too many events to hold in one building. The idea of a full size gym came from the community and Budget Committee at the time of previous proposals. She added that the demand is greater than we can provide. Mrs. Couture indicated that many town organizations use gym space for sports and other recreational events.

Mr. Dennis Miller, Board Chair, noted that another advantage of a full size gym is that two classes can be run concurrently, which will be necessary in a 600 student school and at build out.

John Harte, Budget Committee member, asked about Building Aid for renovating GMS and the risks associated with it. Ms. Caprioglio indicated that the biggest risk is that the State will stop paying Building Aid if dehumidification doesn't work and whatever funding we used would have to be paid back to the State.

Mr. Harte asked if renovations could be done in phases, for example, in year one concentrate on mechanical, then electrical, and then core spaces. Ms. Caprioglio indicated that there isn't much core space to add to. There are electrical concerns that need to be addressed. Electrical concerns that were immediate have been repaired, but there are still concerns. Mr. Scheiner commented that if we renovate we will have to house the students in portables, which are costly.

Mr. Harte wanted to know what type of dehumidification system is being considered. Mr. Franck indicated that both inside and outside systems were considered. Ms. Caprioglio noted that the roof would not support the air handlers because the roof braces are spaced farther apart than they should be.

Mr. Dave Johnson of the Union Leader asked if dewatering the GMS site was an option and why it is not feasible. Ms. Caprioglio indicated that it is still an option. Mr. Franck commented that a 2007 warrant article for a geotechnical study was defeated and we are not allowed to do a geotechnical study until a year passes - FY2009. Mr. Boschi noted that Harriman Associates estimated it would cost over \$1M to dewater the site. We talked to the State about draining under Route 3A, but the State indicated it would be more expensive. Ms. Hamblett clarified that dehumidification would be attempted first and with a plan

for dewatering if dehumidification doesn't work. Ms. Caprioglio indicated that underdraining the site to tie into the culvert under Route 3A would be more costly than renovating the school.

Mrs. Pat Jewett (School Board and Selectwoman) expressed a concern about the growth of the town as less than anticipated.

Mr. Blake suggested building a two story addition onto LMS. Mrs. Jewett agreed. Mrs. Couture indicated that an elevator would have to be installed to make it handicap accessible, which would take away classroom space and is not cost effective. Mr. Boschi commented that if a new building is built to support the student population, it would be less costly to add on to the new building than it would be to add on to an older building.

Mr. Blake asked about the total acreage of GMS and LMS and how much is usable. Mr. Miller commented that there are 120 acres and the only land usable is on the LMS site as there are wetlands on the GMS site.

Mr. Blake suggested adding the elementary school to LMS. Mr. Miller indicated that the core would need to be expanded and it would encroach on the leach fields. Building Committee members and those in attendance discussed at length building an addition of this type and the work involved in putting in a new septic and leach system.

Mr. Fred Snell, a resident of Litchfield, wanted to know if it was the objective of the Committee to submit three options to the Board. Ms. Caprioglio clarified that Committee members will submit one option to the Board. Mr. Franck explained that the Committee has narrowed to three options and would like to consider community input before making a decision and recommendation to the Board.

Mr. Snell asked if the renovation cost from Harriman includes dewatering. Mr. Boschi indicated the costing does not include dewatering, but does include dehumidification. Mr. Snell wanted to know if the Committee had a back up plan if the dehumidification failed in order to keep State funding. Ms. Caprioglio indicated that because of the failed geotechnical warrant the Committee cannot consider a back up plan. Mr. Boschi commented that a small study to survey the feasibility of constructing footings for a second story addition was not allowed because of the failed warrant. Mr. Franck confirmed that even a soil test to check load capacity was not allowed.

Mr. Snell asked if the Committee has considered the cost of additional staffing and busing if a new school is built and GMS is used as an educational facility. Ms. Caprioglio informed him that an analysis was done two years ago by a member of the Committee depicting the operation costs mentioned. The voters wanted to keep GMS, which requires renovation and dehumidification, as well as building a smaller new school. She added that since it is more costly to operate two schools, what can be done with GMS? Mr. Snell indicated that many in the community feel it is all about money. He suggested that when presenting the total renovation costs and/or total new construction costs it must be presented as clear as possible. He suggested collating all the data covered in the past years in one report. Ms. Caprioglio indicated that the Committee cannot present a total cost as it doesn't include dewatering the site.

Mr. Snell indicated that there are a lot of professional opinions included in the data with no associated costs. He suggested that all opinions and costs should be available to the community and the tax impact of the Committee's recommendation should be included on the warrant. Ms. Hamblett commented that reports and data, newsletters, mailings, etc. have been distributed to the community in the past and there is an air of disbelief in the community. Mr. Boschi commented that a succinct document with numbers and tax impact is necessary. He added that the tax impact should be simplified to the actual impact on the voters.

Mr. Snell asked if the Committee had considered the reimbursement for public Kindergarten. Mr. Boschi noted that the Committee has discussed that subject. The District is already approved for 75% reimbursement in constructing, furnishing and equipping four Kindergarten classrooms, however, there is a time limit to implement it. Ms. Hamblett indicated that the time limit is June 30, 2008, so there will be an article on the 2008 warrant regarding Kindergarten and the construction funding. Mr. Boschi commented that the Committee has considered options that include Kindergarten both in the renovation of GMS and in a new building, as well as relocating the SAU offices to give CHS back some space.

Mr. Snell commented that the Committee has done a lot of work and should try to simplify the information when presenting it to the community. Ms. Caprioglio encouraged suggestions for the presentation indicating that there are suggestion boxes placed at all three schools and the Town Hall for residents to drop off their comments. She welcomed public attendance at Building Committee meetings, contact by email, and use of the website.

The next meeting of the Building Committee will be held on August 14, 2007.

7) Adjourn – 9:00pm

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Esposito-Flynn, Secretary