

SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting Minutes

Date: January 19, 2022 6:30PM

Public Online Video Conference (Zoom)

**Minutes are not official until approved at the next regular meeting*

| Member | Position | Present in Person | Present via Zoom | Absent |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------|
| Phil Stevens | Superintendent of Schools | | X | |
| Erika Wieceński | Board of Selectmen Representative | | X | |
| Mike Makuch | Board of Finance Chairman | | X | |
| Erica Bushior | Board of Education Staff | | | X |
| Ann Grosjean | Board of Education Member | | X | |
| Katherine Viveiros | Construction Industry Experience | | X | |
| Gary Anderson | Member at large | | X | |
| Ralph Tulis | Member at large | | X | |
| Peter Latincsics | Member at large | | X | |
| Justin Niderno | Member at large | | X | |
| Briana Ross | Member at large | | X | |

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Viveiros called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Mr. Tulis apologized to the entire committee regarding the OPM submissions; he mistook the start time for the submission review meeting and was not in attendance. He wrote down the time of the meeting incorrectly. Mr. Tulis also made a motion to add an agenda item below.

Motion by R. Tulis to include an item on the agenda to discuss possible Options as outlined in the RFP page 1.

Mike Makuch SECONDED the motion.

Discussion: The committee has asked for up to three options from the owner's project manager. Mr. Tulis felt it was important that this committee offer their perceptions of appropriate options. This item should be added to the agenda under 8b old business.

Vote: 9 YES 0 NO

All in favor, motion carried unanimously.

| Member | Vote |
|--------------------|------|
| Ann Grosjean | Y |
| Erika Wieceński | Y |
| Mike Makuch | Y |
| Justin Niderno | Y |
| Katherine Viveiros | Y |
| Ralph Tulis | Y |

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Peter Latinesics | Y |
| Gary Anderson | Y |
| Briana Ross | Y |

PRESENT TO SPEAK

M. Makuch discussed how and why emails are not a place where business can be conducted. This is a voting committee therefore it needs to be done at public meetings, like this one. You can ask for an item to be added through email but you cannot have actual business being conducted. Chairperson Viveiros expressed her confusion as to what was said in an email where there was business being conducted. M. Makuch explained an email that was sent stating that a subcommittee will not be appointed to do a certain job; that is conducting business and that is not allowed.

PRESENTATION: Enrollment Study by Dr. Peter Prowda (Attachment #1)

Dr. Peter Prowda shared a PowerPoint presentation with the committee. He went through enrollment history starting from 1970 to now. This is useful to see where you have been before you see where you are going. Dr. Prowda shared a graph for everyone to see the changes over the years. There has been a decline throughout the years.

Next he discussed the projector factors. He started with the current enrollment by grade. Dr. Prowda shared a bar graph of enrollment by grade for 2021. Kindergarten is the smallest and 6th grade is the largest. Based on Dr. Prowda's projection, this year's kindergarten class of 2032 could change from 32 to 29 students when they enter grade 5 in 2024. So the decline has it being smaller than the current grade 5 of 46 students.

Next was the projector by level. It's very tricky to predict with the way things are now with COVID. Different patterns have been seen in different places. He shared a bar graph showing what enrollment looked like from 2011-2031. The only flaw is some students' parents who never register their child will not be counted. So, they are doing the best they can in a very difficult time to project. One of Dr. Prowda's assumptions for the next year is that a majority of the homeschool children will return. This will bring enrollment back to where it was back in 2019, obviously before the pandemic. He mentioned if the committee was thinking of a school construction grant he could see a peak of 419 students in 2023. By 2031, if things held steady, 406 students would be projected. So, over the next 10 years, Willington's average would be about 410 students enrolled vs. 432 over the past 10 years.

He then shared another bar graph showing projection of grades prek-4th over the next 10 years. These show as well a decline, especially with homeschool students because of COVID. He asked what the committee's plans were for a school; prek-8th or something else. R. Tulis answered by stating that they were planning for a pre-8th school.

Dr. Prowda then shared a bar graph for the upper grades 5-8. Again it showed 2011-now and what the projection could be from now to 2031. There could be a peak in 2024 then decline again.

The next bar graph was showing why Dr. Prowda projected the way he did. The graph showed births from 1980 to 2026. The first factor to projection is births. There was a decline since 1983 but an unusual peak in 2020. There could be factors from the University and COVID but he doesn't have that actual information.

The bar graph that Dr. Prowda shared next was birth to kindergarten growth. He did this by showing a total kindergarten growth from a particular birth co-hort. This can be tricky since there could be retention or some parents do not enroll their child until they are 6 years old. This affects the data collected. The data goes to 2016 for births because five years from then is 2021. So he can see what kindergarten enrollment is, which is what grade children should be in that were born in 2016.

Dr. Prowda then shared a line graph showing the grade to grade growth. Looking at last year's 2nd grade enrollment compared to this year's 3rd grade enrollment. Kids can; continue at the school, leave to another school system or families can move in or out of the town. Dr. Prowda noticed and was a little nervous about the "little blue diamond" on his graph. Grade 1 is quite high. He thinks this might be because they undercounted the children that were homeschooled in kindergarten last year and then they came back for first grade.

Town population growth for 2010-2021 was the next bar chart he shared. This one shocked Dr. Prowda. When you look at the census, Willington declined by 475 people between 2010-2020. One of the largest declines in the state. He had no idea why. He thought unless there was something going on at the University and their enrollment. But he doesn't really know why. Chairperson Viveiros stated that Uconn had a lot of online learning so the residents were not coming back to the university in full capacity. First Selectwoman Wiczenski stated that when the census was done there was concern because it was when the University shut down and students went back to their more permanent homes.

The next bar graph Dr. Prowda shared was; Net New Housing Units. Willington is building 2 or 3 new homes each year. In 2016 they had a new senior housing project so the numbers were higher. Other than that it stays consistent.

The bar graph for Estimated Sales of Existing Single-Family homes and Condominiums, it showed growth, which should translate to higher enrollment.

Dr. Prowda shared a bar graph of Non-Public Enrollment (Grades prek-8). This showed only a small fraction of total enrollment. You lose some students to magnet and other public schools. The next bar graph of Estimated Student Migration projection was based on a slightly higher migration than we observed over 20 years.

The last line graph that Dr. Prowda shared was the Accuracy of Prior Projections. The last time Dr. Prowda did a projection for Willington was in 2012. The graph showed 2012 enrollment and projected the enrollment in 2021. It also showed the current enrollment and what he projects for the future enrollment. It showed not much of a change.

The committee members then asked numerous questions and had a discussion with Dr. Prowda

about the details of the presentation.

CHAIRPERSON REPORT

Chairperson Viveiros stated that they received the owner project manager proposals. The task committee is reviewing them and has set up interviews. Those members have been notified. In the next committee meeting on February 2nd they will be prepared to make a recommendation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Special SBC meeting December 20, 2021

Motion by First Selectwoman Wiecenski to APPROVE the minutes from the Special School Building Committee December 20, 2021 meeting.

Ralph Tulis SECONDED the motion.

Vote: 9 YES 0 NO

All in favor, motion carried unanimously.

| Member | Vote |
|--------------------|-------------|
| Ann Grosjean | Y |
| Erika Wiecenski | Y |
| Mike Makuch | Y |
| Justin Niderno | Y |
| Katherine Viveiros | Y |
| Ralph Tulis | Y |
| Peter Latincsics | Y |
| Gary Anderson | Y |
| Briana Ross | Y |

COMMUNICATIONS

a. Acreage requirement response from Department of Administrative Services

Chairperson Viveiros discussed an email response she received regarding the question, "How would we calculate the minimum required acreage for a site, existing building/site or new site? Timothy O' Brian, who is the planning analyst for the school construction grants and review department at DAS responded. He said that the recommended lot size in the standard guidelines are provided for general and local purposes but that is not including extenuating circumstances. Exceptions would be evaluated. Lot size however, is a factor considered in OSCGR's plan review process. They don't consider size and shape adequacy and adequacy of the site to support the school facilities. He discusses the state regulations. His response is based on reimbursement. He then goes on explaining the sizes that are considered schools. Chairperson Viveiros stated so where did the 19 acres come from? She reminded the committee it was a huge discussion at one point. O' Brian explained that in a school with mixed levels they generally use the highest level of students to determine eligible reimbursement. For example the maximum acreage to receive reimbursement would be 19 acres. He went on to explain the calculations. Chairperson Viveiros explained that it seems 19 is the maximum not the minimum that some had thought. The subcommittee is discussing this and will come back to the overall building committee and discuss.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Communications Subcommittee:

Communications subcommittee has not met.

Land Assessment Subcommittee:

The Land Assessment Subcommittee has not met. M. Makuch stated that he has been updating a list of town owned pieces of property so they can start with their assessment. The good news is with the update from the state the subcommittee can now use this information of 19 acres and discuss when they meet.

Finance Subcommittee:

Finance has not met. They are waiting until the OPM is on board.

OLD BUSINESS

a. Enrollment Projections discussion

P. Latinsics wanted to comment that he thought it was a great presentation and Superintendent Stevens did a great job bringing this consultant to them. Maybe keep this on the agenda to discuss in the future.

b. Discussion of Available Options

R. Tulis read through what the handbook stated and the meaning. Then he suggested this committee should meet their charge of determining which option they would like an OPM to invest their time in analyzing. Certainly, the townspeople, the taxpayers and those in the education community all have their preferences. Everyone needs to be satisfied in some fashion. He stated he would like an option that precludes a total renovation as new of Hall School but rather a partial renovation, plus an addition or reconfiguration to make it work with prek-8 and excise the 1922 building from any consideration to be directly used as a school. A new school on a new site would be a much simpler answer but they don't have a parcel of land for anyone to evaluate yet. Site development costs are going to be very high. R. Tulis stated he was open for discussion. But felt they should lead the OPM in the direction that satisfies the charge of the committee and not just let the consultant do all the work and make recommendations to the committee.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that they had not even met with OPM yet so no one was leading anything yet. She sees 3 options; 1. Renovating Hall School, 2. Renovating Center School or 3. Build a new school. She thought these were the options that were discussed some time ago. The land is what's going to decide whether or not the options are viable. The OPM can help us get to that bottom line. J. Niderno asked if the 3 options listed are it? We don't want to waste any options on something that's not even an option. Chairperson Viveiros stated that the land assessment committee will help narrow down some of the obvious town owned properties that may or may not be a viable option. We haven't gotten an evaluation on the schools, yet but we are starting the process.

M. Makuch thought the extra thought for Hall School renovation was valuable. Partially because of the history. There is value in having lineage in a school system and in a community. The fact that we have connections to the Hall family and the Hall foundation there are lots of reasons to have this discussion.

P. Latinsics agreed with R. Tulis and M. Makuch. This potential hybrid option. New and reconfiguration of the Hall site is worthwhile. They are looking at renovating one school, depending on the cost. They need to look at all the options, costs and logistics of what happens to the schools. That must be included in the project.

B. Ross asked what the timeframe to have these options narrowed down by was? She wanted to be sure all the subcommittees have time to do their job. She also hoped the Hall family would participate.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that once they discussed and made recommendations the OPM will share with them their timeline of when items need to be identified.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

PRESENT TO SPEAK

Matt Clark of 42 Burt Latham Road in Willington, CT had a few questions regarding Dr. Prowda's presentation. He was wondering where he got his numbers? He stated Willington is losing population, as shown on Dr Prowda's graphs and losing enrollment. But the enrollment projections are about steady. He did not understand how this could be correct. The comment we build a new school and they will come...he respectively posited that. That only happens if Willington increases their test scores. He believed the test scores in Willington were below average.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated they had mentioned numerous times Mrs. Cassells was not able to attend the meetings as she was taking care of an ill relative. First Selectwoman Wiecenski wanted to share with the committee that Mrs. Cassells' brother passed away a couple of weeks ago. It was recently in the newspaper where she saw the obituary. We certainly want to extend our sympathies and allow the family some space, to both Alice and the rest of the Hall family in the passing of Clyde Hall.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mike Makuch to ADJOURN the meeting.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski SECONDED.

Vote: 9 YES 0 NO

All in favor, motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:31

Next regular meeting: February 2, 2022

Nicole Fusco

School Building Committee Recording Secretary

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WILLINGTON, CT.

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TOWN CLERK