

FINAL MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF FINANCE  
CAPITAL PLANNING WORKSHOP  
September 17, 2018

The Board of Finance Capital Planning Workshop meeting was held on Monday, September 17, 2018 at 8.00 p.m. in the All Purpose Room at Osborn Hill School, 760 Stillson Road, Fairfield, CT.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

David Becker (8:45), James Brown, Christopher DeWitt, Thomas Flynn, Sheila Marmion, John Mitola, James Walsh (8:10), Elizabeth Zezima

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mary LeClerc

ALSO PRESENT:

Edward Bateson, Selectman, Town of Fairfield  
Robert Mayer, Chief Fiscal Officer, Town of Fairfield  
Anthony Calabrese, Director, Parks & Recreation, Town of Fairfield  
Mark Barnhart, Director, Community & Economic Development, Town of Fairfield  
Joe Michelangelo, Public Works Director, Town of Fairfield  
Ed Boman, Assistant DPW Director, Town of Fairfield  
Bill Hurley, Engineering Manager, Town of Fairfield  
Pamela Iacono, Minority Leader, RTM, Town of Fairfield  
Bill Gerber, RTM District 2, Town of Fairfield  
Tom Quinn, Chair, Mill Hill School Building Committee  
Harry Ackley, Jr., Mill Hill School Building Committee  
Jason Li, Vice Chair, Mill Hill Building Committee  
Melanie Ruggieri, Vice Chair, Mill Hill School Building Committee  
Charles Warrington, Mill Hill School Building Committee Owners Rep (Colliers International)  
Dr. Toni Jones, Superintendent of Schools, Town of Fairfield  
Jeffrey Peterson, Board of Education Member, Town of Fairfield  
Tom Cullen, Executive Director of Operation for Fairfield Public Schools, Town of Fairfield

Chairman Flynn called the meeting to order at 8:05 p.m. Chairman Flynn announced that Police Chief Gary MacNamara will be retiring this fall. Mr. Flynn thanked the Chief for his service and also thanked town department heads for all of the good work being done throughout the Town. Chairman Flynn announced that the October 2, 2018, the Board of Finance regular meeting will be held at the restaurant at H. Smith Richardson Golf Course. Mr. Mayer led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ACTION TAKEN:

None

AGENDA

1. To hear an update from the Mill Hill School Building Committee  
Mr. Quinn, Mr. Li, Mr. Ackley, Jr. and Mrs. Ruggieri presented this item to the Board and reviewed their handout with the Board. Mr. Quinn reported that the MHSBC will be meeting with the Board

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of Selectmen and the Board of Education in the next two weeks for the purpose of discussing the current issues at hand.

Mr. DeWitt asked Mr. Quinn how it could it be possible to make a decision on which option without having any knowledge of future redistricting plans. Mr. Mitola asked if the MHSBC has already been funded with \$1.5 million. Mr. Quinn replied yes. Ms. Marmion, Mr. DeWitt and Mr. Mitola all expressed their concern about getting the full picture of options without three options being presented.

Mr. Warrington explained to the Board some of the potential issues with the 504 student option as it relates to possible State reimbursements for the project. Mr. Warrington reported that the State requires the application to be within 93% to 94% of space standards and, at this time, the State is pushing back on enforcing these guidelines. Mr. Warrington stated that in the case of the 504 student option, the 93% to 94% requirements would not be met and that could very possibly result in losing all State reimbursements for this project.

Mr. Walsh expressed his confusion about the reason for eliminating one of the options since he said the BOF approved getting three scenarios. Mr. Brown stated that he cannot understand how these decisions can be made without a redistricting plan in place from the BOE. Mr. Brown therefore wants to see a redistricting plan before any decisions can be made.

Mr. Bateson questioned why this change is being requested since nothing has changed since the BOF approved this project.

Mrs. Ruggieri asked how waiting for the redistricting data would affect the project timeline. Chairman Flynn said the project would need to go back before all appropriate town bodies for approval of the changes.

Mr. Quinn suggested that all the town bodies should meet together and discuss the costs which will be about \$300,000 more than what was originally anticipated.

Mr. Peterson stated that the 578 student option should be removed from the options. Mr. Peterson also noted that Mill Hill will create additional space in the system to be used for many various purposes and redistricting is embedded in most of the BOE processes.

Mr. Walsh stated that, due to the financial issues of our State, people are being taxed out of this area; a 504 student school is not needed according to the projections and trends; and redistricting has always been a very unpopular option, but the State is demanding that Fairfield make corrections to the racial imbalance problem.

Chairman Flynn requested the MHSBC to go back to the BOE for more data.

2. To review and discuss Town and BOE non-recurring capital and capital projects planning document, their timing and related subsequent bonding requirements and the estimated impact on debt service levels over the next several years.

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Mr. Mayer presented this item to the Board and reviewed all handouts.

Mr. DeWitt questioned some figures listed on Exhibit #2. Mr. Mayer was requested by Chairman Flynn to review that exhibit with Mr. DeWitt and reconcile this year's and last year's report details.

Mr. Mayer reported that the accountant was encouraged to work with the Department Heads on Exhibit #3 (Changes to the Capital Plan-All Projects) in an effort to ensure estimates included inflation adjustments and up-to-date information.

Mr. Bateson reported that he attended the last WPCA meeting where he became aware that funding for the new project would come from increasing rates. He would like a magnitude of this decision made by town boards, not the WPCA which is not an elected body. Mr. Mayer noted that Fairfield's rates are well below other area municipalities. Chairman Flynn suggested that the BOS, the BOF and the WPCA should get together to discuss this issue going forward. Mr. Walsh asked Mr. Mayer to ask CCM to run a report on fees in State municipalities WPCAs in an effort to compare the fees being charged within the State.

After reviewing some details in Exhibit #3, Mr. Boman explained some of the details about the Asset Management Plan for the Town. Mr. Boman reported that the United Illuminating Company funded a \$50,000 study and the Town will be looking for an RFQ for this project. Mr. Boman stated that \$5 million is the suggested amount needed for funding. He also noted that this plan is an update to the former Johnson Controls Program. A member requested Mr. Mayer add dates to the columns in this exhibit for the next update.

Mr. Becker asked DPW to create a Facilities Management Plan Booklet similar to the one created by the BOE.

Chairman Flynn noted that the \$7.1 million H. Smith Richardson Clubhouse Renovation needs to be discussed further. He also noted that the BOF needs to look at the economic impacts of the clubhouse, the South Benson docks, and other town properties that will benefit Fairfield.

During a review of Exhibit #3 some questions were raised about several bridge projects so Mr. Hurley explained that bridge priorities are determined by a report provided from the State using research based on the condition of the bridges. Mr. Hurley also reported to the Boards that a Southport Connectivity Grant was just awarded to the town.

The Boards then reviewed the BOE Waterfall Chart with Dr. Jones, Mr. Cullen and Mr. Peterson. It was noted that grant money was utilized for some of the switch project. Mr. Cullen reported that new Building Management Systems will be installed in all schools. He also informed the Boards that further interior work will be performed for safety procedures in schools and there will also be additional site work maintenance done for safety reasons.

Ms. Iacono stated that the \$200,000 amount placed in the waterfall for the relocation of the Walter Fitzgerald Campus to a new location is very low. It was noted that there has not been a decision

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made on a new site at this time and the current lease expires in June 2019. Discussion centering on potential relocation sites followed with no resolution.

A discussion followed about the BOE historically providing low estimates for projects that have resulted in consistently requiring significant additional funding. Ms. Iacono mentioned the project for new windows at Fairfield Warde High School which is in the Waterfall. Ms. Iacono noted that the same project at Fairfield Ludlowe High School resulted in massive cost overruns due to problems encountered with PCBs for example, but she said there is no allocation for that type of potential problem in this project.

Both Mr. DeWitt and Ms. Iacono expressed concern that the FWHS Window Project should reflect the same costs as the recently completed FLHS Window Project. Ms. Iacono expressed her frustration with not having a planning document for what BOE projects are planned for the future so that the RTM could plan more realistically for future needs.

Mr. Bateson noted that the latest BOE Facilities Plan was voted on by the BOE in 2015 so he suggested the BOE look closely at what is included and take a new vote. Mr. Peterson stated that he thinks the BOE would be open to the idea of updating the BOE Facilities Plan even though members have a very busy schedule this year.

Dr. Jones reported that the ECC has outgrown the space it has occupied and needs to move. She reported that the ECC has had a second small site in existence since last year and the creation of multiple smaller program sites at existing elementary schools in the district will probably occur in the future. Dr. Jones reported that this is a very sensitive subject for the community, parents and staff and the BOE will be holding multiple conversations to discuss the future of this valuable program.

Dr. Jones also spoke about air conditioning in all schools. She said the BOE is formulating a 10-year plan to accomplish this goal. Dr. Jones stated that this is now a health and safety issue because for those schools without air-conditioning, teachers cannot leave classrooms doors open for ventilation due to safety concerns which creates an uncomfortable space for everyone.

Mr. Bateson asked Dr. Jones to let the Town know what the BOE needs and the Town will work with the BOE to accomplish their goals as best as possible.

On a motion made by Mr. Mitola and seconded by Ms. Zezima the meeting was adjourned at 10.50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah J. Garavel  
Recording Secretary