



**DOVER SCHOOL
DISTRICT**

DOVER SCHOOL BOARD – MINUTES

Meeting Type: Special Session
Meeting Location: City Council Chambers
Meeting Date: **Monday, October 20, 2008**
Meeting Time: **6:30 pm**

A special session of the Dover School Board was called to order by Chairperson Marjorie Fisher on Monday, September 22, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers.

A. ROLL CALL: Present were, Marjorie Fisher, Britt Ulinski-Schuman, Dorothea Hooper, Audra Lurvey, Carolyn Mebert, Beth Setear, and Doris Grady.

Also present were Superintendent John O'Connor, Business Administrator, Laurie Verville, and Horne Street School Principal, Malcolm Foresman.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The Board led the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. CITIZEN'S FORUM: No one addressed the Board.

D. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP) PRESENTATION: Dr. O'Connor presented his Capital Improvement Project proposal to the Board. He began by reviewing Proposal A that he had presented to the Board during the October 6th School Board meeting. He noted Board members had raised a number of questions over the 6 year schedule where the recommendation was for the District to invest approximately \$60 million for the renovations to our three older schools and with the possibility of a small addition to Horne Street. That number was very difficult for Board members and community members to "get their hands around."

He continued, "I will start off by saying those numbers we proposed were our best estimates. We can't guarantee what could happen 5 and 6 years from now in terms of the construction market. I suspect these numbers...could go up dramatically depending upon what costs are at that time as well as trying to determine what will need to be done at Dover High School if it is the last of the three schools to be renovated, what might be needed 5 or 6 years from now to complete a thorough renovation of that building which will be close to 50 years old at that time." Looking only at his previous Option A, he continued, "We were looking at \$7.5 million for the renovation and addition to Horne Street School. We talked about not taking any money the following year, looking at approximately \$7.5 million in 2012 for a similar project at Garrison School where there would be no addition – there would be strictly renovation of the approximately 50 year old and 40 year old wings on that building. Then starting in 2014, we had some markers in there, approximately \$35 - \$45 million, and as I noted, that number could go up dramatically, looking at about 2014. That is when our student's tuition agreement with Barrington Schools runs out and we will have a much better feel for what the community of Barrington is going to do with their high school question by 2012. That would give us ample opportunity to start thinking about renovations at the high school at that time. Also note, there were a number of Board members who talked about moving the schedule – putting the high school first and moving the elementary schools out – we will talk a little bit about that."

Dr. O'Connor then proposed four options to the Board for them to think about.



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Option 1 – Requesting \$6.25 million for new classrooms and renovation at Horne Street School (6 new classrooms, bathrooms, and a library. Dr. O’Connor explained the amount being requested was down from the \$7.5 million in his Proposal A. That is because the District borrowed \$5.2 million this year. There is approximately \$1.5 million remaining in the CIP. The District is about to engage an architect who will be looking at the facilities and will develop a plan for the District which will be paid for by these funds. The Superintendent anticipates there will then be “a guaranteed \$1.25 million remaining in the bank.” That amount can be added to the \$6.25 million request for a total of \$7.5 million estimated to complete the addition and renovation.

Option 2 – Requesting \$5.25 million for renovation at Horne Street School and the addition of a fine arts wing, bathrooms and a library. Adding in the \$1.25 million would provide a total \$6.5 million.

Option 3 – Renovate Horne Street School only. He stated, “No addition. Do electrical, air exchange, all of those things, and possibly some small scale remodeling within the footprint of the building. We might look at enlarging the office. We might look at converting space where the computer lab is to make that larger. There could be some remodeling that could be done with the front entrances and so forth. We could do that with approximately \$4 million (\$2.75 plus the 1.25 million in our pockets.”

Option 4 – Delay renovation project for one or more years

Dr. O’Connor continued, “There are a couple of things I want you to consider. One, we’ve already articulated. That’s the \$1.25 million that we currently have in the bank. The second issue is that we have the capability of borrowing without any impact on the tax rate. We can borrow up to what we are retiring. Next year, our debt service retirement will be \$2.3 million. We can borrow that amount. That is something we need to think about as we are attempting to make a decision. That is the number, \$2.3 million, with no tax impact, I think that you folks would certainly want to consider that number and certainly, the City Council would want to take a very close look at this number and probably would be more supportive of this number than any of the previous numbers that I’ve given you.”

The Superintendent went on to say, “What can we do with \$2.3 million? With the \$1.25 million we have, I would think that option number two, probably addresses the issues that I’ve articulated in terms of our projected student enrollments, provide that little expansion room for the schools, giving us the opportunity to up their enrollment somewhere in the vicinity of 450 to 500 students, based on what would be available rooms for classes. That is providing we can do the renovations without losing any classroom space... If you look at option 2 at \$5.25 million, clearly dividing that number by two and paying for this project and doing this project in an 18



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month time span, we could accomplish this addition and renovation within our debt schedule. We won't be able to add the 6 classrooms, but certainly we can add three with the library and come in within our debt schedule. In addition to this, because this is a two-year project, all we're asking for in year one is \$2.3 million. Coupled with the \$1.25 million that we have, what we can accomplish is not only the cost of the new construction, but we can also get into the renovation of the building. There is a caveat with this and that would be that the Council will have to understand that we will be coming back next year at this time looking for an appropriation comparable to that \$2.3 million, provided our estimates today and over the next few months are accurate... More importantly, it gives our architect we will be bringing on shortly, an opportunity to start looking at the building and come in with various design options and recommendations for the addition, as well as a renovation schedule for the building. It would give us that opportunity to work with him and not worry about the constraints of money if we know that this year with Council approval we will have \$2.3 million plus the \$1.25 that we have. That would get the program underway. I think of the four recommendations, that 'fits.' I still believe #1 is the right way to go. I think we're going to see increased enrollment. My objective when I spoke to you about that was to ensure all three of our schools stay under 500 students. I'm not certain now that we'll be able to accomplish that. We may end up with a school over 500 students without this additional capacity at Horne Street School. It could only be for a three to five year period that we see that enrollment and then, based on some of the projections, that enrollment is going to start taking a slight dip... Option #1 doesn't fit the schedule. We would be asking the City Council to borrow more than what is being retired. We could look at #3 and just renovate. That clearly fits within the guidelines. However, I think that's going to set us up with both Woodman and Garrison to be well in excess of 500 kids, thus triggering additional support for those two schools that are long-term commitments. Clearly, I do not think option #4 is in the District's best interests. We can put off renovations for a long time, but as everyone who owns a house, when they put off renovations, the other systems become compromised and the pricing only goes up year to year."

Doris Grady spoke. "We're not really sure what your architect's going to come in and normally you would have to say we're going to do this, this, this to Horne and we need this much money for it. That's like putting the cart before the horse. I'm looking into option #2...and actually kind of refer to it as an expansion and renovation of Horne Street School over a two-year period. You take the \$1.5 and the \$2.3 – that will have absolutely no affect on the tax rate, increases in taxes...that gives you \$3.8 million to start with and the second year, all totaled you'd have about \$6.1 million to put into Horne Street School over a two-year period. If you're going out, and what made sense, if you go out and do that fine arts wing, you're going to move your library out, your art out, and your music out of the present building. As I recall, where the library was, was almost two classrooms. You're going to have your art classroom and you're going to have your music classroom. So, none of the kids would have to leave the building. We wouldn't have to look at McIntosh College and renting it. That extra cost could come back in and probably do something with that nasty, little, tiny office. At least I'd have them put that money in there so



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that they'd have an expanded area. Until the architect comes in and gives us an idea, then you can play with how many rooms you're going to end up with, and that's what makes sense to me. You're going to end up with the classrooms. To start with six new classrooms, I couldn't buy that. You're talking about borrowing \$5.25 million the first year?...What you're really saying is using the \$1.5 million we have and the \$2.3 that we're retiring. Makes sense to me and when the architect gives you what he feels you can do with it for the amount of money we have; then you can make the decision as to what's best for the building. That makes sense to me. But I hate having to take the kids out of the area and then bus them because busing will be more expensive if you're going from north end to south end. You're going to have an added busing cost. And looking at \$109,000 plus – you're looking at about \$140,000 right there, plus buses. If you came up with \$160,000 you could put that back in and look at doing something in that office where a parent doesn't really have room enough to sit in a chair. Just my opinion.”

Dorothea Hooper stated, “I approached you last week and asked about McIntosh because I have a colleague who works there and I know that they are going to be out by December. You haven't solved my problem which is I think the high school is in desperate need of renovation. I think I raised the issue with you, would it be possible for us to rent McIntosh so that the high school could be renovated where I really think there's the need. What did you tell me?”

Dr. O'Connor responded, “I said I would go take a look at the McIntosh property, which I did this past week. I met with the agency that is attempting to market and rent the facility or to sell the facilities... In looking at the McIntosh properties, there are two properties available that would be suitable for classrooms. The first is the property on Cataract Avenue. It has a library and a number of classrooms. I had a chance to tour the building with facilities, a safety engineer, and the realtor. Clearly, the building has the capability of accepting a large number of, particularly high school students. Although, this building looks impressive and large, the three story structure, the whole bottom floor is offices that could not be used as classrooms. There are a couple of classrooms on the second story and there are some small classrooms on the third story...the passages going up are almost like house staircases. They are very narrow and I am not certain that, for high school aged students, that this would be an ideal spot for them, knowing that you could have 120 kids going down one set of stairs while 120 are trying to come up a set of stairs. Clearly though, it is suitable for educational purposes. Classrooms range anywhere from 600 to almost 1000 square feet. There is a library in the building. A computer lab, a medical tech lab...When I looked at it as a possibility for Horne Street School, I said, 'no.' This building would not do for Horne Street. The Rutland Street property (the old bingo hall) has 10 classrooms approximately 600 to 800 square feet. Horne Street right now is about 750. I thought of the two properties, this would be an ideal location to place 100 to 150 students in a setting while you are remodeling or renovating a school...there is an area that could be a cafeteria. There is a kitchen...corridors were wide; bathrooms were sufficient and all were ADA compliant; classrooms were generally long and narrow but certainly could serve the purpose of an elementary classroom with students in grades 2, 3 and 4. We talked about the size of the



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building -1500 square feet – they’re asking as a sublease \$7.25/SF triple net lease (additional payment of taxes, insurances, and others to be factored in). Renting this building for a year, at about \$130,000.00 does not include heat, utilities, and those things you’d have to add.”

Ms. Hooper interjected, “But you took it right back to Horne Street and I’m still going to bring it back to the high school.” Dr. O’Connor stated, “:You’re right because, quite honestly, I don’t think it’s in the District’s best interest right now to begin renovating Dover High School when we’re moving to block scheduling next year, and a variety of other things, and we’re at near capacity at 1700 students. I could pull 200 – 250 students out over here, but we’re not going to have the continuity of programming that we currently have. I suspect it’s going to cost us more in terms of additional administrative support just because we’re taking 250 – 300 kids even, and actually the freshman class is over 400 – 425 ideally we’d like to move them over to these areas – I don’t think these rooms can accommodate – when the bell rings, how do the kids go from Rutland all the way over to Cataract? We’d have transportation issues and I think it’s just too complex. There’s no question, when you walk into Dover High School, you see its age. You see the fact that many of the systems that are in the building are so expensive that we haven’t been able to keep up with not only just the replacement or renovation or installing new equipment because the cost has been prohibitive, and, do you repair air exchange when the roof is leaking? So we’ve chosen to the roof. There are all of those issues why I think the high school right now is not, in terms of scheduling, in our best interests to do this now.” Ms. Hooper added, “Let’s go back to Horne Street. Would you need to rent if you did Option 2 for Horne Street School and built a fine arts wing with three new classrooms; are we going to move some youngsters like we did at Woodman Park, would you need to rent then?” Dr. O’Connor replied, “I would have to talk carefully with the principal on this. If we built the three classrooms and the library, but did not move our library out currently, and were able to put temporary partitions in the library so that you had five classrooms, we could move all of the classes that are currently in the first grade wing over into the new addition and renovate. We might have to put the principal and the nurse on a cart somewhere...there are some possibilities we can do that.”

Beth Setear asked the Superintendent to confirm the total cost of Option #2 would be \$6.5 million. The Superintendent confirmed that was correct. Ms. Setear stated then what we would need in the second year would be around \$3 million. Ms. Setear added, “So in year two, it’s going to be more than what we’re going to retire in debt? Because I think we’re going to retire about \$2.3 million.” The Superintendent agreed. He added, although these figures were estimates, Habeeb Associates did a very thorough job in terms of looking at Horne Street Schools needs. He added, Bonnett Page validated Habeeb’s numbers with theirs so he felt the estimates are “pretty close.” He added, “Maybe we can value engineer some things out of the project that maybe we put into Woodman – we might have to.”

Dr. Mebert stated, “What I’d like to do...there is a meeting tomorrow of the group that is trying to find who the architect is and there’s no point, of course, in choosing an architect if we’re not



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going to put aside any money. All I'm comfortable with at this point is borrowing against our debt retirement for two years and using the \$1.25 million which gives a total over the two-year period of \$5.85 million. I'd like to make a motion to say, let's hire an architect and say, we've got \$5.85 million, what can you do in renovation and either the creation of this fine arts wing, or something..."

Dr. O'Connor stated, "We should only be voting on, really, what is our commitment for this coming CIP – one year. The other years out there are just estimates so that the Council can look at what the projected needs are of the District." Dr. Mebert clarified, "I want to make it clear that it doesn't make sense to me to go to an architect and say we have \$3.5 million but, we could have another \$2.3 million and so we want you to come up with a couple of different plans for us. My motion is that we say we are going to appropriate this much money. Then we can have a separate vote what we're going to ask the Council for in the CIP. But, I'm thinking about what this committee a couple of us are on is going to be doing tomorrow. We're going for a tour of Horne Street School. We're spending a lot of person hours going into this already. So, we need a plan. And that's my motion. For this committee's purposes and for the purpose of hiring an architect, we say, this is what we're looking at. \$5.85 million over a two-year period."

Carolyn Mebert moved, Doris Grady seconded, to approve \$2.3 million for year 2010 of the CIP and add the \$1.25 balance from the 2009 CIP, and ask for another \$2.3 million for year 2011 of the CIP for a total of \$5.85 million to advise the architect who is chosen to develop a plan for Horne Street School that \$5.85 million over a two-year period is the amount the District will have to work with. A roll call **VOTE PASSED 7/0**.

Dr. Mebert if it was necessary to vote separately for the CIP. Dr. O'Connor stated, "Basically, you've authorized us to put in \$2.3 million. The following year is slightly less, \$2.2 million because there's a reduction over the next five years in what we're retiring." Ms. Grady suggested the Superintendent leave the amount at \$2.3 million the following year, "just in case prices increase." Dr. O'Connor stated he would direct the Business Administrator to submit a \$2.3 million request for years 2009 and 2010 of the CIP and, "play out the Garrison number and the high school number over that six-year period."

Ms. Grady then asked the Superintendent which year the state has scheduled to renovate the Career Technical Center. Dr. O'Connor stated we are scheduled at around 2014 but noted it could move up to 2011 or 2012 if another District is not ready to begin the work. Ms. Grady stated she wanted people to know the date may move up. She asked if, at the same time, the Board would be asking for money to renovate the rest of the building. Dr. O'Connor stated that would be a possibility. Start work with the CTC and then move into the second and third year for the remainder of the building.



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Dr. O'Connor also suggested the Board might want to start to consider looking at ways to renovate and build 'green buildings' employing alternative energy resources...solar panels; geothermal heating; air temperature maintenance; materials to be used in the renovation. He added, "There may be community interest to maybe spend more money to do the building in a manner that will say to the community that this is a building that is safe, environmentally friendly, and will not be a potential hindrance to your child's growth over the next 20 to 30 years. He stated, "I'm just putting it out there for us to be thinking about it because the technology has changed dramatically in the last ten years. Schools across the country are looking at doing these kinds of things." Britt Uilnski Schuman asked if there were any grant funds available for this purpose. Dr. O'Connor stated there is always money available for these things, many in the form of energy credits. Ms. Verville added that the Jordan Institute is another resource we could use – a not-for-profit consulting firm that could assist the District.

E. ADJOURNMENT: Audra Lurvey moved, Carolyn Mebert seconded, to adjourn the Special Session at 7:20 p.m. An oral **VOTE PASSED 7/0.**