



CITY OF DOVER

CITY COUNCIL/PLANNING BOARD - MINUTES

Meeting Type: Workshop Session
Meeting Location: Council Chambers, City Hall
Meeting Date: **Wednesday, December 2, 2009**
Meeting Time: **7:00 pm**

Councilors Present: Mayor Myers, Deputy Mayor Trefethen, Councilors Callaghan, Carrier, Cheney, DeDe, McCusker, Scott and Weston.

Planning Board Members Present: Chairperson Ronald Cole, Marcia Gasses, Linda Merullo, Lee Skinner, Frank Torr, Fire Chief Perry Plummer, and Community Service Director Doug Steele.

Also Present: City Manager Joyal, City Attorney Krans and City Clerk Lavertu.

Councilor McCusker led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. SCHOOL BOARD CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP) PRESENTATION

Mayor Myers thanked Superintendent John O'Connor and the School Board for being present. He invited Superintendent O'Connor to give his presentation on the School's portion of the CIP. Superintendent O'Connor introduced the School Board members who were present: Doris Grady, Dorothea Hooper, Carolyn Mebert, Beth Setear, and Audra Lurvey. He gave a Powerpoint presentation to the Council and Planning Board on the Dover School District Capital Improvement Plan.

Mayor Myers asked Superintendent O'Connor to explain State building aid and how it will affect these projects.

Superintendent O'Connor said that yesterday Ed Murdo, Administrator for the Bureau of School Approval and Facility Management, sent an email to all school superintendents. He said Mr. Murdo has been keeping them apprised of the ongoing legislative actions. He said it is his understanding that there is a committee that is looking at building aid. He said the State has been bonding building aid, and that it does not come out of the State budget. He said they are at a point where the legislature is concerned about the overall health of the State, and feel they are bonding too much money. He said the committee will be recommending to the legislature that the State put a moratorium on building aid, which will have an impact on future projects. He said it wouldn't affect the Horne Street Elementary School Project, but could impact the Garrison Elementary School and Dover High School projects. He said building aid is a statutory responsibility of the State. He said the retirement system has a statutory obligation for the State to contribute, but that law has been changed so the State contributes less to the retirement system. He felt the State could do the same for building aid for schools across the State. Councilor DeDe asked if the estimates predicted for the High School were based on a preliminary engineering study.

Superintendent O'Connor said the numbers are strictly for renovations and do not include additions. He said they scaled back on a number of recommendations.

Councilor DeDe said he has heard of concerns that some of the classrooms do not have exterior windows, and asked if that has been addressed in the proposals.

Superintendent O'Connor said it was not. He said he believes 14 rooms and the library do not have exterior windows, because they are built into the core of the facility. He said the plan does call for a complete air exchange or climate control system to keep those rooms at a reasonable temperature all year round.

Councilor Weston said in the last ten years the High School has replaced the roof, rehabilitated the administration area, repaired the electrical service, resurfaced the gym floors, replaced or



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put in a second boiler. She asked if those figures were included in the amount proposed for the High School.

Superintendent O'Connor said the amount for the roof was subtracted out. He said the boilers were in there for possible replacement. He said the gym floors were resurfaced and they were recommending that the floors be replaced. He said the auditorium is dated, and he felt it could be the showplace for the City of Dover for community events. He said the remodeling of the administrative offices was nothing more than moving offices from one area to another.

Councilor Weston asked him if the electrical wiring was updated in the administrative offices.

Superintendent O'Connor said he believed a new intercom system was put in, but wasn't certain the electrical system was redone in that area.

Councilor Carrier asked if they used the numbers of the Woodman Park renovation as an indicator for the other renovations.

Superintendent O'Connor said they have done that and they are not that far off. He said the renovations for Woodman Park were about \$120 per square foot. He said there was a significant difference between renovating an elementary school and the High School, which has 12 science labs that need roof exhausts. He said they did receive donated equipment from McIntosh College so that they could update two labs.

Councilor Carrier asked if there were plans to enhance some of the fields.

Superintendent O'Connor said work on the fields was included. He said it included artificial turf for the football field, but that they should also look into working on another field to lower the combined cost, instead of waiting to do it another year.

Mr. Cole spoke about piggybacking the work on the fields with St. Thomas Aquinas School. He said \$60 million was a lot of money, and the Red Sox could get a pretty good left fielder for five years. He said the High School has about 1700 students, 28% of which are from Barrington and Nottingham. He said the contract with Barrington expires in 2014, and they are supposed to have a vote in 2011 as to whether they want to build their own high school. He said if Barrington were to build a high school, most likely Nottingham students would go there, based on what he has read in the newspaper. He said there are also comments that they are being "romanced" by Coe-Brown Academy to take the students now. He asked Superintendent O'Connor how the loss of 500 students would affect the \$60 million projection.

Superintendent O'Connor addressed the issue of the fields, and St. Thomas Aquinas Academy using Dunaway Field. He said an artificial field could be used from sunrise to sunset, and later with sufficient lighting. He said the Barrington situation is very complex. He said Dover has a similar question of whether or not they want to continue the agreement. He said if Barrington were to build a high school in 2014, then Dover would lose half of the Barrington students, the incoming freshmen and current freshmen class. He said the Juniors and Seniors would stay in Dover, and by the 2016-2017 school year the High School would be down by 350 students. He said Nottingham's commitment expires in 2016, and the same scenario will occur. He said there is a committee that is made up of two representatives from Barrington School Committee, three representatives from the Dover School Committee, high school administrators, himself, and three parents of middle school students, whose children will be at the high school when the changes are going to happen. He said they are looking at issues relative to these questions.

He said they are also looking at Manchester High School, which went through this situation when Bedford decided to build a high school. He said the committee will eventually recommend whether or not to continue the agreement with Barrington to the School Board. He said it was



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true that Coe-Brown was wooing Barrington, and that would be a significant loss to Dover High School. He said not only would it be a loss of \$5 million in revenue, but a significant blow to the fabric of Dover High School.

Mr. Skinner asked about the proposed debt versus retired debt. He used the analogy that if he just paid off his mortgage that he couldn't expect to finance another mortgage for the same amount. He said the terms for borrowing have changed.

Superintendent O'Connor said the money that the School is asking to bond, \$2.2 million, will have no impact on the taxpayer. He said the School is paying that back as part of their budget now, so they will be able to borrow that money, and it will not impact the taxpayer.

Deputy Mayor Trefethen spoke about performing year-to-year maintenance, as opposed to waiting. He said it doesn't appear that the present or past few budgets have accounted for periodic maintenance.

Superintendent O'Connor said he agreed with Deputy Mayor Trefethen's statement. He said he wouldn't have included the roof replacement for \$1.25 million in the operating budget. He said they have done things through the operating budget, such as replaced windows and sliding doors. He said Dover High School is 250,000 square feet, and Unico has the entire building on a preventative maintenance schedule. He said a lot of the periodic maintenance items are expensive, such as a \$250,000 furnace replacement at an elementary school.

Deputy Mayor Trefethen said the City side of the budget has capital reserve funds for heavy equipment purchases and things of that nature. He asked if the School considered having capital reserve funds to pay for these types of things. He agreed that the roof wasn't a good example, but paying for boilers and lockers were good examples.

Superintendent O'Connor said locker replacements have come out of their operating budget. He said a capital reserve fund has been talked about over the years, but it isn't the School Board that makes that final decision. He believed the authority to create that fund would be from the Council, and he didn't think there was a lot of support for that. He said it would be something that they could talk about at a Joint Fiscal Committee meeting.

Ms. Gasses asked if there were any operational standards as to what can and cannot be done in a classroom. She said her personal observation was that the state of some of the classrooms was unprofessional; painting on the ceiling in the science room and bookcases up against heating vents.

Superintendent O'Connor said they do have a standard. He said the painting on the ceiling is in a science room, but he couldn't say it was a science room a few years ago. He said he believed they were from a social studies class.

Ms. Gasses said she was appalled at the electrical service with outlets hanging from the ceiling or outlets mounted on the floor. She said the school looks beat up. She said repairs should be completed so they will last, and not with the idea that it will be ripped out in five years.

Superintendent O'Connor said he didn't agree that the schools look beat up, but that they are showing their age. He said the Garrison Elementary School was built on a low bid municipal construction project, with nothing endearing about it. He said the Woodman Park Elementary School was built more to match the mill community of Dover, but also had a staggering price tag at the time, and that is no different than the \$60 million price tag to renovate the High School today.

Councilor DeDe spoke about the proposed debt versus retired debt, and said there would be a huge jump in 2014 that will impact the taxpayers.



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Councilor Cheney said she really wished there was a way for the City to take advantage of the 30% financing that will be still guaranteed next year from the State, even by moving the High School renovation up. She said, as a member of the Joint Building Committee, she knows that the Horne Street Elementary School project is seeing a lot of savings from lower costs, because of the poor economy. She said they are picking materials that will last a long time, and reusing materials that are solid and in good condition.

Mr. Torr asked about priorities, and asked if there was a breakout.

Superintendent O'Connor said the breakout was done by the architectural firm and was separated by mechanical, electrical, and site work. He said they consolidated the numbers and separated it into five years.

Mr. Torr said he would have wanted to see the breakout by building; such as the vocational center versus a section of the main building.

Superintendent O'Connor said he doesn't have that breakout immediately, but he can get some figures together for them.

Mr. Torr said he felt it could be stretched out over a longer period of time.

Superintendent O'Connor said there are many factors that are working against them. He said the career centers throughout the State are on a 20-year cycle, and Dover is scheduled for renovations in 2014. He said they are looking at the State helping the City with up to 70% of the renovation costs for the existing career center footprint. He estimates that \$20 million of the \$60 million is for the career center, because they are thinking of adding space to the career center in 2014, which is only covered by 30% from the State. He said in the last four years they had added a biomedicine program, licensed nurse program, equine science, and an upgraded animal science with a small animal barn on the campus. He said they would like to add a firefighter academy next year.

Ms. Merullo said she was thinking along the lines of Mr. Torr's comments. She referred to the newspaper article and wondered if the City should swallow the \$60 million all at once in order to take advantage of the State funding. She spoke about doing the most critical areas, such as the career center, and backing off on the things that he would like to do. She asked which scenario is better.

Superintendent O'Connor said he can't answer that question, but said they are looking for the answer. He said he will be recommending to the new School Board that they engage the services of NESDEC, along with an architectural firm, to make sure the numbers being predicted are accurate.

Fire Chief Plummer asked how much of the \$60 million would be State aid.

Superintendent O'Connor said the City would bond the \$60 million and then be reimbursed 30% of that over a 20 year period. He said the career center is approximately 70% over a shorter period of time.

Fire Chief Plummer said he felt that if the renovations were stretched out it would affect the quality of education. He asked if the renovations included taking care of athletic fields and parking issues.

Superintendent O'Connor said that was correct.

Mr. Plummer asked how the engineering studies were budgeted.

Superintendent O'Connor said there were a number of ways to finance it. He said they did come in with money left over from the Woodman Park Elementary School and Horne Street



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Elementary School Project, and with School Board and City Council approval it could be reassigned to cover the cost of the engineering studies.

Councilor Scott asked how much of the \$60 million would still be needed if Barrington and Nottingham withdrew their students.

Superintendent O'Connor said a majority of it will still be needed, because the number of students is not the only issue affecting the renovations. He said they are trying to take a 50 year old building and give it 25 to 35 years of additional life.

Councilor Scott asked if Barrington and Nottingham could take a portion of these bonds.

Superintendent O'Connor said it will be factored in during negotiations with them. He said right now there is a building use fee that is part of the tuition agreement.

Mayor Myers referred to proposed debt versus retired debt. He said he felt there is always some impact to the taxpayer. He said the \$2.2 million debt that is being retired paid for more than the new \$2.2 million that is being bonded. He said he knew the School Department was required to, but asked the Superintendent if he went before the Planning Board to review any of the School projects.

Superintendent O'Connor said they have on some and have not on others. He said they were backtracking a little bit and meeting with other boards. He said it isn't required by law.

Ms. Gasses clarified that she was satisfied with the quality of the new work at the Garrison Elementary School.

Mayor Myers thanked the Superintendent and School Board members for their presentation and participation.

2. MASTER PLAN OVERVIEW

Mr. Chris Parker, Planning Director, went over his presentation for the Master Plan Overview.

Ms. Merullo said the High School was a low priority on the Master Plan, but from the site walk she felt it should be a high priority. She asked who did the recommendations for the ratings.

Mr. Parker said it was based on the criteria of all the projects in the Master Plan, and that doesn't mean it can't be changed by information brought forward by the School Board. He said they are continually updating the Master Plan with fresh data.

Mr. Cole said the Master Plan is a living document, and involves as many people as can possibly be involved. He said it was based on the feelings from Dover citizens.

3. GENERAL CIP DISCUSSION

Deputy Mayor Trefethen said he has heard discussions about the total amount being proposed, and wanting to ease some people's minds, he felt that when the CIP is approved that the final dollar figure will be much less.

Mayor Myers also clarified that some projects are paid from various sources. He said looking at the total for six years the number is scary, but the Council is only focusing on the current year. He said the Planning Board will be holding a public hearing on Tuesday, December 8th, and the City Council will be having a public hearing after the first of the year.

Councilor Weston asked the City Manager about Tolend Road and the sewer line project, and if he had been able to come up with an estimate on doing part of the road, from the Willows to the landfill.



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City Manager Joyal said he didn't have a number, because they have just gone out to bid for the design services on the project. He said it was his intent that they will design the project, and present to the Council the most advantageous way to phase the project. He said they will be able to tell the City what the different cost segments may be, and how they can be phased. Councilor Weston asked what that timeframe would be.

City Manager Joyal said he believed the bids were due early next week, and the design would take six months. He said they will have some preliminary information before June or July. Ms. Merullo said the joint meetings were very helpful.

4. CITIZEN'S FORUM

Citizens are invited to speak on the subject matter of the Workshop. Statements shall be limited to five minutes.

Edward Bleiler, 28 Isaac Lucas Circle: He said before the City decides to spend any money on anything they should add up what was collected as of the first of the month. He said since there was a pretty good shortfall in June that there will be an enormous shortfall in December. He said the City should find out if they have enough funds to pay for whatever was voted on already. He referred to an article in the Union Leader, by Tom Fahey, regarding retiree hikes that hit with a thud. He said the State is going to whack another 25 to 35 percent increase in pension costs. He said the City should get those figures first. He said people were moving out of Dover to places with lower taxes, such as Maine, Newington, and places with fewer students in the schools. He referred to the Tolend Road Landfill and said the City Council signed an agreement with the people of Dover to close the landfill. He said it is being used now and no one was notified. He felt it should be looked into. He said it should be cleaned up.

Donald Medbery, 3 Covered Bridge Lane: He said Superintendent O'Connor did a great job with his presentation. He addressed the reuse of the Tolend Road Landfill for the product that comes out of the waste treatment plant, and the product being taken out of the catch basins. He said he talked with the EPA in Boston. He said the people wanted the landfill closed, and the Council at that time closed it. He said the resolution language is very specific that not any waste material of any kind shall be deposited on that site. He advised the Council to take a better look at this, because the citizens will fight it. He said he will get the EPA here. He referred to Mr. Peschel's agreement with Casello, which still had a year to go on statute of limitations. He said it was an illegal agreement that didn't get the blessing from any Council. He felt that Mr. Peschel didn't do this on his own. He said they could take that to a different level, creating a significant force to bring the Council to its senses. He said they were not going to stand their properties being devalued. He said the City will also lose its tax base. He said the land has to be given to Open Lands or Conservation to let the land go green.

Martin Coyle, 22 Grove Street, Business Representative for the New England Regional Council of Carpenters: He spoke about his concern about the upcoming School projects. He said he has been a carpenter for 15 years. He said he worked on a high school 10 years ago as a 1099 independent contractor. He said he worked 10 hours a day, \$100 per day cash. He said he was living with his parents and he felt it was good money. He said they were avoiding



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paying overtime, avoiding payroll taxes, and avoiding workmen's compensation premiums. He said there were a lot of avoidances so that the company could come in with the low bid. He was fortunate to be offered an opportunity to get into the New York Carpenters Apprenticeship School, where he learned his trade for four years. He said the carpenters are still being paid cash on some jobs today. He said part of his responsibility is to go to these sites. He said vans of Latino workers are being paid cash, and sleeping in tents behind the building. He said he felt it was the duty of the Clerk of the Works for a project to make sure this isn't happening. He referred to SB78, which requires that all subcontractors be listed on the State's website. He said the City taxpayers' money should not go to dishonest contractors.

Mayor Myers, seeing no one else wishing to speak, closed the Citizen's Forum.

5. ADJOURN

Councilor Weston made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Planning Board Chairman Cole.

DRAFT