

**TOWN OF CROMWELL
JOINT MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
BOARDS OF EDUCATION AND FINANCE**

Unapproved

**SPECIAL MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2017
CROMWELL MIDDLE SCHOOL CAFETERIA**

MINUTES AND MOTIONS

AMENDED

I. Call to Order

Mayor Faienza called the Special Joint Meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Present:

Town Council:

Mayor E. Faienza, Deputy Mayor R. Newton, F. Emanuele, T. Tokarz, E. Widders, S. Slade

Absent: A. Waters

Board of Finance:

Chairman J. Henehan, J. Corlis (7:02 p.m.), A. Spotts, J. Neto, A. Drew

Alternate: J. Dzurka, D. Kelly

Absent: B. Milardo

Board of Education:

J. Flanders, J. Fitts-Ritter, C. Kelleher, J. Matrullo, M. Midgley, P. Sousa

Absent: Chairman M. Camilleri, J. Fletcher, S. Lamberson

Also Present:

Town Manager A. Salvatore, Superintendent of Schools Dr. P. Talty, Assistant Superintendent of Schools J. Maloney, Facilities Manager S. Rose, Director School Finance E. Spencer, CMS Principal A. Cocchiola, Representatives of Construction Solutions Group LLC, President J. Giuliano, Public and Press

II. Approval of Agenda/Additions and Deletions

Mayor Faienza suggested one amendment to the agenda. He proposed to add II. A. Approval of Minutes and Motions – October 24, 2016.

Motion to approve the agenda as amended made by J. Neto, seconded by A. Spotts. Vote: Unanimous.

A. Approval of Minutes and Motions – October 24, 2016.

Motion to approve the Minutes and Motions – October 24, 2016 made by R. Newton, seconded by J. Henehan. Vote: (19) Yes. Abstention: J. Flanders, P. Sousa.

III. CMS School Tour

Dr. Talty stated that CMS Principal A. Cocchiola will guide the tour of the school then all in attendance will reconvene to continue discussion. Meeting was paused at 7:04 p.m. for the tour.

Mayor Faienza reconvened the Special Meeting at 7:44 p.m. for the purpose of continuing the discussion of the BOE Proposal regarding ECS and CMS School Projects.

Motion to reconvene the Special Meeting at 7:44 p.m. made by R. Newton, seconded by, A. Drew. Vote: Unanimous.

CMS Principal A. Cocchiola stated that all the items that were address during the tour are issues with CMS and that there are four hundred eighty three students currently enrolled.

IV. Public Comments (2-3 minutes per speaker – general information or agenda items) - None

V. Discussion of the BOE Proposal regarding ECS and CMS School Projects

Mayor Faienza stated that at the last meeting the three Boards had a discussion regarding ECS. The application for the five year grant would be submitted in 2018 in hopes that the process would start in 2021/2022. This meeting is to focus on CMS. Mayor Faienza requested Construction Solutions Group LLC, President J. Giuliano presented his proposal and possible ideas for CMS.

J. Giuliano stated that since the last meeting, the State's financial issue straits have caused some possible changes to the school construction proposal. The State in trying to reduce commitments regarding school construction is proposing as of July 1, 2017, any grant application submitted will be subject to a construction price of \$360.00 per sq. ft. plus 15% for soft costs. This means the maximum the State will reimburse will be \$414.00 per sq. ft. If a town/district would like to go over that limit they can but the difference would be at the town's/district's cost. The other item that could be an issue is the reduction of the reimbursement rate. J. Giuliano stated there is another way to get what the school needs without costing as much. Two options the architects looked at were; renovation as new which basically means to leave the building as is and bring the school up to 20 Year Standard which means to upgrade HVAC and electrical system, flooring, roofing and windows. The cost would approximately be \$37-41M to renovate. The other option is to build as new and that cost would be approximately \$53-\$59M to build. J. Giuliano stated that both he and R. LaFleur understand that Cromwell needs to be fiscally responsible. Based on the study the architects did, the majority, if not all the classrooms, are undersized. The average 6th grade classroom at CMS is 671 sq. ft., and the average 6th grade science classroom is 937 sq. ft. In most schools the typical classroom is 850 sq. ft. and a typical science classroom is about 1,200 sq. ft. Regarding the layout of CMS, if we were to increase the size of classrooms and the size of science rooms we would be short about six classrooms. A possibility is to put on an addition to compensate for the six classrooms and renovate the rest of building. The State's Alteration Project will not reimburse for upgrades but if you have programmatic upgrades that constitutes reimbursement from the State. J. Giuliano feels that we could renovate the building and it would be reimbursable from the State due to it being programmatic. With this plan Cromwell could save a significant amount

of money. J. Giuliano questioned the Boards to see if this would be an option they would like to look into. J. Giuliano stated that his company feels this would be a viable option.

J. Dzurka asked if we were to use the auditorium space for classrooms and put an addition on for a new auditorium, would that be reimbursable? J. Giuliano stated it may be over the square foot allowable area but it would be a reimbursable expense. J. Dzurka asked what if we were to just fix (upgrade) the auditorium. J. Giuliano stated that if it was for a code violation or ADA access to the stage, the State would reimburse but simple upgrades like painting would not be reimbursed.

J. Neto asked for the cost of the Alteration Project vs. renovate as new in round numbers. J. Giuliano stated it is about \$12 – \$15 million. Mr. Neto also questioned the State's perspective is in regards to the school reimbursement rates. J. Giuliano stated that there is no firm information as of yet just a lot of speculation. They do know that the square footage rate as of July 1st but there is only speculation regarding reimbursement.

F. Emanuele stated that the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent are trying to build a program from ECS to CHS, from the ground up. When kids have the foundation they succeed more at the next level. The environment is not feasible at CMS for what they are trying to accomplish.

Dr. Talty agreed and stated that all three Boards are in agreement. We need to take action regarding CMS for a financially sound strategy. Dr. Talty stated that she will be attending the Superintendents' Round Table this Thursday and School Construction is on the agenda.

J. Dzurka questioned the asbestos at CMS and the time line for completion. J. Giuliano stated it is difficult to tell. They will need to have an architect look at the school and how to service while renovating. The project might be completed through a series of short phases three to four months long.

J. Henahan questioned classroom size in regards to the 20 Year Standards, are there any mandates for minimize size for classrooms? J. Giuliano stated CMS is below the minimum space. J. Henahan questioned if we added on to the back of the building, is that considered non-refurbished. J. Giuliano stated that we would not get two different rates for two different categories. Since it is new and considered programmatic, it would be reimbursed at the full rate. You want to maximize reimbursement.

A. Salvatore stated we are down six classrooms. If we renovate and add a wing through expansion we will be reimbursed roughly \$400 per sq. ft. What is the square footage needed for the addition? J. Giuliano stated that we are under the allowable square footage. The architect made some corrections in the common space areas. He would have to double check the figures.

J. Fitts-Ritter questioned how are you going to make sure students are safe if there is asbestos? J. Giuliano stated the asbestos abatement would be done during summer when students are not in school. Asbestos abatement is closely monitored and regulated.

Mayor Faienza questioned if this project would be similar to the construction that was at CHS. Dr. Talty responded yes, she believes that project took about two years. There was significant use of swing space and it was carefully planned out. The classrooms were small and walls were taken out to make more space.

M. Sousa asked about portable classrooms, would that speed up the process and would renting be reimbursed. J. Giuliano will investigate to find out.

F. Emanuele questioned if we did have portables, how would that affect the safety issue, and how do we make sure that staff and students are safe. Dr. Talty stated there would be one entrance through the building to get to those classrooms to ensure student safety.

S. Slade stated that this project would be done after the ECS project.

Mayor Faienza stated that the ECS project would be completed roughly around 2021 and the CMS project completion would be around 2025 based on complete renovation. The proposed new options could take a little less time. With this new potential concept, it requires some hardcore numbers to fit in the timeline.

S. Slade agreed. She would also like to get the numbers, without them it is very difficult to move forward without concrete numbers and dates.

Mayor Faienza stated that if the numbers are close, we would have a lot to discuss. He would like to have the hardcore figures before further discussion.

J. Giuliano stated he would get that information. He just wanted to present idea and make sure the Boards were interested.

T. Tokarz, questioned again that the State Funding Standard after July 1, 2017 was \$360.00 per sq. ft. plus 15% for soft cost. Is this project doable with those rates? J. Giuliano stated yes with the renovation we are thinking about. The State does not increase the per square foot rate with inflation. Right now the rate of escalation is at 4% a year for construction.

J. Corlis questioned the recommendation for a new roof and solar panels where feasible. J. Giuliano stated that by the time renovation happens it will be time for a new roof.

J. Neto questioned what would be the timeframe for the new analysis. J. Giuliano stated at least six weeks. He would have true numbers in July. J. Neto stated once we receive information from the State and clean numbers for the alteration project, information should be shared and we should regroup. J. Neto stated the State mandates asbestos removal cost and it is astronomical. J. Neto feels that it is important to get figures. We need to be at a point where we are comfortable and this is a very attractive option.

Mayor Faienza agrees, and would also like to see what the State does.

Dr. Talty stated they will do an updated timeline for ECS as well to make an informed decision. As discussed previously, the longer we wait, construction costs increase and reimbursing decreases. We want you to have the information needed in order to make a decision as a community.

Mayor Faienza stated that the Town Manager had requested hard core numbers in regards to potential costs and fees to get a grant application submitted in 2018. J. Giuliano will have that information for the next meeting.

F. Emanuele requested to get what the cost was when renovating CHS and WIS. Dr. Talty stated just a reminder we built WIS as opposed to renovating CHS. F. Emanuele stated the longer we wait the more it is going to cost. Dr. Talty stated we need to consider what the community will and can support. We will get you as much information ahead of time and will notify each Board chair information she receives from the Commissioner.

VI. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the Special Meeting of the Joint Meeting of the Town Council Boards of Education and Finance at 8:24 p.m. made by S. Slade, seconded by F. Emanuele.
Vote: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Hicks

Lisa Hicks
BOE Recording Clerk