

School Building Committee (2020)
Regular Meeting
City Hall Room 335
100 Broadway, Norwich CT 06360
And Virtually via ZOOM
Tuesday September 21, 2021
6:30 PM

Committee Members Present: Alderman Mark Bettencourt, Alderwoman Stacy Gould, William Hull, Heather Romanski, Gerald Martin, Peter Gauthier, Greg Carabine, Kristen Talley and Christine DiStasio. Gregory Ballassi arrived at 6:36PM. Alderman Joe DeLucia arrived virtually at 6:43PM.

Committee Members Absent: None.

Ex-Officio Members Present: None.

Citizens Present: Chris LaRose, Norwich Public Utilities; Bob Sierpinski, Norwich Board of Ed; Bob Castronova, City of Norwich Purchasing Agent; James Barrett and Ronald Paolillo, Drummey Rosane Anderson, Inc.

- I. Call to Order and Quorum:** Alderman Mark Bettencourt called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.
- II. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meetings:** Peter Gauthier made a motion to approve the July 20, 2021 meeting minutes, with some adjustments. Greg Carabine seconded. The chairman called the roll of members present and all were in favor, aside from Heather Romanski who abstained from the vote. The motion passed.
- III. Preliminary report by DRA:** James Barrett reported that DRA had been focusing on the first phase of their strategic work plan for the Norwich school system which included the collection of available information, assessment of facility conditions, demographic information and enrollment projections. James Barrett continued that DRA had also collected base drawings, surveys, current enrollment data, existing space summaries, floor plans and other information. Ronald Paolillo stated he had conducted surveys of the existing buildings and grounds and was visiting a building each week. Ronald Paolillo continued that they walked the site as well as the exterior and interior of each building while noting items that came to attention. James Barrett stated that MEP and building systems would be assessed in early October. Ronald Paolillo reported that the school buildings were in generally good condition

considering their age and use and no major issues were noted aside from some window, roof and exterior walkway issues. Ronald Paolillo added that ADA exterior and interior deficiencies drew the most attention. Ronald Paolillo stated the playgrounds were in decent condition but some were aged or inappropriate for age usage as well as having ADA deficiencies. Gerald Martin asked if regarding the utility service if any environmental issues had arisen to which James Barrett responded that MEP's would be assessing that in October but no hazardous materials or suspicions were observed during the walkthrough. James Barrette stated their consultant, SLR Consulting, was looking for the October 1st enrollment information submitted by the NPS district to the state so that they could move forward developing demographic information and enrollment projections. James Barrett stated that looking forward their team would be holding education planning and programming exercises and working with district administration to have sit downs so that they can better understand how the buildings are used today in regards to high level usage areas, goals and areas that cannot be lost or adjusted. James Barrett stated the next items in the timeline would be to have a meeting for each of the 14 buildings within their scope and to look at the third week of October for the first community workshop. James Barrett continued that the MEP's would be available as well in terms of their understanding of the building and noted that hybrid meetings seemed to garner more participation and engagement. Discussion ensued. An agreement was made to host the community informational workshop as a hybrid meeting. James Barrett stated the goal would be to promote the meeting one month prior at a minimum.

IV. Discussion and possible action - Preliminary report by DRA.

Discussion ensued regarding hosting the workshop on the regular October 19, 2021 meeting. Alderman Mark Bettencourt asked Heather Romanski to inquire about using the community room at Kelly Middle School. Gregory Ballasi and Heather suggested promoting the meeting through the district-wide Kimbo application. Heather Romanski also suggested notifying the Norwich Clergy Association to distribute the information to their communities and Kristen DiStasio suggested promoting the meeting at the senior center. Discussion ensued regarding language assistance for the in-person and virtual portion of the hybrid meeting. Peter Gauthier asked if there was a list of community organizations within the city to which Alderwoman Stacy Gould suggested providing the information to the Greater Norwich Chamber of Commerce to distribute. Greg Carabine asked if it was possible to provide any assessment of buildings prior to the public special meeting. James Barrette responded that even a draft of the information would take time to compile, which would be provided that fall but likely not in time for the October 19th meeting. James Barret continued that at the October 19th meeting a floor plan with mapping would be available as well as comparison data and that the

engineers would be available to discuss what they've seen, architecturally what has been seen. James Barrett stated the primary goal of the meeting would be to listen to the community and their concerns and that the second workshop would be focused on looking at options and alternatives as well as possible solutions. James Barrette stated the third workshop would occur before the final conclusion where DRA would present one or two frontline options and receive feedback on that; then once complete would finalize the report to bring forward to committee and Board of Education. James Barrett stated their team would provide any available information to the committee prior to the next meeting, it just may not be a draft or full snapshot. William Hull suggested starting the presentation time at 7:00 PM in order to host regular meeting items prior.

V. Next Regular Meeting: October 19, 2021

VI. Additional Agenda Items: Peter Gauthier asked for the school tours to be put back on the agenda. Alderman Bettencourt stated he would touch base with Superintendent Kristen Stringfellow.

VII. Adjournment: Heather Romanski made a motion to adjourn. Gerald Martin seconded. The chairman called the roll of members present and all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously. The committee adjourned at 7:28PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Katherine Rose