

**School Building Committee (2020)**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Held via ZOOM & City Hall Room 335**  
**100 Broadway, Norwich**  
**Wednesday March 21, 2023**  
**6:00 PM**

**Committee Members Present:** Chairman Mark Bettencourt, President Pro Tem Joe DeLucia (ZOOM), William Hull, Peter Gauthier, Greg Ballassi, Gregory Carabine, Christine DiStasio (ZOOM), Shiela Hayes and Mark Kulos (ZOOM).

**Committee Members Absent:** Alderwoman Stacy Gould and Cindy Beauregard.

**Ex-Officio Members Present:** Mayor Peter Nystrom (ZOOM), Bob Castronova, Bob Sierpinski (ZOOM), Chris LaRose (ZOOM), Mike Faenza and Jim Guiliano from CSG.

**Citizens Present:** Pamela Kinder

- I. Call to Order and Quorum:** Chairman Mark Bettencourt called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.
- II. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:** Sheila Hayes made a motion to approve the February 22, 2023 regular meeting minutes. Peter Gauthier seconded. The chairman called the roll of members present and all were in favor. William Hull abstained. The motion passed unanimously.
- III. Chairman's Report – Update on Activity:**
  1. Chairman Mark Bettencourt stated he sent a digital report out to members via email. Chairman Bettencourt recapped that once CSG passed through their reference check they hit the ground running.
  2. Chairman Bettencourt stated that a kickoff meeting was held which was attended by Bob Castronova and various city officials.
  3. Chairman Bettencourt continued that on March 6, 2023 the state Office of School Construction Grants & Review spoke to the superintendent and requested to speak with city officials to clarify what is being done with the project. Chairman Bettencourt stated a virtual meeting was held the following day where the OSCG&R requested a letter from the superintendent detailing what is occurring for the year. Chairman Bettencourt stated the letter was sent that included project numbers from the state, details of the project and estimated costs.
  4. Chairman Bettencourt stated on March 9, 2023 he met with CSG, the superintendent and staff at the central office to review what was required for the grant application and that he was provided a checklist from CSG of what was required.
  5. Chairman Bettencourt continued that CSG did a site walk at Stanton with Matthew Brown and Bob Sierpinski where they discussed septic issues and work that would be done due to the usage increase. Chairman Bettencourt noted that a lot of the septic work would be done on city property which should be reimbursable, and that CSG noted the topographical issues of Stanton as well.
  6. Chairman Bettencourt reported that he received the final report for the master plan from DRA which he uploaded to the drive and distributed to pertinent parties.
  7. Chairman Bettencourt stated he spoke to and forwarded a letter to Senator Osten to help craft legislation that will help get the city 80% reimbursement on the project.

#### **IV. CSG report on progress:**

1. Mike Faenza of CSG stated their team started looking at the enrollment projections in the GIS report part of the master plan along with copies of another enrollment report provided by NESDIC. Mike Faenza stated they also looked at the current enrollment reports for the school and after analyzing found that from an enrollment perspective, the enrollment report provided by Cropper GIS seemed to be the most favorable for the size of the buildings. Mike Faenza stated that the analysis yielded that the sizing needed for the first two schools to meet state requirements would be 585 students at Greenville and Stanton, because the projects are scheduled for submission that year. Mike Faenza stated that years 2029 and 2030 were the highest enrollment that would be considered per the OSCG&R requirements. Mike Faenza discussed the enrollment projections for the various years and the math used to determine the numbers. Mike Faenza stated the highest enrollment for the eight-year period was 2030-31 with 2,405 students.
2. Mike Faenza reported that another notable finding, which he is confirming with the superintendent's office, was the Cropper GIS report flatlined enrollment for the Pre-K population at 134 students going forward in its enrollment projection and the superintendent's office had the current Pre-K enrollment as 222 students, so the basis for the Cropper GIS projection was unclear. Mike Faenza stated it may be worth reaching out to the state since the whole program is based off of four elementary schools and the size is based off of the OSCG&R requirements, to see if they would allow the 2,405 projected enrollment and divide it to make all of the schools the same size. Discussion ensued. Sheila Hayes asked if based on the analysis done from the various groups how growth was accounted for (deleted- there) in the projection from Courier & Goldman to what CSG is projecting enrollment wise. Shiela Hayes explained that in the past an enrollment decrease was projected which did not occur and asked how the state can be convinced legally if the board felt there would be a significant increase. Mike Faenza stated the enrollment report from the demographic study in the master plan calculated 2,319 students for the 2022-23 school year in comparison to the 2,405 number for 2031-32, which is the end of the report. Shiela Hayes expressed concerns that the schools could be built based on numbers that will be obsolete by the time of construction. Mike Faenza reiterated his point about the flatline Pre-K projection in regards to the concerns mentioned by Shiela Hayes. Jim Guiliano stated that after clarifying the Pre-K enrollment with the superintendent a discussion would need to occur about how to move forward and strategize with the state if enrollment is increasing and how to have parity amongst the schools. Mark Kulos stated there was a mixture of full and half-day Pre-K students but was not sure of the exact amounts. Jim Guiliano suggested having another conversation with the state to explain the situation and how to address building some of the schools larger based on actual projections. Discussion ensued regarding the enrollment projections. Mike Faenza clarified that the Cropper GIS report breakout for the individual schools flatlined the enrollment at Bishop Elementary at 101 students until 2031-32; 12 Pre-K students at Mahan Elementary; and 20 students at Veterans. Mike Faenza reiterated this projection may be based on current numbers and not all considerations.
3. Mike Faenza stated that other than awaiting for the enrollment information, CSG had: Met with staff Matt Warzecha and Matt Brown regarding facilities and IT infrastructure. Mike Faenza stated the educational specifications will be a description of every space in the building and provided examples of requirements. Mike Faenza stated that CSG was also able to obtain drawings of Stanton School from the archive and would like to have digitized drawings to be used by the architect when going to bid. Mike Faenza continued that CSG created the SGC-9000 School Safety and Security letters with the new project numbers which were sent off to the district security coordinator who pushes them along to the Department of Emergency

Management and Homeland Security. Mike Faenza stated this is something CSG likes to do early on in case the security plans of a school need to be updated, which can be time consuming.

4. Shiela Hayes asked what the time frame was from the submission of the application being worked on, moving forward. Mike Faenza responded the enrollment report is high priority and the other items in the grant application were not as big of a concern. Jim Guiliano responded it was currently June 30th until the schedule could be refined. Chairman Bettencourt stated there was a couple months' leeway with that date, but he would rather not use it if possible.
5. Mike Faenza stated they reached out to DRA who provided sections from the final plan that included things like staff interviews.

**V. Public Comment:** Pam Kinder from United Community Family Services stated that UCFS has school-based health centers at Stanton Elementary, Kelly Middle and Teachers and would like to be part of the design process to provide ideas for the opportunity to have state of the art health centers in all schools. Pam Kinder stated that UCFS currently sees about 583 kids in each school and expects to see more. Pam Kinder stated she would provide her contact information to CSG.

Chairman Mark Bettencourt noted in addition to the health centers, vendors such as those for food service may have input on design aspects especially if the board proceeds with a national vendor.

**VI. Discussion on School population project size:** Chairman Mark Bettencourt stated that once the superintendent provides numbers a determination will be made on how to proceed.

**VII. Action on Discussion if Needed:** Chairman Bettencourt stated that based on discussion the goal is for all schools to be the same size if possible and to approach the state on that issue.

William Hull made a motion that the goal for the School Building Committee (2020) regarding the four elementary schools is to achieve the relative same size schools for parity amongst them, if possible. Shiela Hayes seconded. The chairman called the roll of members present and all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

**VIII. Anything Else to be Brought Before the Committee:** None.

**IX. Adjournment:** William Hull made a motion to adjourn at 7:27 PM. Shiela Hayes seconded. The chairman called the roll of members present and all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

*Respectfully Submitted, Katherine Rose*